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House of Representatives

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

PRAYER

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

Bless the Members of the people's House in these few days before so many Americans gather with families and loved ones in a season of good will toward all.

May that spirit pervade these Halls and Chambers, and may the work done and being done redound to the benefit of all, most particularly those whom You favor: the least among us.

As always, we pray that all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. KILDEE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

REMEMBERING PENNSYLVANIA FFA'S PENNY BRAMMER

(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 in memory of Penny Brammer, who passed away last week after a courageous battle with breast cancer. She was 59.

Penny worked for the Pennsylvania FFA Association and was affectionately known as "Mama B" by the Commonwealth's youth leaders of agriculture. She inspired thousands of teenagers to have the passion and drive to pursue their dreams.

Penny is survived by her loving husband, high school and FFA sweetheart, Michael Brammer; her son and daughter-in-law, Greg and Jackie Brammer; her daughter and son-in-law, Sherisa and Jason Nailor; as well as her parents, George and Shirley Shaver. She also leaves her adored grandchildren: Terrin, Grace, Joleigh, Jordyn, and Jayce.

Mr. Speaker, my heart is heavy for the entire Brammer family, as well as for Penny's extended family at the Pennsylvania FFA Association and the

New Kingstown Volunteer Fire Company where Penny and Michael enjoyed years of fellowship and service to the community.

Penny dedicated her life to helping others, especially our youth. Her memory will live on in the hearts of all those whose lives she touched.

AMERICAN FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND AGAIN

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I guess for the second day in a row, this House voted for massive tax cuts for people at the very top and left behind a lot of working Americans. In fact, it gave permanent tax cuts to corporations and only temporary help for some American families. They said that the marketplace and corporations needed certainty. That is why those tax cuts were permanent.

Now, we have a continuing resolution for 28 days of funding after 11 months of not doing anything about it.

What about the certainty for veterans that they are going to get the healthcare that they deserve?

It is not a priority.

What about the certainty for children who depend on CHIP?

It is not a priority.

What about the certainty for those families who are struggling with a family member fighting opioid abuse?

All the promises ring hollow because they are not a priority. Corporations are the top priority. With this tax bill, and now the continuing resolution, the American people, who struggle every single day, are just not a priority. After 11 months of complete Republican control and false promises, American families get left behind again. It is a shame.

□ 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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H10347

ARKANSAS STATE CHRISTMAS TREE

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a truly talented group of students whose artistic abilities are on display here in our Nation's Capital.

Students from Washington Middle School and the South Arkansas Arts Center in El Dorado, Arkansas, designed ornaments adorning this year's Arkansas State Christmas tree on the Ellipse here in Washington, D.C.

The students used colored pencils, paper, markers, and glitter to create beautiful pieces of art which represent Arkansas' natural resources and economy.

I congratulate these students on highlighting the best of the Natural State in a truly wonderful way. I wish them, their families, and all of the Fourth District of Arkansas a Merry Christmas filled with joy and smiles, like I felt when I saw this remarkable art from home.

HONORING CAPTAIN F.W. "ROCCO" MONTESANO

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

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a Navy veteran and retiring Executive Director of the USS Lexington Museum on the Bay, Captain F.W. "Rocco" Montesano.

Following his graduation from the Naval Academy, Rocco served the U.S. Navy in numerous positions over his 30-year career, completing more than 5,500 flight hours and 900 carrier landings. From serving as commanding officer in aircraft squadrons to manpower director for the Chief of Naval Air Training, Captain Montesano has always shown his dedication and commitment to our country.

His bravery and service earned him many awards, including two Legion of Merit Medals, two Meritorious Service Medals, a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, and five Sea Service Ribbons, amongst many others.

His service, however, did not stop when he retired from the Navy. In 1998, Captain Montesano became the Executive Director of the USS Lexington Museum on the Bay in Corpus Christi, where he served for 19 years.

Throughout his time as Executive Director, Rocco brought innovation and creativity to his position and did a phenomenal job maintaining and improving the museum that sits on Corpus Christi Bay. Through his patriotism, loyalty, and service, he holds true to the values of an American citizen and he inspires us all.

I thank Rocco for his commitment to our Nation. On behalf of everyone in

the 27th Congressional District of Texas, I wish him a happy retirement.

CHIP REAUTHORIZATION

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to once again implore this Congress to take bipartisan action to extend Federal funding of the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP.

In my home State of Pennsylvania, more than 176,000 children have gained access to affordable, comprehensive healthcare coverage through CHIP, providing them with age-appropriate medical and developmental care.

Since the program became law, the percentage of uninsured children nationwide has decreased by more than half, from 13.9 percent in 1997 to 6.6 percent in 2016.

As a result of its reliability and effectiveness, CHIP has consistently enjoyed strong bipartisan support. In September, I joined a bipartisan group from across Pennsylvania in urging leaders of both parties to take action to ensure that children have access to high-quality health insurance coverage during their formative years, a move we know yields an abundance of positive outcomes: fewer hospitalizations, increased earning power, and better healthcare outcomes as an adult.

While this Chamber has already taken action, passing legislation last month to fund CHIP, the Senate has yet to act. It is crucial we provide certainty and security for children, parents, and providers and move to sign into law CHIP extension legislation as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, the time is now for the Senate to act.

REFORM FISA 702 PROGRAM

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

Mr. MASSIE. Mr. Speaker, on December 31 of this year, the FISA 702 surveillance program expires.

Ostensibly, this program allows our intelligence agencies to spy on and stop terrorism. However, it is a well-known fact that the FBI has used this program as a back door to our Constitution to spy on Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues not to reauthorize this program before December 31 without significant reforms. We all took an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution. We need to stay true to that oath and require the FBI to get a warrant if they want to go into the 702 database to surveil Americans.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of

rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 9 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1221

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING) at 12 o'clock and 21 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1370, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4667, FURTHER SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018; AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 22, 2017, THROUGH JANUARY 7, 2018

Mr. WOODALL, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-477) on the resolution (H. Res. 670) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1370) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4667) making further supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, for disaster assistance for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and calendar year 2017 wildfires, and for other purposes; and providing for proceedings during the period from December 22, 2017, through January 7, 2018, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 21, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 21, 2017, at 9:25 a.m.:

That the Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 31.
That the Senate passed S. 117.

That the Senate passed S. 501.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1370, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4667, FURTHER SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018; AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 22, 2017, THROUGH JANUARY 7, 2018

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 670 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 670

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 1370) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment thereto, and to consider in the House, without intervention of any point of order, a motion offered by the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendment with an amendment consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-52. The Senate amendment and the motion shall be considered as read. The motion shall be debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4667) making further supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, for disaster assistance for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and calendar year 2017 wildfires, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendments printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. Clause 2(e) of rule XXI shall not apply during consideration of the bill. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. On any legislative day of the first session of the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress after December 21, 2017—

(a) the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and

(b) the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time, within the limits of clause 4, section 5, article I of the Constitution, to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment.

SEC. 4. On any legislative day of the second session of the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress before January 8, 2018—

(a) the Speaker may dispense with organizational and legislative business;

(b) the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved if applicable; and

(c) the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time, within the limits of clause 4, section 5, article I of the Constitution, to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment.

SEC. 5. The Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the periods addressed by sections 3 and 4 of this resolution as though under clause 8(a) of rule I.

SEC. 6. Each day during the periods addressed by sections 3 and 4 of this resolution shall not constitute a calendar day for purposes of section 7 of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1546).

SEC. 7. Each day during the periods addressed by sections 3 and 4 of this resolution shall not constitute a legislative day for purposes of clause 7 of rule XIII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, most of what you just heard from the Reading Clerk you could have heard during the previous 4 hours of testimony that we have been taking in the Rules Committee this morning. I understand there was no other game in town going on this morning, so if folks were tuning in to C-SPAN, they were treated to my friend from Massachusetts, our ranking member from New York, our chairman from Texas, and all the gang there on the Rules Committee as we worked through this.

But forbid the thought if someone else had something else on their mind this morning, I want to go through just briefly what you heard from our Reading Clerk.

This is a single rule that provides for consideration of two measures. The first is the Senate amendment to H.R. 1370. It is continuing appropriations to make sure the lights stay on and the checks go out the door. It makes in order a motion to concur in the Senate amendment with an amendment consisting of the text of this continuing resolution.

To debate that, Mr. Speaker, we provide an hour of debate divided between the chair and the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee. I think every Member of this Chamber understands the nature of this legislation, but we provided that time nonetheless.

The second measure is H.R. 4667. It is the disaster aid package.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, this House has been working through, in a bipartisan way, funding our neighbors who have been so dramatically affected by disasters, whether in the Virgin Islands, in Puerto Rico, in Florida, in Texas, or the devastating wildfires in California. This has been a national focus, and billions of dollars have already gone out the door to meet the initial emergency needs. This is an additional appropriations measure.

□ 1230

It comes under a closed rule, Mr. Speaker, but it does self-execute two amendments that had been offered: an amendment by Mrs. MIMI WALTERS and an amendment by Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN.

It also provides for an hour of debate, equally divided between the chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, and it provides for a motion to recommit for the minority.

The rest of what you heard from the Reading Clerk, Mr. Speaker, was that typical language that you hear at the end of the year when Members are going to be traveling, to allow for the housekeeping that takes place here, to allow the House to continue to function as the traditional authorities provided in December and January during the district work period.

With that, Mr. Speaker, again, I think we have exhaustively debated these issues. I urge my colleagues to support the rule. Let's get on to the underlying measures.

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

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

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, we are strongly opposed to this rule.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say to my colleagues that this is really a sad day, not only for the institution, but for the United States of America.

It is frustrating that we are here today doing a third continuing resolution. For those who are watching these proceedings, we should be actually passing appropriations bills that fund the government for an entire year. We shouldn't be funding the government week to week, month to month.

Yet my Republican friends have ended up doing just that. They can't seem to get their act together, notwithstanding they are in control of the House of Representatives, they are in control of the United States Senate, and they are in control of the White House. They simply cannot govern. They are lucky that the American people can't sue them, because they would be sued for political malpractice.

The one thing that they are supposed to do is to keep this government running and to keep the lights on, yet we lurch from one crisis to another crisis to another crisis to another crisis.

Today, what they are saying is: Let's kick the can down the road until January 19. You know what will happen then?

Another crisis. Then we will be in the same situation, and we will probably kick the can down the road another few weeks.

That is not the way government is supposed to run. People need certainty, and this Congress has delivered anything but certainty. It has to stop. It is frustrating.

A solution, if I can be so bold as to suggest a solution to dealing with some of the problems that the Republican leadership is confronting, might be a little bipartisanship, might be opening up this process a little bit, might be a little bit more deliberation on the floor of the House of Representatives.

There are a couple of ways they can govern. One is, they can govern in a way where they respect all points of view, where they actually respect the viewpoint of the minority, where they open the process up so the minority can, every once in a while, offer some amendments and offer some alternatives, where they negotiate on spending bills in good faith, where they know they are not going to get everything and the minority knows they are not going to get everything, but they end up in a compromise that is good enough to get bipartisan support.

That is the way things used to be done around here. I don't know why it is so difficult to get back to those days, but if they want the government to run better, that is what they need to do. They have to stop this my-way-or-the-highway approach to every single piece of legislation that comes before this body.

My friends have had more closed rules than any other session of Congress. This is the most closed session in the history of the Congress. That is what this session will go down in history as being: the most closed session in the history of Congress.

They have used martial law, they have used closed rules, they have had emergency meetings, all to try to get us to this point where we are kicking the can down the road for a couple of weeks. That is it.

What we should have been doing is working together not only to keep the government open, but we ought to have been working together to raise the caps.

Democrats want a strong national defense. We also need an equal increase in our domestic budget, which includes critical national security functions and commitments to hardworking families.

My friends ought to know that one-third of the nondefense domestic budget goes to national security, veterans, homeland security, and the State Department's and the Justice Department's counterterrorism initiatives.

I would also say that supporting housing initiatives and investing in education and environmental protection so that our fellow citizens don't

have to drink water that is contaminated with lead is also a part of our national security.

We ought to have been working in a bipartisan way to resolve all of these issues together.

We need to work to fund the opioid epidemic. What we have done in this Congress is given lots of speeches about how terrible this opioid epidemic is. We have talked about the need to support our local communities.

We have done a lot of talking, but what we need to do is appropriate the necessary money so that local communities can implement the strategies to effectively deal with the opioid crisis in their areas. We ought to have been focusing on that.

We need additional veterans funding. Democrats are urging Republicans to join us to provide urgently needed resources to veterans facing a dire shortfall at the VA, meeting our responsibility to ensure that no veteran is left behind or denied the care and opportunities they deserve upon return from the battlefield.

CHIP, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and community health centers are incredibly important to us and people throughout this country. We are calling for immediate reauthorization of these vital initiatives, one that doesn't rob Peter to pay Paul, one that doesn't say we are going to fund CHIP by taking money away from the prevention program that provides monies for immunizations and dealing with issues like lead paint and other issues that affect our kids.

We need emergency disaster relief that is adequate to meet the needs of all the States and localities and territories that have been impacted by these terrible natural disasters.

We need to save Americans' endangered pensions. Millions of hardworking Americans' pensions are at risk, and we are calling for bipartisan action to enact a responsible reform plan to ensure that these struggling pensions will keep on going.

We also believe that we ought to pass the bipartisan Dream Act that we spent a lot of time in the Rules Committee talking about today. Democratic Leader NANCY PELOSI; Minority Whip STENY HOYER; and the head of the Hispanic Caucus, MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, spent many hours at the Rules Committee today. Leader PELOSI was there for 2½ hours testifying on the need to pass the bipartisan Dream Act.

We ought to do that before we go home for Christmas. There are 800,000-plus people whose lives are in the balance because, on September 7, Donald Trump decided to end protection for the DREAMers.

Here is what the President I don't think appreciates and what some of my colleagues I think don't appreciate, but we learned about this today in the Rules Committee: we don't have until March to deal with the Dream Act. Each and every day, people are losing

their status. On average, about 122 a day, we are told.

So there are people who are here who had the protections under DACA who are losing their status, losing their jobs, losing their livelihoods, and their lives have been thrown into turmoil.

Why in the world would we do that?

The majority of Americans, overwhelmingly Democrats and Republicans and Independents, all believe we should protect the DREAMers.

We heard in the Rules Committee: Well, we need more committee deliberation. Again, the President took their protections away on September 7. It is now December 21.

What have you been doing?

They said: Well, the Judiciary Committee needs to do more hearings. Well, what have they been waiting for?

The Judiciary Committee recently set up a bill, the concealed carry reciprocity bill, which allows people from States that have almost no standards to issue permits for people to carry concealed weapons to be able to go to any State in this country, no matter what those States' standards may be, basically endangering my constituents.

They brought that to the Rules Committee. They had time to bring that before the Rules Committee and before the House. There was not a single hearing. None.

We had this tax scam bill that we just voted on where 83 percent of the tax breaks go to the top 1 percent of the wealthiest in this country. Remember that bill that the President just celebrated with all my Republican friends?

That came before this House, and there wasn't a single hearing on it. But now we need to have hearings when it comes to protecting the DREAMers.

It is outrageous. These DREAMers are contributing to the betterment of our communities. We should celebrate them. We should value them. They have served in our military. They are out front leading disaster relief efforts, saving lives. They are working in Fortune 500 companies. They are going to school. They are valued members of our community. And we treat them like this?

Come on. If we brought the Dream Act to the floor, it would pass with Democratic support and a big chunk of Republican support. There is absolutely no reason to continue to stall on this issue. All that will happen as a result of our stalling is that more people will lose their status, more lives will be thrown into turmoil.

I would just say to my colleagues: It is the Christmas season. This is a time, if ever, where the spirit ought to take over, and we ought to do something good for the American people, not just for the donors, but for the people.

Giving a tax break to corporations and wealthy people will help with the fundraisers, but what we need is to help these people, these DREAMers whose lives are in the balance. We can't wait.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on this rule, allow us to bring up a standalone Dream Act or an amendment that would allow the Dream Act to be made in order, and I hope that we can get back to regular order.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this time of year folks get rightfully exorcised about the issues of the day.

We all came here to do something for the men and women whom we represent back home. Every time we get to the end of a year, we think: I have got to get it done; I have got to get it done; I have got to get it done. I recognize those passions are going to exist.

I actually don't believe for a minute that my friend from Massachusetts believes my vote in favor of the tax bill had anything to do with fundraising or my donors. He might believe that about somebody in this Chamber—I hope that he does not—but I know he doesn't believe it about me. It just isn't true.

I have been fighting for tax reform since the day I was elected. In fact, I ran for this job to fight for tax reform. We do the American people a disservice when we suggest something nefarious is going on. Sometimes we just disagree, Mr. Speaker, and those disagreements are okay. In fact, those disagreements are expected. Our Founders intended them, and they created this institution to sort those disagreements out. So I hope we won't sell either ourselves or the American people short in that regard.

But I do want to agree with my friend that this is frustrating. It is frustrating to be here for a continuing resolution, Mr. Speaker. Remember that we passed the National Security and Defense Appropriations bill in July of this year. We have waited patiently for the Senate to be able to take it up, and it has not.

We passed all of the appropriations bills, Mr. Speaker, before the end of the fiscal year, back in September, and we have been waiting for the Senate to take those up. It has not. It is an incredibly frustrating time.

Now, my friend suggested a solution would be bipartisanship. I could not agree with him more. It takes 60 votes to move something through the Senate. I just barely have over 50 Republicans. The only way these funding bills are going to move through the Senate is with bipartisan support. For anyone in this Chamber to deny that is going to be to deny the reality of math. Bipartisanship is the solution.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, when my President invited the Democratic leadership down to the White House to work on exactly this issue a month ago. Folks got frustrated with the tweet he sent out that morning and decided they were going to stay home.

I understand the frustrations. What I don't understand is missing out on an

opportunity to build this bridge. It happens above my pay grade, I am going to confess. To the 700,000 people I represent back home, Mr. Speaker, let me go ahead and confess this deal is taking place way above my pay grade.

But it is probably right there at the pay grade of the President of the United States, the Speaker of the House, and the minority leader. When folks don't show up to the table for the conversation, it makes it harder to get there.

Is there always a good reason to stay home?

I am sure there is.

Are there more good reasons to be there?

I think the answer is: Yes.

Mr. Speaker, I will advise my friend from Massachusetts that I don't have any speakers remaining this morning. Folks have been exhaustively elucidated by the 4 hours of discussion we had this morning, and I am prepared to close when he is.

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

□ 1245

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of concerns about the way this process is unfolding.

And, yes, the gentleman is right. I am exorcised. I am exorcised that we have gone through all of these gyrations, including being on hold trying to figure out what we were going to bring to the floor all night last night, and we end up with this: basically kicking the can down the road for a few weeks and not dealing with some essential emergency priorities that are a concern to most people in this country.

Again, going back to this tax bill, that is an example of where bipartisanism might have been helpful. I don't recall a tax reform package—I don't even want to call it reform because, basically, it is a giveaway to big corporations and to wealthy special interests—that has been rammed through Congress purely on a partisan basis.

But maybe it had something to do with the fact that Democrats weren't welcome to the table.

Maybe it had to do with the fact that Democrats were locked out.

Maybe it had something to do with the fact that this so-called conference committee was a sham and, when Democrats showed up, a deal had already been struck.

That is not bipartisanship.

And maybe we are a little bit exorcised because, time and time again, when people go before the Rules Committee looking to offer legitimate, germane amendments to try to improve legislation, rather than being able to have the opportunity to offer those amendments on the floor and have a debate, we are shut out all the time.

Again, this Congress, this Republican Congress, this session, has the distinction of being the most closed session in

the history of our country. That is the distinction.

So, yes, we are exorcised. And we are exorcised over the fact that, as we are about to adjourn for Christmas, hundreds of thousands of people, DREAMers in this country, their lives have been thrown into turmoil. These are people who have served in our military. They have led rescue efforts during these recent hurricanes. They contribute greatly to our community. A majority of people in this country want them to remain here, and we can't even get a vote on the House floor, notwithstanding the fact that we all know that, if we brought it to the floor, we would pass it.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority has prioritized their tax scam bill over reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program, community health centers, helping DREAMers, and even funding our government, which brings us to where we are now, days before Christmas, scrambling to fulfill our most basic responsibilities.

But we should be doing more here than just trying to keep the lights on. We also have a responsibility toward the hundreds of thousands of young Americans—they are Americans in every way except on paper—who have been betrayed by this administration. We need to pass the Dream Act, and we need to do it now. Thirty-four of my Republican colleagues have already spoken up and urged Speaker RYAN to help these young people. The majority of this House is ready to do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, here is our chance to do just that. If we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 3440, the Dream Act. The bipartisan, bicameral legislation has the support of the majority of this House and would pass if it were brought up for a vote.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I am all in favor of keeping our government open. The difference that I have with my Republican colleagues is that I want to keep it open for everyone.

Here, at Christmas, we think of the children first, but the children are not put first in this underlying bill. The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is barely left on life support.

There are children out there right now, some with dreaded diseases or disabilities, and their access to a family physician is not assured because this Congress has not acted on the Children's Health Insurance Program. Instead of Christmas cards, they are about to get cancellation notices.

And there are children who were brought here to America, through no fault of their own, without a visa. They grew up here. They only know this country. They have since passed a criminal background check. They had paid a fee, but their future is uncertain. They are called DREAMers because they have a dream of giving back to America and being full Americans, which they are, in everything but those legal papers.

And we, in Congress, have our own responsibility. It is a responsibility to respond to their passionate pleas. We should not support another partisan Republican continuing resolution or appropriations process that does not assure the future of our 800,000 DREAMers.

I can tell you, from meeting with them personally, I think of a cardiac nurse, I think of a county prosecutor, I think of a number of teachers whom I have met and many students, all of whom are DREAMers, who want to be full Americans. And I think of the groups in Texas like RAICES and TOPS and JOLT and the University Leadership Initiative and a number of others that are working with these DREAMers to secure their future.

Even President Trump, in one of his few reasonable tweets, in September, said:

“Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated, accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military?”

I think the answer here, if given a free vote, Republicans and Democrats, the majority would say absolutely not; we need these young people.

This holiday season is one that you would hope would open closed hearts to see the humanity in these young people. But amidst all the self-congratulatory high-fives and patting on the back yesterday down at the White House, nothing was said about the DREAMers. The Republican leadership has apparently decided to leave town without doing anything for them.

I believe that the Dream Act, the DACA authorization they have now, was terminated by the President just to use them as a bargaining chip. That was way back in September. And since that time, the majority has had ample opportunity to act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Texas an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I would just say that all of us as Members of Congress are eager to return to our families as soon as possible across America, but our DREAMers are left with fear and uncertainty about returning to their families and about their future.

These deserving young people should not be used as bargaining chips for a wish list of anti-immigrant policies. Let's reject this rule, enact the Dream Act, reauthorize CHIP, and offer a

truly Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of America's children.

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

Mr. Speaker, here, in these cold days outside, it is easy to create a lot of rhetorical heat on the inside. I would argue that legislative light is what we need more often than not.

We brought the Children's Health Insurance Program bill to the floor that my friend from Texas just referenced, Mr. Speaker. We didn't just bring it to the floor; we brought it through committee. We brought it through committee, and we passed it. We brought it to the House floor, and we passed it. We sent it to the Senate, and there it sits.

But when it passed the House floor, my friend from Texas voted “no.” He voted “no.”

Now, do I believe for a moment that is because he hates children? I do not.

Do I believe for a moment that it is because he doesn't want folks to have access to healthcare? I do not. I believe he had legitimate policy reasons for deciding not to reauthorize the program then that he has just taken to the floor and talked about the merits of reauthorizing.

It is okay to disagree on those issues, and it is even okay to highlight those differences. What is not okay is to describe this Chamber as a Chamber that doesn't care. What is not okay is to describe this as a Chamber that doesn't act.

My friend was absolutely right: it is a bipartisan priority to fund the Children's Health Insurance Program, and we did. The Senate has not acted. It hasn't gotten the full reauthorization done. If we pass the continuing resolution today, that funding will continue.

Let's disagree on those things that we disagree about, but let's be honest with ourselves about the legitimacy of those disagreements. Let's try to find more light than heat in this new year.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), my colleague on the Rules Committee.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, my dear friend that just spoke with reference to acting, let me tell you what action was undertaken with reference to CHIP.

Prevention money was used as the pay-for. So, somehow or another, that action doesn't rub some of us in the right way.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Congressional Black Caucus to Speaker PAUL RYAN.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS,
December 21, 2017.

PAUL RYAN,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: On behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), I write today to strongly urge you to provide a more permanent solution for close to 9 million children enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and more than 27 mil-

lion people that visit Community Health Centers (CHC's) for critically needed health care. It is completely irresponsible for Congressional Leaders to have created this crisis. Moreover, it is now unconscionable for Congress to head home for the holidays without taking action to right this wrong.

The holidays are a time to reflect on how fortunate we are and help those in need. In that vein, the CBC will not support a Continuing Resolution unless CHIP is reauthorized and fully funded for five years and Community Health Centers are reauthorized and fully funded for two years. Moreover, the offsets for these programs must not harm other vulnerable communities by reducing funding for other programs, such as the Prevention Fund. For this to be the state of play one day after giving away \$1.5 trillion to huge corporations and the wealthy is absurd and offensive.

Close to 2 million children across this country are in danger of losing CHIP coverage in January, with another 1 million set to lose coverage in February. A short term approach to providing these children and their families with certainty is absolutely irresponsible. Without swift reauthorization and fully funded coverage, young lives hang in the balance. Congress' failure to act will set off a chain of dire-consequences for children, as well as their families, communities, and states. A family without insurance is a family more likely to fall victim to financial crisis related to medical costs, such as bankruptcy.

Similarly, Community Health Centers play an essential role in low-income communities as they protect and expand access to critical and affordable care. The Community Health Centers Fund (CHCF) provides mandatory funding for federal health centers, which provide primary, dental, and other supportive care in medically underserved areas. Robust and reliable support for Community Health Centers results in more health centers, an increased number of patient visit, and more available services. These services save lives, especially in communities struggling to provide affordable care to poor, largely minority communities.

The CHCF is even more essential to the more than 27 million people it helps support in light of recent efforts to the dismantle our nation's health insurance market. As you well know, the elimination of the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate will add 13 million uninsured Americans, increase premiums by 10 percent, and make it harder for sick people to get insurance.

The Congressional Black Caucus has been the conscience of this Congress since its inception in 1971. We have provided moral leadership and courageous advocacy for our constituents and for all Americans that have felt disenfranchised or left behind. At the time of year when we are supposed to be most charitable, it is urgent that Congress act to reauthorize CHIP and Community Health Centers and provide robust funding for both. Children and families do not need to spend the holidays worrying about their health. It is time for Congress to do what it is responsible and moral. Accordingly, the CBC will not support any legislation to prevent a shutdown unless these critical programs are addressed.

Sincerely,

CEDRIC RICHMOND,
Chair.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I lift from it one paragraph that says:

The holidays are a time to reflect on how fortunate we are and help those in need. In that vein, the Congressional Black Caucus will not support a continuing resolution unless CHIP is reauthorized and fully funded

for 5 years and community health centers are reauthorized and fully funded for 2 years.

Mr. Speaker, this morning in the Rules Committee, beginning at 8—I might add, we were noticed that we were going to meet last night at 10, but we did not meet, and then we came in early this morning—the distinguished minority leader and the minority whip, along with the leader of the Hispanic Caucus, appeared and stayed for 2½ hours discussing the fact that we are leaving things on the table, but, more specifically, addressing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

But let's talk about the things that we are leaving on the table:

We are doing nothing about long-term flood insurance.

We are doing nothing about Perkins loans that have expired.

We are not funding or addressing the opioid epidemic.

We are not offering legislation to help save failing pensions in this country.

I talked with some teamsters from Michigan the other day with tears in their eyes concerned about their pensions.

We are doing nothing with reference to long-term, bipartisan reauthorizing for CHIP and community health centers.

We are doing nothing about the FISA reauthorization.

We are not raising the defense and non-defense spending caps.

We are leaving Medicare extension on the table.

And that is just a to-do list that is partial that we are not addressing.

But let me get in the weeds on something that the public doesn't quite understand.

196 people appeared right over here and signed what is called a discharge petition to bring DACA to the floor; 34 Members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to the Speaker. If you combine those numbers, you have 218.

My distinguished Rules Committee chair and I had a colloquy this morning where we discussed that matter.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Florida an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HASTINGS. And the fact of the matter is I believe that it would pass if it were put on the floor.

But do you know what is more important? We had 58 closed rules in this Congress, completely closed. And to put that into context, we averaged 25 closed rules a year in the 4 years the Democrats were in charge.

The Dream Act is a perfect example of this. As Members are well aware, we have tried time and time again to get a floor vote on the Dream Act.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that this CR is the last train leaving town. You have given millionaires and billionaires help. Let's give the DREAMers a Merry Christmas.

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

My friend from Florida is a good accountability partner up on the Rules Committee. I have learned from his intellect, and I have learned from his experience in this Chamber. I value that, and I value his friendship.

When he says that more closed rules have been passed in this Congress than any other, he is absolutely right. He is absolutely right. And that is worth talking about, as my friend does regularly in the committee.

Unfortunately, we usually just have that half of the conversation. What we don't talk about is that many of those closed rules were for bills that were so well worked out in a bipartisan way in committee that there were no amendments offered, that we had already come together in such a collaborative, productive, admirable way that we ought to be bragging about instead of denigrating that we didn't have amendments that were offered.

Other bills, Mr. Speaker, were bills that might not have been so generally agreed upon. But when my friend the chairman of the Rules Committee sends the call out to all 435 Members of Congress and says: If you have any ideas, bring them to the Rules Committee. For many of those bills, Mr. Speaker, there wasn't one idea suggested, not one idea suggested to change the underlying bill.

□ 1300

So did it come under a closed process?

Well, of course, it did, if closed means we ask everybody for all of their ideas and no one had one, so there was no idea to debate on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many ways that we can do better with one another, but I would suggest to my friends that the way to do better with one another is to build that on a foundation of trust, not a foundation of recriminations.

We have an opportunity in this new year, Mr. Speaker, to turn a page in this institution. I want to say, in my time on the Rules Committee, Mr. Speaker, I have never had a chairman who worked as hard to open the process and hear from Members as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), the current chairman.

Time and time again, where other folks would have walked away from the table, the chairman has stayed there to get input, to hear ideas. Time and time again, when the process would have been truncated, he has extended it to make sure folks had a chance to have their voice heard.

I am grateful for that, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful to the chairman for that model that he sets in that committee.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) to speak on this rule.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. WOODALL serves not only the Rules Committee and this body in the Republican majority, but he is also our designee to the Budget Committee and has excelled in excess of understanding the intricate details that not only move this great Nation, but the arguments, a balance between them. I appreciate the gentleman very, very much.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer some advice that I just received from the Governor of the State of Texas, Governor Abbott, who took time to call me. I also want to address the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), my very dear friend.

During that record-setting year, we also made in order over 560 amendments. That is 560 amendments that people came to the Rules Committee, had literally a committee that engaged them on the substance of their ideas, listened to it, believed that that substance had a good place for debate on this floor. Not necessarily every idea should be vetted here. Sometimes it is vetted in committee, subcommittee. Sometimes it is vetted at the Rules Committee, and sometimes we do not make those ideas in order.

This morning was no different. There were a lot of great ideas. As a matter of fact, the minority leader, Ms. PELOSI, came to the Rules Committee for several hours. The gentleman, the minority whip, Mr. HOYER, came a slightly less amount of time, but no doubt came to the Rules Committee and offered us advice about not only what we are doing but presented the arguments about what they were for. They were given unlimited opportunity to discuss that.

There was some limit that we had to offer our challenges back, but it was an open process, and I appreciate Ms. PELOSI and all the members of the committee doing that.

Mr. Speaker, the reason why I came down is to say—and there are lots of stories that go on, but the story that I was just told by the Governor of the State of Texas is that Texas—not unlike the islands of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, the great State of Florida that were in the way of a hurricane—was record-setting rain, 60 inches. It lasted 8 or 9 days. It did incredible damage.

This body has taken time to now study getting money back to those affected areas, and the determination that was made by this body is some \$81 billion. I just found out that the State of Texas has calculated their part of the \$81 billion, and it is less than 15 percent of the total. Less than 15 percent of that total will actually be going to the largest storm in the history of America.

I did not offer a complaint. I was surprised. I would have thought it would be in the 50 percent realm. I would have thought it would have been higher. But what I want to say is that not everybody gets everything they want in this town, not even if they are the

Governor of the State of Texas, with a large delegation like Texas.

It is a difficult time we all go through, and I offered and expressed my confidence to the Governor that I would certainly go look at this. It is the first time I learned of this. Less than 15 percent of the emergency funds that will be presumptively agreed to today, of this huge storm, goes to Texas. I just thought that was worthy of me to take time to come and pass on information that I had not known about, information that I was provided. It tells us how large the need is in this country when the largest storm only gets 15 percent.

So I am a “yes.” I am a “yes” for the other 85 percent that is not going to be in Texas also. I am a “yes” because I have seen the fires in California, I have seen the damage from—and Judge HASTINGS kept us up to date. I have been aware of Ambassador Patrick Rooney, who talked with us about the devastation; and TOM ROONEY in Florida; and certainly Byrne Buchanan, who spoke with us about the damage to the crops—lots of big problems.

I am going to vote for the other 85 percent, too, not just the 15 percent for my home State.

I want to thank the gentleman for allowing me time to share my ideas on the floor. I wish Judge HASTINGS a Merry Christmas.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), who spent 2½ hours today in the Rules Committee fighting on behalf of the DREAMers.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I also thank all of the members of the Rules Committee for the exceptional service they provide to the House in reviewing legislation that will come to the floor.

I particularly want to thank my colleagues on the Democratic side for honoring the values of our country by advocating for an amendment to include the Dream Act as we go forward. I would hope that most of our Members would vote “no” on this rule and not allow for the previous question to come forward so that it will allow for the Dream Act to be considered.

I want to thank the chairman of the committee and the distinguished Members on the Republican side, as well as the Democratic side, for the hospitality extended to the Democratic whip, Mr. HOYER; the chair of the Hispanic Caucus, Congresswoman MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM; and to me.

At that meeting, Mr. Speaker, I told the colleagues that we are in a tradition of having great Democratic and Republican Presidents who have been supportive of newcomers to our country and who recognize that immigration is the constant reinvigoration of America.

When people come to our country with their hopes and dreams and aspirations to make the future better for their families, they are identifying

with an American ideal: all of us having the responsibility to make the future better for the next generation. And their commitment, their courage, their optimism, their determination for a better future makes America more American. Every newcomer who comes here with that determination makes America more American.

Among those people are our DREAMers. This is a very discrete group that we are hoping to protect in the Dream Act. Certainly, as our colleagues acknowledged this morning, we have important work to do on comprehensive immigration reform. We have a responsibility to protect our borders, North and South, and anything that flies in, East Coast, West Coast, and through the Gulf. But the fact is that—as was pointed out by our colleague, Congresswoman LUJAN GRISHAM, the chair of the Hispanic Caucus: think of the DREAMers as a discrete piece that needs protection now and not wait for the entire comprehensive immigration reform to be resolved before we deal with this emergency.

Just as we treat CHIP, 9 million children are depending on CHIP, but we are not waiting until we revise the whole healthcare system in order to pass CHIP, nor did we. When we passed CHIP, it was before the Affordable Care Act had passed.

But let me say why it is really important for this to happen now. Unfortunately—and, really, I was pleased that our Speaker registered his disagreement with President Trump when he took the action he did in regard to DACA in September. When he did that and said, “I will give Congress until March to pass a law,” what he didn’t understand is that he was putting these DREAMers at a distinct disadvantage.

Every day, over 100, 120-some DACA recipients, DACA-eligible recipients, lose their status. That means, if they are working or whatever they are doing, they lose their status to do that in our country. Over 10,000 have lost status since the President’s announcement—well over 10,000.

So we can’t wait until March to do this because it had consequences known to us but unforeseen by the White House and by the President. And I don’t think, in his heart, that the President intended to hurt these people in the very cruel way that they are being hurt by the actions that are being taken.

We can’t wait until March. We need action. We need it soon. We need it to be bipartisan. That is what we have been working on—not me; Members, Member-driven bipartisan cooperation in trying to find a path that addresses the concerns that some have about the border—and we all do—and also addresses the Dream Act.

As the President said: Let’s call it DACA.

Okay. We will call it DACA.

So here we are. I said at the beginning of my remarks that we have been blessed in our country by Presidents

who have recognized the value of immigration; that our country would be in stagnation if we didn’t have this constant reinvigoration of visitors to our country.

When President Obama acted because Congress had not acted to protect the DREAMers and their parents, that was really important for him to do because Congress had not acted. However, it is important to note that President Reagan, when he was President and President George Herbert Walker Bush was at that time Vice President, Congress did act through the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. They did act. And President Reagan’s observation was they didn’t go far enough.

So he took further executive action called Family Fairness to protect people in our country, immigrants in our country. Actually, President Reagan and President George Herbert Walker Bush protected a higher percentage of newcomers to our country than President Obama did with his DACA and DAPA action, a higher percentage because they understood the value to our country of newcomers.

President Clinton continued all of that. President George W. Bush was a champion and continues to be a champion on recognizing the value of immigration. He has spoken about it intellectually, with respect, from the heart for people coming to our country, and he has urged us to do so.

He couldn’t get the cooperation of his own party when he was President to cooperate for comprehensive immigration reform, even though when we had the power as Democrats, we supported it. But he could not get the 60 votes in the Senate. But, nonetheless, he continues to be a champion, really, for immigration reform.

And here we have a new President who campaigned on the backs of newcomers to our country and who made immigrants villains. It is a complete change from the Republican Party, from a commitment to valuing newcomers and diversity in our country. It is a complete departure from President Reagan, President George Herbert Walker Bush, President George W. Bush, just to name the Republican Presidents.

So we find ourselves in this situation, but that doesn’t change the fact that we have a responsibility to all of God’s children to treat them with respect, and when we can do something to be helpful, we should.

□ 1315

There is harm that is coming to the DREAMers every day, because they are losing status. Regardless of what some may say, some are being deported. This may be unknown to the President, but it is not unknown to us in this Congress.

I want to thank Congresswoman LUJAN GRISHAM, the chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and her members. I want to thank Congresswoman JUDY CHU, the chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus; Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE,

who, working with the Congressional Black Caucus, has been a champion in that caucus; and all of the Members on both sides of the aisle who are striving to find a path.

One path that we have open to us is to defeat this rule, to allow the Dream Act to come up, and to put that in the mix as we go forward.

Again, this isn't an issue, this isn't a bill. It is a value, and that is the conversation we had with President Trump. This isn't an issue, but it is a value. This is about who we are as a nation and how we respect who we are as a nation. That is why, I believe, that President Trump will be receptive to signing a bill. He does want—and we are all concerned for—border security. We will work with him on that, but let's start by putting on the RECORD the support of this House for a recognition that we are immigrants, by and large. Unless some of you are Native Americans—and how proud we are of our Native American community in our country and how blessed we are—most of us come from immigrant families.

It was interesting to me in doing some reading on some of this. I am very proud of my own Italian-American heritage. My grandmother was born in Baltimore, Maryland. Her parents were from Venice and Genoa. My father's family from Abruzzo. We are very proud of all of that, which makes us respect the pride that other people take in their heritage.

What was interesting to me in recent days, because I remember—I didn't suffer this, but I know my father and others did: Italians were called “wops.”

Do you know what wops means?

It means “without papers.” That is what they were called: without papers.

These people are without papers, but in every way they are American.

I just want to tell you a couple of stories. One is Fernando Meza Gutierrez. Fernando lives in my district. Fernando's family came to the U.S. Fernando came to the U.S. when he was 9 years old. In high school, Fernando was an AP scholar and received the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the Achievement Award in Foreign Language for French.

Fernando continued to excel academically at Santa Clara University, where he graduated cum laude with a double major in biology and French.

Now a third-year doctoral student at UC San Francisco, Fernando also works at UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, where he is working hard to provide new insights into many diseases and disorders.

I just want to tell you one other story. Lisette Diaz was just 6 years old when her family brought her to the U.S. from Chile. Growing up in Long Island, Lisette excelled in school and was involved in her community. She went on to attend Harvard, where she received numerous awards and participated in a variety of extracurricular

activities. Lisette recently graduated from Harvard with honors.

Lisette and other DREAMers have so much to contribute to our country, but Donald Trump and other Republicans have made their agenda clear. They want to shut down DACA and DAPA and deport hundreds of thousands of DREAMers and parents of Americans.

That is what DREAMers think. We don't want them to think that. We want them to think that the President understands their value, the value of our DREAMers, and the challenges that they face.

If we don't do something soon, Lisette will be deported back to Chile, a country where she hasn't lived since she was 6 years old.

There are just thousands and thousands and thousands of stories of success, of those serving in our military, attending our schools, teaching our children, working in high-level positions, because they all have that immigrant attitude of hard work, hard work ethic, a work ethic, a faith ethic, a family ethic, a sense of community.

In the sense and spirit of community, let's defeat this rule and allow the Dream Act to come forward.

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

Mr. Speaker, we talk a lot about what isn't in the bill today, and we could actually talk a lot longer about what isn't in the bill. It is a fairly narrowly focused bill, but what is in there, in addition to funding to keep the government operating, is funding for our community health centers that we all care so much about; is funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program—that is a bipartisan issue across this Chamber—is funding for the Special Diabetes Program. Mr. Speaker, that is so important to so many families. I can go on and on and on.

Are there things that are not in this bill?

Of course there are, and I look forward to coming back with my colleagues to address each and every one of those, but there is so much good that is in this bill, Mr. Speaker. If we conclude this debate to pass this rule, we can get on and make those things a reality.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BARRAGÁN).

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding.

We are in a critical and urgent time. People's lives are on the line.

On September 5, the President suddenly and cruelly terminated the DACA program. Since that date, 13,000 DACA recipients have lost their status and their protections, and every day that Congress delays a vote, another average of 122 lose their status.

That is why this is urgent, that is why this is important, that is why we need to act now.

Congress should not wait any longer to act. It cannot turn its back on these youths, on these immigrants who are leading productive, positive lives, who are giving back to our communities and contributing immensely to the economy.

Congress has an opportunity today to show the world our values, that we are going to protect DREAMers, that we are going to stand with these young men and women who enrich our country, who only know the United States as their home. The nearly 800,000 DREAMers are our doctors, our nurses, our teachers, our neighbors, and they serve in our military and are protecting us here at home.

But because Congress has not acted and because this Chamber has failed to act on the DACA issue, DREAMers are living in fear and uncertainty of their future. They are afraid to go to school. They are afraid of losing their loved ones at a moment's notice. They are anxious about whether they will be able to continue to earn their paychecks and earn a living.

DREAMers are feeling the pain now. They are experiencing the anxiety now. They are being detained now. These are real people.

Now, I understand their fear and their uncertainty, because, for many of us, this hits real close to home. I have 8,000 DREAMers who live in my district. I also have a family member who is a DREAMer. Many are afraid of being deported to a place where they will be strangers, to a country they haven't lived in since they were children.

Mr. Speaker, this is the 16th time since DACA's termination that Democrats are challenging Republicans to take real urgent action to protect DREAMers by bringing the bipartisan Dream Act to a vote on this floor.

We must stand up for DREAMers. It is the right thing to do. It is what Americans want us to do. They want Congress to protect DREAMers from deportation by an overwhelming majority. It is the moral thing to do.

Again, this is a bipartisan issue. I have talked to many of my colleagues across the aisle who want to see a vote on this. I believe we will pass it overwhelmingly if we could just get this vote.

This is a moment of truth for our Nation. I ask my colleagues to vote against the previous question so that we can immediately bring the Dream Act to the floor and provide relief for the nearly 800,000 DREAMers in time for the holiday season.

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

Mr. Speaker, you likely did, as I did yesterday, get a wonderful Christmas card from our friend from California, which I very much appreciated. She was there with her beautiful family. I appreciate the sincerity of her words today.

I will just remind this Chamber that we are having that conversation for

one reason and one reason only. That is because, when Democrats had the White House, the U.S. House, and the U.S. Senate, but—much like Republicans today—didn't have 60 votes to get around the filibuster, instead of President Obama and the Democratic leaders in the House and the Senate trying to find a bipartisan pathway forward that could get 60 votes, they chose to craft an administrative solution, one that I thought was illegal, one that I thought was unconstitutional, but chose to go it alone.

Mr. Speaker, that is not a blame statement. It is an explanation of some systemic challenges that exist in this place.

I can assure my colleagues, and I am happy to have someone disabuse me of the notion, but I have yet to see the issue that we have solved by blaming each other more for it. I have yet to see that pathway to success.

The pathway I have seen is when folks turn the cameras off, when they roll up their sleeves, when they decide they don't much care who gets the credit for a solution, they just want to solve it.

I will put another one on my colleagues' plate, because, again, I don't doubt their sincerity. Raju is one of my constituents. He is here on an H1-B visa. His wife, Manju, is here on an H-4 visa. He came to this country legally 11 years ago. Every few years, he has to renew his visa, which costs thousands of dollars. When his visa expires, when his driver's license expires, he has to go back and do it. He is not complaining. That is what the law of the land said. When he agreed to come here, he agreed to follow the law of the land. He can't start his own business. He can't change employers. He is a captive of the visa program that he came in on. There is no pathway, Mr. Speaker, for Raju and Manju to get the same benefits that my colleagues are arguing so passionately for for 800,000 additional people.

Mr. Speaker, the human stories don't begin and end with the DACA program. Again, a problem that President Obama created; not solved, but created.

I can go line by line by line of folks who are facing similar challenges, and I question where the justice is when I can name constituent after constituent after constituent who has done everything right, who has paid every dime the government has asked, who has applied for every piece of paperwork that the government has asked, who has stood in every line that the government has asked, and there is no pathway forward for them.

Let's not pretend that there is not common ground that we can come together on. Let's confess that perhaps we haven't spent enough time trying to do it.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, all of us are anxious to go home to our families and our celebrations, but more and more Americans are seeing every single day, particularly in the last couple days, just how messed up the values and priorities of the Republican majority really are.

They saw the Republicans go off to the White House and high-fiving and cheering each other for a tax cut that provides 81 percent of its benefits to the wealthiest Americans and that blows about a \$1.5-trillion hole in the budget. That means debt and deficit.

Who is left with the coal in the stocking?

We are looking at 9 million children and their parents who are sick, who have been worrying about how they are going to have the Children's Health Insurance Program. Yes, we extended it now until March. It expired in September, but we didn't have time for those children.

We don't have time for the 800,000 young people who are serving this country right now as DACA recipients. We could pass the Dream Act today. Let's get our values straight. Let's do better than we are.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I would advise the gentleman from Massachusetts that I have no further speakers and I am prepared to close when he is.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would inquire if the gentleman has any time to share.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I would advise the gentleman that it appears I have committed all of my time.

□ 1330

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this has been a painful season for so many of us, from California to Texas to Florida, Louisiana, to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and so I am still here begging my colleagues for those who are begging in Texas.

Right now, my local officials are letting my constituents from Kashmere Gardens share in the public view how desperate they are for housing money. So this CR and this emergency supplemental should be separated. But the CR, on the other hand, should be funding CHIP completely. And DACA, the DREAMers, should be protected completely.

I introduced a bill when Hurricane Harvey came for \$164 billion. That is where we should be, and I know that because of the sacrifice and loss and devastation. But also, a DREAMer lost his life trying to rescue my constituents, so, you see, we have a situation that should be corrected across the board. Fix the DREAMers, but provide for the hurricane victims.

I will say that we are going to keep on pushing beyond the \$81 billion. I am glad the \$1 billion that I pushed for for small businesses is in this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield the gentlewoman from Texas an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, we have 300,000 homes underwater. Puerto Rico has no lights in homes; U.S. Virgin Islands, none, no homes. Key West still needs debris picked up.

What my constituents are saying is, because the lights are out, we are forgotten; because DREAMers don't have rights, they are forgotten.

So I am not going to stand here and ignore our children, 9 million of them who need CHIP, or our DREAMers. But I am also going to say that, whatever is in this for us, which is not a lot, I am going to keep pushing and fighting for my constituents. And the money that we are getting, get it to us now—now.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it is the Christmas season, so I do want to begin by thanking the gentleman from Georgia and the distinguished chairman of the Rules Committee, Mr. SESSIONS, for always being so polite to me and to other Democrats on the committee.

But I want to say, in all candor, that, in spite of that, we are disrespected each and every day when our ideas are shut out and, in turn, our constituents are disrespected. I represent the same number of people as the Speaker of the House, as any Republican and any other Democrat in this Chamber, and yet, routinely, we are told that our ideas are not welcome.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that every Member of this House, Democrats and Republicans alike, are entitled to basic respect. We have just gone through the most closed session in the history of our country, more than 58 closed rules in this session. Over 1,500 amendments, both Democratic and Republican amendments, were blocked. That is not what we were promised by the leadership of this House.

We are disappointed with what we are dealing with today. We are disappointed with the inaction and lack of support for the CHIP program and the community health centers funding. We think that is inadequate. We are disappointed that more funding isn't provided to deal with the opioid crisis.

I could go on and on and on, but today, we are asking the Speaker to allow a vote to help the DREAMers, men and women who came here as children, who have served in our military, who have been first responders saving lives in these disaster relief efforts, 91 percent who work and pay taxes. They are important. They are valuable. We should celebrate them.

I would say to my colleagues this is a matter of decency. The right and decent thing to do is to help them, not rationalize inaction.

Please, please, for the sake of all that is good about our country, join us in

defeating the previous question so we can have an up-or-down vote on the Dream Act, so we can actually help these 800,000 people, these young individuals who are giving so much to our country. It is the right thing to do.

This is the Christmas season. I hope you are all moved to joining us and to helping these people because, as we have learned, each and every day that we wait, more and more of them lose their status. They lose their jobs. Their lives are thrown into deeper turmoil.

It is wrong for us to go home and not deal with this. The decent thing to do is to vote on the Dream Act.

Vote “no” on the previous question.

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

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

There has been a lot of productivity this week. There has been a lot of work that has gone on this week. I am looking around up there at the dais with you, Mr. Speaker. I see a lot of unshaven faces. I’m not just taking about Josef. I am talking about folks who intended to shave and might not have made it home last night to get that done.

It takes an incredible amount of staff time to do this. So what Mr. MCGOVERN and I do up in the Rules Committee, our staffs have been there past midnight time and time again this week and then back in at dawn.

I wish that more of the American people, Mr. Speaker, could see the hardworking, dedicated staff, the team that goes into making all of this possible, because I think it would make them proud. I think, in a season like this, it would lift them up and make them feel better about who we are as a people and the things that we could accomplish together.

One of those young people, Mr. Speaker, is Nate Blake on the Rules Committee. He is sitting right here behind me. He is leaving us after 5 years of service. I want to put that into perspective, Mr. Speaker.

There is not a staff member up here that can’t leave today and get better hours and more money going anywhere else in town. You will work on Capitol Hill for one reason and one reason only, and that is that you believe, if only you work hard enough and long enough, you would make America just a little bit better.

Mr. Blake is one of those believers. We will miss him on the committee. It is a great honor for me that his very last rule is to be one of mine, and I thank him for his service.

Mr. Speaker, they often say everything’s been said but not everyone has said it. We don’t need to go down that path today. This House has done its job. It has done its job in a collaborative way. It has done its job in a way that the American people can be proud of.

If we pass this rule, we will not only fund the government, send money to the troops, send money to community

health centers, send money to education, send money to courts, send money to the environment; we will not only take care of those funding responsibilities; we will also provide those dollars needed for those men and women spread out from Florida to Texas to California to Puerto Rico to the Virgin Islands. There is a real human being behind each and every one of these dollars that will go out the door today.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues, vote “yes” on this rule so we can get to that underlying legislation.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the Rule, and H.R. 4667, one of the two underlying bills made in order.

H.R. 4667 provides \$81 billion in aid to respond to the damage caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and the wildfires in California.

I thank the Speaker and Rules Committee Chairman SESSIONS for acting favorably upon my request to bring this emergency disaster supplemental to the floor for debate and vote as a stand-alone measure.

Ever since the widespread and catastrophic destruction of Hurricane Harvey, I have been working closely with the Texas Governor and the Hurricane Harvey Taskforce to secure the help necessary for the region to rebuild.

I have witnessed firsthand the pain of storm-weary Houstonians who lost their homes, their belongings, and in many cases their jobs.

They are struggling and hurting.

So this is personal to me.

The amount of funding provided in the disaster relief package is very disappointing because it is not nearly sufficient to ameliorate the suffering still being experienced by the people of the communities in the areas affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Congress has had more than three months to develop an aid package that is commensurate to the challenge faced by the affected states and territories in rebuilding their devastated communities.

Much of this time has been squandered by the Republican congressional leadership’s all-consuming focus on ramming through the Republican Tax Scam legislation that gives 83 percent of its benefits to the top 1 percent, raises taxes on working and middle-class families, takes away health insurance from 13 million Americans, explodes the deficit by \$1.5 trillion and the national debt by \$1.7 trillion, and will be paid for by 5.4 trillion in cuts to vital programs Americans depend on, including an imminent \$25 billion reduction in Medicare funding.

Mr. Speaker, on September 6, 2017, ten days after Hurricane Harvey struck and joined by 44 of our colleagues, I introduced H.R. 3686, the “Hurricane Harvey Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2017,” which provides \$174 billion in disaster relief for the areas affected by Hurricane Harvey, the worst superstorm ever to strike the mainland United States.

The \$174 billion in funding provided by H.R. 3686 represents a comprehensive response commensurate to the challenge; specifically, my legislation provides relief in the following amounts:

1. Housing and Community Development Fund: \$50 billion
2. FEMA Disaster Relief Fund: \$35 billion
3. Army Corps of Engineers—Construction: \$15 billion

4. Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies: \$13 billion

5. Public Transportation Emergency Relief Program: \$33 billion

6. Small Business Disaster Loans Program: \$2 billion

7. Emergency Conservation Activities: \$650 million

8. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: \$321 million

9. National Aeronautics and Space Administration: \$50 million

10. Legal Services Corporation: \$10 million

11. Army National Guard: \$10 million

12. Army Corps of Engineers—Civil Investigations: \$150 million

13. Coast Guard: \$450 million

14. National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund: \$800 million

15. EPA Environmental Programs and Management: \$2.5 billion

16. EPA Hazardous Substance Superfund: \$7 million

17. Leaking Underground Storage Tank Fund: \$15 million

18. State and Tribal Assistance Grants: \$600 million

19. Employment and Training Services: \$100 million

20. Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund: \$2.5 billion

21. Airport and Airway Trust Fund: \$90 million

22. Federal-Aid Highways Emergency Relief Program: \$6.5 billion

And that is just for Texas and the areas affected by Hurricane Harvey; the damage wrought by Hurricane Irma in Florida, and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands was nearly as great in dollar terms and equal in the level of misery and suffering inflicted on the residents.

Mr. Speaker, on September 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, along the southeastern coast, near the small town of Yabucoa.

The devastation wrought on that beautiful Caribbean oasis and its 3.5 million inhabitants, our fellow citizens of the United States, is unimaginable, except perhaps to those of us who have lived through and survived similar natural disasters, like Hurricanes Harvey and Katrina.

At least 48 people have died as a result of the storm as rescue and recovery operations proceed, a number likely to rise, especially with so many elderly, sick, and very young persons at risk.

Much of Puerto Rico’s population is still without potable drinking water and large swaths of the population still lack electrical power.

Hurricane Maria destroyed 80 percent of Puerto Rico’s agricultural industry, including banana, plantain and coffee crops, which translates into lost income of approximately \$780 million.

On August 30, 2017, Hurricane Irma struck, inflicting horrific damage on the U.S. Virgin Islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John, the Caribbean nations of Barbuda, St. Maarten, Cuba, and Anguilla, before making landfall in the Florida Keys.

In Florida alone, 6.4 million people were told to evacuate to safety, leading to days of jammed highways and frantic searches for gasoline amid one of the nation’s largest ever emergency evacuations.

At least 124 persons are known to have lost their lives in Hurricane Irma, more than

200,000 Floridians took refuge in shelters, and nearly 6.5 million homes and businesses were without power.

Mr. Speaker, we do not yet know the full extent of the damage and devastation suffered by our fellows Americans in Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

But what we do know is that the costs of recovery and reconstruction will be extensive, best estimates place the cost in the range of \$50–\$100 billion.

This puts in perspective the inadequacy of the amount of disaster relief provided under H.R. 4667 and why more, much more, must be done.

Mr. Speaker, right now, at this very moment, approximately 300,000 Texans—in Port Arthur, in Port Aransas, in Houston and Harris County—remain homeless or are living in substandard homes with blue tarp roofs and infested with mold.

Today, residents of the Cashmere Gardens community are meeting with local government officials to highlight their plight and those of other residents in the northeastern part of Houston.

They are angry and frustrated and anxious, and who can blame them?

Mr. Speaker, this is personal to them; and it is personal to me.

That is why right now my highest priority is to ensure that funding that has been made available expeditiously gets in the hands of local governments so that relief can deliver the resources and services so desperately needed.

And I will be working with the Texas General Land Office and HUD Secretary Carson to relieve the emergency housing crisis in my congressional district and state.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the bipartisan leadership of both Chambers, and my colleagues in the Texas congressional delegation for their diligence and commitment in bringing this package to the floor for debate and vote.

I thank Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and Ranking Member LOWEY, and Speaker RYAN and Democratic Leader PELOSI, and their Senate counterparts for the work that has been done thus far and for their assistance in the work that lies ahead.

I also thank Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and Ranking Member LOWEY, and T-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman DIAZ-BALART, and Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee Chair SIMPSON and Ranking Member KAPTUR for including in the legislation before us the following beneficial measures that I requested, including:

1. Authority to establish and implement a \$1 billion pilot program to provide small business disaster recovery grants, modeled on H.R. 3930, the “Hurricane Harvey Small Business Recovery Grants Act,” legislation I introduced on October 3, 2017 and co-sponsored by 16 of our colleagues.

2. \$75 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Investigations account, which is to be used in areas affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and can be used to finance the \$3 million Houston-Area Watershed Assessment Study I have worked to secure and previously approved by the House.

3. The bill also includes helpful legislative language to ensure that in awarding CDBG-Disaster Relief funds to states, the Secretary

of HUD should to the maximum extent practicable award grants to units of local government and public housing authorities that have the financial and administrative capacity to manage a grant awarded under the program.

Let me describe briefly some of the major provisions contained in the Disaster Relief Supplemental:

1. FEMA Disaster Relief Fund: \$27.5 billion to provide critical funding to assist the ongoing federal disaster response. Allows up to \$4 billion to be provided for Community Disaster Loans (CDLs).

2. Community Development Block Grants Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR): \$26.1 billion for housing and infrastructure needs, \$13.56 billion for grants to states, tribes, and territories for unmet housing needs and business losses.

3. \$12.5 billion for mitigation efforts to help communities protect against future disasters.

4. This funding can provide for housing elevation, buyouts in the flood plain, water/sewer infrastructure enhancements, public infrastructure hardening (e.g. stormproofing public buildings).

5. Federal Highway Administration’s Emergency Relief: \$1.4 billion to address all current damages to federal highways caused by designated disasters.

6. \$12.11 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers to repair existing damages by natural disasters and for studies and projects to reduce the risk of future natural disasters, \$75 million to expedite studies to help mitigate future disaster damage.

7. 2.9 billion to help displaced students get back to school. Funding can be used for both public and private schools.

8. \$3.8 billion for agriculture assistance.

9. \$1.66 billion for Small Business Administration Disaster Loans to assist small businesses and homeowners repair or replace real estate, personal property, machinery and equipment, and inventory and business assets.

Mr. Speaker, there is much more work to be done in my city of Houston, and across the areas affected by the terrible, awesome storm that will be forever known simply as Hurricane Harvey, and by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

That is why I am disappointed that only \$81 billion is being provided at this time.

That is why it must be emphasized and understood that this can only be understood as a partial response because much more funding will be needed to provide our fellow Americans in Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands the help and support they need to restore their communities to their previous greatness.

The material previously referred to by Mr. MCGOVERN is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 670 OFFERED BY
MR. MCGOVERN

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 8. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3440) to authorize the cancellation of removal and adjustment of status of certain individuals who are long-term United States residents and who entered the United States as children and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order

against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 9. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 3440.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon’s *Precedents of the House of Representatives* (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as “a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.” To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker’s ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that “the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition” in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: “The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.”

The Republican majority may say “the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.” But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the *Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives*, (6th edition, page 135). Here’s how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: “Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.”

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: "Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on ordering the previous question will be followed by 5-minute votes on:

Adopting the resolution, if ordered;

Suspending the rules and passing S. 1393; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 232, nays 188, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 704]

YEAS—232

Abraham	Collins (GA)	Garrett
Aderholt	Collins (NY)	Gianforte
Allen	Comer	Gibbs
Amash	Comstock	Gohmert
Amodei	Conaway	Goodlatte
Arrington	Cook	Gosar
Babin	Costello (PA)	Gowdy
Bacon	Cramer	Graves (GA)
Banks (IN)	Crawford	Graves (LA)
Barletta	Culberson	Graves (MO)
Barr	Curbelo (FL)	Griffith
Barton	Curtis	Grothman
Bergman	Davidson	Guthrie
Biggs	Davis, Rodney	Handel
Bilirakis	Denham	Harper
Bishop (MI)	Dent	Harris
Bishop (UT)	DeSantis	Hartzler
Black	DesJarlais	Hensarling
Blackburn	Diaz-Balart	Herrera Beutler
Blum	Donovan	Hice, Jody B.
Bost	Duffy	Higgins (LA)
Brady (TX)	Duncan (SC)	Hill
Brat	Duncan (TN)	Holding
Brooks (IN)	Dunn	Hollingsworth
Buchanan	Emmer	Hudson
Buck	Estes (KS)	Huizenga
Bucshon	Farenthold	Hultgren
Budd	Faso	Hunter
Burgess	Ferguson	Hurd
Byrne	Fitzpatrick	Issa
Calvert	Fleischmann	Jenkins (KS)
Carter (GA)	Flores	Jenkins (WV)
Carter (TX)	Fortenberry	Johnson (LA)
Chabot	Fox	Johnson (OH)
Cheney	Frelinghuysen	Johnson, Sam
Coffman	Gaetz	Jordan
Cole	Gallagher	Joyce (OH)

Katko	Mullin
Kelly (MS)	Newhouse
Kelly (PA)	Noem
King (IA)	Norman
King (NY)	Nunes
Kinzinger	Olson
Knight	Palazzo
Kustoff (TN)	Palmer
Labrador	Paulsen
LaHood	Pearce
LaMalfa	Perry
Lamborn	Pittenger
Lance	Poe (TX)
Latta	Poliquin
Lewis (MN)	Posey
LoBiondo	Ratcliffe
Long	Reed
Loudermilk	Reichert
Love	Rice (SC)
Lucas	Roby
Luetkemeyer	Roe (TN)
MacArthur	Rogers (AL)
Marchant	Rogers (KY)
Marino	Rohrabacher
Marshall	Rokita
Massie	Rooney, Francis
Mast	Rooney, Thomas
McCarthy	J.
McCaul	Ros-Lehtinen
McClintock	Roskam
McHenry	Ross
McKinley	Rothfus
McMorris	Rouzer
Rodgers	Royce (CA)
McSally	Russell
Meadows	Rutherford
Meehan	Sanford
Messer	Scalise
Mitchell	Schweikert
Moolenaar	Scott, Austin
Mooney (WV)	Sensenbrenner

NAYS—188

Adams	Ellison	Luján, Ben Ray
Aguilar	Engel	Lynch
Barragán	Eshoo	Maloney,
Bass	Espallat	Carolyn B.
Beatty	Esty (CT)	Maloney, Sean
Bera	Evans	Matsui
Beyer	Frankel (FL)	McCollum
Bishop (GA)	Fudge	McEachin
Blumenauer	Gabbard	McGovern
Blunt Rochester	Galleo	McNerney
Bonamici	Garamendi	Meeks
Boyle, Brendan	Gomez	Meng
F.	Gonzalez (TX)	Moore
Brady (PA)	Gottheimer	Moulton
Brown (MD)	Green, Al	Murphy (FL)
Brownley (CA)	Green, Gene	Nadler
Bustos	Grijalva	Neal
Butterfield	Gutiérrez	Nolan
Capuano	Hanabusa	Norcross
Carbajal	Hastings	O'Halleran
Cardenas	Heck	O'Rourke
Carson (IN)	Higgins (NY)	Pallone
Cartwright	Himes	Panetta
Castor (FL)	Hoyer	Pascarella
Castro (TX)	Huffman	Payne
Chu, Judy	Jackson Lee	Pelosi
Cicilline	Jayapal	Perlmutter
Clark (MA)	Jeffries	Peters
Clarke (NY)	Johnson (GA)	Peterson
Clay	Johnson, E. B.	Pingree
Cleaver	Kaptur	Polis
Clyburn	Keating	Price (NC)
Cohen	Kelly (IL)	Quigley
Connolly	Khanna	Raskin
Cooper	Kihuen	Rice (NY)
Correa	Kildee	Richmond
Costa	Kilmer	Rosen
Courtney	Kind	Roybal-Allard
Crist	Krishnamoorthi	Ruiz
Crowley	Kuster (NH)	Ruppersberger
Cuellar	Langevin	Rush
Cummings	Larsen (WA)	Ryan (OH)
Davis (CA)	Larson (CT)	Sánchez
Davis, Danny	Lawrence	Sarbanes
DeFazio	Lawson (FL)	Schakowsky
DeGette	Lee	Schiff
Delaney	Levin	Schneider
DeLauro	Lewis (GA)	Schrader
Demings	Lieu, Ted	Scott (VA)
DeSaulnier	Lipinski	Scott, David
Deutsch	Loeb sack	Serrano
Dingell	Lofgren	Sowell (AL)
Doggett	Lowenthal	Shea-Porter
Doyle, Michael	Lowey	Sherman
F.	Lujan Grisham,	Sinema
	M.	Sires

Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus

Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz

Wasserman
Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—11

Bridenstine	Jones	Renacci
Brooks (AL)	Kennedy	Smith (TX)
Foster	Napolitano	Suozi
Granger	Pocan	

□ 1402

So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—aye 228, noes 188, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 705]

AYES—228

Abraham	Duffy	King (IA)
Aderholt	Duncan (SC)	King (NY)
Allen	Duncan (TN)	Kinzinger
Amodei	Dunn	Knight
Arrington	Emmer	Kustoff (TN)
Babin	Estes (KS)	Labrador
Bacon	Farenthold	LaHood
Banks (IN)	Faso	LaMalfa
Barletta	Ferguson	Lamborn
Barr	Fitzpatrick	Lance
Barton	Fleischmann	Latta
Bergman	Flores	Lewis (MN)
Biggs	Fortenberry	LoBiondo
Bilirakis	Fox	Long
Bishop (MI)	Frelinghuysen	Loudermilk
Bishop (UT)	Gaetz	Love
Black	Gallagher	Lucas
Blackburn	Garrett	Luetkemeyer
Blum	Gianforte	MacArthur
Bost	Gibbs	Marchant
Brady (TX)	Gohmert	Marino
Brat	Goodlatte	Marshall
Brooks (IN)	Gowdy	Mast
Buchanan	Graves (GA)	McCarthy
Buck	Graves (LA)	McCaul
Bucshon	Graves (MO)	McClintock
Budd	Griffith	McHenry
Burgess	Grothman	McKinley
Byrne	Guthrie	McMorris
Calvert	Handel	Rodgers
Carter (GA)	Harper	McSally
Carter (TX)	Harris	Meadows
Chabot	Hartzler	Meehan
Cheney	Hensarling	Messer
Coffman	Herrera Beutler	Mitchell
Cole	Hice, Jody B.	Moolenaar
Collins (GA)	Higgins (LA)	Mooney (WV)
Collins (NY)	Hill	Mullin
Comer	Holding	Newhouse
Comstock	Hollingsworth	Noem
Conaway	Hudson	Norman
Cook	Huizenga	Nunes
Costello (PA)	Hultgren	Olson
Cramer	Hunter	Palazzo
Crawford	Hurd	Paulsen
Culberson	Issa	Pearce
Curbelo (FL)	Jenkins (KS)	Pittenger
Curtis	Jenkins (WV)	Poe (TX)
Davidson	Johnson (LA)	Poliquin
Davis, Rodney	Johnson (OH)	Posey
Denham	Johnson, Sam	Reed
Dent	Jordan	Ratcliffe
DeSantis	Joyce (OH)	Reich
DesJarlais	Katko	Rice (SC)
Diaz-Balart	Kelly (MS)	Roby
Donovan	Kelly (PA)	

Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas
J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner

Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Troott
Turner
Upton
Valadao

Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1410

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

JOBS FOR OUR HEROES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1393) to streamline the process by which active duty military, reservists, and veterans receive commercial driver's licenses, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 418, nays 0, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 706]

YEAS—418

NOES—188

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

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

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Baretta
Barr
Barragán
Cohen
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan
F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)

Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleave
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Fudge
Gabbard
Galtz
Gallagher
Gallo
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gotthelmer
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene

Donovan
Doyle, Michael
F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espallat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxy
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Galtz
Gallagher
Gallo
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gotthelmer
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene

Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebach
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham,
M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney,
Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie

Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris
Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halloran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascarell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas
J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford

Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schradler
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—13

Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Foster
Garamendi
Gosar

Granger
Jones
Kennedy
Napolitano
Palmer

Pascarell
Pocan
Renacci
Smith (TX)
Suozi

Pascarell
Pocan
Renacci
Smith (TX)
Suozi

Brooks (AL)
Jones
Kennedy
Napolitano
Pocan

Granger
Jones
Kennedy
Napolitano
Pocan

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1419

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina changed his vote from “present” to “yea.”

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. WOODALL. 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 225, nays 187, answered “present” 1, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 707]

YEAS—225

Abraham	Dent	Kelly (PA)
Aderholt	DeSaulnier	Kildee
Allen	DesJarlais	King (IA)
Amodei	Dingell	King (NY)
Arrington	Doggett	Krishnamoorthi
Babin	Donovan	Kuster (NH)
Banks (IN)	Duffy	Kustoff (TN)
Barletta	Duncan (SC)	Labrador
Barr	Duncan (TN)	LaMalfa
Bergman	Dunn	Lamborn
Billakis	Ellison	Latta
Bishop (UT)	Eshoo	Lewis (MN)
Black	Estes (KS)	Lipinski
Blackburn	Farenthold	Long
Blumenauer	Ferguson	Loudermilk
Blunt Rochester	Fleischmann	Lowe
Brady (TX)	Fortenberry	Lucas
Brat	Frankel (FL)	Luetkemeyer
Brooks (IN)	Frelinghuysen	Lujan Grisham,
Brown (MD)	Gabbard	M.
Buchanan	Gaetz	Marchant
Bucshon	Garrett	Marino
Budd	Gianforte	Marshall
Bustos	Gibbs	Massie
Butterfield	Goodlatte	McCarthy
Carter (TX)	Gowdy	McCaul
Cartwright	Graves (LA)	McClintock
Castro (TX)	Griffith	McCollum
Chabot	Grothman	McEachin
Cheney	Guthrie	McHenry
Chu, Judy	Handel	McMorris
Clay	Harper	Rodgers
Cole	Harris	McNerney
Collins (GA)	Hartzler	McSally
Collins (NY)	Heck	Meadows
Comstock	Hensarling	Meeks
Cook	Hice, Jody B.	Meng
Cooper	Higgins (LA)	Messer
Cramer	Hill	Mitchell
Crawford	Himes	Moolenaar
Crist	Hollingsworth	Mooney (WV)
Cuellar	Huffman	Moore
Culberson	Huizenga	Moulton
Cummings	Hultgren	Mullin
Curbelo (FL)	Hunter	Murphy (FL)
Curtis	Hurd	Nadler
Davidson	Issa	Newhouse
Davis (CA)	Johnson (GA)	Noem
Davis, Danny	Johnson (LA)	Norman
Davis, Rodney	Johnson, Sam	Nunes
DeLauro	Joyce (OH)	O'Rourke
Demings	Kaptur	Palazzo

Pascarella	Sanford	Tiberi
Pelosi	Scalise	Trott
Perlmutter	Schneider	Tsongas
Perry	Schweikert	Turner
Peters	Scott (VA)	Wagner
Pingree	Scott, David	Walberg
Posey	Sensenbrenner	Walden
Quigley	Serrano	Walorski
Reed	Sessions	Walters, Mimi
Reichert	Sherman	Walz
Rice (SC)	Shimkus	Wasserman
Roby	Shuster	Schultz
Roe (TN)	Simpson	Waters, Maxine
Rogers (KY)	Smith (MO)	Weber (TX)
Rohrabacher	Smith (NE)	Webster (FL)
Rokita	Smith (NJ)	Welch
Rooney, Francis	Smith (WA)	Wenstrup
Ros-Lehtinen	Speier	Westerman
Ross	Stefanik	Williams
Rothfus	Stewart	Wilson (SC)
Royce (CA)	Takano	Womack
Ruppersberger	Taylor	Yarmuth
Russell	Tenney	Young (IA)
Rutherford	Thornberry	Zeldin

NAYS—187

Adams	Gallego	Nolan
Aguilar	Garamendi	Norcross
Amash	Gomez	O'Halleran
Barragán	Gonzalez (TX)	Pallone
Barton	Gottheimer	Palmer
Bass	Graves (GA)	Panetta
Beatty	Graves (MO)	Paulsen
Bera	Green, Al	Payne
Beyer	Green, Gene	Pearce
Biggs	Grijalva	Peterson
Bishop (GA)	Gutiérrez	Pittenger
Bishop (MI)	Hanabusa	Poe (TX)
Blum	Hastings	Poliquin
Bonamici	Herrera Beutler	Polis
Bost	Higgins (NY)	Price (NC)
Boyle, Brendan	Holding	Raskin
F.	Hoyer	Ratcliffe
Brady (PA)	Hudson	Rice (NY)
Brownley (CA)	Jackson Lee	Richmond
Buck	Jayapal	Rogers (AL)
Burgess	Jeffries	Rosen
Byrne	Jenkins (KS)	Roskam
Capuano	Jenkins (WV)	Rouzer
Carbajal	Johnson (OH)	Roybal-Allard
Cárdenas	Johnson, E. B.	Ruiz
Carson (IN)	Jordan	Rush
Carter (GA)	Katko	Ryan (OH)
Castor (FL)	Keating	Sánchez
Cicilline	Kelly (IL)	Sarbanes
Clark (MA)	Kelly (MS)	Schakowsky
Clarke (NY)	Khanna	Schiff
Cleaver	Kihuen	Schrader
Clyburn	Kilmer	Scott, Austin
Coffman	Kind	Sewell (AL)
Cohen	Kinzinger	Shea-Porter
Comer	Knight	Sinema
Conaway	LaHood	Sires
Connolly	Lance	Slaughter
Correa	Langevin	Smucker
Costa	Larsen (WA)	Soto
Costello (PA)	Larson (CT)	Stivers
Courtney	Lawrence	Swalwell (CA)
Crowley	Lawson (FL)	Thompson (CA)
DeFazio	Lee	Thompson (MS)
DeGette	Levin	Thompson (PA)
Delaney	Lewis (GA)	Tipton
DeBene	Lieu, Ted	Titus
Denham	LoBiondo	Torres
DeSantis	Loeb sack	Upton
Deutsch	Lofgren	Valadao
Diaz-Balart	Love	Vargas
Doyle, Michael	Lowenthal	Veasey
F.	Lujan, Ben Ray	Vela
Emmer	Lynch	Velázquez
Engel	MacArthur	Visclosky
Españillat	Maloney,	Walker
Esty (CT)	Carolyn B.	Watson Coleman
Evans	Maloney, Sean	Wilson (FL)
Faso	Mast	Woodall
Fitzpatrick	Matsui	Yoder
Flores	McGovern	Yoho
Foxx	McKinley	Young (AK)
Fudge	Meehan	
Gallagher	Neal	

ANSWERED “PRESENT”—1

Tonko

NOT VOTING—18

Bacon	Foster	Jones
Bairstow	Gohmert	Kennedy
Brooks (AL)	Gosar	Napolitano
Calvert	Granger	Olson

Pocan	Rooney, Thomas	Suozi
Renacci	J.	Wittman
	Smith (TX)	

□ 1426

So the Journal was approved.
The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present today, December 21, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted “Yes” on rollcall votes No. 706 and No. 707, and “No” on rollcall votes No. 704 and No. 705.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

APPOINTMENTS TO FREDERICK DOUGLASS BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOST). The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 5 of the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission Act (Pub. L. 115-77), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission:

Mr. HARRIS, Maryland
And from private life:
Ms. Sylvia Quinton, Mardela Springs, Maryland
Dr. C. James Trotman, West Chester, Pennsylvania

AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL FOR A CEREMONY TO AWARD THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO BOB DOLE

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 31) authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Bob Dole, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

S. CON. RES. 31

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL FOR CEREMONY TO AWARD THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO BOB DOLE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The rotunda of the Capitol is authorized to be used on January 17, 2018, for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Bob Dole.

(b) PREPARATIONS.—Physical preparations for the conduct of the ceremony described in subsection (a) shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as may be prescribed by the Architect of the Capitol.

The concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT TO AWARD THE MEDAL OF HONOR TO JOHN L. CANLEY FOR ACTS OF VALOR DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4641) to authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to John L. Canley for acts of valor during the Vietnam War while a member of the Marine Corps, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4641

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

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION FOR AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR TO JOHN L. CANLEY FOR ACTS OF VALOR DURING THE VIETNAM WAR.

(a) WAIVER OF TIME LIMITATIONS.—Notwithstanding the time limitations specified in section 6248 of title 10, United States Code, or any other time limitation with respect to the awarding of certain medals to persons who served in the Armed Forces, the President may award the Medal of Honor under section 6241 of such title to John L. Canley for the acts of valor during the Vietnam War described in subsection (b).

(b) ACTS OF VALOR DESCRIBED.—The acts of valor referred to in subsection (a) are the actions of then Gunnery Sergeant John L. Canley during combat operations from January 31, 1968, to February 6, 1968, during the Vietnam War as a member of the Marine Corps, for which he was previously awarded the Navy Cross.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

□ 1430

SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EVIDENCE REPORTING ACT OF 2017

Mrs. HANDEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1766) to reauthorize the SAFER Act of 2013, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1766

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 “Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act of 2017” or the “SAFER Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. PEDIATRIC SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINERS.

Section 304(c)(2) of the DNA Sexual Assault Justice Act of 2004 (34 U.S.C. 40723(c)(2)) is amended—

(1) by inserting “, both adult and pediatric,” after “role of forensic nurses”; and

(2) by striking “and elder abuse” and inserting “elder abuse, and, in particular, the need for pediatric sexual assault nurse examiners, including such nurse examiners working in the multidisciplinary setting, in responding to abuse of both children and adolescents”.

SEC. 3. REDUCING THE RAPE KIT BACKLOG.

(a) REAUTHORIZATION.—Section 2(c)(4) of the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 (34 U.S.C. 40701(c)(4)) is amended by striking “2017” and inserting “2022”.

(b) SUNSET.—Section 1006 of the SAFER Act of 2013 (34 U.S.C. 40701 note) is amended by striking “2018” and inserting “2023”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. HANDEL) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HANDEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 1766, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

S. 1766, the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act of 2017, also known as the SAFER Act, will strengthen State and local law enforcement's ability to reduce the number of untested rape kits and help take more offenders off our streets.

Congress provides significant resources annually to the Department of Justice to help reduce backlogs of untested forensic evidence. This legislation will reauthorize the Attorney General's authority to allocate 5 to 7 percent of funds made available to carry out the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program to help communities audit their backlogs, which is an important first step in any effort to eliminate a backlog.

Despite the cases analyzed and improvements made with our Federal resources, backlogs persist due to the ever-increasing demand for evidence testing. According to the National Institute of Justice, as the value of DNA evidence is increasingly recognized, more evidence gets collected and submitted to laboratories for analysis.

Delays in analysis of forensic evidence often result in delays of justice: serial offenders can continue victimizing, and innocent individuals may be incarcerated. The SAFER Act helps address this common impediment to the response to rape and sexual assault at the State, local, and Tribal levels.

Importantly, the SAFER Act also would clarify that pediatric forensic nurses are eligible for training and employment grants. This provision underscores the critical role that pediatric sexual assault nurse examiners can play in a community's response to children who are victims of abuse.

S. 1766 can help ensure that resources provided for DNA analysis are focused on grant recipients making a good faith effort to estimate and manage their backlog of untested samples and improve efforts to get sex offenders off of our streets.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 1766, the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act of 2017. This bipartisan legislation passed the Senate on October 23, 2017.

I am glad that this House is moving this legislation, because it is about children. It is about the scourge that children, women, and others find themselves victims of—sexual assault.

S. 1766 will reauthorize the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 through the year 2022, by amending the language in section 2(c)(4) of 34 U.S.C. 40701(c)(4).

Furthermore, this legislation also amends other sections of the DNA Sexual Assault Justice Act of 2004 by ensuring that role of forensic nurses pertains to both adult and pediatric care.

The SAFER Act also amends this statute by making a provision after “elder abuse” for the need of nurse examiners, particularly where there is the need for pediatric sexual assault nurse examiners, including such nurse examiners working in the multidisciplinary setting, in responding to abuse of both children and adolescents.

Finally, this legislation will sunset through 2023 by amending the SAFER Act. The SAFER Act is a critical program, administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, that allows:

Local law enforcement programs to obtain funding for programs to reduce the rape kit backlog in communities across the country;

Victims of sexual assault get justice more quickly than in the past;

Thirty-five percent of funds available under the Debbie Smith Act for grants to local law enforcement agencies to focus more resources on rape kit testing;

Five to seven percent of the Debbie Smith Act funding to be used by local jurisdictions to conduct 1-year audits of untested sexual assault evidence to identify serious areas of backlog; and

Forensic testing to be done by both pediatric and adult sexual assault nurse examiners.

This is a very important measure that will address the large volume of cases that fester due to the excessive backlog in our processing of rape kits.

According to the National Institute of Justice, a multidisciplinary, victim-centered approach and standardized, efficient evidence processing in sexual assault cases are the focus of its new report.

The report, "National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits," outlines 35 suggestions for laboratories and law enforcement to improve their sexual assault investigations, tackling issues such as evidence collection, storage, and maintenance; backlog tracking and processing; victim advocacy and notification; and sensitivity to trauma in sexual assault victims.

A working group—consisting of victims and victim advocates, sexual assault nurse examiners and medical examiners, forensic laboratories, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and members of the judiciary—developed the suggestions over a 2-year period following the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act of 2013, the SAFER Act, a component of the Violence Against Women Act. We will soon reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, and we will be happy to have this expansion included in this.

A victim-centered approach is the focus on the needs and the concerns of a victim to ensure the passionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner. A trauma-informed approach considers the impact of trauma and victim safety considerations.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Texas, Congressman POE, and my colleague from New York, Congresswoman CAROLYN B. MALONEY, have worked on a number of these issues, and also Senator CORNYN, because this is a very important step. I remember the days, in our respective jurisdictions, that we had a mounting backlog of rape kits. Do you know what that means, Mr. Speaker? Women and children do not get either their day in court or do not get justice.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is a timely and very important legislative initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support the legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. HANDEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), my colleague.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, one of the worst things that can happen to any of us is to lose their voice, and I have lost mine. I know some of the Democrats are glad about that.

But I want to say this on behalf of the SAFER Act. There are, in our country, on shelves, in warehouses, and in law enforcement office buildings rape kits that have never been examined. That is shameful. And everybody

is to blame, from the Federal Government to local government.

It is shameful because victims—and I knew a lot of them at the courthouse as a judge—don't know who committed this crime against them, and we have the ability to tell them, but we don't because of bureaucratic incompetence. These haven't been examined. They have the right to know who sexually assaulted them.

Also, there are criminals running loose, who have never been prosecuted, because these rape kits have never been analyzed. And, yes, there are people incarcerated who are innocent, and the rape kit can prove their innocence. It is important that we pass the SAFER Act. Get those sexual assault kits analyzed. There are no more excuses.

Mr. Speaker, in 1984, Michelle was raped at knifepoint by two men who broke into her home.

They blindfolded her, tied her up with a phone cord, and gagged her before sexually assaulting her.

During the assault, they laughed and bragged that they had been getting away with committing this crime for seven years.

Much to Michelle's surprise, they left without ending her life. But hers would now be a life filled with suffering and fear. Michelle called the police and had a rape kit taken.

She hoped that by achieving justice against her attackers she would find some measure of peace and closure.

Michelle waited for the results, but she waited in vain.

The backlog of untested kits was too large, so her kit was never tested.

Over the next years, while her rape kit sat collecting dust on a shelf, break-ins and rapes continued to happen in her neighborhood.

She was in constant fear that her attackers were still on the loose.

Not only does the inability to test rape kits deny victims justice, it also puts the safety of other innocent people in jeopardy by keeping criminals on the streets.

To address this issue, Congresswoman MALONEY and I introduced the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act or SAFER Act, which was signed into law in 2013.

This bill provides funds to states and localities to increase rape kit testing and expand forensic lab capacities.

In the years since SAFER's enactment there has been progress, but there are still hundreds of thousands of untested rape kits across the nation.

SAFER was slated to expire at the end of this year, but thankfully, with bipartisan support, Congress has secured its reauthorization and continued existence.

This legislation will continue to reduce the national rape kit backlog and help victims achieve justice.

I want to thank Senator CORNYN who has worked with me on SAFER for many years.

And I want to thank the Chairman for bringing this bill to the floor. I applaud its passage here today.

And that is just the way it is.

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

Mr. Speaker, to my good friend from Texas, I am just a measure above your

lost voice. I am suffering from somewhat of the same thing, but I have a little bit of a voice, so I can say thank you, again, for your very hard work on this legislation as a former judge in Harris County on the criminal bench. I know you saw injustices because rape kits had not been processed.

I believe, as the chair and co-chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus and the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, that we went through this as well. I was very pleased that the Justice Department understood the importance of grants to help our local law enforcement, but, more importantly, that the Judiciary Committee understood the importance of this legislation to really move forward to process kits.

Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, children having a backlog of kits that have been subjected to sexual assault—the most dastardly act and violence—not only against adults, but against children, like 3-month-olds, or toddlers, by sick people who sexually assault them.

So the development and implementation of policies and procedures by the National Institutes of Health leads to more timely submission of evidence to forensic laboratories, enhances communications and investigative procedures, promotes better informed prosecutorial decisionmaking, and, as my friend said, it helps the accused and the accuser. These approaches are the most important because they get victim participation.

Victims of sexual assault require justice that is swift, thorough, and expedient so they may begin to heal and attempt to put the pieces of their lives back together. They deserve the best efforts of law enforcement to help them along the way.

When Houston was trying to rebuild its rape testing structure, we utilized the FBI. And I want to take a moment to thank the FBI for its deep abiding integrity and honesty and how it comes to the rescue of so many jurisdictions, local law enforcement. Let us be very clear on how important it is to maintain the integrity and the respect for the FBI, as opposed to demeaning the FBI. Today, on the floor of the House, I want to thank them for their service.

So this legislation would reauthorize the SAFER Act, provide funding to conduct 1-year audits of untested sexual assault evidence, and ensure that law enforcement agencies across the country are trained and armed with the skills and tools they require to stand against sexual assault and stand for those individuals who might be victimized.

The SAFER Act would also ensure that forensic nurses are eligible for training under the program. These professionals are indispensable. Our citizens deserve to be protected and remain free from harm. Our children, women, and men, who are sexually assaulted, deserve to be protected, but their cases must move expeditiously.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation, as we continue to stand for victims and against the viciousness of sexual crimes of any kind, protect them, and bring the perpetrators to justice. I ask for a "yes" vote for this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1766, the "Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting" or the (SAFER) Act of 2017."

This bipartisan legislation passed the Senate October 23, 2017.

S. 1766 will reauthorize the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 through the year 2022, by amending the language in section 2(c)(4) of the (34 U.S.C. 40701(c)(4)).

Furthermore, this legislation also amends Section 304(c)(2) of the DNA Sexual Assault Justice Act of 2004 (34 U.S.C. 40723(c)(2)) by ensuring that role of forensic nurses pertains to both adult and pediatric care.

The SAFER Act also amends this statute by making a provision after "elder abuse" for the need of nurse examiners, particularly, where there is the need for pediatric sexual assault nurse examiners, including such nurse examiners working in the multidisciplinary setting, in responding to abuse of both children and adolescents".

Finally, this legislation will sunset through 2023 by amending Section 1006 of the SAFER Act of 2013 (34 U.S.C. 40701 note).

The SAFER Act is a critical program administered by the U.S. Department of Justice that allows:

Local law enforcement programs to obtain funding for programs to reduce the rape kit backlog in communities across the country.

Victims of sexual assault get justice more quickly than in the past.

35% of funds available under the Debbie Smith Act for grants to local law enforcement agencies to focus more resources on rape kit testing.

5%–7% of the Debbie Smith Act funding to be used by local jurisdictions to conduct one-year audits of untested sexual assault evidence to identify serious areas of backlog.

Forensic testing to be done by both pediatric and adult sexual assault nurse examiners.

This is a very important measure that will address the large volume of cases that fester due to the excessive back log in our processing of rape kits.

According to the National Institute of Justice, a multidisciplinary, victim-centered approach and standardized, efficient evidence processing in sexual assault cases are the focus of its new report.

The report, National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits, outlines 35 suggestions for laboratories and law enforcement to improve their sexual assault investigations, tackling issues such as evidence collection, storage and maintenance; backlog tracking & processing; victim advocacy and notification; and sensitivity to trauma in sexual assault victims.

A working group—consisting of victims and victim advocates, sexual assault nurse examiners and medical examiners, forensic laboratories, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and members of the judiciary—developed the suggestions over a two-year period following the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting (SAFER) Act of 2013, a component of the Violence Against Women Act.

A victim centered approach is the focus on the needs and concerns of a victim to ensure the compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner. A trauma-informed approach considers the impact of trauma and victim safety considerations.

Utilizing both approaches in the development and implementation of policies and procedures leads to more timely submission of evidence to forensic laboratories, enhances communications and investigative procedures, promotes better informed prosecutorial decision-making, and ultimately may reduce re-traumatization of victims by the criminal justice system.

In fact, these approaches are more likely to increase victim participation and thereby, support more complete investigations, increasing the overall likelihood of successful prosecutions."

For these reasons, I support this bill.

Victims of sexual assault require justice that is swift, thorough, and expedient, so that they may begin to heal and attempt to put the pieces of their lives back together. They deserve the best efforts of law enforcement to help them along the way.

This legislation would reauthorize the SAFER Act, provide funding to conduct one-year audits of untested sexual assault evidence, and ensure that law enforcement agencies across the country are trained and armed with the skills and tools they require to stand against sexual assault, and stand for those individuals who might be victimized.

The SAFER Act would also ensure that forensic nurses are eligible for training under the program. These professionals perform indispensable functions within the investigation of sexual abuse cases. They also provide specialized care and attention to children, youth, and the elderly, who are sexually abused. This legislation would help local authorities make certain that state and local forensic nurses are fully capable of providing such an important service to child victims.

Our citizens deserve to be protected and remain free from harm. We have a responsibility to do all that we can during those unfortunate times where one of them might be victimized.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation as we continue to stand for victims and against sexual crimes of any kind.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, let me start by recognizing the tremendous leadership of my colleague, Representative TED POE from Texas. I thank him for giving me the honor of being his wing woman in presenting this important piece of legislation today.

And, indeed, the SAFER Act is an important piece of legislation to reinforce the efforts of our local and State law enforcement in their work to reduce the number of untested rape kits and help take these sexual assault predators off the streets.

At the same time, this legislation underscores the critical role that the pediatric sexual assault examiners play in this process and makes them eligible for key training.

So, again, I ask my colleagues to pass this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1445

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. HANDEL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1766.

The question was taken.

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

Mrs. HANDEL. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

FURTHER SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4667.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 670, I call up the bill (H.R. 4667) making further supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, for disaster assistance for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and calendar year 2017 wildfires, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 670, the amendments printed in House Report 115-477 are adopted.

The bill, as amended, contains an emergency designation pursuant to section 4(g)(1) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010. Accordingly, the Chair must put the question of consideration under section 4(g)(2) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010.

The question is, Will the House now consider the bill?

The question of consideration was decided in the affirmative.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 4667

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

DIVISION A—DISASTER ASSISTANCE

The following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For an additional amount for the “Office of the Secretary”, \$2,600,000,000, which shall remain available until September 30, 2019, for necessary expenses related to crops, trees, bushes, vines, and livestock losses resulting from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria, and other hurricanes and wildfires occurring in calendar year 2017 under such terms and conditions as determined by the Secretary: *Provided*, That the Secretary may provide assistance for such losses in the form of block grants to eligible states and territories: *Provided further*, That the total amount of payments received under this heading and applicable policies of crop insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.) or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) under section 196 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7333) shall not exceed 85 percent of the loss as determined by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That the total amount of payments received under this heading for producers who did not obtain a policy or plan of insurance for an insurable commodity for the 2017 crop year, or 2018 crop year in the case of citrus, under the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.) for the crop incurring the losses or did not file the required paperwork and pay the service fee by the applicable State filing deadline for a noninsurable commodity for the 2017 crop year under NAP for the crop incurring the losses shall not exceed 65 percent of the loss as determined by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That producers receiving payments under this heading, as determined by the Secretary, shall be required to purchase crop insurance where crop insurance is available for the next two available crop years, and producers receiving payments under this heading shall be required to purchase coverage under NAP where crop insurance is not available in the next two available crop years, as determined by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That, not later than 90 days after the end of fiscal year 2018, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Congress specifying the type, amount, and method of such assistance by state and territory and the status of the amounts obligated and plans for further expenditure and include improvements that can be made to Federal Crop Insurance policies, either administratively or legislatively, to increase participation, particularly among underserved producers, in higher levels of coverage in future years for crops qualifying for assistance under this heading: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

For an additional amount for “Office of Inspector General”, \$2,500,000, to remain available until expended, for oversight and audit of programs, grants, and activities funded by this division and administered by the Department of Agriculture: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

For an additional amount for “Buildings and Facilities”, \$22,000,000, to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria: *Provided*, That such

amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY
EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM

For an additional amount for the “Emergency Conservation Program” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria and of wildfires occurring in calendar year 2017, and other natural disasters, \$400,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That not less than \$300,000,000 of the amount made available in the previous proviso shall be for necessary expenses resulting from a major disaster declared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.): *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
WATERSHED AND FLOOD PREVENTION
OPERATIONS

For an additional amount, for “Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations”, for necessary expenses for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria and of wildfires occurring in calendar year 2017, and other natural disasters, \$541,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That not less than \$400,000,000 of the amount made available in the previous proviso shall be for necessary expenses resulting from a major disaster declared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.): *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
RURAL HOUSING SERVICERURAL HOUSING INSURANCE FUND PROGRAM
ACCOUNT

For an additional amount for costs of direct loans, including costs relating to modification of such loans, as those terms are defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 661a), \$18,672,000 shall be for direct loans for the rehabilitation of section 515 rental housing (42 U.S.C. 1485) in locations where owners were not required to carry national flood insurance, to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That such funds shall be for areas impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE
RURAL WATER AND WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAM
ACCOUNT

For an additional amount for the “Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program Account”, \$165,475,000, to remain available until expended, for grants to repair drinking water systems and sewer and solid waste disposal systems impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: *Provided*, That not to exceed \$2,000,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be for technical assistance grants for rural water and waste systems pursuant to section 306(a)(14) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development

Act: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE
COMMODITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

For an additional amount for “Commodity Assistance Program” for the emergency food assistance program as authorized by section 27(a) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2036(a)) and section 204(a)(1) of the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (7 U.S.C. 7508(a)(1)), \$24,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That notwithstanding any other provisions of the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983, the Secretary of Agriculture may allocate additional foods and funds for administrative expenses from resources specifically appropriated, transferred, or reprogrammed to provide resources to Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, and States affected by wildfires occurring in calendar year 2017 or Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, as determined by the Secretary, without regard to sections 204 and 214 of such Act (7 U.S.C. 7508, 7515): *Provided further*, That such funds will be designated for States impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, or wildfire and subject to a federal major disaster or emergency declaration: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICESFOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES
(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for “Buildings and Facilities”, \$7,600,000, to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: *Provided*, That such amount may be transferred to “Department of Health and Human Services—Food and Drug Administration Salaries and Expenses” for costs related to repair of facilities, for replacement of equipment, and for other increases in facility-related costs: *Provided further*, That obligations incurred for the purposes provided herein prior to the date of enactment of this Act may be charged to funds appropriated by this paragraph: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

GENERAL PROVISION—THIS TITLE

SEC. 101. (a) Section 1501(d)(1) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9081(d)(1)) is amended by striking “not more than \$20,000,000” and inserting “not more than \$40,000,000”.

(b) The amount provided by subsection (a) for fiscal year 2018 is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

TITLE II
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE
PROGRAMS
(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Pursuant to section 703 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act (42 U.S.C. 3233), for an additional amount for “Economic Development Assistance Programs” for necessary expenses related to

flood mitigation, disaster relief, long-term recovery, and restoration of infrastructure in areas that received a major disaster designation as a result of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and the calendar year 2017 wildfires, under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.), \$600,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That within the amount appropriated, up to 2 percent of funds may be transferred to the “Salaries and Expenses” account for administration and oversight activities: *Provided further*, That within the amount appropriated, \$1,000,000 shall be transferred to the “Office of Inspector General” account for carrying out investigations and audits related to the funding provided under this heading.

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

OPERATIONS, RESEARCH, AND FACILITIES

For an additional amount for “Operations, Research, and Facilities” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$120,904,000, to remain available until September 30, 2019, as follows: (1) \$12,904,000 for repair and replacement of observing assets, Federal real property, and equipment; (2) \$18,000,000 for marine debris assessment and removal; (3) \$40,000,000 for mapping, charting, and geodesy services; and (4) \$50,000,000 to improve weather forecasting, hurricane intensity forecasting and flood forecasting and mitigation capabilities, including data assimilation from ocean observing platforms and satellites: *Provided*, That the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

PROCUREMENT, ACQUISITION AND CONSTRUCTION

For an additional amount for “Procurement, Acquisition and Construction” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$79,232,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020, as follows: (1) \$29,232,000 for repair and replacement of Federal real property and observing assets; and (2) \$50,000,000 for improvements to operational and research weather supercomputing infrastructure and for improvement of satellite ground services used in hurricane intensity and track prediction: *Provided*, That the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

UNITED STATES MARSHALS SERVICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$2,500,000: *Provided*, That the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$21,200,000: *Provided*, That

the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$11,500,000: *Provided*, That the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

FEDERAL PRISON SYSTEM

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$16,000,000: *Provided*, That the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

For an additional amount for “Buildings and Facilities” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$34,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

SCIENCE

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

CONSTRUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND RESTORATION

For an additional amount for “Construction and Environmental Compliance and Restoration” for repairs at National Aeronautics and Space Administration facilities damaged by hurricanes during 2017, \$81,300,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

RESEARCH AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

For an additional amount for “Research and Related Activities” for necessary expenses to repair National Science Foundation radio observatory facilities damaged by hurricanes that occurred during 2017, \$16,300,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That the National Science Foundation shall submit a spending plan to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate within 45 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

RELATED AGENCIES

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

PAYMENT TO THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

For an additional amount for “Payment to the Legal Services Corporation” to carry out the purposes of the Legal Services Corporation Act by providing for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes

Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$1,000,000: *Provided*, That the amount made available under this heading shall be used only to provide the mobile resources, technology, and disaster coordinators necessary to provide storm-related services to the Legal Services Corporation client population and only in the areas significantly affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That none of the funds appropriated in this division to the Legal Services Corporation shall be expended for any purpose prohibited or limited by, or contrary to any of the provisions of, sections 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, and 506 of Public Law 105-119, and all funds appropriated in this division to the Legal Services Corporation shall be subject to the same terms and conditions set forth in such sections, except that all references in sections 502 and 503 to 1997 and 1998 shall be deemed to refer instead to 2017 and 2018, respectively, and except that sections 501 and 503 of Public Law 104-134 (referenced by Public Law 105-119) shall not apply to the amount made available under this heading: *Provided further*, That, for the purposes of this division, the Legal Services Corporation shall be considered an agency of the United States Government.

TITLE III

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE—MILITARY

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Army”, \$20,110,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Navy”, \$267,796,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, MARINE CORPS

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Marine Corps”, \$17,920,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Air Force”, \$20,916,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide”, \$2,650,000,

to remain available until September 30, 2018, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY RESERVE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Army Reserve”, \$12,500,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY RESERVE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Navy Reserve”, \$2,922,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE RESERVE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Air Force Reserve”, \$5,770,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Army National Guard”, \$55,471,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

PROCUREMENT

OTHER PROCUREMENT, NAVY

For an additional amount for “Other Procurement, Navy” \$18,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

REVOLVING AND MANAGEMENT FUNDS

DEFENSE WORKING CAPITAL FUNDS

For an additional amount for “Defense Working Capital Funds” for the Navy Working Capital Fund, \$9,486,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OTHER DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PROGRAMS

DEFENSE HEALTH PROGRAM

For an additional amount for operation and maintenance for “Defense Health Pro-

gram”, \$704,000, to remain available until September 30, 2018, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma or Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

TITLE IV

CORPS OF ENGINEERS—CIVIL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

CORPS OF ENGINEERS—CIVIL

INVESTIGATIONS

For an additional amount for “Investigations” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$75,000,000, to remain available until expended to expedite and complete at full Federal expense studies, including Preconstruction Engineering and Design, for flood and storm damage reduction, including shore protection, in areas that were affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria: *Provided*, That the Secretary may use funding provided under this heading to complete ongoing studies, to initiate and complete up to two authorized studies for assessing regional flood and storm risks, and to initiate and complete up to six authorized feasibility studies: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall consider giving priority to studies in areas that suffered the most damage from these hurricanes and to studies in areas that have had multiple major disaster declarations in recent years: *Provided further*, That a report identifying all ongoing studies, authorized studies for assessing regional flood and storm risks in the impacted areas, and authorized feasibility studies eligible for funding under this heading, including identification of whether each study is in a category to be considered for priority, shall be submitted to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act: *Provided further*, That no allocation shall be made to initiate any new study until the Secretary submits to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a list of all new studies selected to be initiated using funds provided under this heading: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That beginning not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works shall provide monthly reports to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate detailing the allocation and obligation of these funds.

CONSTRUCTION

For an additional amount for “Construction” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of natural disasters, including Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$10,480,000,000, to remain available until expended to rehabilitate, repair, and construct United States Army Corps of Engineers projects: *Provided*, That \$55,000,000 of the funds provided under this heading shall be used to address emergency situations at Corps of Engineers projects, and to rehabilitate and repair damages to Corps of Engineers projects, caused by natural disasters: *Provided further*, That \$10,425,000,000 of the funds provided under this heading shall be used to expedite construction of projects for flood and storm damage reduction, including shore protection, in areas that were affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria: *Pro-*

vided further, That the Secretary shall consider giving priority to projects located in areas that suffered the most damage from these hurricanes and to projects located in areas that have had multiple major disaster declarations in recent years: *Provided further*, That funding utilized for authorized shore protection projects shall restore such projects from the design level of protection to the full project profile at full Federal expense: *Provided further*, That the completion of ongoing construction projects receiving funds provided under this heading shall be at full Federal expense with respect to such funds: *Provided further*, That upon approval of the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate funds provided under this heading may be used to construct any project studied using funds provided under the heading “Investigations” or any project with a completed Chief’s Report that has not yet been authorized if the Secretary determines that the project is technically feasible, economically justified, and environmentally acceptable: *Provided further*, That, using these funds, the non-Federal cash contribution for authorized but unconstructed projects, projects with completed Chief’s Reports that have not yet been authorized, or projects that are funded as ongoing studies under the heading “Investigations” shall be financed in accordance with the provisions of section 103(k) of Public Law 99-662 over a period of 30 years from the date of completion of the project or separable element: *Provided further*, That a report identifying all ongoing construction projects, authorized but unconstructed projects, and projects with completed Chief’s Reports that have not yet been authorized, including project cost estimates and identification of whether each project is in a category to be considered for priority, shall be submitted to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of this Act: *Provided further*, That not more than \$500,000,000 of the funds provided to expedite construction shall be available until such report is submitted: *Provided further*, That for projects funded under this heading, the provisions of section 902 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 shall not apply to these funds: *Provided further*, That up to \$50,000,000 of the funds provided to expedite construction shall be used to expedite continuing authorities projects to reduce the risk of flooding and storm damage in areas impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria: *Provided further*, That any projects using funds appropriated under this heading shall be initiated only after non-Federal interests have entered into binding agreements with the Secretary requiring the non-Federal interests to pay 100 percent of the operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation costs of the project and to hold and save the United States free from damages due to the construction or operation and maintenance of the project, except for damages due to the fault or negligence of the United States or its contractors: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That beginning not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works shall provide monthly reports to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate detailing the allocation and obligation of these funds.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES

For an additional amount for “Mississippi River and Tributaries”, \$370,000,000, to remain available until expended, for necessary

expenses to dredge navigation projects in response to, and repair damages to Corps of Engineers projects caused by, natural disasters: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That beginning not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works shall provide monthly reports to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate detailing the allocation and obligation of these funds.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance” for necessary expenses to dredge navigation projects in response to, and repair damages to Corps of Engineers projects caused by, natural disasters, \$608,000,000, to remain available until expended, of which such sums as are necessary to cover the Federal share of eligible operation and maintenance costs for coastal harbors and channels, and for inland harbors shall be derived from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That beginning not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works shall provide monthly reports to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate detailing the allocation and obligation of these funds.

FLOOD CONTROL AND COASTAL EMERGENCIES

For an additional amount for “Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies”, as authorized by section 5 of the Act of August 18, 1941 (33 U.S.C. 701n), for necessary expenses to prepare for flood, hurricane and other natural disasters and support emergency operations, repairs, and other activities in response to such disasters, as authorized by law, \$537,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That beginning not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works shall provide monthly reports to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate detailing the allocation and obligation of these funds.

EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Expenses” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$20,000,000, to remain available until expended to oversee emergency response and recovery activities: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That beginning not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works shall provide monthly reports to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate detailing the allocation and obligation of these funds.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

ENERGY PROGRAMS

ELECTRICITY DELIVERY AND ENERGY RELIABILITY

For an additional amount for “Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability”, \$13,000,000,

to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses related to natural disasters, including technical assistance related to electric grids: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE

For an additional amount for “Strategic Petroleum Reserve”, \$8,716,000, to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses related to damages caused by natural disasters: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

GENERAL PROVISION—THIS TITLE

SEC. 401. In fiscal year 2018 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Chief of Engineers of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers shall transmit to the Congress, after reasonable opportunity for comment, but without change, by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, a monthly report, the first of which shall be transmitted to Congress not later than 2 days after the date of enactment of this Act and monthly thereafter, which includes detailed estimates of damages to each Corps of Engineers project, caused by natural disasters or otherwise.

TITLE V

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

FEDERAL BUILDINGS FUND

For an additional amount to be deposited in the “Federal Buildings Fund”, \$126,951,000, to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Maria, and Irma, for repair and alteration of buildings under the custody and control of the Administrator of General Services, and real property management and related activities not otherwise provided for: *Provided*, That funds may be used to reimburse the “Federal Buildings Fund” for obligations incurred for this purpose prior to enactment of this Act: *Provided further*, That not more than \$15,000,000 shall be available for tenant improvements in damaged U.S. courthouses: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

DISASTER LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for the “Small Business Administration—Disaster Loans Program Account” for the cost of direct loans authorized by section 7(b) of the Small Business Act, \$1,652,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That up to \$618,000,000 may be transferred to and merged with “Salaries and Expenses” for administrative expenses to carry out the disaster loan program authorized by section 7(b) of the Small Business Act: *Provided further*, That none of the funds provided under this heading may be used for indirect administrative expenses: *Provided further*, That the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

For an additional amount for the “Small Business Administration—Office of Inspector General”, \$7,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an

emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

TITLE VI

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT

For an additional amount for “Operations and Support” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$25,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020, for audits and investigations of activities funded by this title: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT

For an additional amount for “Operations and Support” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$104,494,000, to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That not more than \$39,400,000 may be used to carry out U.S. Customs and Border Protection activities in fiscal year 2018 in Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands, in addition to any other amounts available for such purposes.

PROCUREMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND IMPROVEMENTS

For an additional amount for “Procurement, Construction, and Improvements” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$3,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That funds are provided to carry out U.S. Customs and Border Protection activities in Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands, in addition to any other amounts available for such purposes.

U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT

For an additional amount for “Operations and Support” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$30,905,000, to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

PROCUREMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND IMPROVEMENTS

For an additional amount for “Procurement, Construction, and Improvements” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$33,052,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT

For an additional amount for “Operations and Support” for necessary expenses related

to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$10,322,000, to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

COAST GUARD OPERATING EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Operating Expenses” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$112,136,000, to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND RESTORATION

For an additional amount for “Environmental Compliance and Restoration” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$4,038,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, AND IMPROVEMENTS

For an additional amount for “Acquisition, Construction, and Improvements” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria, and Matthew, \$718,919,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT

For an additional amount for “Operations and Support” for necessary expenses, \$58,800,000, to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

PROCUREMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND IMPROVEMENTS

For an additional amount for “Procurement, Construction, and Improvements” for necessary expenses, \$1,200,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

DISASTER RELIEF FUND (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for “Disaster Relief Fund” for major disasters declared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.), \$27,500,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall publish on the Agency’s website not later than 5 days after an award of a public assistance grant under section 406 or 428 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5172 or 5189f) that is in excess of \$1,000,000, the specifics of each such grant award: *Provided further*, That for any mission

assignment or mission assignment task order to another Federal department or agency regarding a major disaster in excess of \$1,000,000, not later than 5 days after the issuance of such mission assignment or mission assignment task order, the Administrator shall publish on the Agency’s website the following: the name of the impacted State, the disaster declaration for such State, the assigned agency, the assistance requested, a description of the disaster, the total cost estimate, and the amount obligated: *Provided further*, That not later than 10 days after the last day of each month until a mission assignment or mission assignment task order described in the preceding proviso is completed and closed out, the Administrator shall update any changes to the total cost estimate and the amount obligated: *Provided further*, That for a disaster declaration related to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria, the Administrator shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, not later than 5 days after the first day of each month beginning after the date of enactment of this Act, and shall publish on the Agency’s website, not later than 10 days after the first day of each such month, an estimate or actual amount, if available, for the current fiscal year of the cost of the following categories of spending: public assistance, individual assistance, operations, mitigation, administrative, and any other relevant category (including emergency measures and disaster resources): *Provided further*, That not later than 10 days after the first day of each month, the Administrator shall publish on the Agency’s website the report (referred to as the Disaster Relief Monthly Report) as required by Public Law 114-4.

Of the amounts provided under this heading for the Disaster Relief Fund, up to \$4,000,000,000 may be transferred to the Disaster Assistance Direct Loan Program Account for the cost of direct loans as authorized under section 417 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5184) to be used to assist local governments in providing essential services as a result of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria: *Provided further*, That such amounts may subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed \$4,000,000,000 under section 417 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5184): *Provided further*, That notwithstanding section 417 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5184), a territory or possession, and instrumentalities and local governments thereof, of the United States shall be deemed to be a local government for purposes of this paragraph: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding section 417(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5184(b)), the amount of any such loan issued to a territory or possession, and instrumentalities and local governments thereof, may be based on the projected loss of tax and other revenues and on projected cash outlays not previously budgeted for a period not to exceed 180 days from the date of the major disaster, and may exceed \$5,000,000: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law or the constitution of a territory or possession that limits the issuance of debt, a territory or possession, and instrumentalities and local governments thereof, may each receive more than one loan with repayment provisions and other terms specific to the type of lost tax and other revenues and on projected unbudgeted cash outlays for which the loan is provided: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding section 417(c)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency As-

sistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5184(c)(1)), loans to a territory or possession, and instrumentalities and local governments thereof, may be cancelled in whole or in part only at the discretion of the Secretary of Homeland Security in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, shall determine the terms, conditions, eligible uses, and timing and amount of Federal disbursements of loans issued to a territory or possession, and instrumentalities and local governments thereof: *Provided further*, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 661a): *Provided further*, That the Federal Emergency Management Agency may transfer up to 1.5 percent of the amount under this paragraph to the Disaster Assistance Direct Loan Program Account for administrative expenses to carry out under this paragraph the direct loan program, as authorized by section 417 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5184): *Provided further*, That of the amount provided under this paragraph for transfer, up to \$150,000,000 may be transferred to the Disaster Assistance Direct Loan Program Account for the cost to lend a territory or possession of the United States that portion of assistance for which the territory or possession is responsible under the cost-sharing provisions of the major disaster declaration for Hurricanes Irma or Maria, as authorized under section 319 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5162): *Provided further*, That of the amount provided under this paragraph for transfer, up to \$1,000,000 may be transferred to the Disaster Assistance Direct Loan Program Account for administrative expenses to carry out the Advance of Non-Federal Share program, as authorized by section 319 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5162): *Provided further*, That the amount provided under this heading is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTERS

OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT

For an additional amount for “Operations and Support” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$5,374,000, to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

PROCUREMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND IMPROVEMENTS

For an additional amount for “Procurement, Construction, and Improvements” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$5,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

GENERAL PROVISIONS—THIS TITLE

SEC. 601. The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency may provide assistance, pursuant to section 428 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et

seq.), for critical services as defined in section 406 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act for the duration of the recovery for incidents DR-4336-PR, DR-4339-PR, DR-4340-USVI, and DR-4335-USVI to—

(1) replace or restore the function of a facility or system to industry standards without regard to the pre-disaster condition of the facility or system; and

(2) replace or restore components of the facility or system not damaged by the disaster where necessary to fully effectuate the replacement or restoration of disaster-damaged components to restore the function of the facility or system to industry standards.

SEC. 602. (a) The Federal share of assistance, including direct Federal assistance, provided under section 407 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5173), with respect to a major disaster declared pursuant to such Act for damages resulting from a wildfire in calendar year 2017, shall be 90 percent of the eligible costs under such section.

(b) The Federal share provided by subsection (a) shall apply to assistance provided before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act.

TITLE VII

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

CONSTRUCTION

For an additional amount for “Construction” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$210,629,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND

For an additional amount for the “Historic Preservation Fund” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$17,500,000, to remain available until September 30, 2019, including costs to States necessary to complete compliance activities required by section 306108 of title 54, United States Code (formerly section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act), and costs needed to administer the program: *Provided*, That grants shall only be available for areas that have received a major disaster declaration pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.): *Provided further*, That individual grants shall not be subject to a non-Federal matching requirement: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

CONSTRUCTION

For an additional amount for “Construction” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$207,600,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

SURVEYS, INVESTIGATIONS, AND RESEARCH

For an additional amount for “Surveys, Investigations, and Research” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and in those areas impacted by a major disaster de-

clared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) with respect to wildfires in 2017, \$42,246,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

DEPARTMENTAL OFFICES

INSULAR AFFAIRS

ASSISTANCE TO TERRITORIES

For an additional amount for “Technical Assistance” for financial management expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, \$3,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for “Salaries and Expenses” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$2,500,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE SUPERFUND

For an additional amount for “Hazardous Substance Superfund” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$6,200,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

LEAKING UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK FUND

For an additional amount for “Leaking Underground Storage Tank Fund” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$7,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREST SERVICE

STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY

For an additional amount for “State and Private Forestry” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$7,500,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM

For an additional amount for “National Forest System” for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, \$20,652,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

For an additional amount for “Capital Improvement and Maintenance” for necessary

expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and the 2017 fire season, \$91,600,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

GENERAL PROVISION—THIS TITLE

SEC. 701. Agencies receiving funds appropriated by this title shall each provide a monthly report to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate detailing the allocation and obligation of these funds by account, beginning not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act.

TITLE VIII

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for “Training and Employment Services”, \$30,000,000, for the dislocated workers assistance national reserve for necessary expenses directly related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and the calendar year 2017 wildfires with major disaster or emergency declarations under titles IV or V of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act in calendar year 2017, which shall remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That these sums may be used to replace grant funds previously obligated to the impacted areas: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

JOB CORPS

For an additional amount for “Job Corps” for construction, rehabilitation and acquisition for Job Corps Centers in Puerto Rico, \$30,900,000, which shall be available through June 30, 2021: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

CDC-WIDE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAM SUPPORT (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for “CDC-Wide Activities and Program Support”, \$200,000,000, to remain available until expended, for response, recovery, preparation, mitigation, and other expenses directly related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: *Provided*, That obligations incurred for the purposes provided herein prior to the date of enactment of this Act may be charged to funds appropriated by this paragraph: *Provided further*, That of the amount provided, not less than \$6,000,000 shall be transferred to the “Buildings and Facilities” account for the purposes provided herein: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES EMERGENCY FUND

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for the “Public Health and Social Services Emergency

Fund", \$177,000,000, to remain available until expended, for response, recovery, preparation, mitigation and other expenses directly related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria, including activities authorized under section 319(a) of the Public Health Service Act (referred to in this title as the "PHS Act"): *Provided*, That \$60,000,000 shall be transferred to "Health Resources and Services Administration—Primary Health Care", for expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria for disaster response and recovery, for the Health Centers Program under section 330 of the PHS Act: *Provided further*, That not less than \$50,000,000, of amounts transferred under the preceding proviso, shall be available for alteration, renovation, construction, equipment, and other capital improvement costs as necessary to meet the needs of areas affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria: *Provided further*, That the time limitation in section 330(e)(3) of the PHS Act shall not apply to funds made available under the preceding proviso: *Provided further*, That not less than \$20,000,000 shall be transferred to "Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration—Health Surveillance and Program Support" for grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements for behavioral health treatment, crisis counseling, and other related helplines, and for other similar programs to provide support to individuals impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria: *Provided further*, That up to \$2,000,000 shall be transferred to "Office of the Secretary—Office of Inspector General" for oversight of activities responding to such hurricanes: *Provided further*, That obligations incurred for the purposes provided herein prior to the date of enactment of this Act may be charged to funds appropriated under this heading: *Provided further*, That of the funds appropriated in this paragraph, \$15,000,000 shall be transferred to the "National Institutes of Health—Office of the Director" for the purposes provided in this paragraph: *Provided further*, That funds transferred to the National Institutes of Health for the purpose of supporting the repair or rebuilding of non-Federal biomedical or behavioral research facilities damaged as a result of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria shall be used to award grants or contracts for such purpose under section 404I of the Public Health Service Act: *Provided further*, That section 404I(c)(2) of such Act does not apply to the use of funds described in the preceding proviso: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated in this paragraph shall not be available for costs that are reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, under a contract for insurance, or by self-insurance: *Provided further*, That such additional amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES PROGRAMS

For an additional amount for "Children and Families Services Programs", \$650,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2021, for Head Start programs, for necessary expenses directly related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria, including making payments under the Head Start Act: *Provided*, That none of the funds appropriated in this paragraph shall be included in the calculation of the "base grant" in subsequent fiscal years, as such term is defined in sections 640(a)(7)(A), 641A(h)(1)(B), or 645(d)(3) of the Head Start Act: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated in this paragraph are not subject to the allocation requirements of section 640(a)

of the Head Start Act: *Provided further*, That funds appropriated in this paragraph shall not be available for costs that are reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, under a contract for insurance, or by self-insurance: *Provided further*, That up to \$10,000,000 shall be available for Federal administrative expenses: *Provided further*, That obligations incurred for the purposes provided herein prior to the date of enactment of this Act may be charged to funds appropriated under this heading: *Provided further*, That such additional amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HURRICANE EDUCATION RECOVERY (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for "Hurricane Education Recovery" for assisting in meeting the educational needs of individuals affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria, or calendar year 2017 wildfires for which the President declared a major disaster or emergency under section 401 or 501 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170; 42 U.S.C. 5191) (referred to herein as a "covered disaster or emergency"), \$2,900,000,000, to remain available through September 30, 2021: *Provided*, That such additional amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That—

(1) such funds shall be used—

(A) to make awards, which shall be available until expended, to eligible entities for immediate aid to restart school operations, in accordance with paragraph (2);

(B) for temporary emergency impact aid for displaced students, in accordance with paragraph (2);

(C) for emergency assistance to institutions of higher education and students attending institutions of higher education in an area directly affected by a covered disaster or emergency in accordance with paragraph (3);

(D) for payments to institutions of higher education to help defray the unexpected expenses associated with enrolling displaced students from institutions of higher education directly affected by a covered disaster or emergency, in accordance with paragraph (4); and

(E) to provide assistance to local educational agencies serving homeless children and youth in accordance with paragraph (5);

(2) immediate aid to restart school operations and temporary emergency impact aid for displaced students described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) shall be provided under the statutory terms and conditions that applied to assistance under sections 102 and 107 of title IV of division B of Public Law 109-148, respectively, including the nondiscrimination provisions under section 107(m), except that such sections shall be applied so that—

(A) each reference to a major disaster declared in accordance with section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) shall be to a major disaster or emergency declared by the President in accordance with section 401 or 501, respectively, of such Act;

(B) each reference to Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita shall be a reference to a covered disaster or emergency;

(C) each reference to August 22, 2005, when used in relation to a covered disaster or emergency, shall be to the date that is one week prior to the date on which the major

disaster or emergency was declared for the area;

(D) each reference to the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas shall be to the States or territories affected by a covered disaster or emergency, and each reference to the State educational agencies of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, or Texas shall be a reference to the State educational agencies that serve the states or territories affected by a covered disaster or emergency;

(E) each reference to the 2005-2006 school year shall be to the 2017-2018 school year;

(F) the references in section 102(h)(1) of title IV of division B of Public Law 109-148 to the number of non-public elementary schools and secondary schools in the State shall be to the number of students in non-public elementary schools and secondary schools in the State, and the reference in such section to the 2003-2004 school year shall be to the most recent data set for the 2016-2017 school year;

(G) in determining the amount of immediate aid provided to restart school operations as described in section 102(b) of title IV of division B of Public Law 109-148, the Secretary shall consider the number of students enrolled, during the 2016-2017 school year, in elementary schools and secondary schools that were closed as a result of a covered disaster or emergency;

(H) in determining the amount of emergency impact aid that a State educational agency is eligible to receive under paragraph (1)(B), the Secretary shall, subject to section 107(d)(1)(B) of such title, provide—

(i) \$9,000 for each displaced student who is an English learner, as that term is defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801);

(ii) \$10,000 for each displaced student who is a child with disability (regardless of whether the child is an English learner); and

(iii) \$8,500 for each displaced student who is not a child with a disability or an English learner; and

(I) with respect to the emergency impact aid provided under paragraph (1)(B), the Secretary may modify the State educational agency and local educational agency application timelines in section 107(c) of such title;

(3) up to \$200,000,000 of the funds made available under this heading shall be for programs authorized under subpart 3 of part A and part C of title IV and part B of title VII of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087-51 et seq., 1138 et seq.) for institutions located in an area affected by a covered disaster or emergency, and students enrolled in such institutions, except that—

(A) any requirements relating to matching, Federal share, reservation of funds, or maintenance of effort under such parts that would otherwise be applicable to that assistance shall not apply;

(B) such assistance may be used for student financial assistance;

(C) such assistance may also be used for faculty and staff salaries, equipment, student supplies and instruments, or any purpose authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965, by institutions of higher education that are located in areas affected by a covered disaster or emergency; and

(D) the Secretary shall prioritize, to the extent possible, students who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless as a result of displacement, and institutions that have sustained extensive damage, by a covered disaster or emergency;

(4) up to \$120,000,000 of the funds made available under this heading shall be for payments to institutions of higher education to help defray the unexpected expenses associated with enrolling displaced students from institutions of higher education at which operations have been disrupted by a covered

disaster or emergency, in accordance with criteria established by the Secretary and made publicly available;

(5) \$25,000,000 of the funds made available under this heading shall be available to provide assistance to local educational agencies serving homeless children and youths displaced by a covered disaster or emergency, consistent with section 723 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431–11435) and with section 106 of title IV of division B of Public Law 109–148, except that funds shall be disbursed based on demonstrated need and the number of homeless children and youth enrolled as a result of displacement by a covered disaster or emergency;

(6) section 437 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232) and section 553 of title 5, United States Code, shall not apply to activities under this heading;

(7) \$4,000,000 of the funds made available under this heading, to remain available through September 30, 2021, shall be transferred to the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Education for oversight of activities supported with funds appropriated under this heading, and up to \$3,000,000 of the funds made available under this heading, to remain available through September 30, 2019, shall be for program administration;

(8) up to \$35,000,000 of the funds made available under this heading shall be to carry out activities authorized under section 4631(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7281(b)); and

(9) the Secretary may waive, modify, or provide extensions for certain requirements of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) for affected individuals, affected students, and affected institutions in covered disaster or emergency areas in the same manner as the Secretary was authorized to waive, modify, or provide extensions for certain requirements of such Act under provisions of subtitle B of title IV of division B of Public Law 109–148 for affected individuals, affected students, and affected institutions in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita, except that the cost associated with any action taken by the Secretary under this paragraph is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

GENERAL PROVISIONS—THIS TITLE

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 801. (a) Notwithstanding section 133(b)(4) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, in States, as defined by section 3(56) of such Act, affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, a local board, as defined by section 3(33) of such Act, in a local area, as defined by section 3(32) of such Act, affected by such Hurricanes may transfer, if such transfer is approved by the Governor, up to 100 percent of the funds allocated to the local area for Program Years 2016 and 2017 for Youth Workforce Investment activities under paragraphs (2) or (3) of section 128(b) of such Act, for Adult employment and training activities under paragraphs (2)(A) or (3) of section 133(b) of such Act, or for Dislocated Worker employment and training activities under paragraph (2)(B) of section 133(b) of such Act among—

(1) adult employment and training activities;

(2) dislocated worker employment and training activities; and

(3) youth workforce investment activities.

(b) Except for the funds reserved to carry out required statewide activities under sections 127(b) and 134(a)(2) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Governor

of the United States Virgin Islands may authorize the transfer of up to 100 percent of the remaining funds provided to the United States Virgin Islands for Program Years 2016 and 2017 for Youth Workforce Investment activities under section 127(b)(1)(B) of such Act, for Adult employment and training activities under section 132(b)(1)(A) of such Act, or for Dislocated Worker employment and training activities under section 133(b)(2)(A) of such Act among—

(1) adult employment and training activities;

(2) dislocated worker employment and training activities; and

(3) youth workforce investment activities.

SEC. 802. Funds appropriated by this title may be transferred to, and merged with, other appropriation accounts under the headings “Centers for Disease Control and Prevention” and “Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund” for the purposes specified in this title following consultation with the Office of Management and Budget: *Provided*, That the Committees on Appropriations in the House of Representatives and the Senate shall be notified 10 days in advance of any such transfer: *Provided further*, That, upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred from an appropriation are not necessary, such amounts may be transferred back to that appropriation: *Provided further*, That none of the funds made available by this title may be transferred pursuant to the authority in section 205 of division H of Public Law 115–31 or section 241(a) of the PHS Act.

SEC. 803. (a) As the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines necessary to respond to a critical hiring need for emergency response positions, after providing public notice and without regard to the provisions of sections 3309 through 3319 of title 5, United States Code, the Secretary may appoint candidates directly to the following positions to perform critical work directly relating to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, or Maria:

(1) Intermittent disaster-response personnel in the National Disaster Medical System, under section 2812 of the PHS Act (42 U.S.C. 300hh–11).

(2) Term or temporary appointments at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response.

(b) The authority under subsection (a) shall expire 270 days after the date of enactment of this section.

SEC. 804. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the interest payment of the United States Virgin Islands that was due under section 1202(b)(1) of the Social Security Act on September 29, 2017, shall not be due until September 28, 2018, and no interest shall accrue on such amount through September 28, 2018.

SEC. 805. Agencies receiving funds appropriated by this title shall each provide a monthly report to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate detailing the allocation and obligation of these funds by account, beginning not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act.

TITLE IX

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For an additional amount for the Government Accountability Office for “Salaries and Expenses”, \$14,000,000, to remain available until expended, for audits and investigations relating to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria and the calendar year 2017 wildfires: *Provided*, That not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, GAO shall submit to Congress a report describing the

United States Virgin Island’s economic and disaster recovery plan that defines the priorities, goals, and expected outcomes of the recovery effort based on damage assessments prepared pursuant to Federal law: *Provided further*, That GAO shall report on the internal control plans that are in place to provide oversight of Federal disaster funds to be used in recovery activities in the United States Virgin Islands, identify any deficiencies in such plans, and provide recommendations to address noted deficiencies: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

TITLE X

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For an additional amount for “Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps”, \$201,636,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: *Provided*, That none of the funds made available to the Navy and Marine Corps for recovery efforts related to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in this division shall be available for obligation until the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate receive form 1391 for each specific request: *Provided further*, That, not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy, or his designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of House of Representatives and the Senate a detailed expenditure plan for funds provided under this heading: *Provided further*, That such funds may be obligated or expended for planning and design and military construction projects not otherwise authorized by law: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

For an additional amount for “Military Construction, Army National Guard”, \$519,345,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: *Provided*, That none of the funds made available to the Army National Guard for recovery efforts related to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in this division shall be available for obligation until the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate receive form 1391 for each specific request: *Provided further*, That, not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act, the Director of the Army National Guard, or his designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a detailed expenditure plan for funds provided under this heading: *Provided further*, That such funds may be obligated or expended for planning and design and military construction projects not otherwise authorized by law: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

MEDICAL SERVICES

For an additional amount for “Medical Services”, \$11,075,000, to remain available

until September 30, 2019, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

MEDICAL SUPPORT AND COMPLIANCE

For an additional amount for “Medical Support and Compliance”, \$3,209,000, to remain available until September 30, 2019, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

For an additional amount for “Medical Facilities”, \$75,108,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: *Provided*, That none of these funds shall be available for obligation until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs submits to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a detailed expenditure plan for funds provided under this heading: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

For an additional amount for “Construction, Minor Projects”, \$4,088,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

GENERAL PROVISION—THIS TITLE

SEC. 1001. Notwithstanding section 18236(b) of title 10, United States Code, the Secretary of Defense shall contribute to Puerto Rico 100 percent of the total cost of construction (including the cost of architectural, engineering and design services) for the acquisition, construction, expansion, rehabilitation, or conversion of the Arroyo readiness center under paragraph (5) of section 18233(a) of title 10, United States Code.

TITLE XI

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

OPERATIONS

(AIRPORT AND AIRWAY TRUST FUND)

For an additional amount for “Operations”, \$35,000,000, to be derived from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund and to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of hurricanes occurring in calendar year 2017: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

(AIRPORT AND AIRWAY TRUST FUND)

For an additional amount for “Facilities and Equipment”, \$79,589,000, to be derived from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund and to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses related to the consequences of hurricanes occurring in calendar year 2017:

Provided, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAYS

EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM

For an additional amount for the Emergency Relief Program as authorized under section 125 of title 23, United States Code, \$1,374,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That notwithstanding section 125(d)(4) of title 23, United States Code, no limitation on the total obligations for projects under section 125 of such title shall apply to the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for fiscal year 2018 and fiscal year 2019: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding section 120(i)(1) of title 23, United States Code, for fiscal year 2018 and each fiscal year thereafter, Puerto Rico may use toll credits toward the non-Federal share requirement for emergency relief funds made available under section 125 of such title to respond to damage caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria: *Provided further*, That such amounts are designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM

For the “Public Transportation Emergency Relief Program” as authorized under section 5324 of title 49, United States Code, \$269,000,000 to remain available until expended, for transit systems affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria with major disaster declarations in 2017: *Provided*, That not more than three-quarters of one percent of the funds for public transportation emergency relief shall be available for administrative expenses and ongoing program management oversight as authorized under sections 5334 and 5338(f)(2) of such title and shall be in addition to any other appropriations for such purpose: *Provided further*, That such amounts are designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

For an additional amount for “Operations and Training”, \$10,000,000, to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses, including for dredging, related to damage to Maritime Administration facilities resulting from Hurricane Harvey: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for “Community Development Fund”, \$26,060,000,000, to remain available until expended, for necessary expenses for activities authorized under title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.) related to disaster relief, long-term recovery, restoration of infrastructure and housing, economic revitalization, and mitigation in the most impacted and distressed areas re-

sulting from a major disaster declared in 2017 (except as otherwise provided under this heading) pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.): *Provided*, That funds shall be awarded directly to the State, unit of general local government, or Indian tribe (as such term is defined in section 102 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974) at the discretion of the Secretary: *Provided further*, That of the amounts made available under this heading, up to \$13,560,000,000 shall be allocated to meet unmet needs for grantees that have received or will receive allocations for major disasters declared in 2017, and that such allocations shall include the States and units of local government affected by Hurricane Maria: *Provided further*, That of the amounts made available under this heading, no less than \$12,500,000,000 shall be allocated for mitigation activities to all grantees of funding provided under this heading, the same heading in chapter 9 of title X of division A of Public Law 113-2, section 420 of division L of Public Law 114-113, section 145 of division C of Public Law 114-223, section 192 of division C of Public Law 114-223 (as added by section 101(3) of division A of Public Law 114-254), section 421 of division K of Public Law 115-31, and the same heading in division B of Public Law 115-56, and that such mitigation activities shall be subject to the same terms and conditions of this heading, as determined by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That all such grantees shall receive an allocation of funds under the preceding proviso in the same proportion that the amount of funds each grantee received or will receive under the second proviso of this heading or the headings and sections specified in the previous proviso bears to the amount of all funds provided to all grantees specified in the previous proviso: *Provided further*, That of the amounts made available under the second and third provisos of this heading, the Secretary shall allocate to all such grantees an aggregate amount of not less than 33 percent of each such amount of funds provided under this heading within 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act based on the best available data: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall not prohibit the use of funds made available under this heading and the same heading in division B of Public Law 115-56 for non-federal share as authorized by section 105(a)(9) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(9)): *Provided further*, That of the amounts made available under this heading, grantees may establish grant programs to assist small businesses to recover from economic losses: *Provided further*, That as a condition of making any grant, the Secretary shall certify in advance that such grantee has in place proficient financial controls and procurement processes and has established adequate procedures to prevent any duplication of benefits as defined by section 312 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5155), to ensure timely expenditure of funds, to maintain comprehensive websites regarding all disaster recovery activities assisted with these funds, and to detect and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of funds: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall require grantees to maintain on a public website information containing common reporting criteria established by the Department that permits individuals and entities awaiting assistance and the general public to see how all grant funds are used, including copies of all relevant procurement documents, grantee administrative contracts and details of ongoing procurement processes, as determined by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That prior to the obligation of funds a grantee shall submit a

plan to the Secretary for approval detailing the proposed use of all funds, including criteria for eligibility and how the use of these funds will address long-term recovery, restoration of infrastructure and housing, economic revitalization, and mitigation in the most impacted and distressed areas: *Provided further*, That such funds may not be used for activities reimbursable by, or for which funds are made available by, the Federal Emergency Management Agency or the Army Corps of Engineers: *Provided further*, That funds allocated under this heading shall not be considered relevant to the non-disaster formula allocations made pursuant to section 106 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5306): *Provided further*, That a State, unit of general local government, or Indian tribe may use up to 5 percent of its allocation for administrative costs: *Provided further*, That the sixth proviso under this heading in the Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements, 2017 (division B of Public Law 115-56) is amended by striking “State or subdivision thereof” and inserting “State, unit of general local government, or Indian tribe (as such term is defined in section 102 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5302))”: *Provided further*, That in administering the funds under this heading, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development may waive, or specify alternative requirements for, any provision of any statute or regulation that the Secretary administers in connection with the obligation by the Secretary or the use by the recipient of these funds (except for requirements related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment), if the Secretary finds that good cause exists for the waiver or alternative requirement and such waiver or alternative requirement would not be inconsistent with the overall purpose of title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974: *Provided further*, That, notwithstanding the preceding proviso, recipients of funds provided under this heading that use such funds to supplement Federal assistance provided under section 402, 403, 404, 406, 407, 408(c)(4), or 502 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) may adopt, without review or public comment, any environmental review, approval, or permit performed by a Federal agency, and such adoption shall satisfy the responsibilities of the recipient with respect to such environmental review, approval or permit: *Provided further*, That, notwithstanding section 104(g)(2) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5304(g)(2)), the Secretary may, upon receipt of a request for release of funds and certification, immediately approve the release of funds for an activity or project assisted under this heading if the recipient has adopted an environmental review, approval or permit under the preceding proviso or the activity or project is categorically excluded from review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.): *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall publish via notice in the Federal Register any waiver, or alternative requirement, to any statute or regulation that the Secretary administers pursuant to title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 no later than 5 days before the effective date of such waiver or alternative requirement: *Provided further*, That the eighth proviso under this heading in the Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements, 2017 (division B of Public Law 115-56) is amended by inserting “408(c)(4),” after “407,”: *Provided further*, That of the amounts made available under this heading, up to \$10,000,000 shall be made available for capacity building and technical

assistance, including assistance on contracting and procurement processes, to support States, units of general local government, or Indian tribes (and their subrecipients) that receive allocations pursuant to this heading, received disaster recovery allocations under the same heading in Public Law 115-56, or may receive similar allocations for disaster recovery in future appropriations Acts: *Provided further*, That of the amounts made available under this heading, up to \$10,000,000 shall be transferred, in aggregate, to “Department of Housing and Urban Development—Program Office Salaries and Expenses—Community Planning and Development” for necessary costs, including information technology costs, of administering and overseeing the obligation and expenditure of amounts under this heading: *Provided further*, That the amount specified in the preceding proviso shall be combined with funds appropriated under the same heading and for the same purpose in Public Law 115-56 and the aggregate of such amounts shall be available for any of the purposes specified under this heading or the same heading in Public Law 115-56 without limitation: *Provided further*, That of the funds made available under this heading, \$10,000,000 shall be transferred to the Office of the Inspector General for necessary costs of overseeing and auditing funds made available under this heading: *Provided further*, That any funds made available under this heading that remain available, after the other funds under such heading have been allocated for necessary expenses for activities authorized under such heading, shall be used for additional activities, including mitigation, in the most impacted and distressed areas resulting from major disasters declared in 2011 and subsequent years: *Provided further*, That such remaining funds shall be awarded to grantees of funding provided for disaster relief under this heading, the same heading in chapter 9 of title X of division A of Public Law 113-2, section 420 of division L of Public Law 114-113, section 145 of division C of Public Law 114-223, section 192 of division C of Public Law 114-223 (as added by section 101(3) of division A of Public Law 114-254), section 421 of division K of Public Law 115-31, and the same heading in division B of Public Law 115-56, subject to the same terms and conditions under this heading and such headings and sections respectively: *Provided further*, That each such grantee shall receive an allocation from such remaining funds in the same proportion that the amount of funds such grantee received under the second proviso under this heading and under the Acts specified in the previous proviso bears to the amount of all funds provided to all grantees specified in the previous proviso: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

TITLE XII

GENERAL PROVISIONS—THIS DIVISION

SEC. 1201. Each amount appropriated or made available by this division is in addition to amounts otherwise appropriated for the fiscal year involved.

SEC. 1202. No part of any appropriation contained in this division shall remain available for obligation beyond the current fiscal year unless expressly so provided herein.

SEC. 1203. Unless otherwise provided for by this division, the additional amounts appropriated by this division to appropriations accounts shall be available under the authorities and conditions applicable to such appropriations accounts for fiscal year 2018.

SEC. 1204. The terms and conditions applicable to the funds provided in this division,

including those provided by this title, shall also apply to the funds made available in division B of Public Law 115-56 and in division A of Public Law 115-72.

SEC. 1205. Each amount designated in this division by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates all such amounts and transmits such designations to the Congress.

SEC. 1206. (a) Section 305 of division A of the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-72) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking “(1) Not later than December 31, 2017,” and inserting “Not later than March 31, 2018,”; and

(B) by striking paragraph (2); and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “receiving funds under this division” and inserting “expending more than \$10,000,000 of funds provided by this division and division B of Public Law 115-56 in any one fiscal year”.

(b) Section 305 of division A of the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-72), as amended by this section, shall apply to funds appropriated by this division as if they had been appropriated by that division.

(c) In order to proactively prepare for oversight of future disaster relief funding, not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall issue standard guidance for Federal agencies to use in designing internal control plans for disaster relief funding. This guidance shall leverage existing internal control review processes and shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:

(1) Robust criteria for identifying and documenting incremental risks and mitigating controls related to the funding.

(2) Guidance for documenting the linkage between the incremental risks related to disaster funding and efforts to address known internal control risks.

SEC. 1207. Any agency or department provided funding in excess of \$3,000,000,000 by this division, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Corps of Engineers, is directed to provide a report to the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives regarding its efforts to provide adequate resources and technical assistance for small, low-income communities affected by natural disasters.

SEC. 1208. (a) Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act and in coordination with the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, with support and contributions from the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Energy, and other Federal agencies having responsibilities defined under the National Disaster Recovery Framework, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall submit to Congress a report describing the Commonwealth’s 12- and 24-month economic and disaster recovery plan that—

(1) defines the priorities, goals, and expected outcomes of the recovery effort for the Commonwealth, based on damage assessments prepared pursuant to Federal law, if applicable, including—

(A) housing;

(B) economic issues, including workforce development and industry expansion and cultivation;

(C) health and social services;

(D) natural and cultural resources;

(E) governance and civic institutions;

(F) electric power systems and grid restoration;

(G) environmental issues, including solid waste facilities; and

(H) other infrastructure systems, including repair, restoration, replacement, and improvement of public infrastructure such as water and wastewater treatment facilities, communications networks, and transportation infrastructure;

(2) is consistent with—

(A) the Commonwealth's fiscal capacity to provide long-term operation and maintenance of rebuilt or replaced assets;

(B) alternative procedures and associated programmatic guidance adopted by the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Administration pursuant to section 428 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5189f); and

(C) actions as may be necessary to mitigate vulnerabilities to future extreme weather events and natural disasters and increase community resilience, including encouraging the adoption and enforcement of the latest published editions of relevant consensus-based codes, specifications, and standards that incorporate the latest hazard-resistant designs and establish minimum acceptable criteria for the design, construction, and maintenance of residential structures and facilities for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of the buildings' users against disasters;

(3) promotes transparency and accountability through appropriate public notification, outreach, and hearings;

(4) identifies performance metrics for assessing and reporting on the progress toward achieving the Commonwealth's recovery goals, as identified under paragraph (1);

(5) is developed in coordination with the Oversight Board established under PROMESA; and

(6) is certified by that Oversight Board to be consistent with the purpose set forth in section 101(a) of PROMESA (48 U.S.C. 2121(a)).

(b) At the end of every 30-day period before the submission of the report described in subsection (a), the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, in coordination with the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, shall provide to Congress interim status updates on progress developing such report.

(c) At the end of every 180-day period after the submission of the report described in subsection (a), the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, in coordination with the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, shall make public a report on progress achieving the goals set forth in such report.

(d) During the development, and after the submission, of the report require by in subsection (a), the Oversight Board may provide to Congress reports on the status of coordination with the Governor of Puerto Rico.

(e) Amounts made available by this division to a covered territory for response to or recovery from Hurricane Irma or Hurricane Maria in an aggregate amount greater than \$10,000,000 may be reviewed by the Oversight Board under the Oversight Board's authority under 204(b)(2) of PROMESA (48 U.S.C. 2144(b)(2)).

(f) When developing a Fiscal Plan while the recovery plan required under subsection (a) is in development and in effect, the Oversight Board shall use and incorporate, to the greatest extent feasible, damage assessments prepared pursuant to Federal law.

(g) For purposes of this section, the terms "covered territory" and "Oversight Board" have the meaning given those term in section 5 of PROMESA (48 U.S.C. 2104).

This division may be cited as the "Further Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements, 2017".

DIVISION B—DISASTER RECOVERY REFORM ACT

- Sec. 2001. Applicability.
- Sec. 2002. State defined.
- Sec. 2003. Wildfire prevention.
- Sec. 2004. Additional activities.
- Sec. 2005. Eligibility for code implementation and enforcement.
- Sec. 2006. Program improvements.
- Sec. 2007. Prioritization of facilities.
- Sec. 2008. Guidance on evacuation routes.
- Sec. 2009. Duplication of benefits.
- Sec. 2010. State administration of assistance for direct temporary housing and permanent housing construction.
- Sec. 2011. Assistance to individuals and households.
- Sec. 2012. Multifamily lease and repair assistance.
- Sec. 2013. Federal disaster assistance non-profit fairness.
- Sec. 2014. Management costs.
- Sec. 2015. Flexibility.
- Sec. 2016. Additional disaster assistance.
- Sec. 2017. National veterinary emergency teams.
- Sec. 2018. Dispute resolution pilot program.
- Sec. 2019. Emergency relief.
- Sec. 2020. Unified Federal environmental and historic preservation review.
- Sec. 2021. Closeout incentives.
- Sec. 2022. Performance of services.
- Sec. 2023. Study to streamline and consolidate information collection.
- Sec. 2024. Agency accountability.
- Sec. 2025. Audit of contracts.
- Sec. 2026. Inspector general audit of FEMA contracts for tarps and plastic sheeting.
- Sec. 2027. Relief organizations.
- Sec. 2028. Guidance on inundated and submerged roads.
- Sec. 2029. Authorities.
- Sec. 2030. Recoupment of certain assistance prohibited.
- Sec. 2031. Statute of limitations.
- Sec. 2032. Technical assistance and recommendations.
- Sec. 2033. Guidance on hazard mitigation assistance.
- Sec. 2034. Local impact.
- Sec. 2035. Additional hazard mitigation activities.
- Sec. 2036. National public infrastructure predisaster hazard mitigation.
- Sec. 2037. Additional mitigation activities.
- Sec. 2038. Federal cost-share adjustments for repair, restoration, and replacement of damaged facilities.

SEC. 2001. APPLICABILITY.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, the amendments in this division to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) apply to each major disaster and emergency declared by the President on or after August 1, 2017, under such Act.

SEC. 2002. STATE DEFINED.

In this division, the term "State" has the meaning given that term in section 102(4) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122(4)).

SEC. 2003. WILDFIRE PREVENTION.

(a) MITIGATION ASSISTANCE.—Section 420 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5187) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (c) the following:

“(d) HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE.—Whether or not a major disaster is declared, the President may provide hazard mitigation

assistance in accordance with section 404 in any area affected by a fire for which assistance was provided under this section.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 404(a) (42 U.S.C. 5170c(a)) (as amended by section 37(a) of this Act)—

(A) by inserting before the first period “, or any area affected by a fire for which assistance was provided under section 420”; and

(B) in the third sentence by inserting “or event under section 420” after “major disaster” each place it appears; and

(2) in section 322(e)(1) (42 U.S.C. 5165(e)(1)), by inserting “or event under section 420” after “major disaster” each place it appears.

(c) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act and annually thereafter, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, and the Appropriations Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report containing a summary of any projects carried out, and any funding provided to those projects, under subsection (d) of section 420 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5187) (as amended by this section).

SEC. 2004. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES.

Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170c) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(f) USE OF ASSISTANCE.—Recipients of hazard mitigation assistance provided under this section and section 203 may use the assistance to conduct activities to help reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss, or suffering in any area affected by a wildfire or windstorm, including—

“(1) reseeding ground cover with quick-growing or native species;

“(2) mulching with straw or chipped wood;

“(3) constructing straw, rock, or log dams in small tributaries to prevent flooding;

“(4) placing logs and other erosion barriers to catch sediment on hill slopes;

“(5) installing debris traps to modify road and trail drainage mechanisms;

“(6) modifying or removing culverts to allow drainage to flow freely;

“(7) adding drainage dips and constructing emergency spillways to keep roads and bridges from washing out during floods;

“(8) planting grass to prevent the spread of noxious weeds;

“(9) installing warning signs;

“(10) establishing defensible space measures;

“(11) reducing hazardous fuels; and

“(12) windstorm damage, including replacing or installing electrical transmission or distribution utility pole structures with poles that are resilient to extreme wind and combined ice and wind loadings for the basic wind speeds and ice conditions associated with the relevant location.”.

SEC. 2005. ELIGIBILITY FOR CODE IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT.

Section 406(a)(2) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5172(a)(2)) is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (B);

(2) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (C) and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(D) base and overtime wages for extra hires to facilitate the implementation and enforcement of adopted building codes for a

period of not more than 180 days after the major disaster is declared.”.

SEC. 2006. PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) HAZARD MITIGATION.—Section 406(c) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5172(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(A), by striking “90 percent of”; and

(2) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “75 percent of”.

(b) PARTICIPATION.—Section 428(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5189f) is amended—

(1) by inserting “(1) IN GENERAL.—” before “Participation in”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) NO CONDITIONS.—The President may not condition the provision of Federal assistance under this Act on the election by a State, Tribal, or local government, or owner or operator of a private nonprofit facility to participate in the alternative procedures adopted under this section.”.

(c) CERTIFICATION.—Section 428(e)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5189f(e)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (E), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (F), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(G) once certified by a professionally licensed engineer and accepted by the Administrator, the estimates on which grants made pursuant to this section are based shall be presumed to be reasonable and eligible costs, as long as there is no evidence of fraud.”.

SEC. 2007. PRIORITIZATION OF FACILITIES.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall provide guidance and training on an annual basis to State, Tribal, and local governments, first responders, and utility companies on—

(1) the need to prioritize assistance to hospitals, nursing homes, and other long-term care facilities to ensure that such health care facilities remain functioning or return to functioning as soon as practicable during power outages caused by natural hazards, including severe weather events; and

(2) how hospitals, nursing homes and other long-term care facilities should adequately prepare for power outages during a major disaster or emergency.

SEC. 2008. GUIDANCE ON EVACUATION ROUTES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) IDENTIFICATION.—The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, in coordination with the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, shall develop and issue guidance for State, local, and Tribal governments regarding the identification of evacuation routes.

(2) GUIDANCE.—The Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, in coordination with the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, shall revise existing guidance or issue new guidance as appropriate for State, local, and Tribal governments regarding the design, construction, maintenance, and repair of evacuation routes.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—

(1) IDENTIFICATION.—In developing the guidance under subsection (a)(1), the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall consider—

(A) whether evacuation routes have resisted impacts and recovered quickly from disasters, regardless of cause;

(B) the need to evacuate special needs populations, including—

(i) individuals with a physical or mental disability;

(ii) individuals in schools, daycare centers, mobile home parks, prisons, nursing homes

and other long-term care facilities, and detention centers;

(iii) individuals with limited-English proficiency;

(iv) the elderly; and

(v) individuals who are tourists, seasonal workers, or homeless;

(C) the sharing of information and other public communications with evacuees during evacuations;

(D) the sheltering of evacuees, including the care, protection, and sheltering of animals;

(E) the return of evacuees to their homes; and

(F) such other items the Administrator considers appropriate.

(2) DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR.—In revising or issuing guidance under (a)(2), the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration shall consider—

(A) methods that assist evacuation routes to—

(i) withstand likely risks to viability, including flammability and hydrostatic forces;

(ii) improve durability, strength (including the ability to withstand tensile stresses and compressive stresses), and sustainability; and

(iii) provide for long-term cost savings;

(B) the ability of evacuation routes to effectively manage contraflow operations;

(C) for evacuation routes on public lands, the viewpoints of the applicable Federal land management agency regarding emergency operations, sustainability, and resource protection; and

(D) such other items the Administrator considers appropriate.

SEC. 2009. DUPLICATION OF BENEFITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 312(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5155(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(4) WAIVER OF GENERAL PROHIBITION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The President may waive the general prohibition provided in subsection (a) upon request of a Governor on behalf of the State or on behalf of a person, business concern, or any other entity suffering losses as a result of a major disaster or emergency, if the President finds such waiver is in the public interest and will not result in waste, fraud, or abuse. In making this decision, the President may consider the following:

“(i) The recommendations of the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency made in consultation with the Federal agency or agencies administering the duplicative program.

“(ii) If a waiver is granted, the assistance to be funded is cost effective.

“(iii) Equity and good conscience.

“(iv) Other matters of public policy considered appropriate by the President.

“(B) GRANT OR DENIAL OF WAIVER.—A request under subparagraph (A) shall be granted or denied not later than 45 days after submission of such request.

“(C) PROHIBITION ON DETERMINATION THAT LOAN IS A DUPLICATION.—Notwithstanding subsection (c), in carrying out subparagraph (A), the President may not determine that a loan is a duplication of assistance, provided that all Federal assistance is used toward a loss suffered as a result of the major disaster or emergency.”.

(b) FUNDING OF A FEDERALLY AUTHORIZED WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT.—

(1) ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.—Notwithstanding section 312 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5155) and its implementing regulations, assistance provided pursuant to section 404 of such Act may be used to fund ac-

tivities authorized for construction within the scope of a federally authorized water resources development project of the Army Corps of Engineers if such activities are also eligible activities under such section.

(2) FEDERAL FUNDING.—All Federal funding provided under section 404 pursuant to this section shall be applied toward the Federal share of such project.

(3) NON-FEDERAL MATCH.—All non-Federal matching funds required under section 404 pursuant to this section shall be applied toward the non-Federal share of such project.

(4) TOTAL FEDERAL SHARE.—Funding provided under section 404 pursuant to this section may not exceed the total Federal share for such project.

(5) NO EFFECT.—Nothing in this section shall—

(A) affect the cost-share requirement of a hazard mitigation measure under section 404;

(B) affect the eligibility criteria for a hazard mitigation measure under section 404;

(C) affect the cost share requirements of a federally authorized water resources development project; and

(D) affect the responsibilities of a non-Federal interest with respect to the project, including those related to the provision of lands, easements, rights-of-way, dredge material disposal areas, and necessary relocations.

(c) APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply to each disaster and emergency declared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) after January 1, 2016.

SEC. 2010. STATE ADMINISTRATION OF ASSISTANCE FOR DIRECT TEMPORARY HOUSING AND PERMANENT HOUSING CONSTRUCTION.

Section 408(f) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174(f)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking the paragraph heading and inserting “STATE- OR TRIBAL-ADMINISTERED ASSISTANCE AND OTHER NEEDS ASSISTANCE.”;

(2) in paragraph (1)(A)—

(A) by striking “financial”; and

(B) by striking “subsection (e)” and inserting “subsections (c)(1)(B), (c)(4), and (e) if the President and the State or Tribal government comply, as determined by the Administrator, with paragraph (3)”;

(3) in paragraph (1)(B)—

(A) by striking “financial”; and

(B) by striking “subsection (e)” and inserting “subsections (c)(1)(B), (c)(4), and (e)”;

and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) IN GENERAL.—

“(A) APPLICATION.—A State or Tribal government desiring to provide assistance under subsection (c)(1)(B), (c)(4), or (e) shall submit to the President an application for a grant to provide financial assistance under the program.

“(B) CRITERIA.—The President, in consultation and coordination with State, Tribal, and local governments, shall establish criteria for the approval of applications submitted under subparagraph (A). The criteria shall include, at a minimum—

“(i) the demonstrated ability of the State or Tribal government to manage the program under this section;

“(ii) there being in effect a plan approved by the President as to how the State or Tribal government will comply with applicable Federal laws and regulations and how the State or Tribal government will provide assistance under its plan;

“(iii) a requirement that the State, Tribal, or local government comply with rules and regulations established pursuant to subsection (j); and

“(iv) a requirement that the President, or the designee of the President, comply with subsection (i).

“(C) QUALITY ASSURANCE.—Before approving an application submitted under this section, the President, or the designee of the President, shall institute adequate policies, procedures, and internal controls to prevent waste, fraud, abuse, and program mismanagement for this program and for programs under subsections (c)(1)(B), (c)(4), and (e). The President shall monitor and conduct quality assurance activities on a State or Tribal government’s implementation of programs under subsections (c)(1)(B), (c)(4), and (e). If, after approving an application of a State or Tribal government submitted under this section, the President determines that the State or Tribal government is not administering the program established by this section in a manner satisfactory to the President, the President shall withdraw the approval.

“(D) AUDITS.—The Office of the inspector general shall provide for periodic audits of the programs administered by States and Tribal governments under this subsection.

“(E) APPLICABLE LAWS.—All Federal laws applicable to the management, administration, or contracting of the programs by the Federal Emergency Management Agency under this section shall be applicable to the management, administration, or contracting by a non-Federal entity under this section.

“(F) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the inspector general of the Department of Homeland Security shall submit a report to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives on the State or Tribal government’s role to provide assistance under this section. The report shall contain an assessment of the effectiveness of the State or Tribal government’s role to provide assistance under this section, including—

“(i) whether the State or Tribal government’s role helped to improve the general speed of disaster recovery;

“(ii) whether the State or Tribal government providing assistance under this section had the capacity to administer this section; and

“(iii) recommendations for changes to improve the program if the State or Tribal government’s role to administer the programs should be continued.

“(G) PROHIBITION.—The President may not condition the provision of Federal assistance under this Act by a State or Tribal government requesting a grant under this section.

“(H) MISCELLANEOUS.—

“(i) NOTICE AND COMMENT.—The Administrator may waive notice and comment rulemaking, if the Administrator determines doing so is necessary to expeditiously implement this section, and may carry out this section as a pilot program until such regulations are promulgated.

“(ii) FINAL RULE.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Administrator shall issue final regulations to implement this subsection as amended by the Disaster Recovery Reform Act.

“(iii) WAIVER AND EXPIRATION.—The authority under clause (i) and any pilot program implemented pursuant to such clause shall expire 2 years after the date of enactment of this paragraph or upon issuance of final regulations pursuant to clause (ii), whichever occurs sooner.”.

SEC. 2011. ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS.

Section 408(h) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174(h)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting “, excluding financial assistance to rent alternate housing accommodations under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) and financial assistance to address other needs under subsection (e)” after “disaster”;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3);

(3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

“(2) OTHER NEEDS ASSISTANCE.—The maximum financial assistance any individual or household may receive under subsection (e) shall be equivalent to the amount set forth in paragraph (1) with respect to a single major disaster.”;

(4) in paragraph (3) (as so redesignated), by striking “paragraph (1)” and inserting “paragraphs (1) and (2)”;

(5) by inserting after paragraph (3) (as so redesignated) the following:

“(4) EXCLUSION OF NECESSARY EXPENSES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.—

“(A) The maximum amount of assistance established under paragraph (1) shall exclude expenses to repair or replace damaged accessibility-related improvements under paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) of subsection (c) for individuals with disabilities.

“(B) The maximum amount of assistance established under paragraph (2) shall exclude expenses to repair or replace accessibility-related personal property under subsection (e)(2) for individuals with disabilities.”.

SEC. 2012. MULTIFAMILY LEASE AND REPAIR ASSISTANCE.

(a) LEASE AND REPAIR OF RENTAL UNITS FOR TEMPORARY HOUSING.—Section 408(c)(1)(B)(ii)(II) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174(c)(1)(B)(ii)(II)) is amended to read as follows:

“(II) IMPROVEMENTS OR REPAIRS.—Under the terms of any lease agreement for property entered into under this subsection, the value of the improvements or repairs shall be deducted from the value of the lease agreement.”.

(b) RENTAL PROPERTIES IMPACTED.—Section 408(c)(1)(B)(ii)(I)(aa) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174(c)(1)(B)(ii)(I)(aa)) is amended to read as follows:

“(aa) enter into lease agreements with owners of multifamily rental property impacted by a major disaster or located in areas covered by a major disaster declaration to house individuals and households eligible for assistance under this section; and”.

(c) INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the inspector general of the Department of Homeland Security shall assess the use of the authority provided under section 408(c)(1)(B) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174(c)(1)(B)), including the adequacy of any benefit-cost analysis done to justify the use of this alternative, and submit a report on the results of that review to the appropriate committees of Congress.

SEC. 2013. FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE NON-PROFIT FAIRNESS.

(a) DEFINITION OF PRIVATE NONPROFIT FACILITY.—Section 102(11)(B) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122(11)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

“(B) ADDITIONAL FACILITIES.—In addition to the facilities described in subparagraph (A), the term ‘private nonprofit facility’ includes any private nonprofit facility that provides essential services of a governmental

nature to the general public (including museums, zoos, performing arts facilities, community arts centers, community centers, houses of worship exempt from taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, libraries, homeless shelters, senior citizen centers, rehabilitation facilities, shelter workshops, food banks, broadcasting facilities, and facilities that provide health and safety services of a governmental nature), as defined by the President.”.

(b) REPAIR, RESTORATION, AND REPLACEMENT OF DAMAGED FACILITIES.—Section 406(a)(3) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5172(a)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(C) HOUSES OF WORSHIP.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—A church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other house of worship, and a private nonprofit facility operated by a religious organization, shall be eligible for contributions under paragraph (1)(B) (subject to paragraph (3)(A)), without regard to the religious character of the facility or the primary religious use of the facility.

“(ii) LIMITATIONS.—Notwithstanding clause (i), in spaces dedicated to or primarily used for religious purposes, contributions under paragraph (1)(B) shall only be used to cover costs of purchasing or replacing, without limitation, the building structure, building enclosure components, building envelope, vertical and horizontal circulation, physical plant support spaces, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems (including heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, and fire and life safety systems), and related site improvements.”.

(c) APPLICABILITY.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall apply to the provision of assistance in response to a major disaster or emergency declared on or after October 28, 2012.

SEC. 2014. MANAGEMENT COSTS.

Section 324 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5165b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by striking “any administrative expense, and any other expense not directly chargeable to” and inserting “direct administrative cost, and any other administrative expense associated with”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking “Notwithstanding” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding”;

(B) by striking “establish” and inserting the following: “implement”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT COSTS.—The Administrator shall provide the following percentage rates, in addition to the eligible project costs, to cover direct and indirect costs of administering the following programs:

“(A) HAZARD MITIGATION.—A grantee under section 404 may be reimbursed not more than 15 percent of the total amount of the grant award under such section of which not more than 10 percent may be used by the grantee and 5 percent by the subgrantee for such costs.

“(B) PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.—A grantee under sections 403, 406, 407, and 502 may be reimbursed not more than 12 percent of the total award amount under such sections, of which not more than 7 percent may be used by the grantee and 5 percent by the subgrantee for such costs.”.

SEC. 2015. FLEXIBILITY.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “covered assistance” means assistance provided—

(1) under section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174); and

(2) in relation to a major disaster or emergency declared by the President under section 401 or 501 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170; 42 U.S.C. 5191) on or after October 28, 2012.

(b) **WAIVER AUTHORITY.**—Notwithstanding section 3716(e) of title 31, United States Code, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency—

(1) subject to paragraph (2), may waive a debt owed to the United States related to covered assistance provided to an individual or household if—

(A) the covered assistance was distributed based on an error by the Federal Emergency Management Agency;

(B) there was no fault on behalf of the debtor; and

(C) the collection of the debt would be against equity and good conscience; and

(2) may not waive a debt under paragraph (1) if the debt involves fraud, the presentation of a false claim, or misrepresentation by the debtor or any party having an interest in the claim.

(c) **MONITORING OF COVERED ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTED BASED ON ERROR.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The inspector general of the Department of Homeland Security shall monitor the distribution of covered assistance to individuals and households to determine the percentage of such assistance distributed based on an error.

(2) **REMOVAL OF WAIVER AUTHORITY BASED ON EXCESSIVE ERROR RATE.**—If the inspector general determines, with respect to any 12-month period, that the amount of covered assistance distributed based on an error by the Federal Emergency Management Agency exceeds 4 percent of the total amount of covered assistance distributed—

(A) the inspector general shall notify the Administrator and publish the determination in the Federal Register; and

(B) with respect to any major disaster or emergency declared by the President under section 401 or section 501, respectively, of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170; 42 U.S.C. 5191) after the date on which the determination is published under subparagraph (A), the authority of the Administrator to waive debt under subsection (b) shall no longer be effective.

SEC. 2016. ADDITIONAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE.

(a) **DISASTER MITIGATION.**—Section 209 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3149) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) **DISASTER MITIGATION.**—In providing assistance pursuant to subsection (c)(2), if appropriate and as applicable, the Secretary may encourage hazard mitigation in assistance provided pursuant to such subsection.”.

(b) **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE COMPACT GRANTS.**—Section 661(d) of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 (6 U.S.C. 761(d)) is amended by striking “for fiscal year 2008” and inserting “for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022”.

(c) **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANTS PROGRAM.**—Section 662(f) of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 (6 U.S.C. 762(f)) is amended by striking “the program” and all that follows through “2012” and inserting “the program, for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022”.

(d) **TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.**—Section 403(a)(3) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170b(a)(3)) is amended by striking the second subparagraph (J).

SEC. 2017. NATIONAL VETERINARY EMERGENCY TEAMS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency

may establish one or more national veterinary emergency teams at accredited colleges of veterinary medicine.

(b) **RESPONSIBILITIES.**—A national veterinary emergency team shall—

(1) deploy with a team of the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System to assist with—

(A) veterinary care of canine search teams;

(B) locating and treating companion animals, service animals, livestock, and other animals; and

(C) surveillance and treatment of zoonotic diseases;

(2) recruit, train, and certify veterinary professionals, including veterinary students, in accordance with an established set of plans and standard operating guidelines to carry out the duties associated with planning for and responding to emergencies as described in paragraph (1);

(3) assist State, Tribal, and local governments and nonprofit organizations in developing emergency management and evacuation plans that account for the care and rescue of animals and in improving local readiness for providing veterinary medical response during a disaster; and

(4) coordinate with the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Agriculture, State, Tribal, and local governments (including departments of animal and human health), veterinary and health care professionals, and volunteers.

SEC. 2018. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PILOT PROGRAM.

Section 1105(c) of the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013 (42 U.S.C. 5189a note) is amended by striking “2015” and inserting “2022”.

SEC. 2019. EMERGENCY RELIEF.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for each of fiscal years 2018 and 2019, obligations for projects undertaken to respond to damages caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria shall be excluded from any calculation of total obligations for purposes of section 125(d)(4) of title 23, United States Code.

SEC. 2020. UNIFIED FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW.

(a) **REVIEW AND ANALYSIS.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall review the Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation review process established pursuant to section 429 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5189g), and submit a report to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate that includes the following:

(1) An analysis of whether and how the unified process has expedited the interagency review process to ensure compliance with the environmental and historic requirements under Federal law relating to disaster recovery projects.

(2) A survey and analysis of categorical exclusions used by other Federal agencies that may be applicable to any activity related to a Presidentially declared major disaster or emergency under such Act.

(3) Recommendations on any further actions, including any legislative proposals, needed to expedite and streamline the review process.

(b) **REGULATIONS.**—After completing the review, survey, and analyses under subsection (a), but not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and after providing notice and opportunity for public comment, the Administrator shall issue regulations to

implement any regulatory recommendations, including any categorical exclusions identified under subsection (a), to the extent that the categorical exclusions meet the criteria for a categorical exclusion under section 1508.4 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, and section II of DHS Instruction Manual 023-01-001-01.

SEC. 2021. CLOSEOUT INCENTIVES.

(a) **FACILITATING CLOSEOUT.**—Section 705 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5205) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) **FACILITATING CLOSEOUT.**—

“(1) **INCENTIVES.**—The Administrator may develop incentives and penalties that encourage State, Tribal, or local governments to close out expenditures and activities on a timely basis related to disaster or emergency assistance.

“(2) **AGENCY REQUIREMENTS.**—The Agency shall, consistent with applicable regulations and required procedures, meet its responsibilities to improve closeout practices and reduce the time to close disaster program awards.”.

(b) **REGULATIONS.**—The Administrator shall issue regulations to implement this section.

SEC. 2022. PERFORMANCE OF SERVICES.

Section 306 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5149) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(c) The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency is authorized to appoint temporary personnel, after serving continuously for 3 years, to positions in the Agency in the same manner that competitive service employees with competitive status are considered for transfer, reassignment, or promotion to such positions. An individual appointed under this subsection shall become a career-conditional employee, unless the employee has already completed the service requirements for career tenure.”.

SEC. 2023. STUDY TO STREAMLINE AND CONSOLIDATE INFORMATION COLLECTION.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall—

(1) in coordination with the Small Business Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other appropriate agencies, conduct a study and develop a plan, consistent with law, under which the collection of information from disaster assistance applicants and grantees will be modified, streamlined, expedited, efficient, flexible, consolidated, and simplified to be less burdensome, duplicative, and time consuming for applicants and grantees;

(2) in coordination with the Small Business Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other appropriate agencies, develop a plan for the regular collection and reporting of information on Federal disaster assistance awarded, including the establishment and maintenance of a website for presenting the information to the public; and

(3) submit the plans to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

SEC. 2024. AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY.

Title IV of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 430. AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY.

“(a) **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.**—Not later than 5 days after an award of a public assistance grant is made under section 406 that is in excess of \$1,000,000, the Administrator shall publish on the Agency’s website the specifics of each such grant award, including—

“(1) identifying the Federal Emergency Management Agency Region;

“(2) the disaster or emergency declaration number;

“(3) the State, county, and applicant name;

“(4) if the applicant is a private nonprofit organization;

“(5) the damage category code;

“(6) the amount of the Federal share obligated; and

“(7) the date of the award.

“(b) MISSION ASSIGNMENTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 5 days after the issuance of a mission assignment or mission assignment task order, the Administrator shall publish on the Agency’s website any mission assignment or mission assignment task order to another Federal department or agency regarding a major disaster in excess of \$1,000,000, including—

“(A) the name of the impacted State or Tribe;

“(B) the disaster declaration for such State or Tribe;

“(C) the assigned agency;

“(D) the assistance requested;

“(E) a description of the disaster;

“(F) the total cost estimate;

“(G) the amount obligated;

“(H) the State or Tribal cost share, if applicable;

“(I) the authority under which the mission assignment or mission assignment task order was directed; and

“(J) if applicable, the date a State or Tribe requested the mission assignment.

“(2) RECORDING CHANGES.—Not later than 10 days after the last day of each month until a mission assignment or mission assignment task order described in paragraph (1) is completed and closed out, the Administrator shall update any changes to the total cost estimate and the amount obligated.

“(c) DISASTER RELIEF MONTHLY REPORT.—Not later than 10 days after the first day of each month, the Administrator shall publish on the Agency’s website reports, including a specific description of the methodology and the source data used in developing such reports, including—

“(1) an estimate of the amounts for the fiscal year covered by the President’s most recent budget pursuant to section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, including—

“(A) the unobligated balance of funds to be carried over from the prior fiscal year to the budget year;

“(B) the unobligated balance of funds to be carried over from the budget year to the budget year plus 1;

“(C) the amount of obligations for non-catastrophic events for the budget year;

“(D) the amount of obligations for the budget year for catastrophic events delineated by event and by State;

“(E) the total amount that has been previously obligated or will be required for catastrophic events delineated by event and by State for all prior years, the current fiscal year, the budget year, and each fiscal year thereafter;

“(F) the amount of previously obligated funds that will be recovered for the budget year;

“(G) the amount that will be required for obligations for emergencies, as described in section 102(1), major disasters, as described in section 102(2), fire management assistance grants, as described in section 420, surge activities, and disaster readiness and support activities; and

“(H) the amount required for activities not covered under section 251(b)(2)(D)(iii) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(D)(iii)); and

“(2) an estimate or actual amounts, if available, of the following for the current

fiscal year shall be submitted not later than the fifth day of each month, published by the Administrator on the Agency’s website not later than the fifth day of each month:

“(A) A summary of the amount of appropriations made available by source, the transfers executed, the previously allocated funds recovered, and the commitments, allocations, and obligations made.

“(B) A table of disaster relief activity delineated by month, including—

“(i) the beginning and ending balances;

“(ii) the total obligations to include amounts obligated for fire assistance, emergencies, surge, and disaster support activities;

“(iii) the obligations for catastrophic events delineated by event and by State; and

“(iv) the amount of previously obligated funds that are recovered.

“(C) A summary of allocations, obligations, and expenditures for catastrophic events delineated by event.

“(D) The cost of the following categories of spending:

“(i) Public assistance.

“(ii) Individual assistance.

“(iii) Mitigation.

“(iv) Administrative.

“(v) Operations.

“(vi) Any other relevant category (including emergency measures and disaster resources) delineated by disaster.

“(E) The date on which funds appropriated will be exhausted.

“(d) CONTRACTS.—

“(1) INFORMATION.—Not later than 10 days after the first day of each month, the Administrator shall publish on the Agency’s website the specifics of each contract in excess of \$1,000,000 that the Agency enters into, including—

“(A) the name of the party;

“(B) the date the contract was awarded;

“(C) the amount and scope of the contract;

“(D) if the contract was awarded through competitive bidding process;

“(E) if no competitive bidding process was used, the reason why competitive bidding was not used; and

“(F) the authority used to bypass the competitive bidding process.

The information shall be delineated by disaster, if applicable, and specify the damage category code, if applicable.

“(2) REPORT.—Not later than 10 days after the last day of the fiscal year, the Administrator shall provide a report to the appropriate committees of Congress summarizing the following information for the preceding fiscal year:

“(A) The number of contracts awarded without competitive bidding.

“(B) The reasons why a competitive bidding process was not used.

“(C) The total amount of contracts awarded with no competitive bidding.

“(D) The damage category codes, if applicable, for contracts awarded without competitive bidding.”

SEC. 2025. AUDIT OF CONTRACTS.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall not reimburse a State, Tribe, or local government or the owner or operator of a private nonprofit facility for any activities made pursuant to a contract entered into after August 1, 2017, that prohibits the Administrator or the Comptroller General of the United States from auditing or otherwise reviewing all aspects relating to the contract.

SEC. 2026. INSPECTOR GENERAL AUDIT OF FEMA CONTRACTS FOR TARPS AND PLASTIC SHEETING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the

inspector general of the Department of Homeland Security shall initiate an audit of the contracts awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (in this section referred to as “FEMA”) for tarps and plastic sheeting for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands in response to Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In carrying out the audit under subsection (a), the inspector general shall review—

(1) the contracting process used by FEMA to evaluate offerors and award the relevant contracts to contractors;

(2) FEMA’s assessment of the past performance of the contractors, including any historical information showing that the contractors had supported large-scale delivery quantities in the past;

(3) FEMA’s assessment of the capacity of the contractors to carry out the relevant contracts, including with respect to inventory, production, and financial capabilities;

(4) how FEMA ensured that the contractors met the terms of the relevant contracts; and

(5) whether the failure of the contractors to meet the terms of the relevant contracts and FEMA’s subsequent cancellation of the relevant contracts affected the provision of tarps and plastic sheeting to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date of initiation of the audit under subsection (a), the inspector general shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the results of the audit, including findings and recommendations.

SEC. 2027. RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS.

Section 309 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5152) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “and other relief or” and inserting “long-term recovery groups, domestic hunger relief, and other relief, or”; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “and other relief or” and inserting “long-term recovery groups, domestic hunger relief, and other relief, or”.

SEC. 2028. GUIDANCE ON INUNDATED AND SUBMERGED ROADS.

The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, in coordination with the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, shall develop and issue guidance for State, local, and Tribal governments regarding repair, restoration, and replacement of inundated and submerged roads damaged or destroyed by a major disaster, and for associated expenses incurred by the Government, with respect to roads eligible for assistance under section 406 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5172).

SEC. 2029. AUTHORITIES.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the non-federally funded actions of private parties and State, local, or Tribal governments, on State, local, Tribal, and private land, and the effects of those actions, shall not be attributed to the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s actions under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.), the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4002 et seq.), the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (subtitle A of title II of division F of Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 916), and the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–89; 128 Stat. 1020) for the purposes of section 7 (16 U.S.C. 1536) and section 9 (16 U.S.C. 1538) of the Endangered Species Act. Actions taken under the

National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014, that may influence private actions do not create a Federal nexus for the purpose of applying the requirements of section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536).

SEC. 2030. RECOUPMENT OF CERTAIN ASSISTANCE PROHIBITED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 3716(e) of title 31, United States Code, and unless there is evidence of civil or criminal fraud, the Federal Emergency Management Agency may not take any action to recoup covered assistance from the recipient of such assistance if the receipt of such assistance occurred on a date that is more than 3 years before the date on which the Federal Emergency Management Agency first provides to the recipient written notification of an intent to recoup.

(b) COVERED ASSISTANCE DEFINED.—In this section, the term “covered assistance” means assistance provided—

(1) under section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174); and

(2) in relation to a major disaster or emergency declared by the President under section 401 or 501 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5170; 42 U.S.C. 5191) on or after January 1, 2012.

SEC. 2031. STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 705 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5205) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) by striking “Except” and inserting “Notwithstanding section 3716(e) of title 31, United States Code, and except”; and

(B) by striking “report for the disaster or emergency” and inserting “report for project completion as certified by the grantee”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1) by striking “report for the disaster or emergency” and inserting “report for project completion as certified by the grantee”; and

(B) in paragraph (3) by inserting “for project completion as certified by the grantee” after “final expenditure report”.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—With respect to disaster or emergency assistance provided to a State or local government on or after January 1, 2004—

(A) no administrative action may be taken to recover a payment of such assistance after the date of enactment of this Act if the action is prohibited under section 705(a)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5205(a)(1)), as amended by subsection (a); and

(B) any administrative action to recover a payment of such assistance that is pending on such date of enactment shall be terminated if the action is prohibited under section 705(a)(1) of that Act, as amended by subsection (a).

(2) LIMITATION.—This section, including the amendments made by this section, may not be construed to invalidate or otherwise affect any administration action completed before the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2032. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

(a) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall provide technical assistance to a common interest community that provides essential services of a governmental nature on actions that a common interest community may take in order to be eligible to receive reimbursement from a grantee that receives funds from the Agency for certain activities performed after an event that results in a disaster declaration.

(b) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall provide to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a legislative proposal on how to provide eligibility for disaster assistance with respect to common areas of condominiums and housing cooperatives.

SEC. 2033. GUIDANCE ON HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall issue guidance regarding the acquisition of property for open space as a mitigation measure under section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170c) that includes—

(1) a process by which the State hazard mitigation officer appointed for such an acquisition shall, not later than 60 days after the applicant for assistance enters into an agreement with the Administrator regarding the acquisition, provide written notification to each affected unit of local government for such acquisition that includes—

(A) the location of the acquisition;

(B) the State-local assistance agreement for the hazard mitigation grant program;

(C) a description of the acquisition; and

(D) a copy of the deed restriction; and

(2) recommendations for entering into and implementing a memorandum of understanding between units of local government and covered entities that includes provisions to allow an affected unit of local government notified under paragraph (1) to—

(A) use and maintain the open space created by such a project, consistent with section 404 (including related regulations, standards, and guidance) and consistent with all adjoining property, subject to the notification of the adjoining property, so long as the cost of the maintenance is borne by the local government; and

(B) maintain the open space pursuant to standards exceeding any local government standards defined in the agreement with the Administrator described under paragraph (1).

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section the following definitions apply:

(1) AFFECTED UNIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The term “affected unit of local government” means any entity covered by the definition of local government in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122), that has jurisdiction over the property subject to the acquisition described in subsection (a).

(2) COVERED ENTITY.—The term “covered entity” means—

(A) the grantee or subgrantee receiving assistance for an open space project described in subsection (a);

(B) the State in which such project is located; and

(C) the applicable Regional Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

SEC. 2034. LOCAL IMPACT.

In making recommendations to the President regarding a major disaster declaration, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall give greater weight and consideration to severe local impact or recent multiple disasters. Further, the Administrator shall make corresponding adjustments to the Agency’s policies and regulations regarding such consideration. Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Administrator shall report to the Committee on Transportation

and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate on the changes made to regulations and policies and the number of declarations that have been declared based on the new criteria.

SEC. 2035. ADDITIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION ACTIVITIES.

Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170c) is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(g) USE OF ASSISTANCE.—Recipients of hazard mitigation assistance provided under this section and section 203 may use the assistance to conduct activities to help reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss, or suffering in any area affected by earthquake hazards, including—

“(1) improvements to regional seismic networks in support of building a capability for earthquake early warning;

“(2) improvements to geodetic networks in support of building a capability for earthquake early warning; and

“(3) improvements to seismometers, Global Positioning System receivers, and associated infrastructure in support of building a capability for earthquake early warning.”.

SEC. 2036. NATIONAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PREDISASTER HAZARD MITIGATION.

(a) PREDISASTER HAZARD MITIGATION.—Section 203 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5133) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c) by inserting “Public Infrastructure” after “the National”; and

(2) in subsection (e)(1)(B)—

(A) by striking “or” at the end of clause (ii);

(B) by striking the period at the end of clause (iii) and inserting “; or”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(iv) to establish and carry out enforcement activities to implement the latest published editions of relevant consensus-based codes, specifications, and standards that incorporate the latest hazard-resistant designs and establish minimum acceptable criteria for the design, construction, and maintenance of residential structures and facilities that may be eligible for assistance under this Act for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of the buildings’ users against disasters.”;

(3) in subsection (f)—

(A) in paragraph (1) by inserting “for mitigation activities that are cost effective” after “competitive basis”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) REDISTRIBUTION OF UNOBLIGATED AMOUNTS.—The President may—

“(A) withdraw amounts of financial assistance made available to a State (including amounts made available to local governments of a State) under this subsection that remain unobligated by the end of the third fiscal year after the fiscal year for which the amounts were allocated; and

“(B) in the fiscal year following a fiscal year in which amounts were withdrawn under subparagraph (A), add the amounts to any other amounts available to be awarded on a competitive basis pursuant to paragraph (1).”;

(4) in subsection (g)—

(A) in paragraph (9) by striking “and” at the end;

(B) by redesignating paragraph (10) as paragraph (12); and

(C) by adding after paragraph (9) the following:

“(10) the extent to which the State or local government has facilitated the adoption and enforcement of the latest published editions of relevant consensus-based codes, specifications, and standards that incorporate the

latest hazard-resistant designs and establish criteria for the design, construction, and maintenance of residential structures and facilities that may be eligible for assistance under this Act for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of the buildings' users against disasters;

"(1) the extent to which the assistance will fund activities that increase the level of resiliency; and";

(5) by striking subsection (i) and inserting the following:

"(i) NATIONAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PREDISASTER MITIGATION ASSISTANCE.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may set aside from the Disaster Relief Fund, with respect to each major disaster, an amount equal to 6 percent of the estimated aggregate amount of the grants to be made pursuant to sections 403, 406, 407, 408, 410, and 416 for the major disaster in order to provide technical and financial assistance under this section.

"(2) ESTIMATED AGGREGATE AMOUNT.—Not later than 180 days after each major disaster declaration pursuant to this Act, the estimated aggregate amount of grants for purposes of paragraph (1) shall be determined by the President and such estimated amount need not be reduced, increased, or changed due to variations in estimates.

"(3) NO REDUCTION IN AMOUNTS.—The amount set aside pursuant to paragraph (1) shall not reduce the amounts otherwise made available for sections 403, 404, 406, 407, 408, 410, and 416 under this Act."; and

(6) by striking subsections (j) and (m) and redesignating subsections (k), (l), and (n) as subsections (j), (k), and (l), respectively.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made to section 203 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5133) by paragraphs (3) and (5) of subsection (a) shall apply to funds appropriated after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2037. ADDITIONAL MITIGATION ACTIVITIES.

(a) HAZARD MITIGATION CLARIFICATION.—Section 404(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170c(a)) is amended by striking the first sentence and inserting the following: "The President may contribute up to 75 percent of the cost of hazard mitigation measures which the President has determined are cost effective and which substantially reduce the risk of, or increase resilience to, future damage, hardship, loss, or suffering in any area affected by a major disaster."

(b) ELIGIBLE COST.—Section 406(e)(1)(A) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5172(e)(1)(A)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting after "section," the following: "for disasters declared on or after August 1, 2017, or a disaster in which a cost estimate has not yet been finalized for a project,";

(2) in clause (i), by striking "and";

(3) in clause (ii)—

(A) by striking "codes, specifications, and standards" and inserting "the latest published editions of relevant consensus-based codes, specifications, and standards that incorporate the latest hazard-resistant designs and establish minimum acceptable criteria for the design, construction, and maintenance of residential structures and facilities that may be eligible for assistance under this Act for the purposes of protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of a facility's users against disasters";

(B) by striking "applicable at the time at which the disaster occurred"; and

(C) by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

"(iii) in a manner that allows the facility to meet the definition of resilient developed pursuant to this subsection.".

(c) OTHER ELIGIBLE COST.—Section 406(e)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5172(e)(1)) is further amended by inserting at the end the following:

"(C) CONTRIBUTIONS.—Contributions for the eligible cost made under this section may be provided on an actual cost basis or on cost-estimation procedures."

(d) NEW RULES.—Section 406(e) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5172(e)) is further amended by adding at the end the following:

"(5) NEW RULES.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the President, acting through the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, shall issue a final rulemaking that defines the terms 'resilient' and 'resiliency' for purposes of this subsection.

"(B) INTERIM GUIDANCE.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Administrator shall issue interim guidance to implement this subsection. Such interim guidance shall expire 18 months after the date of enactment of this paragraph or upon issuance of final regulations pursuant to subparagraph (A), whichever occurs first.

"(C) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Administrator issues the final rulemaking under this paragraph, the Administrator shall issue any necessary guidance related to the rulemaking.

"(D) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report summarizing the regulations and guidance issued pursuant to this paragraph."

(e) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 205(d)(2) of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-390) is amended by inserting "(B)" after "except that paragraph (1)".

SEC. 2038. FEDERAL COST-SHARE ADJUSTMENTS FOR REPAIR, RESTORATION, AND REPLACEMENT OF DAMAGED FACILITIES.

Section 406(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5172(b)) is amended by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

"(3) INCREASED FEDERAL SHARE.—

"(A) INCENTIVE MEASURES.—The President may provide incentives to a State or Tribal government to invest in measures that increase readiness for, and resilience from, a major disaster by recognizing such investments through a sliding scale that increases the minimum Federal share to 85 percent. Such measures may include—

"(i) the adoption of a mitigation plan approved under section 322;

"(ii) investments in disaster relief, insurance, and emergency management programs;

"(iii) encouraging the adoption and enforcement of the latest published editions of relevant consensus-based codes, specifications, and standards that incorporate the latest hazard-resistant designs and establish minimum acceptable criteria for the design, construction, and maintenance of residential structures and facilities that may be eligible for assistance under this Act for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, and general welfare of the buildings' users against disasters;

"(iv) facilitating participation in the community rating system; and

"(v) funding mitigation projects or granting tax incentives for projects that reduce risk.

"(B) COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the President, acting

through the Administrator, shall issue comprehensive guidance to State and Tribal governments regarding the measures and investments, weighted appropriately based on actuarial assessments of eligible actions, that will be recognized for the purpose of increasing the Federal share under this section. Guidance shall ensure that the agency's review of eligible measures and investments does not unduly delay determining the appropriate Federal cost share.

"(C) REPORT.—One year after the issuance of the guidance required by subparagraph (B), the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report regarding the analysis of the Federal cost shares paid under this section.

"(D) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this paragraph prevents the President from increasing the Federal cost share above 85 percent."

DIVISION C—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 3001. TREATMENT OF SEED COTTON.

(a) DEFINITION.—Section 1111 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9011) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(25) SEED COTTON.—The term 'seed cotton' means unginned upland cotton that includes both lint and seed."

(b) DESIGNATION AS COVERED COMMODITY.—Section 1111(6) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9011(6)) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "Effective beginning with the 2018 crop year, the term includes seed cotton."

(c) REFERENCE PRICE.—Section 1111(18) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9011(18)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(O) For seed cotton, \$0.367 per pound."

(d) PAYMENT YIELD.—Section 1113(d) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9013(d)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(5) PAYMENT YIELD FOR SEED COTTON.—

"(A) PAYMENT YIELD.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the payment yield for seed cotton for a farm shall be equal to 2.4 times the payment yield for upland cotton for the farm established for purposes of subsection (e)(3) of section 1104 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-246; 122 Stat. 1672), as in effect immediately before the repeal of such section by section 1102(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-79; 128 Stat. 658).

"(B) UPDATE.—At the sole discretion of the owner of a farm with a yield described in subparagraph (A), the owner of the farm shall have a 1-time opportunity to update the payment yield for upland cotton for the farm, as provided in subsection (d), for the purpose of calculating the payment yield for seed cotton under such subparagraph."

(e) PAYMENT ACRES.—Section 1114(b) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9014(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(4) SEED COTTON RULE.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, the Secretary shall require the owner of a farm to allocate all generic base acres on the farm under subparagraph (B) or (C), or both.

"(B) NO RECENT HISTORY OF COVERED COMMODITIES.—In the case of a farm where no covered commodities (including seed cotton) were planted or were prevented from being planted at any time during the 2009 through 2016 crop years, the owner of such farm shall allocate generic base acres on the farm to unassigned crop base for which no payments may be made under section 1116 or 1117.

“(C) RECENT HISTORY OF COVERED COMMODITIES.—In the case of a farm not described in subparagraph (B), the owner of such farm shall allocate generic base acres on the farm—

“(i) subject to subparagraph (D), to seed cotton base acres in an amount equal to the greater of—

“(I) 80 percent of the generic base acres on the farm; or

“(II) the average seed cotton acres planted or prevented from being planted on the farm during the 2009 through 2012 crop years (not to exceed the total generic base acres on the farm); or

“(ii) to covered commodities (including seed cotton), by applying subparagraphs (B), (D), (E), and (F) of section 1112(a)(3).

“(D) TREATMENT OF RESIDUAL GENERIC BASE ACRES.—In the case of a farm where generic base acres are allocated under subparagraph (C)(i), the residual generic base acres shall be allocated to unassigned crop base for which no payments may be made under section 1116 or 1117.

“(E) EFFECT OF FAILURE TO ALLOCATE.—If the owner of a farm fails to allocate generic base acres on the farm, the owner of the farm shall be deemed to have allocated all generic base acres in accordance with subparagraph (C)(i).”.

(f) RECORDKEEPING REGARDING UNASSIGNED CROP BASE.—Section 1114 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9014) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) UNASSIGNED CROP BASE.—The Secretary shall maintain information on generic base acres on a farm allocated as unassigned crop base pursuant to subsection (b)(4).”.

(g) SPECIAL ELECTION PERIOD FOR PRICE LOSS COVERAGE OR AGRICULTURE RISK COVERAGE.—Section 1115 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9014(b)) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “For” and inserting “Except as provided in subsection (g), for”; and

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

“(g) SPECIAL ELECTION.—

“(1) ELECTION REQUIRED.—In the case of acres allocated on a farm to seed cotton, all of the producers on the farm shall be given the opportunity to make a new 1-time election under subsection (a) to reflect the designation of seed cotton as a covered commodity for that crop year under section 1111(6).

“(2) EFFECT OF FAILURE TO MAKE UNANIMOUS ELECTION.—If all of the producers on a farm fail to make a unanimous election under paragraph (1), the producers on the farm shall be deemed to have elected price loss coverage under section 1116 for all acres allocated on the farm to seed cotton.”.

(h) EFFECTIVE PRICE.—Section 1116 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9016(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h) EFFECTIVE PRICE FOR SEED COTTON.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The effective price for seed cotton under subsection (b) shall be equal to the marketing year average price for seed cotton, as calculated under paragraph (2).

“(2) CALCULATION.—The marketing year average price for seed cotton for a crop year shall be equal to the quotient of—

“(A) a dividend that is equal to the sum of—

“(i) the product obtained when the upland cotton lint marketing year average price is multiplied by total United States upland cotton lint production measured in pounds; and

“(ii) the product obtained when the cottonseed marketing year average price is multiplied by total United States cottonseed production measured in pounds; and

“(B) a divisor that is equal to the sum of—

“(i) total United States upland cotton lint production measured in pounds; and

“(ii) total United States cottonseed production measured in pounds.”.

(i) DEEMED LOAN RATE FOR SEED COTTON.—Section 1202 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9032) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) RULE FOR SEED COTTON.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of section 1116(b)(2) and paragraphs (1)(B)(ii) and (2)(A)(ii)(II) of section 1117(b) only, seed cotton shall be deemed to have a loan rate equal to \$0.25 per pound.

“(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize nonrecourse marketing assistance loans under this part for seed cotton.”.

(j) LIMITATION ON STACKED INCOME PROTECTION PLAN FOR PRODUCERS OF UPLAND COTTON.—Section 508B of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1508b) is amended by adding the following new subsection:

“(f) LIMITATION.—Beginning with the 2018 crop year, in the case of a farm that is enrolled for a crop year in price loss coverage under section 1116 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9016) or agriculture risk coverage under section 1117 of such Act (7 U.S.C. 9017) and the coverage on the farm includes seed cotton, the farm shall not be eligible for a Stacked Income Protection Plan for upland cotton for that crop year.”.

(k) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 1114(b)(2) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9014(b)(2)) is amended by striking “paragraphs (1)(B) and (2)(B)” and inserting “paragraphs (1) and (2)”.

(l) ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall carry out the amendments made by this section in the manner provided under section 1601 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9091).

(m) APPLICATION.—The amendments made by this section shall apply beginning with the 2018 crop year.

SEC. 3002. LIMITATION ON CROP INSURANCE LIVESTOCK-RELATED EXPENDITURES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (10) of section 523(b) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1523) is repealed.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 516 of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1516) is amended in subsections (a)(2)(C) and (b)(1)(D) by striking “subsections (a)(3)(E)(ii) and (b)(10) of section 523” and inserting “subsection (a)(3)(E)(ii) of such section”.

SEC. 3003. NATIONAL ACCURACY CLEARINGHOUSE.

The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) is amended at the end by adding the following:

“SEC. 30. NATIONAL ACCURACY CLEARINGHOUSE.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish an interstate database, or system of databases, of supplemental nutrition assistance program information to be known as the National Accuracy Clearinghouse.

“(b) PURPOSE.—Any database or system of databases established pursuant to subsection (a) shall be used by States when making eligibility determinations to prevent supplemental nutrition assistance program participants from receiving duplicative benefits in multiple States.

“(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—

“(1) ISSUANCE OF INTERIM FINAL REGULATIONS.—Not later than 18 months after the effective date of this section, the Secretary shall issue interim final regulations to carry out this section that—

“(A) incorporate best practices and lessons learned from the regional pilot project ref-

erenced in section 4032(c) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 2036c(c));

“(B) safeguard the security of the data stored in the National Accuracy Clearinghouse and protect the privacy of supplemental nutrition assistance program participants and applicants; and

“(C) detail the process States will be required to follow for—

“(i) conducting initial and ongoing matches of participant and applicant data;

“(ii) identifying and acting on all apparent instances of duplicative participation by participants or applicants in multiple States; and

“(iii) complying with such other rules and standards the Secretary determines appropriate to carry out this section.

“(2) TIMING.—The initial match and corresponding actions required by paragraph (1)(C) shall occur within 3 years after the effective date of this section.”.

SEC. 3004. PUERTO RICO LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES TREATED AS QUALIFIED OPPORTUNITY ZONE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1400Z-1(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as added by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) SPECIAL RULE FOR PUERTO RICO.—Each population census tract in Puerto Rico that is a low-income community shall be deemed to be certified and designated as a qualified opportunity zone.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1400Z-1(d)(1) of such Code is amended by inserting “and subsection (b)(3)” after “paragraph (2)”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of section 13823 of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and the deemed certification and designation under section 1400Z-1(b)(3) of such Code, as added by this section, shall be treated as effective on the date of the enactment of such Act.

DIVISION D—BUDGETARY EFFECTS

SEC. 4001. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The budgetary effects of division B and each succeeding division (other than division E) shall not be entered on either PAYGO scorecard maintained pursuant to section 4(d) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010.

(b) SENATE PAYGO SCORECARDS.—The budgetary effects of division B and each succeeding division (other than division E) shall not be entered on any PAYGO scorecard maintained for purposes of section 4106 of H. Con. Res. 71 (115th Congress).

(c) CLASSIFICATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.—Notwithstanding Rule 3 of the Budget Scorekeeping Guidelines set forth in the joint explanatory statement of the committee of conference accompanying Conference Report 105-217 and section 250(c)(8) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, the budgetary effects of division B and each succeeding division (other than division E) shall not be estimated—

(1) for purposes of section 251 of such Act; and

(2) for purposes of paragraph (4)(C) of section 3 of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 as being included in an appropriation Act.

DIVISION E—TAX RELIEF RELATING TO CERTAIN DISASTERS

TITLE I—CALIFORNIA FIRES

SEC. 5001. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this title—

(1) CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE DISASTER ZONE.—The term “California wildfire disaster zone” means that portion of the California wildfire

disaster area determined by the President to warrant individual or individual and public assistance from the Federal Government under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by reason of wildfires in California.

(2) CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE DISASTER AREA.—The term “California wildfire disaster area” means an area with respect to which during 2017 a major disaster has been declared by the President under section 401 of such Act by reason of wildfires in California.

SEC. 5002. SPECIAL DISASTER-RELATED RULES FOR USE OF RETIREMENT FUNDS.

(a) TAX-FAVORED WITHDRAWALS FROM RETIREMENT PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 72(t) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall not apply to any qualified wildfire distribution.

(2) AGGREGATE DOLLAR LIMITATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the aggregate amount of distributions received by an individual which may be treated as qualified wildfire distributions for any taxable year shall not exceed the excess (if any) of—

(i) \$100,000, over

(ii) the aggregate amounts treated as qualified wildfire distributions received by such individual for all prior taxable years.

(B) TREATMENT OF PLAN DISTRIBUTIONS.—If a distribution to an individual would (without regard to subparagraph (A)) be a qualified wildfire distribution, a plan shall not be treated as violating any requirement of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 merely because the plan treats such distribution as a qualified wildfire distribution, unless the aggregate amount of such distributions from all plans maintained by the employer (and any member of any controlled group which includes the employer) to such individual exceeds \$100,000.

(C) CONTROLLED GROUP.—For purposes of subparagraph (B), the term “controlled group” means any group treated as a single employer under subsection (b), (c), (m), or (o) of section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(3) AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED MAY BE REPAID.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Any individual who receives a qualified wildfire distribution may, at any time during the 3-year period beginning on the day after the date on which such distribution was received, make one or more contributions in an aggregate amount not to exceed the amount of such distribution to an eligible retirement plan of which such individual is a beneficiary and to which a rollover contribution of such distribution could be made under section 402(c), 403(a)(4), 403(b)(8), 408(d)(3), or 457(e)(16), of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as the case may be.

(B) TREATMENT OF REPAYMENTS OF DISTRIBUTIONS FROM ELIGIBLE RETIREMENT PLANS OTHER THAN IRAS.—For purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, if a contribution is made pursuant to subparagraph (A) with respect to a qualified wildfire distribution from an eligible retirement plan other than an individual retirement plan, then the taxpayer shall, to the extent of the amount of the contribution, be treated as having received the qualified wildfire distribution in an eligible rollover distribution (as defined in section 402(c)(4) of such Code) and as having transferred the amount to the eligible retirement plan in a direct trustee to trustee transfer within 60 days of the distribution.

(C) TREATMENT OF REPAYMENTS FOR DISTRIBUTIONS FROM IRAS.—For purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, if a contribution is made pursuant to subparagraph (A) with respect to a qualified wildfire distribution from an individual retirement plan (as defined by section 7701(a)(37) of such Code), then, to the extent of the amount of the contribution, the qualified wildfire distribution

shall be treated as a distribution described in section 408(d)(3) of such Code and as having been transferred to the eligible retirement plan in a direct trustee to trustee transfer within 60 days of the distribution.

(4) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

(A) QUALIFIED WILDFIRE DISTRIBUTION.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the term “qualified wildfire distribution” means any distribution from an eligible retirement plan made on or after October 8, 2017, and before January 1, 2019, to an individual whose principal place of abode on October 8, 2017, is located in the California wildfire disaster area and who has sustained an economic loss by reason of the wildfires to which the declaration of such area relates.

(B) ELIGIBLE RETIREMENT PLAN.—The term “eligible retirement plan” shall have the meaning given such term by section 402(c)(8)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(5) INCOME INCLUSION SPREAD OVER 3-YEAR PERIOD.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any qualified wildfire distribution, unless the taxpayer elects not to have this paragraph apply for any taxable year, any amount required to be included in gross income for such taxable year shall be so included ratably over the 3-taxable-year period beginning with such taxable year.

(B) SPECIAL RULE.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), rules similar to the rules of subparagraph (E) of section 408A(d)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall apply.

(6) SPECIAL RULES.—

(A) EXEMPTION OF DISTRIBUTIONS FROM TRUSTEE TO TRUSTEE TRANSFER AND WITHHOLDING RULES.—For purposes of sections 401(a)(31), 402(f), and 3405 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, qualified wildfire distributions shall not be treated as eligible rollover distributions.

(B) QUALIFIED WILDFIRE DISTRIBUTIONS TREATED AS MEETING PLAN DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS.—For purposes the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, a qualified wildfire distribution shall be treated as meeting the requirements of sections 401(k)(2)(B)(i), 403(b)(7)(A)(ii), 403(b)(11), and 457(d)(1)(A) of such Code.

(b) RECONTRIBUTIONS OF WITHDRAWALS FOR HOME PURCHASES.—

(1) RECONTRIBUTIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Any individual who received a qualified distribution may, during the period beginning on October 8, 2017, and ending on June 30, 2018, make one or more contributions in an aggregate amount not to exceed the amount of such qualified distribution to an eligible retirement plan (as defined in section 402(c)(8)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) of which such individual is a beneficiary and to which a rollover contribution of such distribution could be made under section 402(c), 403(a)(4), 403(b)(8), or 408(d)(3), of such Code, as the case may be.

(B) TREATMENT OF REPAYMENTS.—Rules similar to the rules of subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subsection (a)(3) shall apply for purposes of this subsection.

(2) QUALIFIED DISTRIBUTION.—For purposes of this subsection, the term “qualified distribution” means any distribution—

(A) described in section 401(k)(2)(B)(i)(IV), 403(b)(7)(A)(ii) (but only to the extent such distribution relates to financial hardship), 403(b)(11)(B), or 72(t)(2)(F), of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(B) received after March 31, 2017, and before January 15, 2018, and

(C) which was to be used to purchase or construct a principal residence in the California wildfire disaster area but which was not so purchased or constructed on account

of the wildfires to which the declaration of such area relates.

(c) LOANS FROM QUALIFIED PLANS.—

(1) INCREASE IN LIMIT ON LOANS NOT TREATED AS DISTRIBUTIONS.—In the case of any loan from a qualified employer plan (as defined under section 72(p)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) to a qualified individual made during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on December 31, 2018—

(A) clause (i) of section 72(p)(2)(A) of such Code shall be applied by substituting “\$100,000” for “\$50,000”, and

(B) clause (ii) of such section shall be applied by substituting “the present value of the nonforfeitable accrued benefit of the employee under the plan” for “one-half of the present value of the nonforfeitable accrued benefit of the employee under the plan”.

(2) DELAY OF REPAYMENT.—In the case of a qualified individual with an outstanding loan on or after October 8, 2017, from a qualified employer plan (as defined in section 72(p)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986)—

(A) if the due date pursuant to subparagraph (B) or (C) of section 72(p)(2) of such Code for any repayment with respect to such loan occurs during the period beginning on October 8, 2017, and ending on December 31, 2018, such due date shall be delayed for 1 year,

(B) any subsequent repayments with respect to any such loan shall be appropriately adjusted to reflect the delay in the due date under paragraph (1) and any interest accruing during such delay, and

(C) in determining the 5-year period and the term of a loan under subparagraph (B) or (C) of section 72(p)(2) of such Code, the period described in subparagraph (A) shall be disregarded.

(3) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the term “qualified individual” means any individual whose principal place of abode on October 8, 2017, is located in the California wildfire disaster area and who has sustained an economic loss by reason of wildfires to which the declaration of such area relates.

(d) PROVISIONS RELATING TO PLAN AMENDMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If this subsection applies to any amendment to any plan or annuity contract, such plan or contract shall be treated as being operated in accordance with the terms of the plan during the period described in paragraph (2)(B)(i).

(2) AMENDMENTS TO WHICH SUBSECTION APPLIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—This subsection shall apply to any amendment to any plan or annuity contract which is made—

(i) pursuant to any provision of this section, or pursuant to any regulation issued by the Secretary or the Secretary of Labor under any provision of this section, and

(ii) on or before the last day of the first plan year beginning on or after January 1, 2019, or such later date as the Secretary may prescribe.

In the case of a governmental plan (as defined in section 414(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986), clause (ii) shall be applied by substituting the date which is 2 years after the date otherwise applied under clause (ii).

(B) CONDITIONS.—This subsection shall not apply to any amendment unless—

(i) during the period—

(I) beginning on the date that this section or the regulation described in subparagraph (A)(i) takes effect (or in the case of a plan or contract amendment not required by this section or such regulation, the effective date specified by the plan), and

(II) ending on the date described in subparagraph (A)(ii) (or, if earlier, the date the plan or contract amendment is adopted), the plan or contract is operated as if such plan or contract amendment were in effect, and

(ii) such plan or contract amendment applies retroactively for such period.

SEC. 5003. EMPLOYEE RETENTION CREDIT FOR EMPLOYERS AFFECTED BY CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of section 38 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, in the case of an eligible employer, the California wildfire employee retention credit shall be treated as a credit listed in subsection (b) of such section. For purposes of this subsection, the California wildfire employee retention credit for any taxable year is an amount equal to 40 percent of the qualified wages with respect to each eligible employee of such employer for such taxable year. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the amount of qualified wages which may be taken into account with respect to any individual shall not exceed \$6,000.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

(1) ELIGIBLE EMPLOYER.—The term “eligible employer” means any employer—

(A) which conducted an active trade or business on October 8, 2017, in the California wildfire disaster zone, and

(B) with respect to whom the trade or business described in subparagraph (A) is inoperable on any day after October 8, 2017, and before January 1, 2018, as a result of damage sustained by reason of the wildfires to which such declaration of such area relates.

(2) ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEE.—The term “eligible employee” means with respect to an eligible employer an employee whose principal place of employment on October 8, 2017, with such eligible employer was in the California wildfire disaster zone.

(3) QUALIFIED WAGES.—The term “qualified wages” means wages (as defined in section 51(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, but without regard to section 3306(b)(2)(B) of such Code) paid or incurred by an eligible employer with respect to an eligible employee on any day after October 8, 2017, and before January 1, 2018, which occurs during the period—

(A) beginning on the date on which the trade or business described in paragraph (1) first became inoperable at the principal place of employment of the employee immediately before the wildfires to which the declaration of the California wildfire disaster area relates, and

(B) ending on the date on which such trade or business has resumed significant operations at such principal place of employment.

Such term shall include wages paid without regard to whether the employee performs no services, performs services at a different place of employment than such principal place of employment, or performs services at such principal place of employment before significant operations have resumed.

(c) CERTAIN RULES TO APPLY.—For purposes of this section, rules similar to the rules of sections 51(i)(1), 52, and 280C(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, shall apply.

(d) EMPLOYEE NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT MORE THAN ONCE.—An employee shall not be treated as an eligible employee for purposes of this section for any period with respect to any employer if such employer is allowed a credit under section 51 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect to such employee for such period.

SEC. 5004. ADDITIONAL DISASTER-RELATED TAX RELIEF PROVISIONS.

(a) TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF LIMITATIONS ON CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (2), subsection (b) of section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall not apply to qualified contributions and such contributions shall not be taken into account for purposes of applying subsections (b) and (d) of such section to other contributions.

(2) TREATMENT OF EXCESS CONTRIBUTIONS.—For purposes of section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986—

(A) INDIVIDUALS.—In the case of an individual—

(i) LIMITATION.—Any qualified contribution shall be allowed only to the extent that the aggregate of such contributions does not exceed the excess of the taxpayer's contribution base (as defined in subparagraph (G) of section 170(b)(1) of such Code) over the amount of all other charitable contributions allowed under section 170(b)(1) of such Code.

(ii) CARRYOVER.—If the aggregate amount of qualified contributions made in the contribution year (within the meaning of section 170(d)(1) of such Code) exceeds the limitation of clause (i), such excess shall be added to the excess described in the portion of subparagraph (A) of such section which precedes clause (i) thereof for purposes of applying such section.

(B) CORPORATIONS.—In the case of a corporation—

(i) LIMITATION.—Any qualified contribution shall be allowed only to the extent that the aggregate of such contributions does not exceed the excess of the taxpayer's taxable income (as determined under paragraph (2) of section 170(b) of such Code) over the amount of all other charitable contributions allowed under such paragraph.

(ii) CARRYOVER.—Rules similar to the rules of subparagraph (A)(ii) shall apply for purposes of this subparagraph.

(3) EXCEPTION TO OVERALL LIMITATION ON ITEMIZED DEDUCTIONS.—So much of any deduction allowed under section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as does not exceed the qualified contributions paid during the taxable year shall not be treated as an itemized deduction for purposes of section 68 of such Code.

(4) QUALIFIED CONTRIBUTIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the term “qualified contribution” means any charitable contribution (as defined in section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) if—

(i) such contribution—

(I) is paid during the period beginning on October 8, 2017, and ending on December 31, 2017, in cash to an organization described in section 170(b)(1)(A) of such Code, and

(II) is made for relief efforts in the California wildfire disaster area,

(ii) the taxpayer obtains from such organization contemporaneous written acknowledgment (within the meaning of section 170(f)(8) of such Code) that such contribution was used (or is to be used) for relief efforts described in clause (i)(II), and

(iii) the taxpayer has elected the application of this subsection with respect to such contribution.

(B) EXCEPTION.—Such term shall not include a contribution by a donor if the contribution is—

(i) to an organization described in section 509(a)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or

(ii) for the establishment of a new, or maintenance of an existing, donor advised fund (as defined in section 4966(d)(2) of such Code).

(C) APPLICATION OF ELECTION TO PARTNERSHIPS AND S CORPORATIONS.—In the case of a partnership or S corporation, the election under subparagraph (A)(iii) shall be made separately by each partner or shareholder.

(b) SPECIAL RULES FOR QUALIFIED DISASTER-RELATED PERSONAL CASUALTY LOSSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If an individual has a net disaster loss for any taxable year—

(A) the amount determined under section 165(h)(2)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be equal to the sum of—

(i) such net disaster loss, and

(ii) so much of the excess referred to in the matter preceding clause (i) of section 165(h)(2)(A) of such Code (reduced by the amount in clause (i) of this subparagraph) as exceeds 10 percent of the adjusted gross income of the individual.

(B) section 165(h)(1) of such Code shall be applied by substituting “\$500” for “\$500 (\$100 for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2009)”.

(C) the standard deduction determined under section 63(c) of such Code shall be increased by the net disaster loss, and

(D) section 56(b)(1)(E) of such Code shall not apply to so much of the standard deduction as is attributable to the increase under subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

(2) NET DISASTER LOSS.—For purposes of this subsection, the term “net disaster loss” means the excess of qualified disaster-related personal casualty losses over personal casualty gains (as defined in section 165(h)(3)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986).

(3) QUALIFIED DISASTER-RELATED PERSONAL CASUALTY LOSSES.—For purposes of this subsection, the term “qualified disaster-related personal casualty losses” means losses described in section 165(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 which arise in the California wildfire disaster area on or after October 8, 2017, and which are attributable to the wildfires to which the declaration of such area relates.

(c) SPECIAL RULE FOR DETERMINING EARNED INCOME.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a qualified individual, if the earned income of the taxpayer for the taxable year which includes the applicable date is less than the earned income of the taxpayer for the preceding taxable year, the credits allowed under sections 24(d) and 32 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 may, at the election of the taxpayer, be determined by substituting—

(A) such earned income for the preceding taxable year, for

(B) such earned income for the taxable year which includes October 8, 2017.

(2) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the term “qualified individual” means any individual whose principal place of abode on October 8, 2017, was located—

(A) in the California wildfire disaster zone, or

(B) in the California wildfire disaster area (but outside the California wildfire disaster zone) and such individual was displaced from such principal place of abode by reason of the wildfires to which the declaration of such area relates.

(3) EARNED INCOME.—For purposes of this subsection, the term “earned income” has the meaning given such term under section 32(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(4) SPECIAL RULES.—

(A) APPLICATION TO JOINT RETURNS.—For purposes of paragraph (1), in the case of a joint return for a taxable year which includes October 8, 2017—

(i) such paragraph shall apply if either spouse is a qualified individual, and

(ii) the earned income of the taxpayer for the preceding taxable year shall be the sum of the earned income of each spouse for such preceding taxable year.

(B) UNIFORM APPLICATION OF ELECTION.—Any election made under paragraph (1) shall

apply with respect to both sections 24(d) and 32, of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(C) **ERRORS TREATED AS MATHEMATICAL ERROR.**—For purposes of section 6213 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, an incorrect use on a return of earned income pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be treated as a mathematical or clerical error.

(D) **NO EFFECT ON DETERMINATION OF GROSS INCOME, ETC.**—Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be applied without regard to any substitution under paragraph (1).

TITLE II—TAX RELIEF FOR HURRICANES HARVEY, IRMA, AND MARIA

SEC. 5101. TAX RELIEF FOR HURRICANES HARVEY, IRMA, AND MARIA.

(a) **MODIFICATION OF HURRICANES HARVEY AND IRMA DISASTER AREAS.**—Subsections (a)(2) and (b)(2) of section 501 of the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-63; 131 Stat. 1173) are both amended by striking “September 21, 2017” and inserting “October 17, 2017”.

(b) **EMPLOYEE RETENTION CREDIT.**—Subsections (a)(3), (b)(3), and (c)(3) of section 503 of the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-63; 131 Stat. 1181) are each amended by striking “sections 51(i)(1) and 52” and inserting “sections 51(i)(1), 52, and 280C(a)”.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the provisions of title V of the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017 to which such amendments relate.

TITLE III—BUDGETARY EFFECTS

SEC. 5201. EMERGENCY DESIGNATION.

This division is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4(g) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (2 U.S.C. 933(g)).

SEC. 5202. DESIGNATION IN SENATE.

In the Senate, this division is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 403(a) of S. Con. Res. 13 (111th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2010.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations.

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present H.R. 4667, a bill making emergency appropriations for hurricane and wildfire recovery.

Parts of our Nation have been devastated by multiple back-to-back hurricanes and wildfires that have caused tremendous loss of life, livelihoods, and property.

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria are three of the top five most expensive hurricanes in the last 25 years. Combined with the horrific wildfires that continue to rage in California, the toll that these disasters have taken is unprecedented.

We must stand by our fellow Americans to get them the help and re-

sources they need to recover. To this end, this legislation provides a total of \$81 billion for crucial Federal programs that support ongoing relief, recovery, and rebuilding.

This includes \$27.5 billion for FEMA to provide relief and recovery assistance; \$26.1 billion for Community Development Block Grants for shelter and housing and infrastructure improvements, and the means to help large and small businesses recover; and \$12.1 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers to repair and rebuild infrastructure projects that help protect against future disasters, building in resiliency.

The bill also includes \$3.8 billion for the Department of Agriculture, which will support critical agriculture disaster assistance for massive crop and livestock loss.

Funding is also included to repair Federal highways and local transit systems, to help children displaced by the storms of Puerto Rico get back to school, and for small business disaster loans, which will allow businesses to reopen their doors as quickly as possible.

Our Committee on Appropriations will continue to monitor these recovery efforts to ensure accountability, transparency, and that every dollar is spent wisely. From Florida and Texas, to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, to California, and all areas dealing with major disaster declarations, this Congress is committed to helping you.

Congress has already provided \$51.75 billion in two separate supplemental bills for these ongoing efforts. With this third tranche of emergency funding, it will bring the total funding for fiscal year 2018 emergency response to \$132 billion. This funding is desperately needed by thousands of American families, individuals, and communities to rebuild their homes and businesses, restore electric power and critical infrastructure, and to protect against further damage. It is the duty of Congress to provide this help to our fellow Americans in their times of need.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I would like to thank everyone who came to leadership and to the Appropriations Committee to make sure that Congress is getting the assistance to those hurricane and wildfire victims that they urgently need.

I would also like to thank the clerks and professional staff and the chairs of the 12 Appropriations Subcommittees for their working tirelessly to bring this bill to the floor and, may I say, nearly 30 others this year.

It is time to get this emergency aid to those who need it. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is a failure of both process and substance. When Congress received the paltry and

insufficient disaster request from the administration, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees began a bipartisan and bicameral process to develop an emergency assistance package that would come closer to meeting the massive scale of need resulting from hurricanes and wildfires in the summer and fall 2017.

I sincerely regret that the majority leadership abandoned that process, choosing, instead, to disregard input from Democrats and even from Senate Republicans, and developed their own partisan supplemental. The results of that decision is a poor product that will not be enacted into law.

Despite some robust funding levels, this bill fails to fix a potentially calamitous Medicaid system situation for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Without help from Congress, these programs will exhaust available funding within months. This bill also fails to waive unworkable and unjustifiable cost share requirements for FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers' projects, which could put Federal funding out of reach.

These and other serious shortcomings must be fixed before an emergency supplemental is enacted into law. Even if this supplemental passes today, the House majority's decision to exclude both Democrats and Senate Republicans from this process means that it will not be enacted this year because it cannot pass the Senate.

Instead of the partisan product with no chance of advancement, we should be considering a responsible bipartisan emergency supplemental that both the House and the Senate could pass and enact into law.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON), the chairman of the Commerce, Justice, and Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and Speaker RYAN for rejecting the Office of Management and Budget's completely inadequate funding request that they sent to Congress. It is the job of the Appropriations Committee and Congress to write these emergency spending bills, and we have done so.

I am one of eight subcommittee chairmen who held public hearings at the request of the chairman. I want to thank Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN for listening to all of us to change the legislation to ensure that the State of Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico are a long way towards being made whole. This is a tremendous step in the right direction. We are grateful for the funding that is contained here. We are also grateful for a lot of the changes that the chairman and the committee have included.

For example, we have got \$12 billion here for the Army Corps of Engineers' projects that is going to be prioritized

and targeted to areas that have suffered repeated floods over the last 2 years, to areas that have been declared disasters by the President. That will help ensure that the people of Texas, in particular, who had 53 inches of rain over an area the size of New Jersey, the people of Texas and southwest Louisiana who suffered from Hurricane Harvey, those projects will receive priority consideration by the Army Corps of Engineers. That is going to help us get that third reservoir built in north-west Harris County.

This funding is also sufficient to fully pay for all federally authorized flood control projects in southeast Texas. That means we will have front-loaded funding for a critical project to finish out Brays Bayou, to build it to the 100-year flood protection standard.

The Army Corps of Engineers' funding is also going to allow us to dredge the Port of Houston, the Port of Beaumont, and open up those ports to full capacity.

Another important change that the chairman included at my request, and I am very pleased it is in there, is that we had a lot of people flooded because the Army Corps of Engineers opened the floodgates necessarily on Addicks and Barker.

These folks were flooded by the action of the government in the Neches River Waterway and the Sabine Waterway and on the San Jacinto River.

Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN included language that allows the Governor of the State of Texas to ask for a waiver of the prohibition against duplication of benefits.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, it is important for the people of Texas to know that help is on the way to not only repair the damage caused by the flood, but if they were flooded by the action of the government, there is a provision in this legislation today that will allow the Governor to request that they be compensated, that they can take out an SBA loan at the front and they will pay the government back, and then receive a Community Development Block Grant at the end to help make them whole.

Mr. Speaker, we will also be able to rebuild churches and synagogues. That is vitally important because we suffered so much damage in southeast Texas.

I am proud to support this legislation, and I look forward to working with the chairman and my colleagues as we go forward, if there is additional funding needed. I am very grateful for the support of Congress. I urge Members to support this vital legislation to help the people of southeast Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico have a better Christmas.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New

York (Mr. SERRANO), the ranking member of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

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

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for the time.

I rise to sadly oppose this disaster supplemental, which does not do enough to help Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

This is a bill created by Republicans with little Democratic input. At some point, they decided that rather than working in a bipartisan manner, they wanted to try and address these disasters without taking into account some of the most important Democratic priorities.

In particular, it does not address many issues crucial to Puerto Rico's recovery in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. For instance, it does nothing to address the looming Medicaid cliff, which will devastate health kits access and delivery on the island early next year. It does not waive numerous local cost share requirements, which will make it extremely difficult for the government of Puerto Rico to access large parts of the Federal funding made available here.

It does not do enough to help States like New York and New Jersey and others that have generously opened their arms to our fellow citizens displaced by these storms.

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It expands the powers of the Puerto Rico Fiscal Oversight Board, giving them authority to approve the recovery plans of Puerto Rico's government.

The end result of all of this is further delay in Puerto Rico's recovery. This is not the message that we want to send to 3.4 million American citizens this holiday season.

As I look at my notes and as I look at what this debate may become today, it really comes down to one point: we as Americans, we as the United States Congress, we as the U.S. Government still have not come to grips with the fact that, yes, we have territories, that, yes, we have colonies.

If you ask the American people, "Are the people of Puerto Rico American citizens?" you would be shocked before all this information went out on the hurricanes how many would say: "I don't know. I served with some in the Army, but I don't know if they are citizens."

Well, I think, more and more, we need to know that the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Puerto Rico are part of the American family. It is not as a long gone member of my party once told me when I said: What are we going to do about Puerto Rico in this bill?

He said: Well, we have no money left over.

I said: Did you have money left over for the 50 States?

He said: Well, they go first.

I said: Why do they go first? Why can't the whole family go together?

So my plea that I have made for years, I continue to make. There is a bigger issue than the one we are discussing today, and that is the fact that we have territories. We have colonies. They are part of the United States. They should be part of our family. We should treat them as such.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER), the chairman of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Appropriations.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I recently flew in a C-130 with a gathering of my colleagues and members of the Senate the length and breadth of Florida, across the Gulf of Mexico, and up and down the Gulf Coast of my home State of Texas and looked at the devastation that, in 1 day, on about a 12-hour flight, we could see all the devastation that took place from these terrible storms.

That is why this supplemental is so very important, because this is not about numbers, this is not about anything; it is about people, human beings. We helped people move their ruined furniture out of their houses when we were on that trip. We saw the devastation. We saw the tears and the pain that these people were dealing with.

As chairman of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Appropriations, I am proud to have had a small part in working on this project.

Let me explain that the supplement provides \$28.6 billion for the Department of Homeland Security; \$27.5 billion is for the Disaster Relief Fund to provide for the continued response and recovery efforts for all recent disasters. These funds will provide for the recovery efforts of all disasters that have received a major disaster declaration, to include, Texas, Florida, California, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

This money is needed to ensure food, water, and temporary shelter is made available to disaster survivors. These funds are used for debris removal efforts, the first step in recovery. These funds will also support the long-term recovery efforts to help rebuild utilities, bridges, roads, and buildings.

\$4 billion of this can be used for community disaster loans to help communities pay for essential services while they get back on their feet.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The bill also includes \$1.1 billion to address the damages to important Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, and Transportation Security Administration facilities.

The supplement provides \$4.4 billion more than requested, but we looked at

each project to ensure that funding was only going to projects that address damages, improve resiliency, and increase disaster responses.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN for his leadership. He has been right on top of this, and we have got a good product here.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a “yes” vote on the supplemental.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), the chair of the Democratic Caucus.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York for yielding me this time, and I thank her for her work. I thank Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, as well, for his work and my colleagues on the other side, but I have reservations, strong reservations about this bill.

I appreciate the very real needs of those still recovering, our American citizens and friends and family in Florida and Texas, and that concern is genuine. I have always supported aid to other parts of the country, even when some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle refused to help New York and left New York hanging after Superstorm Sandy. I have never let that get in the way of my wanting to be helpful to my fellow citizens anywhere in this country who are under duress.

But I can't, in good conscience, vote for this bill. It leaves some of the hardest hit and most vulnerable Americans, American citizens, without the help that they need. It treats Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands as second-class citizens—not second-class people, but second-class, literally, citizens—and will stall the efforts there to rebuild.

I appreciate Mr. CULBERSON saying that the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are a long way from recovery. I am paraphrasing what he said. I do appreciate those words. I do hope that it is an insight for my Republican colleagues and the leadership on the other side of the aisle that more help will be on the way for the people of Puerto Rico, but simply not enough is being done in this bill to help the men and women of Puerto Rico and the children of Puerto Rico today.

Our fellow citizens of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are no less American than those in any of the 50 States.

I wonder if anyone would argue that point as to whether they are citizens of the United States or not. I would argue they are no less citizens of the United States than any other individuals in the rest of the 50 States, and they should be treated the same and with the same respect.

The people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands suffered direct hits not from one, but from two massive hurricanes, the likes of which we have never seen before, not in our modern history. Maybe you have to go back to Alexander Hamilton and the hurricane that he wrote about back in the 1700s that rocketed him to stardom.

Here we are 3 months later. Millions—not hundreds, not thousands, but millions—of our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico and in the Virgin Islands are without power. Far too many still, because they are without power, lack clean drinking water. Thousands are unable to receive adequate healthcare, and earlier this week, the Governor of Puerto Rico ordered a recount of the storm's death toll, which could number, now, into the thousands. If that is not a sign of how neglectful the response has been to this disaster, then I don't know what would be.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 additional minute to the gentleman from New York.

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

We must provide the assistance that our territories need. We must fully fund Medicaid as the islands recover. We must eliminate disparities in the law that are holding back that recovery. We must stand up for not the people of the Virgin Islands, not the people of Puerto Rico, but the United States citizens who have fought in our wars, who have defended our freedoms, for the United States citizens of the Virgin Islands and the United States citizens of Puerto Rico.

They deserve no less than how any other State is being treated after a disaster like this. They deserve no less. They deserve more than they are getting in this bill.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), chairman of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4667, which provides \$81 billion in Federal disaster assistance to States and territories recently devastated by natural disasters. This is not a small amount of money.

First, as chairman of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations, I am pleased to include \$616.4 million for repairs, cleanup, and recovery at various agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Park Service, and others.

As chairman of the California Republican delegation, I have a particular interest in wildfire assistance in this bill. The coordination and collaboration between Republicans and Democrats on this bill to reflect the needs of California shows bipartisanship is alive and well.

Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to thank Congressman MIKE THOMPSON for his tireless efforts in regard to the fires in northern California.

Last month, I toured Santa Rosa, California, which was absolutely deci-

imated after a wildfire tore through the area. Forty people lost their lives, and more than 14,000 homes were destroyed or damaged.

As a lifelong California resident, I have seen a lot of fires and the resulting devastation, but I have never witnessed anything like I saw in Santa Rosa. The stories of survival and heroics of our first responders truly are incredible. Now, in the aftermath, we must come together to recover and rebuild.

This bill is the first step towards recovery and provides \$27.5 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund, a \$4.5 billion increase from the request, a 90 percent Federal cost share for wildfire disasters; and \$541 million for watershed and flood prevention efforts, which will be vital as the rainy season begins in California.

California will be eligible for nearly all the various sources of disaster funding in this bill, including for crop losses, Army Corps of Engineers projects, Federal highway damages, small business assistance, displaced employees, and student assistance, among others.

With my colleagues, I will continue to monitor the fire situation and respond as needed. The Thomas Fire in Ventura County has burned over 272,000 acres, on track to be the largest wildfire in California history; and, unfortunately, the fire rages on.

Mr. Speaker, I especially want to thank Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and the Appropriations Committee staff for their outreach and responsiveness to the fires in California. We greatly appreciate their assistance and ongoing support.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't thank all my staff and the Interior Subcommittee, but in particular, my chief of staff, Dave Kennett, and on the Interior Subcommittee, Betsy Bina, both of whom went above and beyond to deliver results for California.

On a quick note, best wishes for Betsy, who is getting married today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this emergency supplemental funding bill.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York; I want to thank the chairman; but I do want to take a moment and particularly thank the gentlewoman from New York for the kindness that she showed the first victims of this horrific hurricane season.

I remember coming back to Congress in the immediacy of Hurricane Harvey. Many don't know, but I left my home in a firetruck—not out of desperation, but to go where my constituents were—and spent the rest of the time with 14,000 homeless evacuees in a shelter that had been set up immediately with concern about the city of Houston.

We had meetings starting at 6 a.m. In the evening, as the waters started moving in different communities and different communities became flooded, we

could see evacuees carrying their only belongings—pillows, just a paper bag—flooding into the George R. Brown Convention Center.

This is serious for me.

I remember seeing elderly persons being evacuated after the Addicks Reservoir, Barker Reservoir was released and family members standing on what was now the shore waiting for those loved ones. I know the family and went to the funerals of the six family members who died in Greens Bayou in my congressional district.

I introduced a bill, H.R. 3686, which the gentlewoman from New York was quite interested in. It was for \$174 billion. If we had that amount now, I would be more than happy to share that with Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

We don't have that. And I am extremely disappointed that we have \$81 billion, not because of the lack of the hard work of those who worked on the Appropriations Committee, because I know they wanted to do more, but there were other distractions—like a \$1.4 trillion tax cut.

□ 1515

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mrs. LOWEY. I yield the gentlewoman from Texas an additional 1 minute.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I want to thank my Texas colleagues. We worked together, and I truly appreciate that and will thank them for it.

Today, I indicated that I have constituents who are down testifying in Houston about their devastation, so I want to make this point. First of all, I fought very hard for a \$1 billion grant program for small businesses. I want to tell my constituents it is in, and I want to tell the State of Texas they have to put that in their application that they want to give small businesses grants and not loans.

There is \$12 billion in CDBG programs. I want to make sure that the State works with us to ensure that the elderly, the people who have no resources, families that have no resources have their homes rebuilt or they have their homes fixed.

I want to make sure that the watershed study comes under section title IV, that the Army Corps is listening, that the watershed program that I have passed in two sessions to study the bayous, as to why Greens Bayou and Buffalo Bayou and White Oak Bayou and Halls Bayou flood, and why people lose their lives. I want that watershed done, and the Army Corps of Engineers, I hope, will listen.

There is a lot of work left to be done. We have got to get more money. And I am glad that Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are in, but you can count on me, Texas, and count on me, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and Florida. We will fight into the new year to ensure that we get more funding. But these items have to

be considered. We fought hard for them.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on H.R. 4667, "Making Further Supplemental Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2017."

H.R. 4667, provides \$81 billion in aid to respond to the damage caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and the wildfires in California.

I thank the Speaker and Rules Committee Chairman SESSIONS for acting favorably upon my request to bring this emergency disaster supplemental to the floor for debate and vote as a stand-alone measure.

But the fact remains that the amount of funding provided in the disaster relief package is very disappointing because it is not nearly sufficient to ameliorate the suffering still being experienced by the people of the communities in the areas affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Congress has had more than three months to develop an aid package that it is commensurate to the challenge faced by the affected states and territories in rebuilding their devastated communities.

Much of this time has been squandered by the Republican congressional leadership all-consuming focus on ramming through the Republican Tax Scam legislation that gives 83 percent of its benefits to the top 1 percent, raises taxes on working and middle-class families, takes away health insurance from 13 million Americans, explodes the deficit by \$1.5 trillion and the national debt by \$1.7 trillion, and will be paid for by 5.4 trillion in cuts to vital programs Americans depend on, including an imminent \$25 billion reduction in Medicare funding.

Mr. Speaker, on September 6, 2017, ten days after Hurricane Harvey struck and joined by 44 of our colleagues, I introduced H.R. 3686, the "Hurricane Harvey Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2017," which provides \$174 billion in disaster relief for the areas affected by Hurricane Harvey, the worst superstorm ever to strike the mainland United States.

The \$174 billion in funding provided by H.R. 3686 represents a comprehensive response commensurate to the challenge; specifically my legislation provides relief in the following amounts:

1. Housing and Community Development Fund: \$50 billion
2. FEMA Disaster Relief Fund: \$35 billion
3. Army Corps of Engineers—Construction: \$15 billion
4. Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies: \$13 billion
5. Public Transportation Emergency Relief Program: \$33 billion
6. Small Business Disaster Loans Program: \$2 billion
7. Emergency Conservation Activities: \$650 million
8. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: \$321 million
9. National Aeronautics and Space Administration: \$50 million
10. Legal Services Corporation: \$10 million
11. Army National Guard: \$10 million
12. Army Corps of Engineers—Civil Investigations: \$150 million
13. Coast Guard: \$450 million
14. National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund: \$800 million
15. EPA Environmental Programs and Management: \$2.5 billion

16. EPA Hazardous Substance Superfund: \$7 million

17. Leaking Underground Storage Tank Fund: \$15 million

18. State and Tribal Assistance Grants: \$600 million

19. Employment and Training Services: \$100 million

20. Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund: \$2.5 billion

21. Airport and Airway Trust Fund: \$90 million

22. Federal-Aid Highways Emergency Relief Program: \$6.5 billion

And that is just for Texas and the areas affected by Hurricane Harvey; the damage wrought by Hurricane Irma in Florida, and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands was nearly as great in dollar terms and equal in the level of misery and suffering inflicted on the residents.

Mr. Speaker, on September 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, along the southeastern coast, near the small town of Yabucoa.

The devastation wrought on that beautiful Caribbean oasis and its 3.5 million inhabitants, our fellow citizens of the United States, is unimaginable, except perhaps to those of us who have lived through and survived similar natural disasters, like Hurricanes Harvey and Katrina.

At least 48 people have died as a result of the storm as rescue and recovery operations proceed, a number likely to rise, especially with so many elderly, sick, and very young persons at risk.

Much of Puerto Rico's population is still without potable drinking water and large swaths of the population still lack electrical power.

Hurricane Maria destroyed 80 percent of Puerto Rico's agricultural industry, including banana, plantain and coffee crops, which translates into lost income of approximately \$780 million.

On August 30, 2017, Hurricane Irma struck, inflicting horrific damage on the U.S. Virgin Islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John, the Caribbean nations of Barbuda, St. Maarten, Cuba, and Anguilla, before making landfall in the Florida Keys.

In Florida alone, 6.4 million people told to evacuate to safety, leading to days of jammed highways and frantic searches for gasoline amid one of the nation's largest ever emergency evacuations.

At least 124 persons are known to have lost their lives in Hurricane Irma, more than 200,000 Floridians took refuge in shelters, and nearly 6.5 million homes and businesses were without power.

Mr. Speaker, we do not yet know the full extent of the damage and devastation suffered by our fellows Americans in Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

But what we do know is that the costs of recovery and reconstruction will be extensive, best estimates place the cost in the range of \$50–\$100 billion.

This puts in perspective the inadequacy of the amount of disaster relief provided under H.R. 4667 and why more, much more, must be done.

Mr. Speaker, right now, at this very moment, approximately 300,000 Texans—in Port Arthur, in Port Aransas, in Houston and Harris County—remain homeless or are living in sub-standard homes with blue tarp roofs and infected with mold.

Today, residents of the Cashmere Gardens community are meeting with local government officials to highlight their plight and those of other residents in the northeastern part of Houston.

They are angry and frustrated and anxious, and who can blame them?

Mr. Speaker, this is personal to them; and it is personal to me.

That is why right now my highest priority is to ensure that funding that has been made available expeditiously gets in the hands of local governments so that relief can be delivered the resources and services so desperately needed.

And I will be working with the Texas General Land Office and HUD Secretary Carson to relieve the emergency housing crisis in my congressional district and state.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the bipartisan leadership of both chambers, and my colleagues in the Texas congressional delegation for their diligence and commitment in bringing this package to the floor for debate and vote.

I thank Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and Ranking Member LOWEY, and Speaker RYAN and Democratic Leader PELOSI, and their Senate counterparts for the work that has been done thus far and for their assistance in the work that lies ahead.

I also thank Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and Ranking Member LOWEY, and T-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman DIAZ-BALART, and Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee Chair SIMPSON and Ranking Member KAPTUR for including in the legislation before us the following beneficial measures that I requested, including:

1. Authority to establish and implement a \$1 billion pilot program to provide small business disaster recovery grants, modeled on H.R. 3930, the "Hurricane Harvey Small Business Recovery Grants Act," legislation I introduced on October 3, 2017 and co-sponsored by 16 of our colleagues.

2. \$75 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Investigations account, which is to be used in areas affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and can be used to finance the \$3 million Houston-Area Watershed Assessment Study I have worked to secure and previously approved by the House.

3. The bill also includes helpful legislative language to ensure that in awarding CDBG-Disaster Relief funds to states, the Secretary of HUD should to the maximum extent practicable award grants to units of local government and public housing authorities that have the financial and administrative capacity to manage a grant awarded under the program.

Let me describe briefly some of the major provisions contained in the Disaster Relief Supplemental:

1. FEMA Disaster Relief Fund: \$27.5 billion to provide critical funding to assist the ongoing federal disaster response, allows up to \$4 billion to be provided for Community Disaster Loans (CDLs).

2. Community Development Block Grants Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR): \$26.1 billion for housing and infrastructure needs, \$13.56 billion for grants to states, tribes, and territories for unmet housing needs and business losses.

3. \$12.5 billion for mitigation efforts to help communities protect against future disasters.

4. This funding can provide for housing elevation, buyouts in the flood plain, water/sewer

infrastructure enhancements, public infrastructure hardening (e.g. storm proofing public buildings).

5. Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief: \$1.4 billion to address all current damages to federal highways caused by designated disasters

6. \$12.11 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers to repair existing damages by natural disasters and for studies and projects to reduce the risk of future natural disasters, \$75 million to expedite studies to help mitigate future disaster damage.

7. 2.9 billion to help displaced students get back to school. funding can be used for both public and private schools

8. \$3.8 billion for agriculture assistance.

9. \$1.66 billion for Small Business Administration Disaster Loans to assist small businesses and homeowners repair or replace real estate, personal property, machinery and equipment, and inventory and business assets.

Mr. Speaker, there is much more work to be done in my city of Houston, and across the areas affected by the terrible, awesome storm that will be forever known simply as Hurricane Harvey, and by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

That is why I am disappointed that only \$81 billion is being provided at this time.

That is why it must be emphasized and understood that this can only be understood as a partial response because much more funding will be needed to provide our fellow Americans in Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands the help and support they need to restore their communities to their previous greatness.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), the chairman of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank the chairman of the committee for his spectacular work on this bill.

Look, this bill provides much-needed relief and resources to Texas, Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, California, and Puerto Rico. I have heard a lot in this debate, but let's be very clear. This bill treats Florida, the folks in Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and California exactly the same—exactly the same.

Significant portions, Mr. Speaker, of my district were hit hard by Hurricane Irma. Communities are still working to get back on their feet, communities like Everglades City, Chokoloskee, Plantation Island, Immokalee, and Montura Ranch.

This bill helps meet our Federal obligation to ensure the full, appropriate Federal commitment is there for long-term recovery.

Mr. Speaker, for highways, this bill funds repairs for the 2017 storms and clears the backlog of prior years.

On the housing side, this bill provides \$26.1 billion for Community Development Block Grants. Of that, \$13.6 billion is provided to meet all remaining unmet housing, business, and infrastructure needs for those hurricanes, and, yes, that includes the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

The remaining \$12.5 billion is provided for mitigation grants, again, also to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and Florida and California and Texas. All of those are treated exactly the same. So, again, these grants provide resources to our communities so that they can rebuild.

Additionally, I am pleased that \$3.8 billion is allocated for the Department of Agriculture. This will go a long way to help those affected, those farmers, like the ag industry and the citrus industry in the State of Florida.

So, again, I strongly urge a "yes" vote on this important supplemental.

I once again want to thank the chairman, Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN, for his leadership, for his courage, for bringing forward a good bill that helps the folks in our country and that treats everybody equally, equitably, and fairly.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, this year has been the worst fire season in California history. The October fires included 21 major fires that were fought by over 11,000 firefighters.

They were driven by powerful winds that reached speeds of over 80 miles an hour, and these fires moved, at times, as fast as 200 feet per second. That is 40 football fields in a minute. They burned nearly 300,000 acres.

They forced over 100,000 people to evacuate their homes, and they destroyed over 9,000 homes and structures. And, most tragically, 44 people lost their lives.

Our communities have been devastated, Mr. Speaker, but they have also come together and supported each other in inspiring ways, and now they begin the very long road to recovery.

I am pleased to see this supplemental funding package will deliver much-needed funds for fire recovery. I want to specifically thank Congressmen CALVERT, MCCARTHY, and PELOSI, who came out and saw this devastation and have been working with us to make sure we get the funds that we need. I want to thank the appropriators and the appropriations staff for all their help as well.

With the support of the entire California House delegation, the State of California has requested \$4.4 billion for fire-related disaster relief. These funds will be vital to helping families rebuild their homes and their lives and to supporting our community as they rebuild critical infrastructure and restore essential services.

It is critical that the Federal Government steps up and does its part to support our long-term recovery. This funding package is an important first step in that effort.

I have a picture of one of the devastated areas. This is over 3,000 homes in one swath that were just burned to the ground. Folks in California who experienced this terrible disaster need our help.

I ask for an “aye” vote.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER), the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding, and I thank the chairman and the Appropriations Committee for bringing forward this extremely important legislation, which includes important FEMA reforms which were approved unanimously by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee partially in response to this year's historic hurricane season.

The bipartisan, bicameral Disaster Recovery Reform Act addresses the rising costs of disasters in the United States. It reforms Federal disaster programs to ensure our communities are more resilient and better prepared for the next hurricane, flood, earthquake, wildfire, or other disaster.

It focuses on predisaster planning and mitigation and creates incentives for communities to build better and smarter to speed recovery when disaster does strike. This will save lives, and it will also save money.

Putting our focus on mitigation is good government and is fiscally responsible. For every dollar we spend on mitigation, between \$4 and \$8 is saved in avoided disaster recovery costs later. This is good policy that will benefit every single congressional district across the country.

I want to thank many Members who contributed, but especially to my Democratic colleagues who contributed to this effort: Congressmen JOHNSON, DEFazio, HUFFMAN, WILSON, MALONEY, RUIZ, SINEMA, FRANKEL, and NADLER. And again, many, many others contributed to this important reform legislation.

Many Americans are still recovering from hurricane damage, and California is in the middle of fighting massive wildfires. This is extremely important legislation. I would urge all my colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), the chairman of the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for working with us on this and for yielding time.

I also want to thank the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the ranking member for all their assistance.

Mr. Speaker, this bill doesn't just include money, which, of course, is very, very important. It also includes language and changes that I would consider to be priceless. It includes things like applying lessons learned, reducing disaster response costs, and, importantly, speeding up recovery—things

outside Washington called common sense and applying it to how we handle disasters. It pivots from being reactive and spending billions of dollars after disasters to being proactive.

You can look back since 1980. We have had well over 200 disasters in this Nation that have cost over \$1 billion each. In fact, when you add it all up, we are looking at approximately \$1.3 trillion in disaster costs in this Nation.

As the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee said, this bill includes text from H.R. 4460 and H.R. 4438 that transforms this process: instead of just coming in and picking up the pieces after a disaster, actually leaning forward and making sure our communities are more resilient, making sure they are prepared for disasters, making sure they are prepared for the future.

This bill includes very important provisions to the State of Louisiana that address this duplication of benefits issue, some nonsensical policy that someone came up with that a loan is duplicative of a grant. It eliminates these barriers that prevent us from spending hazard mitigation grant programs on federally authorized Corps of Engineer projects to prevent flooding and prevent hurricane damage to our communities.

It applies common sense. It ensures that deficiencies like the I-12 barrier in Louisiana are addressed. It provides funding to respond to the 2016, 1,000-year flood that we had in the capital region in Louisiana.

It provides flexibility for these STEP program housing program-type concepts that ensure that we are not wasting money that is only ripped out later on, but it truly provides long-term solutions.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it addresses inefficiency in food banks and churches and others, and it makes them eligible. I urge adoption of this bill.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA).

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4667, which includes provisions of my bill, the Disaster Recovery Reform Act.

In 2017, 8 percent of the United States population was affected by at least one disaster. This startling statistic highlights the importance of investing in mitigation infrastructure before tragedy strikes.

Studies have repeatedly shown that, for every \$1 invested up front, we can save between \$4 and \$8 in avoided recovery costs. My bill would allow us to realize those savings by transforming how we approach disaster spending.

It would provide FEMA with the programs, authorities, and resources to help our communities plan for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from disasters.

Every one of our districts, Republicans and Democrats alike, will be im-

pacted by disaster at some point. In 2011, my own district was devastated by flooding from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. People lost everything, and homes and businesses were completely wiped out.

I visited with families and employers affected by this tragedy, and it made me realize that we need to do something to help communities build better and smarter before disaster strikes. My bill, the Disaster Recovery Reform Act, will do just that. It will save lives, lessen damage, and speed up recovery.

I thank Chairman SHUSTER and my colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Senate for their work on this bipartisan and bicameral agreement.

Again, I urge swift passage of H.R. 4667.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS).

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, my congratulations go out to Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and to Chairman SHUSTER for putting these FEMA reforms into law that were long overdue. I thank the gentlemen for their support.

I rise in support of H.R. 4667, the critical disaster assistance legislation to help those affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria this year.

I have said on the floor of this House numerous times that I believe it is important for Congress to come together when disaster strikes to help those impacted. Helping our fellow Americans after a disaster is the right thing to do.

And, don't forget, you never know when a disaster may hit your State. That is why I am thankful to Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and Chairman SHUSTER for including language important to my home State of Illinois in this bill. My bill, the Disaster Declaration Improvement Act, requires FEMA to place greater weight and consideration on the severe, localized impact of the damage following a disaster.

□ 1530

I want to thank my colleague, Congresswoman CHERI BUSTOS, for working with me on this bipartisan bill.

FEMA currently takes into account several factors when determining the need for public and individual assistance. However, there is no standard to determine which factor is more important than another, which leads to a highly subjective process, and one that has left rural counties in very populated States, like Illinois, left without help from the Federal Government.

It is because one major factor used by FEMA is a State's population. Currently, FEMA multiplies a State's population by \$1.39 to use it for the threshold to determine need, meaning, for Illinois to receive assistance, damages would have to be \$18 million or more.

As you can see by this chart, that is more than or nearly double that of all

of our neighboring States. There have been multiple times where a storm hits both Illinois and our neighbors, but Illinois is the only one denied assistance.

One of the most recent examples is, 2 years ago this Christmas, flood damage throughout 16 counties cost \$15 million in damages. Missouri, who was also impacted by this same storm, received assistance, but Illinois did not.

This is wrong. My constituents pay into the Disaster Relief Fund to help other States. It should be there when they need it.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS).

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, California is experiencing the worst fire season in its history. Tragically, these fires have taken 46 lives, including one of our brave Cal Fire firefighters, Cory Iverson.

California has lost nearly 10,000 homes and structures since the start of the October wildfires. The need for relief and assistance is immediate.

Mr. Speaker, I support the swift passage of the Emergency Disaster Aid Package, which includes legislation I introduced, the California Wildfire Disaster Tax Relief Act of 2017.

These specific provisions will allow victims to deduct property damages and access retirement funds without penalty, as well as encourage charitable giving.

Passage of this bill will help mitigate the burden of these devastating wildfires and allow people to begin rebuilding their lives.

Mr. Speaker, California faces a long road to recovery and rebuild from this devastating fire season. I urge my colleagues to aid in that recovery by voting for the Emergency Disaster Aid Package.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding time to me and for his tremendous bill. It is a great bipartisan piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, after Superstorm Sandy, I and others saw how leaders and volunteers of churches, synagogues, and other religious centers helped feed, clothe, and shelter tens of thousands of victims, yet they were left out and left behind when it came to repairs of their own facilities.

The FEMA policy was and is unfair, unjustified, and discriminatory. Over 4 years ago, the House came together in the wake of Superstorm Sandy and passed legislation that I authored by 354-72. Surprise, surprise, the Senate never acted, so the policy continues to this day.

I want to thank the chairman for including a provision in this bill that will ensure that houses of worship, churches, and synagogues get the kind of help they need on an equal basis with other

nonprofits. I also want to thank him for including language that will get rid of this misnamed duplication of benefits clause.

Imagine this: men and women who are victimized by Superstorm Sandy or any other storm, they go to FEMA, they are advised to take out an SBA loan, then a little later in the recovery time, they are told that there is a HUD grant available, and they are precluded from getting that grant to even pay off the SBA loan.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD).

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this emergency supplemental bill.

This emergency funding provides much-needed and, frankly, overdue relief to my district in northeast Florida.

In September, Hurricane Irma caused flooding that the city of Jacksonville had not seen in more than 150 years. Downtown was literally under water, power was out for many days, and homes and businesses were shuttered.

In our more rural agricultural communities in Nassau County and St. Johns County, crops were wiped out, hurting our agriculture community for months, if not years to come.

The city of Jacksonville recently projected that Hurricane Irma will cost the city \$85 million.

I would be remiss if I did not commend the quick Federal response, the leadership of our Governor, and the planning and coordination of local emergency management officials and first responders, who saved lives and made our community safe and quickly back up and running.

But the Federal support in this bill provides the next phase in emergency response that we so desperately need.

I would like to thank Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and his committee and committee staff for their work to get this bill over the line. I urge my colleagues in the strongest way possible to support this bill.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the majority leader.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me and for his work.

Mr. Speaker, it is only 4 days until Christmas. I look forward to going home and being with my family. I know every single Member in this body looks forward to that, too. I count my blessings that my family is safe and that I have a community and home to head back to.

There are people in this country who don't have that. Their homes were destroyed by wind, flood, and fires. Their communities were torn apart by hurricanes and flames.

Mr. Speaker, I had the somber privilege of traveling to these places. I went

to Texas and spent time with Members from both sides of the aisle, seeing the flooded homes and streets filled with water. We visited NRG Stadium to meet the people forced to evacuate their homes.

I stood with Representatives like SHEILA JACKSON LEE, AL GREEN, RANDY WEBER, and BRIAN BABIN. These folks don't often agree on much in politics. But you know what we did that day? We all promised to help the people of Texas.

I flew to the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico with Minority Whip STENY HOYER, and I would like to thank Delegate STACEY PLASKETT and Resident Commissioner JENNIFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN for welcoming us and opening the eyes of the Nation to what was happening.

In the Virgin Islands, we visited a hospital. The storm left half of it unusable. No dialysis machines. They had to come to the mainland. Nurses and doctors were working, doing the best they could to help people in the most difficult of circumstances.

In Puerto Rico, we were the first congressional delegation to visit the interior after the storm. We were with Members like JEFF DENHAM, ANTHONY BROWN, and NORMA TORRES. We met people without power for weeks, low on food, low on medicine. We saw schools and homes destroyed and completely washed away.

We then went to Florida to see the other towns hit by Hurricane Irma, places that face storms year after year.

I returned to my home State of California with Congressmen MIKE THOMPSON and JARED HUFFMAN during the worst wildfire season our State has ever seen. We saw the fires rage up north, where it destroyed entire communities. Forty-six people have lost their lives in the fires in California this year.

You could see the devastation, block after block. Ash heaps of homes and trees, standing like barren pillars.

I met with firefighters down south, still battling what may become the largest wildfire in California's history. As it looks right now, they will still be standing on the front lines of those fires come Christmas day.

Every single place I went, Democrats and Republicans stood together. We saw the devastation together. We spoke to the suffering that the people were having together, and together we made a promise that we would return here to Washington and work hand-in-hand to help them as soon as possible.

That is why you heard Minority Whip STENY HOYER, on September 26, say that he would "work with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure Congress provides all funding necessary to ensure that all Americans affected by these storms can recover and rebuild."

That is why he said on November 2 that he believes "we can work together in a bipartisan way to ensure that the affected areas receive the resources they need from Congress."

That is why I appreciated joining him in an op-ed piece that was in *The Washington Post* on November 8, where we wrote: “We are determined to ensure that there is strong bipartisan support for the next supplemental emergency funding package so that affected areas, such as those we visited, have the resources they need.”

Minority Leader NANCY PELOSI spoke similarly. She signed a letter with Members across California saying to President Trump that: We look forward to working with you to ensure that all Americans who have been severely impacted by recent natural disasters across the United States receive the Federal support they need and deserve.

She told the Appropriations Committee that: Congress has an urgent responsibility to the California families, whose lives have been upended by disastrous wildfires.

I couldn’t agree more with these statements. In the past few weeks and months, we did—we worked together. We analyzed the damage. We studied the requests from Governors and legislators. We even made significant reforms to respond to disaster in the most effective and responsible way possible.

The legislation today is the result. It provides funding for every single State and territory affected by natural disasters.

I remind all my friends from California that this legislation accommodates exactly what our entire delegation requested.

In all this work, we did it together in a bipartisan way; the way the American people expect this body to work.

Now, I know it is the habit of this town to play politics. Mr. Speaker, I do want to tell my friends on the other side: If they feel like they have to, play politics on tax cuts. Call it whatever you want to call it. Play politics on all the other legislation that comes to this floor.

But if I can request one thing: Please don’t do it here. Don’t play politics on a vote to give aid to the people of Texas; to the people of Puerto Rico; to the people of the Virgin Islands; to the people of Florida, and to the people of California, who are still fighting the fires.

Don’t play politics on a bill that you are going to hope to maybe stop another. That would be the worst of any politics I have seen played here.

Mr. Speaker, I beg my friends on the other side: Please don’t do what they did 2 weeks ago when they whipped against the funding bill to shut the government down. If they don’t like tax cuts, I understand; vote against them. If they don’t want to vote for the funding of the government and they want to shut it down, fine, take that vote.

But here and now, right before Christmas, don’t vote against aid for Americans who just lost everything. They don’t understand the politics in it. Don’t vote against aid we promised

to deliver. Don’t vote against aid we worked so hard together to put on this floor.

Washington, D.C., can be far from our homes. We may all be dreaming of being home with our kids, eating Christmas dinner, opening presents, and enjoying time with our family and friends; but what we do here and now has consequences. What we do here and now will either give tens of thousands of people something to hope for this Christmas, or take that hope away.

We can deliver that hope if those who stood with me on the flood plains of Texas and on the burnt hills of California keep the promise they made. We can deliver that hope if those who worked with us for so long continue to work with us today.

People need our help. Vote to give them the help they need, the help we all promised.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT).

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, at this moment I would like to speak on behalf of the people who I represent, the people of the Virgin Islands.

I am thankful that this House has decided that they wanted to work in a bipartisan manner on supplemental aid for the unprecedented disasters that have occurred in the Virgin Islands.

I did hear the voice of so many of my colleagues who said that they would be willing to do whatever was necessary to support the people of the Virgin Islands.

But right now, as I stand here, people of the Virgin Islands, almost 60 percent of them, still do not have power.

□ 1545

I have no power in my own home, and those of you in Florida, Texas, and in other places would not stand for that. But you expect us to stand for it. We are supposed to muddle through.

We are only supposed to have hope this Christmas of what is supposed to come?

Mr. Speaker, you can have hope at your Christmas dinner because you have got some lights on. My house I will go empty to, it will be cold, and it will be dark there until my husband and I crank up the generator and get it going for a couple of hours so that maybe we can wash, cook some food, and turn it back off again later in the day.

Today, I am urging my colleagues to vote “no” on H.R. 4667, not because I don’t want supplemental support, not because the people of the Virgin Islands don’t need it, but because I understand that I have said, when this measure was unveiled, that the funding in this bill is woefully insufficient, and it has not improved since that time.

This measure provides only \$81 billion to be split between Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and other places. If history is any indication, that money is not going to get to the people of the Virgin Islands, because while the California delegation and the Texas delegation can lobby in late hours to get what they need in the bill, I am the only person from the Virgin Islands here to support the people of the Virgin Islands. Not only do I not get invited to those negotiations, I don’t even have a vote when the bill that comes to providing for the people that I represent comes on this floor.

One of the things that is noticeably absent from this disaster package is funding for Medicaid programs, the same type of funding that was put in, in discussions for Katrina, for the people of Texas and Louisiana.

The government of the Virgin Islands cannot shoulder the current burden of the local matching requirements for Medicaid funding which the government of the Virgin Islands has recently submitted to be \$64 million and an additional \$50 million. The government of the Virgin Islands has respectfully requested that the Medicaid provisions, that the cap be removed, the arbitrary cap be removed for us for a period of time for us to be stabilized and for 100 percent the same way it was for Katrina in other places be given to us.

Now, the people of the Virgin Islands and the people of Puerto Rico—I know it may be news to many people—but we are U.S. citizens. We decide to live on an island because that is where we were brought.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

Ms. PLASKETT. Because of that, we have been treated disproportionately and unfairly in the ways that some of this funding has come about.

In addition, the bill does not include important local cost-share waivers for the Virgin Islands and contains unnecessary limitations on the ability of the Virgin Islands to use Federal assistance to rebuild with more resilience.

Furthermore, the Virgin Islands cannot wait for the community development funds provided in this bill. HUD should immediately award community development funds to the Virgin Islands on the damage assessments that have been completed.

Those are things that I can get around. Those are real support in a real bill that is really working in a bipartisan way to help all Americans—not just delegations who can get together in the dark of the night and in the cold of the night and make provisions for themselves leaving those of us. I have told my colleagues on this side of the aisle that they are going to pick off Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, we are going to be left out.

Some of you are going to get what you want, and you are going to vote for

this. Once again, the people who have no vote on this floor, the people who have no say in this country, although they are U.S. citizens, are going to be left out.

Mr. Speaker, I am urging all of my colleagues to vote “no.”

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

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute to close.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that the bill before us is insufficient to meet the needs of those living in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Months after hurricanes devastated the islands, hundreds, if not thousands, of Americans have died, and far too many people are living without basic necessities that all Americans should have.

I include in the RECORD a letter from Puerto Rico’s Resident Commissioner, JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, which requests Medicaid assistance and 100 percent Federal costs for FEMA and Army Corps projects which are not included in the bill.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 20, 2017.

Hon. THAD COCHRAN,
Chairman, Appropriations Committee, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. PATRICK J. LEAHY,
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. RODNEY FRELINGHUYSEN,
Chairman, Appropriations Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. NITA M. LOWEY,
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMEN COCHRAN AND FRELINGHUYSEN AND RANKING MEMBERS LEAHY AND LOWEY: I write to draw your attention to several disaster supplemental appropriations matters that are important to Puerto Rico’s recovery from the catastrophic damage caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The revisions I propose to the disaster supplemental legislation that Congress is currently considering are necessary for rebuilding the lives of the 3.4 million U.S. citizens who live on the island.

Regarding any federal funding for Medicaid in Puerto Rico, it is imperative that disaster supplemental legislation provide that for not less than two years Puerto Rico will receive 100% federal funding (FMAP). This funding is necessary because there is no question about Puerto Rico’s looming Medicaid crisis: within the first months of 2018, absent emergency funding, Puerto Rico’s Medicaid program will exhaust its current funds and the island’s Medicaid system will collapse, which will bring to a halt Puerto Rico’s entire healthcare system.

The disaster supplemental legislation must be revised so to statutorily waive for two years Puerto Rico’s state cost share for FEMA Public Assistance. Moreover, the disaster supplemental legislation must be revised so to include a two year waiver of the cost-sharing requirements for all Army Corps of Engineers projects in Puerto Rico.

As you know, the recent hurricanes have destroyed Puerto Rico. The lives of millions of U.S. citizens are now in the federal government’s hands. I look forward to continuing to work with you to move forward the proposals I have outlined in this letter. Together we can rebuild Puerto Rico better than ever and make the island anew. At this moment, the federal government has an op-

portunity to demonstrate America’s commitment to all its citizens, including those who reside in Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,

JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN,
Member of Congress, PR-At Large.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this bill—put together after eight public hearings, input from all Governors, all Members of Congress, and all Delegates, especially those who represent Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and California—represents a fair and a compassionate treatment of all hurricane and fire victims.

Like the first two emergency supplementals put together by our leadership, our committee, and Congress, we acted within days to help. I ask that we do it again this afternoon without delay. Get this \$81 billion disaster package into the hands of the States, the territories, and the communities that continue to suffer.

Let me associate myself with the remarks of our majority leader. Let’s get the money into those communities that have been suffering. That money is going to the Virgin Islands, it is going to Puerto Rico, and it is going to Florida, Texas, and California. There has been no discrimination at all.

This bill has been put together with the cooperation of all the chairs and ranking members, and it deserves to be acted on promptly. People are suffering. Let’s get the money out the door to help them as we have done in the past on the first two supplementals.

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Division B of this bill, which has bipartisan, bicameral support of the leadership of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate. It includes H.R. 4460, the “Disaster Recovery Reform Act”, and several other Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) bills that passed the House earlier this year.

While there are many good provisions in Division B, I will focus my comments on a few provisions that I believe will have the most impact in making the United States a leader in disaster recovery. Under Division B, the Nation will be on the right track to build stronger and more resilient communities and it will encourage better behavior before and after disaster strikes.

We know that for every dollar invested in mitigation to make our communities stronger before disaster strikes, the taxpayer saves \$3 to \$4 in future disaster costs. Section 2036 of this bill furthers the goal of investing in mitigation before disaster strikes by establishing a steady funding stream for FEMA’s Predisaster Mitigation (PDM) program.

Under Section 2036, the President must provide a specific amount of additional funding from the Disaster Relief Fund for the PDM program. The specific amount of additional

funding is equal to six percent of the estimated amount of disaster assistance provided for each major disaster. The President will then distribute these funds in accordance with existing law, with a certain amount provided to each State and the remainder made available through a competitive grant process.

Section 2036 uses language similar to language in the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) authorizing FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), which is mandatory funding provided post-disaster with each disaster declaration. Although Section 2036 uses the term “may”, the intent is that FEMA will set aside funds for the PDM program, just as they do for HMGP. We have had several bipartisan conversations with FEMA confirming that FEMA understands the intent of this section and will interpret the “may set-aside” language included in section 2036 as mandatory. The mandatory funding for the PDM program from the Disaster Relief Fund required under this section will provide consistency to a program with a proven record of saving taxpayers money.

In addition, section 2036 authorizes FEMA to withdraw and redistribute funds that remain unobligated three fiscal years after FEMA awarded the funds to the grantee. The intent of this provision is to provide FEMA with discretionary authority to move funding that is not being used to States and projects that will use it. However, FEMA is not required to withdraw these funds from grantees and shall make these decisions on a case-by-case basis. For instance, a grantee may have commenced work on a project or is actively working on a project but the project is not at the point where funds need to be obligated. In this instance, we would not expect FEMA to withdraw the funds.

In addition, while this section will apply to PDM funds awarded prior to enactment of this Division, the intent is to give grantees three fiscal years from the date of enactment of this Act to obligate these funds. Grantees with existing PDM funds are now on notice that they have three years to obligate these funds or at least be actively working on projects that will allow those funds to be obligated shortly thereafter.

I have noted time and time again how nonsensical it is that the Federal Government pays to rebuild communities after a disaster to inadequate standards only to have those facilities destroyed again by a later disaster, with the Federal Government once again on the hook for the cost of rebuilding. Under this legislation, this nonsense will finally stop. Section 2037 requires communities to rebuild to the latest consensus-based, design standards and in a more resilient manner, thereby ensuring stronger, smarter facilities going forward. The cycle of repeatedly rebuilding and repairing disaster-damaged public infrastructure will end under this measure.

Although FEMA must define “resilient” and “resiliency” pursuant to regulations within two years of the date of enactment of this Act, FEMA is required to adopt guidance to immediately implement the “resiliency” requirements of this legislation. The need for resilient construction has become even more apparent after the 2017 disaster season. FEMA must use this opportunity to invest taxpayer funds wisely while saving lives and reducing injuries. FEMA has the ability to ensure that the United

States leads the way in disaster recovery and I urge FEMA to seize this moment.

Accordingly, as FEMA works to develop the definition of “resilient” and “resiliency”, the agency needs to ensure that it takes into account the extent to which the improved facilities:

- reduce deaths and injuries during and after a major disaster;

- sustain minimal damage allowing the facility to continue to provide the primary function and services of the facility during and after a natural hazard;

- prepare for and withstand all hazards that could result in a major disaster; and

- reduce the magnitude or duration of a disruption to the facility's primary function and services to a facility.

In addition, any “resilient” facility should be constructed:

- in consideration of current and future environmental conditions based upon the best-available science, changes in demand, and extreme weather events;

- to reduce potential disruptions to the facility, including by building in operational redundancies, and increasing the ability of the facility to recover more rapidly; using techniques and materials that have the absorptive capacity, adaptive capacity, and recoverability to withstand a potentially disruptive event;

- to the maximum extent practicable, using durable and sustainable material; and

- to incorporate, to the maximum extent practicable, natural and nature-based measures and energy efficiency improvements.

Currently, FEMA provides HMGP funds when a State receives a disaster declaration, but HMGP funds are not provided when a State receives a Fire Management Assistance Grant to respond to wildfires on non-Federal lands. Unfortunately, wildfires destroy the landscape often causing mudslides and flooding that then result in a disaster declaration. Under Division B, States will receive HMGP funds if they have received Fire Management Assistance Grants to respond to wildfires. With HMGP funds, States will be able to restore landscapes and vegetation destroyed by wildfires and make the land less susceptible to future mudslides and floods. This legislation also clarifies that wildfire-related mitigation activities are eligible under both the PDM and HMGP programs. Together, these provisions will help prevent wildfires and related disasters and I commend our colleague from California (Mr. RUIZ) for his leadership on these issues.

Division B also clarifies that earthquake-related activities are eligible for mitigation assistance. The West Coast faces the most risk from multiple and extreme earthquakes, and Oregon is long overdue for an earthquake and tsunami on the Cascadia Subduction Zone. Yet, the United States' earthquake early warning system lags behind those of other nations. Clarifying for grantees that mitigation funds are available for earthquake-related activities will save lives and reduce injuries in a future disaster.

Finally, important to the State of Oregon, section 2029 clarifies that for purposes of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), FEMA is not responsible for privately funded actions taken by private parties on private land. Under actions proposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service, the entire State of Oregon would become a critical habitat, seriously impeding economic development. The

proposed requirements, are so onerous, the State of Oregon, which already has strict land use regulations, would have difficulty implementing them, as they violate federal and state property rights. This provision will help ensure that FEMA implements the NFIP in a manner that is consistent from state-to-state and does not become a land use regulatory agency.

I support all of these important provisions and urge their adoption.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 670, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

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.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings are postponed.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1370.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 670, I call up the bill (H.R. 1370) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment thereto, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

Senate amendment:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. ENHANCED DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY COORDINATION THROUGH THE BLUE CAMPAIGN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle C of title IV of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 231 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 434. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN.

“(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ‘human trafficking’ means an act or practice described in paragraph (9) or (10) of section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

“(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within the Department a program, which shall be known as the ‘Blue Campaign’. The Blue Campaign shall be headed by a Director, who shall be appointed by the Secretary.

“(c) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Blue Campaign shall be to unify and coordinate Department efforts to address human trafficking.

“(d) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Secretary, working through the Director, shall, in accordance with subsection (e)—

“(1) issue Department-wide guidance to appropriate Department personnel;

“(2) develop training programs for such personnel;

“(3) coordinate departmental efforts, including training for such personnel; and

“(4) provide guidance and training on trauma-informed practices to ensure that human trafficking victims are afforded prompt access to victim support service providers, in addition to the government assistance required under section 107 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105), to address their immediate and long-term needs.

“(e) GUIDANCE AND TRAINING.—The Blue Campaign shall provide guidance and training to appropriate Department personnel and other Federal, State, tribal, and law enforcement personnel, as appropriate regarding—

“(1) programs to help identify instances of human trafficking;

“(2) the types of information that should be collected and recorded in information technology systems utilized by the Department to help identify individuals suspected or convicted of human trafficking;

“(3) systematic and routine information sharing within the Department and among Federal, State, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies regarding—

“(A) individuals suspected or convicted of human trafficking; and

“(B) patterns and practices of human trafficking;

“(4) techniques to identify suspected victims of trafficking along the United States border and at airport security checkpoints;

“(5) methods to be used by the Transportation Security Administration and personnel from other appropriate agencies—

“(A) to train employees of the Transportation Security Administration to identify suspected victims of trafficking; and

“(B) to serve as a liaison and resource regarding human trafficking prevention to appropriate State, local, and private sector aviation workers and the traveling public;

“(6) utilizing resources, such as indicator cards, fact sheets, pamphlets, posters, brochures, and radio and television campaigns—

“(A) to educate partners and stakeholders; and

“(B) to increase public awareness of human trafficking;

“(7) leveraging partnerships with State and local governmental, nongovernmental, and private sector organizations to raise public awareness of human trafficking; and

“(8) any other activities the Secretary determines necessary to carry out the Blue Campaign.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–296) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 433 the following:

“Sec. 434. Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign.”.

SEC. 3. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure, in accordance with the Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance required under section 434(d) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 2, the integration of information technology systems utilized within the Department to record

and track information regarding individuals suspected or convicted of human trafficking.

SEC. 4. REPORT.

Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit a report to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives that—

(1) describes the status and effectiveness of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign; and

(2) provides a recommendation regarding the appropriate office within the Department of Homeland Security for the Blue Campaign.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated \$819,000 to carry out section 434 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 2.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the motion.

The text of the motion is as follows:

Mr. Frelinghuysen moves that the House concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 1370 with an amendment consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-52.

The text of the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the text is as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the Senate amendment, insert the following

DIVISION A—FURTHER ADDITIONAL CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

SEC. 1001. The Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018 (division D of Public Law 115-56) is further amended—

(1) by striking the date specified in section 106(3) and inserting “January 19, 2018”; and

(2) by adding after section 142 the following:

“SEC. 143. Notwithstanding section 104, amounts made available by section 111 for ‘Department of Homeland Security—Coast Guard—Retired Pay’ may be obligated to carry out Retired Pay Reform, as authorized by part 1 of subtitle D of title VI of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114-92, as amended), and the matter under such heading in division F of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31; 131 Stat. 409) shall be applied during the period covered by this Act by inserting ‘payment of continuation pay under section 356 of title 37, United States Code,’ after ‘payment for career status bonuses.’

“SEC. 144. In addition to amounts provided by section 101, amounts are provided for ‘Department of Health and Human Services—Indian Health Service—Indian Health Facilities’ at a rate for operations of \$1,761,000 and amounts are provided for ‘Department of Health and Human Services—Indian Health Service—Indian Health Facilities’ at a rate for operations of \$1,104,000, for an additional amount for costs of staffing and operating newly constructed facilities; and such amounts may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to staff and operate newly constructed facilities.

“SEC. 145. Amounts made available by section 101 for ‘Department of Health and Human Services—Administration for Children and Families—Refugee and Entrant Assistance’ may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to maintain program operations for carrying out section 235 of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (8 U.S.C. 1232) and section 462 of the Home-

land Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 279) at the level provided in fiscal year 2017.

“SEC. 146. Notwithstanding section 101, amounts are provided for the purposes described in the third paragraph under the heading ‘Department of Health and Human Services—Office of the Secretary—Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund’ at a rate for operations of \$112,000,000; and such amounts may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to prepare for or respond to an influenza pandemic.

“SEC. 147. Notwithstanding section 251(a)(1) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 and the timetable in section 254(a) of such Act, the final sequestration report for fiscal year 2018 pursuant to section 254(f)(1) of such Act and any order for fiscal year 2018 pursuant to section 254(f)(5) of such Act shall be issued, for the Congressional Budget Office, 10 days after the date specified in section 106(3), and for the Office of Management and Budget, 15 days after the date specified in section 106(3).”

SEC. 1002. (a) Notwithstanding the dates specified in section 403(b) of the FISA Amendments Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-261; 122 Stat. 2474), the amendments made by such section shall not take effect until the date specified in section 106(3) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018 (division D of Public Law 115-56), as amended.

(b) If during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on the date specified in section 106(3) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018 (division D of Public Law 115-56), as amended, any Act amending the dates specified in section 403(b) of the FISA Amendments Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-261; 122 Stat. 2474) is enacted, this section shall be repealed.

This division may be cited as the “Further Additional Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018”.

DIVISION B—MISSILE DEFENSE

The following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I—MISSILE DEFEAT AND DEFENSE ENHANCEMENTS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Navy” for necessary costs to repair damage to the U.S.S. John S. McCain and the U.S.S. Fitzgerald, \$673,500,000: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Air Force” for necessary costs to detect, defeat, and defend against the use of ballistic missiles, \$18,750,000: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

For an additional amount for “Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide” for necessary costs to detect, defeat, and defend against the use of ballistic missiles, \$23,735,000: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

PROCUREMENT

MISSILE PROCUREMENT, ARMY

For an additional amount for “Missile Procurement, Army” for necessary costs to detect, defeat, and defend against the use of ballistic missiles, \$884,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

MISSILE PROCUREMENT, AIR FORCE

For an additional amount for “Missile Procurement, Air Force” for necessary costs to detect, defeat, and defend against the use of ballistic missiles, \$12,000,000 to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

OTHER PROCUREMENT, AIR FORCE

For an additional amount for “Other Procurement, Air Force” for necessary costs to detect, defeat, and defend against the use of ballistic missiles, \$288,055,000 to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

PROCUREMENT, DEFENSE-WIDE

For an additional amount for “Procurement, Defense-Wide” for necessary costs to detect, defeat, and defend against the use of ballistic missiles, \$1,239,140,000 to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST AND EVALUATION

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST AND EVALUATION, ARMY

For an additional amount for “Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Army” for necessary costs to detect, defeat, and defend against the use of ballistic missiles, \$20,700,000 to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST AND EVALUATION, NAVY

For an additional amount for “Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Navy” for necessary costs to detect, defeat, and defend against the use of ballistic missiles, \$60,000,000 to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST AND EVALUATION, AIR FORCE

For an additional amount for “Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Air Force” for necessary costs to detect, defeat, and defend against the use of ballistic missiles, \$255,744,000 to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST AND EVALUATION, DEFENSE-WIDE

For an additional amount for “Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Defense-

Wide'' for necessary costs to detect, defeat, and defend against the use of ballistic missiles, \$1,010,220,000 to remain available until September 30, 2019: *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

TITLE II—MISSILE CONSTRUCTION ENHANCEMENTS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE

For an additional amount for "Military Construction, Defense-Wide", \$200,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2022, to carry out construction of a missile field in Alaska: *Provided*, That such funds may be obligated or expended for planning and design and military construction projects not otherwise authorized by law: *Provided further*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

TITLE III—GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 2001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds made available in this division are in addition to amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2018.

SEC. 2002. (a) Funds made available in title I of this division shall be allocated to programs, projects, and activities in accordance with the detailed congressional budget justifications submitted by the Department of Defense to accompany the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Amendments requested by the President on November 6, 2017: *Provided*, That changes to the allocation of such funds shall be subject to the reprogramming requirements set forth in the annual appropriations Act.

(b) Funds made available in this division may be obligated and expended notwithstanding sections 102 and 104 of division D of Public Law 115-56.

SEC. 2003. Each amount designated in this division by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 shall be available only if the President subsequently so designates all such amounts and transmits such designations to the Congress.

This division may be cited as the "Department of Defense Missile Defeat and Defense Enhancements Appropriations Act, 2018".

DIVISION C—HEALTH PROVISIONS

TITLE I—PUBLIC HEALTH EXTENDERS

SEC. 3101. EXTENSION FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS, THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS, AND TEACHING HEALTH CENTERS THAT OPERATE GME PROGRAMS.

(a) COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS FUNDING.—Section 10503(b)(1) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 254b-2(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (D), by striking "and" at the end; and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following:

"(F) \$550,000,000 for the period of the first and second quarters of fiscal year 2018; and".

(b) NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS.—Section 10503(b)(2) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 254b-2(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (D), by striking "and" at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following:

"(F) \$65,000,000 for period of the first and second quarters of fiscal year 2018".

(c) TEACHING HEALTH CENTERS THAT OPERATE GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS.—Subsection (g) of section 340H of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 256h) is amended—

(1) by striking "To carry out" and inserting the following:

"(1) IN GENERAL.—To carry out";

(2) by striking "and \$15,000,000 for the first quarter of fiscal year 2018" and inserting "and \$30,000,000 for the period of the first and second quarters of fiscal year 2018, to remain available until expended"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Of the amount made available to carry out this section for any fiscal year, the Secretary may not use more than 5 percent of such amount for the expenses of administering this section."

(d) APPLICATION.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to this section are subject to the requirements contained in Public Law 115-31 for funds for programs authorized under sections 330 through 340 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b-256).

(e) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 3014(h) of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking "section 10503(b)(1)(E) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 254b-2(b)(1)(E))", as amended by section 221 of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015" and inserting "subparagraphs (E) and (F) of section 10503(b)(1) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 254b-2(b)(1))"; and

(2) in paragraph (4), by inserting "and section 3101(d) of the CHIP and Public Health Funding Extension Act" after "section 221(c) of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015".

SEC. 3102. EXTENSION FOR SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAMS.

(a) SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAM FOR TYPE I DIABETES.—Section 330B(b)(2) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254c-2(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking "and" at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

"(D) \$37,500,000 for the period of the first and second quarters of fiscal year 2018, to remain available until expended."

(b) SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAM FOR INDIGENES.—Subparagraph (D) of section 330C(c)(2) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254c-3(c)(2)) is amended by inserting "and \$37,500,000 for the second quarter of fiscal year 2018" before the period at the end.

SEC. 3103. PREVENTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH FUND.

Section 4002(b) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 300u-11(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking "each of fiscal years 2018 and 2019" and inserting "fiscal year 2018";

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (4) through (8) as paragraphs (5) through (9);

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

"(4) for fiscal year 2019, \$800,000,000";

(4) in paragraph (5), as so redesignated, by striking "\$1,000,000,000" and inserting "\$800,000,000"; and

(5) in paragraph (6), as so redesignated, by striking "\$1,500,000,000" and inserting "\$1,250,000,000".

TITLE II—CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (CHIP)

SEC. 3201. FUNDING EXTENSION OF THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM.

(a) APPROPRIATION; TOTAL ALLOTMENT.—Section 2104(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (19), by striking "and";

(2) in paragraph (20), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

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

"(21) for fiscal year 2018, for purposes of making 1 semi-annual allotment—

"(A) \$2,850,000,000 for the period beginning on October 1, 2017, and ending on March 31, 2018."

(b) ALLOTMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 2104(m) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(m)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2)(B)(ii), in the matter preceding subclause (I), by inserting "and paragraph (10)" after "clauses (iii) and (iv)";

(B) in paragraph (5)—

(i) by striking "or (4)" and inserting "(4, or (10))"; and

(ii) by striking "or 2017" and inserting "2017, or 2018";

(C) in paragraph (9)—

(i) in the heading, by striking "FISCAL YEARS 2015 AND 2017" and inserting "CERTAIN FISCAL YEARS";

(ii) by striking "or (4)" and inserting "(4, or (10))"; and

(iii) by striking "or fiscal year 2017" and inserting "2017, or 2018"; and

(D) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(10) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018.—

"(A) FIRST HALF.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (5) and (7), from the amount made available under subparagraph (A) of paragraph (21) of subsection (a) for the semi-annual period described in such subparagraph, the Secretary shall compute a State allotment for each State (including the District of Columbia and each commonwealth and territory) for such semi-annual period in an amount equal to 1/2 of the amount described in clause (ii) for the State.

"(ii) FULL YEAR AMOUNT BASED ON GROWTH FACTOR UPDATED AMOUNT.—The amount described in this clause for a State is equal to the sum of—

"(I) the sum of the 2 semi-annual allotments made to the State under paragraph (4) for fiscal year 2017; and

"(II) the amount of any payments made to the State under subsection (n) for fiscal year 2017,

multiplied by the allotment increase factor under paragraph (6) for fiscal year 2018."

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 2104(m)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(m)(2)) is amended—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking "2010 THROUGH 2016" and inserting "BEGINNING WITH FISCAL YEAR 2010"; and

(B) by striking "the allotment increase factor under paragraph (5)" each place it appears and inserting "the allotment increase factor under paragraph (6)".

(3) APPLICATION OF REGULAR EXPENDITURE RULES.—Amounts allotted to a State under section 2104(m)(10)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(m)(10)(A)) (as added by paragraph (1)) shall be subject to the same requirements of title XXI of such Act and applicable regulations of the Secretary of Health and Human Services as apply to other allotments made to States for a fiscal year under section 2104 of such Act.

(c) EXTENSION OF CHIP ALLOCATION REDISTRIBUTION SPECIAL RULE FOR CERTAIN SHORT-FALL STATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 2104(f)(2)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(f)(2)(B)), as amended by section 201 of Public Law 115-90, is amended—

(A) in the clause heading, by striking “FIRST QUARTER” and inserting “FIRST HALF”;

(B) by redesignating subclause (III) as subclause (VI); and

(C) by striking subclauses (I) and (II) and inserting the following:

“(I) IN GENERAL.—For each month beginning during the period beginning on October 1, 2017, and ending March 31, 2018, subject to the succeeding subclauses of this clause, the Secretary shall redistribute any amounts available for redistribution under paragraph (1) for fiscal year 2018, to each State that is an emergency shortfall State for the month (as defined in subclause (II)) such amount as the Secretary determines will eliminate the estimated shortfall described in subclause (II) for such State for the month (as may be adjusted under subparagraph (C)) before the Secretary may redistribute such amounts to any shortfall State that is not an emergency shortfall State. In the case of any amounts redistributed under this subclause to a State that is not an emergency shortfall State, such amounts shall be determined in accordance with clause (i).

“(II) EMERGENCY SHORTFALL STATE DEFINED.—For purposes of this clause, the term ‘emergency shortfall State’ means, with respect to a month beginning during the period beginning October 1, 2017, and ending March 31, 2018, a shortfall State for which the Secretary estimates, in accordance with subparagraph (A) (unless otherwise specified in this subclause) and on a monthly basis using the most recent data available to the Secretary as of such month, that the projected expenditures under the State child health plan and under section 2105(g) (calculated as if the reference under section 2105(g)(4)(A) to ‘2017’ were a reference to ‘2018’ and insofar as the allotments are available to the State under this subsection or subsection (e) or (m)) for such month will exceed the sum of the amounts described in clauses (i) through (iii) of subparagraph (A) for such month, including after application of any amount redistributed under paragraph (1) for a previous month for fiscal year 2018 in accordance with this clause, to such State. A shortfall State may be an emergency shortfall State under the previous sentence without regard to whether any amounts were redistributed to such State under paragraph (1) for a previous month in fiscal year 2018.

“(III) FUNDS REDISTRIBUTED IN THE ORDER IN WHICH STATES REALIZE FUNDING SHORTFALLS.—The Secretary shall redistribute the amounts available for redistribution under paragraph (1) to emergency shortfall States described in subclause (II) in the order in which such States realize monthly funding shortfalls under this title for fiscal year 2018. The Secretary shall only make redistributions under this clause to the extent that such amounts are available for such redistributions.

“(IV) PRORATION RULE.—If the amounts available for redistribution under paragraph (1) for a month during the period described in subclause (I) are less than the total amounts of the estimated shortfalls determined for the month for emergency shortfall States described in subclause (II), the amount computed under subclause (I) for each emergency shortfall State shall be reduced proportionally.

“(V) UNOBLIGATED REDISTRIBUTED FUNDS.—The Secretary shall withhold any funds redistributed under paragraph (1) for fiscal year 2018 before January 1, 2018, but which have not been obligated for amounts expended by a State as of that date, and shall

redistribute such funds in accordance with the preceding subclauses of this clause.”.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in the amendments made by paragraph (1) shall be construed as authorizing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to de-obligate any funds redistributed under clause (ii) of section 2104(f)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(f)(2)(B)) that have been obligated for amounts expended by an emergency shortfall State described in such clause as of January 1, 2018.

This division may be cited as the “CHIP and Public Health Funding Extension Act”.

DIVISION D—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 4001. VA CHOICE.

There is appropriated, out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$2,100,000,000, to remain available until expended, to be deposited in the Veterans Choice Fund under section 802 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note).

DIVISION E—BUDGETARY EFFECTS

SEC. 5001. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The budgetary effects of division C and each succeeding division shall not be entered on either PAYGO scorecard maintained pursuant to section 4(d) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010.

(b) SENATE PAYGO SCORECARDS.—The budgetary effects of division C and each succeeding division shall not be entered on any PAYGO scorecard maintained for purposes of section 4106 of H. Con. Res. 71 (115th Congress).

(c) CLASSIFICATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.—Notwithstanding Rule 3 of the Budget Scorekeeping Guidelines set forth in the joint explanatory statement of the committee of conference accompanying Conference Report 105-217 and section 250(c)(8) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, the budgetary effects of division C and each succeeding division shall not be estimated—

(1) for purposes of section 251 of such Act; and

(2) for purposes of paragraph (4)(C) of section 3 of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 as being included in an appropriation Act.

SEC. 5002. BUDGETARY EFFECTS OF RECONCILIATION ACT.

(a) DEFINITION OF RECONCILIATION ACT.—In this section, the term “reconciliation Act” means an Act enacted into law before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act that was considered pursuant to the reconciliation instructions in H. Con. Res. 71 (115th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018.

(b) PAYGO SCORECARD.—The budgetary effects of the reconciliation Act shall not be entered on either PAYGO scorecard maintained pursuant to section 4(d) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (2 U.S.C. 933(d)).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 670, the motion shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations.

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1370.

This legislation keeps the government fully open, funds important national security priorities, and temporarily extends critical government programs like the Children's Health Insurance Program, the National Flood Insurance Program, and section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

Our duty to the American people is to keep them secure and to ensure they have access to the government programs and services they depend on.

The House must pass this bill now, today.

Without acting on this bill, existing government funding will expire tomorrow, and the government will shut down. This legislation provides a simple, clean extension of current funding levels through January of 2018.

This additional time will allow House and Senate leadership to complete their negotiations on overall spending levels. Once that is determined, my committee will complete negotiations with the Senate on all 12 appropriations bills for the rest of fiscal year 2018.

In the meantime, it is essential that Congress maintain government programs and services—for our Nation's stability, the stability of our economy, and for the security and well-being of the American people.

This bill also supports national security by providing an additional \$4.7 billion in emergency funding to bolster missile defense, to protect against growing threats, and to repair damaged Navy ships.

In addition, the bill also includes \$2.1 billion in mandatory funding for the VA Choice Program. This funding will guarantee that our veterans continue to have access to the medical care they need and deserve.

Along with important funding for our Armed Forces and veterans, this bill contains temporary extensions of several critical programs that millions of Americans rely on. These include the Children's Health Insurance Program, the National Flood Insurance Program, and section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, again, I would like to thank the 12 Appropriations chairs, our 12 clerks, and the very professional staff of the Appropriations Committee for working overtime to bring this bill and others before the House today.

We cannot delay on passing this critical legislation, funding the government, protecting our Nation, and extending essential programs that hard-working Americans rely on every day.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this epic failure of governing.

Nearly 3 months into the fiscal year, the Republican majority is advancing

its third temporary continuing resolution with no foreseeable path forward on enacting full-year appropriations and no evident urgency to address priorities that are critical to American families and communities.

Completely preoccupied with showing tax breaks on corporations and the wealthiest Americans, the majority has failed to clear the extremely low bar of charting a course to keep the government open and meet deadlines they have set for themselves.

In short, the Republican majority has made a complete mess of the very basics of governing. Now they want Democrats to bail them out by carrying a bill that neglects our priorities.

This continuing resolution should include the bipartisan Dream Act, protecting from deportation young people who were brought to this country as small children and only know the United States as home. But this bill tells those facing deportation that their plight is not our concern.

It should include a bipartisan reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program, providing long-term certainty for 9 million children and families who depend on the program. Instead, this bill tells children and families their medical needs are not our priority.

It should include an agreement to raise caps for defense and nondefense spending with parity so that appropriators can get to work on a full-year spending package that keeps America secure and prosperous. Instead, the bill tries to make an end run around solely the defense cap by slipping in nearly \$5 billion in new spending for the Pentagon.

It should not clean up the mess the majority made triggering automatic reductions to Medicare because of their deficit-busting tax bill.

The majority wants to pass this bill and go home for the holidays, somehow content with its performance on behalf of the Americans they represent. In every sense, this bill fails to live up to our responsibilities as legislators and as Representatives. Given these failures, I urge a "no" vote.

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

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Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, for his incredible and tenacious work to bring us this legislation.

By the way, all 12 appropriations bills have already been passed by the House individually and sent to the Senate.

A vote against the CR is a vote to shut down the government. It is that simple. Today is the day we keep the

government operating. We are not going to take the irresponsible path of voting to shut it down.

I stand here in support of the continuing resolution. This legislation before us today not only keeps the doors of the Federal Government open and the services to our constituents available, but also provides short-term funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program, also known as CHIP.

This program provides vital health coverage for approximately 9 million children nationwide. So, when my colleagues on other side vote "no," know that they are also voting against these 9 million children who need access to this health insurance.

While I am glad we have this short-term funding, I, too, am disappointed to stand here today without Congress having completed its work to fully fund CHIP for the next 5 years. We did that in the House on a bipartisan basis.

This bill also provides critical short-term funding for community health centers. They are essential. In my district, 63 different facilities take care of men, women, and children in the community health center network. It takes care of teaching health center graduate medical education and special diabetes programs as well. So a "no" vote today is against all of those programs.

It is worth noting yet again that the House passed a comprehensive bill, the CHAMPIONING HEALTHY KIDS Act, in November. It was a bipartisan vote. It will fund the CHIP program for a full 5 years. Community health centers will be funded for 2 years, and the other public health programs will be funded for 2 years.

It would also prevent billions of dollars of cuts to our safety net hospitals. Those cuts will be triggered in January because of inaction in the Senate.

Unfortunately, our friends on the other side of the Capitol have yet to move our bill or reach full agreement on some different combination of offsets to pay for extending these important programs. This is disappointing since it means Congress has not yet been able to provide certainty to families across Oregon and the country who rely on these vital programs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. WALDEN. We are well past the time in which we should have had this done. The Energy and Commerce Committee has acted. The U.S. House of Representatives has acted. The Senate Finance Committee has acted. But the full Senate has yet to do so.

I know that Chairman HATCH and Ranking Member PALLONE believe this must be done as soon as possible. We have been working closely together, along with my fellow Oregonian, Senator RON WYDEN, to figure out how to get a bill to fund CHIP and public health extenders across the finish line.

So, while we are frustrated we will not complete our work today, we are determined to continue to work with my colleagues to get this done early in January.

I urge my colleagues to support the CR and these necessary funding extensions.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM), the ranking member of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this continuing resolution.

The Federal Government's fiscal year started 3 months ago. The Republican Congress still hasn't passed a full year of Federal spending. Rather than protecting our Nation and meeting the needs of the American people, we are now debating a third continuing resolution to kick the can into January.

Republicans control this House, the Senate, and the White House, but, clearly, they do not take their responsibility to fund the Federal Government seriously. Frankly, they should be embarrassed.

For the past 3 months, Democrats have sought to work with Republicans to secure a budget agreement and responsibly pass appropriations bills, but Republicans have been too busy to meet this basic responsibility. Instead, they have spent months working in secret on their deficit-busting tax scam.

Let's be clear: the Republican tax scam is part of this CR as well. The CR contains language to exempt the Republican's lavish tax cuts for big corporations and billionaires from the statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act.

Republicans passed their tax scam knowing it was fiscally irresponsible and that it would trigger cuts to Medicare, the Crime Victims Fund, and other vital programs, and trigger an increase in Federal student loans. Now they are asking Democrats to help bail them out.

While I didn't vote for the Republican tax scam and I am not going to paper over their mistakes so that President Trump can sign it into law, here is what I will do, Mr. Speaker.

As the ranking member of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, I know Republican appropriators are as frustrated I am. I want to work with them to find common ground and to responsibly fund our government. It is time for appropriators to do our jobs and for Republicans and Democrats to work together. It is time for us to get back to work and fund the Federal Government responsibly.

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

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), the ranking member of the Energy and Water Subcommittee.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member LOWEY for yielding, and I rise in opposition to this continuing resolution that some might consider ridiculous.

No matter how you look at it, Republicans have control of all of the reins of the Federal Government; yet we find ourselves, again, locked in an artificial crisis of their own creation on the third punt to try to run this government for another couple of weeks.

First in September, then again 2 weeks ago, and now here again today, the government will be set on automatic pilot because President Trump and his fellow Republicans refuse to pass a real budget under regular order so the Appropriations Committee can get its work done within strict budget parameters. These last 3 months, Congress has been left to twiddle its thumbs while the list of unmet priorities for Americans has steadily grown.

Most notably, let me address the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, that covers over 9 million children in our country and more than 220,000 in Ohio. In fact, that insurance program expired 81 days ago. It covers half the children in my district.

How do you think it makes those families feel? What are they going to do after the end of March?

Unfortunately, this spending bill only provides enough funding for the CHIP program through March 31, again kicking the can down the road.

Let me mention, too, the budgets for community health centers, which also expired last September 30. They serve more than 25 million patients and are the Nation's largest source of primary comprehensive care for people in need. Don't they deserve full respect from this Congress for the life-giving work they do?

Mr. Speaker, I will close with this. Up to 10 million private pensions are at risk across our country through no fault of the workers. Congress must act. But where is the leadership? Our solution is the Butch Lewis Act, which ensures America's private pensioners receive the benefits they earned.

So whether it is helping our retirees or caring for our children, time and again Republicans are ignoring real middle class Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman from Ohio an additional 15 seconds.

Ms. KAPTUR. Yet, the Republicans had no problem finding trillions for billionaires who end up funding their campaigns, too.

This prescription simply is bad medicine for America, and I ask my colleagues to vote "no."

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE), the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the provision within this legislation that would authorize and appropriate \$2.1 billion for the Veterans Choice Program.

Choice was created by Congress in 2014, following a nationwide Depart-

ment of Veterans Affairs access and accountability crisis. Make no mistake about it: Choice has certainly not been without its faults in the last 3 years; however, the program has also resulted in millions of veterans receiving care they otherwise would have had to wait longer or travel further for—or maybe not receive at all.

Absent passage of this provision, the Choice Program is expected to run out of money in early 2018, which could jeopardize the care that veterans across the country are receiving in their communities. This is totally unacceptable.

The committee has been working diligently to create a permanent care in the community program to replace and improve upon Choice. In fact, I was proud to introduce H.R. 4242, the VA Care in the Community Act, last month. That legislation was favorably reported out of my committee just this week, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on community care reform. In the meantime, we cannot allow the care our veterans receive in the community through the Choice Program to be jeopardized by lack of funding.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter Secretary Shulkin sent me earlier this month.

THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, December 12, 2017.
Hon. DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write to raise issues for your consideration regarding the financial status of the Veterans Choice Program (VCP), established by the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014, Public Law 113-146, as amended (Choice Act). Current projections indicate that VCP could be unable to create new referrals or authorizations within several weeks. Without additional funding before the end of the year, there will be a dramatic impact on the ability of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide care to Veterans.

As of December 7, 2017, VA has approximately \$490 million in VCP funds remaining, once December obligations of approximately \$300 million and reserve funding of approximately \$300 million are accounted for. The average spend rate of VCP funds ranges from \$200–\$400 million per month, with the possibility that unexpected obligations would push this above and beyond the reserves. As a result, we believe we have 3 to 5 weeks of funds left, which could change based on Veteran utilization.

Nearly 1.9 million unique Veterans have sought care through VCP since its implementation. VA has focused on improving VCP through streamlined business processes, contract modifications and implementation of statutory changes. Unless additional funds are provided, Veterans utilizing the current VCP will be less able to access timely health care as close to their homes as possible. The Veteran Coordinated Access & Rewarding Experiences (CARE) Act, proposed by VA to Congress, would satisfy the funding requirements if passed.

The challenges of the transition from VCP to a new Community Care program should not be underestimated, and VA will need to take steps soon to responsibly prepare for the termination date. If no action is taken by Congress in the next 3 to 5 weeks, VA

could have to discontinue authorizing VCP care and transition Veterans to VA or other community care programs. VA's other community care programs will not have the capacity to handle all of the patients who will transition from VCP, and the wait time for appointments at VA facilities will rise if large numbers of Veterans return to VA to seek care. Taking these actions would have a number of negative consequences, including decreased access to care, damaged community partnerships and interrupted care continuity for Veterans.

Should you have any questions, please have a member of your staff contact Mr. David Brant, Congressional Relations Officer.

Sincerely,

DAVID J. SHULKIN, M.D.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. In this letter, Secretary Shulkin explicitly stated: "Without additional funding before the end of the year, there will be a dramatic impact on the ability of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide care to veterans."

A vote against the continuing resolution is a vote against funding medical care for our Nation's heroes. The Secretary's message is clear, Mr. Speaker.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting an additional \$2.1 billion for the Choice Program.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), a member of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for her tremendous leadership on so many issues as a ranking member.

As a member of the Appropriations and Budget Committees, I rise in strong opposition to this continuing resolution, which really could be called the "Failure to Govern Resolution."

This bill, as my colleague from Ohio said, shamefully kicks the can down the road once again, this time until January 19.

Why? Republicans have been too busy passing the greatest tax scam in history rather than responsibly funding the government.

This reckless, short-term resolution ignores our critical year-end priorities like passing a bipartisan, long-term reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program or a DACA program.

Every day, 122, DACA recipients are losing their protections. They are afraid. They are fearful. There is so much anxiety. We should not do this today without protecting them.

This continuing resolution does not honor the temporary protected status for immigrants. It does not raise the budget caps equally for defense and nondefense spending. Much-needed funding for the opioid epidemic, community health centers, and our veterans is also not included.

I could go on and on about the problems with the CR, but I just have to tell you that the reality is this bill, like the tax giveaway, underscores the majority's complete lack of regard for everyday Americans and struggling families.

Continuing resolutions leave the American people out on a limb, with no confidence in their Federal Government.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman from California an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. LEE. I guess we should not be surprised by this approach, since the playbook for this administration from day one has been, as Steve Bannon said early on, that their goal was deconstruction of the administrative state. That is exactly what is happening with this CR. This is unacceptable.

By passing a short-term spending bill that entirely neglects urgent and vital needs and underfunds job training, affordable housing, and education, we really are selling the American people short.

Unfortunately, this is another effort to disregard the lives of millions of people. It is totally irresponsible, and it does nothing to help create jobs, better wages, or a better future for our children and their families.

I urge a “no” vote on this bill. We need to begin to try to do our job here.

□ 1615

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

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), the ranking member of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this continuing resolution, which is, yet again, a complete abdication of our responsibilities as Members of Congress.

What we have before us today is evidence that the so-called Republican leadership simply cannot deliver on the promises they have made to the American people. Instead, this Congress has decided to continue taking the ludicrous approach of funding the government for just a few weeks at a time, while ignoring the pressing issues that demand our attention.

Over the last few weeks, Republicans in this Congress have decided to focus only on pushing through legislation designed to further enrich giant corporations, while adding \$1.5 trillion to the deficit.

Yet, to the DREAMers who teach our children, care for our sick, and serve our Nation, Republicans continue to say: You just have to wait.

For millions of our most vulnerable—young kids suffering from illness and debilitating disease, who are reliant on the Children’s Health Insurance Program—Republicans have made it clear their priorities lie elsewhere.

And to those who have served our country with dignity and pride, the Re-

publican majority has failed to provide urgently needed resources to address the dire shortfalls at the VA.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the DREAMers cannot wait. The threat of deportation looms over these courageous individuals every single day. Sick children deserve our attention now. They should not be used as bargaining chips in this reckless debate. And our Nation’s veterans need to know we have got their backs without delay. We cannot deny them the healthcare that they have earned.

Don’t tell me that we don’t have the funds to support those who need us the most, when this Congress just gave a handout to those who need it the least.

This pathetic continuing resolution fails to address the needs of the people who sent us here. It doesn’t even come close.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting “no.”

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

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), the ranking member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose this continuing resolution. Yet again we are punting one of our core obligations as Members of Congress: funding government programs.

The Republican majority has failed to respond to the needs of the American people. They put services and investments that are critical to our families and our communities at risk: from apprenticeships to education for students with disabilities, child care, afterschool programs that help working families make ends meet, and financial aid for students attending college.

We should be negotiating spending levels for 2018 for both defense and non-defense spending. We should have spent the last 2 months fulfilling our responsibility as legislators by writing bipartisan bills to fund programs that help the middle class and the vulnerable, support evidence-based scientific research, and help working people get the skills that they need to find good jobs with good wages.

Instead, the Republican majority squandered the last 2 months focused on their tax scam, rewarding big corporations, millionaires, and billionaires who wrote the rules to make government work for them. Our Republican colleagues were their comrades in arms in rigging the game against the middle class.

I am horrified by the majority’s decision to put the future of the Children’s Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, in jeopardy: kids’ checkups, shots, prescriptions, dental and vision care, hospital care, and the list goes on.

States are beginning to cut children off because of the majority’s delay—my

own State of Connecticut. The hard-working families that depend on CHIP deserve to know that it will be there for their children for the long term.

How can the majority go on vacation while millions of children worry about losing their health insurance?

This is a disgrace. This bill also cuts \$750 million from the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which supports programs such as heart disease and stroke prevention, diabetes prevention, immunization and vaccination programs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it was only yesterday that our Republican colleagues voted to spend \$1.5 trillion of taxpayers’ money on tax cuts for millionaires. Eighty-three percent of the tax cuts go to 1 percent of the people in this Nation. Instead, they are cutting nearly \$1 billion from public health programs that protect them and their family.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reject this continuing resolution because it fails to meet the obligations that we are entrusted with, the moral responsibility that we have to the American people.

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

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mrs. LOWEY for yielding.

Here we are again, Mr. Speaker. Two weeks ago, the Republican majority asked for another 2 weeks to write an appropriations package to fund the government, yet now they are asking to kick the can down the road one more time.

We all knew that those 2 weeks were a pretense for getting the votes to pass their tax bill. We didn’t make any progress on a bipartisan appropriations bill.

Before that, Republicans asked for an additional 12 weeks in September. We all voted to give that 12 weeks.

All of us know exactly why the can keeps being kicked farther and farther down the road. It is because the majority cannot muster a majority of their own Members to support bipartisan funding bills. Because the governing party, which controls the House, the Senate, and the White House, has not been able to govern.

Senate Republican Whip JOHN CORNYN said on Sunday: “The can always seems to be kicked down the road.”

Yet here we are again with Republicans doing exactly that.

Mr. Speaker, let’s call the CR for what it is: a chaotic retreat from rational, regular, and fiscal responsibility. We have alongside it a supplemental funding bill that provides some

additional emergency relief to those affected by natural disasters, but it ought to do more, in my opinion, to help those in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

It has been 3 months since Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and since Hurricane Harvey visited so much water on Houston.

Many still do not have electricity or running water in Puerto Rico. These are our fellow Americans. We owe it to them and to ourselves to help them in their time of need.

Mr. Speaker, Congress can do better, and it should do better. We should act in a bipartisan way.

I was on the Appropriations Committee as an active member for 23 years. I was a member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee. I told people that you could take the 13 of us—we were eight Democrats and five Republicans—and thrown us up in the air, we would have come down in random seats, had a markup, and you would have been hard-pressed to identify the Democrat or the Republican, because we believed our responsibility was to fund the priorities of this country.

Now, I know that we passed 12 bills.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, the Appropriations Committee used to be an extraordinarily bipartisan committee where we worked together, not on a partisan basis, but on a basis of trying to determine which priorities were important for our country, what funds were needed so that agencies could operate in an effective way. That, unfortunately, is not happening the way it did.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican friends, who control this House, and all the levers of government, to work with Democrats on making sure that all those who need emergency disaster relief, as well as those who need funds to operate their government agencies in a way that serves America best—I urge us to work together toward that end. I urge us because nobody believes these CRs are good policy, but they, unfortunately, are becoming regular, if not regular order.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, once again, this is an epic failure of governing.

How many more times will we have to pass a continuing resolution, which not only denies certainty to men and women in uniform and all Federal employees, but is an inefficient waste of taxpayer dollars?

How many more times would the majority stumble from crisis to crisis, narrowly averting a shutdown?

It is long past time that the majority work with Democrats to increase the budget caps and write full-year spending bills. The Appropriations Committee stands ready to do our job. I hope that Republican leadership finally does its job and agrees to permit reasonable spending bills that invest in America's future.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" to keep the government open for business, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this Continuing Resolution because we can't keep kicking the can down the road, and that is all this CR will do.

Since Republicans took control of the House in 2011, their approach to governing has been to pass short term extensions and Continuing Resolutions that merely delay the hard work of making decisions on the big issues facing our country.

Eventually, after not completing their work on time, Republicans regularly force through an extension in order to deal with another crisis of their own making. This has happened over . . . and over . . . and over.

And here we go again. We passed a CR in September and another one two weeks ago, and now we are being asked to give Republicans even more time to get the job done.

Governing by repeated CRs means federal agencies can't plan for the future or begin new initiatives. This undermines our national security; endangers our homeland security, restricts investments in groundbreaking research to treat and cure diseases, and threatens the accuracy of the next decennial Census.

This repeated inaction means we must now worry about keeping our government open at the same time we are trying to address several other large national challenges. For example, we are about to hit the nation's debt limit; Americans need help recovering from the hurricanes that hit Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Florida, and Texas and the wildfires that have ravaged California; people who depend on community health centers and the Children's Health Insurance Program are about to lose their healthcare; and we must protect the hundreds of thousands of Dreamers whose immigration status has been thrown into question.

President Trump himself created this particular crisis for the millions of Dreamers living in this country. These young men and women are American in every way but their citizenship, and due to the President's actions, nearly 13 thousand of them have lost their DACA protections, an average of 122 per day. Tens of thousands more Dreamers will eventually lose their jobs and their protection against deportation if we do not take action.

As the author of the Dream Act in the House, I believe it is inhumane to force Dreamers to live in fear and uncertainty for longer than absolutely necessary. We must act now. We can't afford to wait until the last minute for a solution, as Republicans have done so often while running Congress.

We cannot keep kicking the can down the road. I oppose this CR and urge my colleagues to vote no so we can get the job done now.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the continuing resolution before us today.

First, I'd like to acknowledge the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN.

Under his leadership, the Committee reported, and the whole House considered and passed, all twelve appropriations bills for fiscal year 2018. That doesn't happen very often anymore, and the fact that we did it this year is a credit to our Chairman.

We've heard complaints about considering another CR rather than full appropriations bills. And I agree that continuing resolutions aren't an ideal solution to funding our government. Ideally, all twelve appropriations bills would be enacted by October 1st.

That process provides the Congress with its best opportunity to set priorities across government programs, and it provides the most stability for agencies to carry out those programs in an efficient and effective manner.

But sometimes we need more time to complete those negotiations. For example, in 2010, the Democrats controlled both the House, the Senate, and the White House. Guess what happened when they hadn't completed the appropriations process on time?

They passed a CR until the end of September. When they hadn't completed their work yet, they passed another CR until December 2nd. When they hadn't completed their work—they passed another CR until December 22.

Then, when we took the majority, we ended up finishing the appropriations process.

So while CRs aren't ideal, supporting a CR to keep our government functioning is the only responsible vote today—for national security, for our economy, and for the general welfare of the American people.

As Chairman of the Energy and Water subcommittee, I am very familiar with the positive impacts the federal government has in each of these areas—whether it's the Department of Energy maintaining our nuclear weapons stockpile, the Corps of Engineers dredging our ports and waterways so goods and materials can move freely, or the Bureau of Reclamation providing tens of millions of people with water.

We must avoid disruptions to these vital activities by passing the continuing resolution before us today and then working towards completing our work on final appropriations bills as quickly as possible.

Will we get all our work done by the end of this next CR? I don't know.

But one thing I can guarantee is that we will not get it done by tomorrow, and a vote against this resolution is a vote to shut down the government.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes on the continuing resolution.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, Republicans have moved on from doing nothing to help middle-class America, to actively undoing everything America's middle class relies on. First, they cut taxes for corporations and the wealthy, instead of lifting up the middle class. And they did it *twice*. Now they're kicking the can down the road while millions of Americans suffer through the holidays. They've left millions of kids in the lurch for months by letting the Children's Health Insurance Program expire instead of protecting sick children in need of care. They have woefully underfunded recovery efforts in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Florida and Texas instead of guaranteeing clean water and electricity to our fellow Americans. And the icing on the cake: Republicans would leave 800,000 DREAMers—

Americans in every way but on paper—wondering whether their Christmas gift will be deportation papers. I cannot support Republicans' heartlessness. I cannot support Republicans' recklessness. I cannot support this bill without a fix for DREAMers.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about H.R. 1370, "Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017" [Further Continuing Resolution].

This resolution is an imperfect vehicle for appropriations for FY 2018, because it does not reflect an effort to include bipartisan solutions to remaining Democratic priorities.

H.R. 1370 not only fails to address remaining unsolved issues, but it also fails to fund the government through the end of FY 2018.

Republicans have not consulted Democrats on anything that is included in this year-end legislation, accordingly the majority should not expect Democrats to vote on a bill that does not include the following priorities:

A bipartisan, long-term reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP):

CHIP, which provides health coverage to 9 million children, expired nearly three months ago.

Republicans have only put forward legislation that cuts other critical health programs, an unacceptable trade-off.

States have already begun taking steps to shut down their CHIP programs, and I will not vote for a Continuing Resolution (CR) that prevents children from obtaining health coverage.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program:

According to a report by the Center for American Progress, 122 DREAMers are losing their protection every single day that Congress fails to act.

Disaster aid:

My district—Houston, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are short-changed in the supplemental proposed by the majority.

Among other glaring omissions, the Republican supplemental fails to include funding for their Medicaid programs, which are facing unprecedented demands following these ruinous hurricanes.

An agreement to lift the Budget Control Act (BCA) spending caps:

In the three months since a CR was passed in September, Republicans have not worked on a budget agreement that ensures Congress can adequately fund defense and nondefense priorities and adhere to the principle of parity between defense and non-defense spending.

H.R. 1370 would provide \$4.5 billion in emergency funding for the Department of Defense, as requested by the Trump administration on November 6.

Most of that money is allocated for missile defense programs primarily targeting North Korea, an area that President Trump has failed to approach diplomatically and instead, has resorted to inflammatory threats, tweets, and other non-presidential approaches typical of this administration.

In contrast, H.R. 1370 would provide a mere four-week extension of current funding for domestic needs.

This continuing resolution would force both parties to revisit the domestic programs in January.

Mr. Speaker, I will not accept this scheme and I highlight the importance of parity between defense and domestic programs in

order to provide adequate funds for veterans' health, a pension bailout, opioid-fighting programs, and medical research.

Another major concern of this bill includes the unrevised extension of government surveillance powers; Congress has yet to agree on a proper revision of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

Section 702 of FISA was intended to be revised this month; however, the majority has failed to address that issue, adding one more unresolved priority to the list of neglected legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that we have again been placed in the position of having to fund the government through the device of a continuing resolution rather than through the normal appropriations process of considering and voting on separate spending bills usually reported by the Committee on Appropriations.

The reason for this last minute resolution is due to the Republican leadership being solely focused on cutting taxes on the wealthy rather than coming up with a plan to keep the government open and serving its citizens.

Republicans control the House, Senate, and the White House—they should have the votes to pass a CR on their own if they refuse to compromise with Democrats.

The government shutdown of 2013, which was manufactured by the Republican majority lasted 16 days and cost taxpayers \$24 billion.

The enormous harm and disruption of the lives of federal employees and the people they serve, however, was irreparable.

As I stated, Mr. Speaker, this Continuing Resolution is not perfect and it only funds the government until January 19, 2018.

As seasoned Members of Congress, we have been in this challenging position before.

But working together in a spirit of goodwill, bipartisanship, and realism, I believe we can reach a long-term agreement that will avert a shutdown of government operations and the disruption a shutdown causes to the lives of millions of Americans who depend upon federal programs to do their jobs, educate their kids, care for their parents, and contribute to their communities.

Our constituents look to the Congress and the President to make responsible choices and decisions to keep the nation safe, the economy prosperous, and to make necessary and prudent investments in education, healthcare and research, transportation and infrastructure, economic development, science, the arts and humanities, and the environment.

This is, after all, just another way of saying that the American people expect their leaders in Washington be guided by the Constitution's Preamble and pursue policies and provide the resources that will:

establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty.

The funding priorities that have been floated by the Trump Administration fail this essential test of leadership because they are irresponsible, impracticable, unrealistic, and, in many respects, insensitive or indifferent to the deleterious impact they will have on the lives of real people living in the real world.

They do not command majority support in the Congress or of the public.

To win such support, I believe that it is essential that any subsequent continuing resolu-

tion or omnibus appropriations bill achieves the following goals and objectives:

"To establish justice" and "To promote the general welfare":

1. Full funding for the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights so that they have funds needed to enforce laws protecting civil rights, voting rights, and prosecuting hate crimes.

2. Fully funds community development block grants and low income housing programs in urban and rural communities.

3. Fully funds the Legal Services Corporation so that working and low-income persons who lack an army of lobbyists to represent them in Washington will at least have the assistance of counsel to defend their legal rights in courts of law.

4. Fully funds programs providing food assistance to housebound seniors, such as Meals on Wheels.

5. Fully funds programs that provide students from low and moderate-income families access to affordable access to higher education and provides students with special needs the support needed to receive the free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA Act).

6. Fully funds before and after school programs and other student enrichment programs that help students succeed.

7. Fully funds programs that make federal housing safer through energy efficient heating and cooling systems.

8. Preserves tax credit programs that help revitalize low income communities.

9. Fully funds the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy programs developing the next generation of clean energy and transportation technologies.

"Provide for the common defense":

1. Provides robust funding for the Department of State and USAID to advance national security interests in places like Iraq and Afghanistan and to end violent conflicts in trouble spots which could threaten the security interests of the United States.

2. Provides adequate funding for United Nations peacekeeping missions throughout the world and distribution of food aid to people in developing and famine stricken countries, such as South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Nigeria.

"To ensure domestic tranquility":

1. Fully funds cost-sharing reduction subsidies, or CSRs, to compensate insurers for reducing deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums for low-income customers on the Affordable Care Act exchanges.

2. Protects the adequacy, solvency, and integrity of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, which provide health sustaining support for 70 million Americans.

3. Fully funds the National Institutes of Health research programs so that patient access to lifesaving treatments is not delayed.

4. Does not convert funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention into block grants which would hinder the nation's ability to respond swiftly and effectively to public health crises like Ebola, Zika, and HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that if all members of the House and Senate work together, we can reach agreement on an appropriate budget framework that that invests in the American

people, preserves our national security, and keeps faith with the values that have served our nation well and made the United States the leading nation on earth.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 670, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the motion by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN).

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion will be followed by 5-minute votes on:

Passage of H.R. 4667;

The motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 1532; and

The motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 1766, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 231, nays 188, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 708]

YEAS—231

Abraham	Duffy	LaMalfa
Aderholt	Duncan (SC)	Lamborn
Allen	Duncan (TN)	Lance
Amodei	Dunn	Latta
Arrington	Emmer	Lawson (FL)
Babin	Estes (KS)	Lewis (MN)
Bacon	Farenthold	LoBiondo
Banks (IN)	Faso	Loeb sack
Barletta	Ferguson	Long
Barr	Fitzpatrick	Loudermilk
Barton	Fleischmann	Love
Bergman	Flores	Lucas
Bilirakis	Fortenberry	Luetkemeyer
Bishop (GA)	Fox	MacArthur
Bishop (MI)	Frelinghuysen	Marchant
Bishop (UT)	Gallagher	Marino
Black	Garrett	Marshall
Blackburn	Gianforte	Mast
Blum	Gibbs	McCarthy
Bost	Gohmert	McCaul
Brady (TX)	Goodlatte	McClintock
Brat	Gottheimer	McHenry
Brooks (IN)	Gowdy	McKinley
Buchanan	Graves (GA)	McMorris
Buck	Graves (LA)	Rodgers
Bucshon	Graves (MO)	McSally
Budd	Griffith	Meadows
Burgess	Grothman	Meehan
Bustos	Guthrie	Messer
Byrne	Handel	Mitchell
Calvert	Harper	Moolenaar
Carter (GA)	Harris	Mullin
Carter (TX)	Hartzler	Murphy (FL)
Chabot	Hensarling	Newhouse
Cheney	Herrera Beutler	Noem
Coffman	Hice, Jody B.	Norman
Cole	Higgins (LA)	Nunes
Collins (GA)	Hill	O'Halleran
Collins (NY)	Holding	Olson
Comer	Hudson	Palazzo
Comstock	Huizenga	Palmer
Conaway	Hultgren	Paulsen
Cook	Hurd	Pearce
Costa	Issa	Pittenger
Costello (PA)	Jenkins (KS)	Poe (TX)
Cramer	Jenkins (WV)	Poliquin
Crawford	Johnson (LA)	Posey
Crist	Johnson (OH)	Ratcliffe
Culberson	Johnson, Sam	Reed
Curtis	Joyce (OH)	Reichert
Davidson	Katko	Rice (SC)
Davis, Rodney	Kelly (MS)	Roby
Delaney	Kelly (PA)	Roe (TN)
Denham	King (IA)	Rogers (AL)
Dent	King (NY)	Rogers (KY)
DeSantis	Kinzing	Rohrabacher
DesJarlais	Knight	Rokita
Diaz-Balart	Kustoff (TN)	Rooney, Francis
Donovan	LaHood	Roskam

Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (WI)
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema

Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg

Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—188

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Biggs
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan
F.

Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)

Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings

Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutsch
Dingell

Doggett
Doyle, Michael
F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espallat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallego
Garamendi

Garamendi
Green, Gene
Jones
Kennedy
Napolitano
Pocan

Green, Gene
Jones
Kennedy
Napolitano
Pocan

Green, Gene
Jones
Kennedy
Napolitano
Pocan

Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Gosar
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Huffman
Hunter
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jordan
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Labrador
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowe

Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Neal
Nolan

Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Neal
Nolan

Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascarella
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rooney, Thomas
J.

Rosen
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Aguilar
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Wittman
Yarmuth

Yarmuth
Zeldin

Zeldin

Zeldin

Zeldin

Zeldin

Mr. GOHMERT, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Messrs. LAWSON of Florida, and DELANEY changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the motion to concur was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted "Nay" on rollcall No. 708.

FURTHER SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 4667) making further supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, for disaster assistance for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and calendar year 2017 wildfires, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 251, nays 169, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 709]

YEAS—251

Abraham	Cuellar	Huizenga
Adams	Culberson	Hunter
Aderholt	Curbelo (FL)	Hurd
Allen	Curtis	Issa
Amodei	Davis (CA)	Jackson Lee
Arrington	Davis, Rodney	Jenkins (KS)
Babin	DeFazio	Jenkins (WV)
Bacon	Delaney	Johnson (LA)
Barletta	DelBene	Johnson (OH)
Barr	Demings	Johnson, E. B.
Barton	Denham	Johnson, Sam
Bera	Dent	Joyce (OH)
Bergman	DeSantis	Katko
Bilirakis	DeSaulnier	Kelly (MS)
Bishop (GA)	Deutsch	Kelly (PA)
Bishop (MI)	Diaz-Balart	Kilmer
Bishop (UT)	Donovan	King (IA)
Black	Duffy	King (NY)
Blum	Dunn	Kinzing
Bost	Estes (KS)	Knight
Brady (TX)	Farenthold	Krishnamoorthi
Brat	Faso	Kuster (NH)
Brooks (IN)	Ferguson	Kustoff (TN)
Brownley (CA)	Fitzpatrick	LaHood
Buchanan	Fleischmann	LaMalfa
Bucshon	Flores	Lance
Burgess	Fortenberry	Larsen (WA)
Bustos	Frankel (FL)	Latta
Butterfield	Frelinghuysen	Lawson (FL)
Byrne	Gabbard	Lieu, Ted
Calvert	Gaetz	Lipinski
Carbajal	Gallagher	LoBiondo
Carter (GA)	Garamendi	Loeb sack
Carter (TX)	Gianforte	Long
Castor (FL)	Gibbs	Love
Castro (TX)	Gohmert	Lowenthal
Cheney	Gonzalez (TX)	Lucas
Coffman	Gowdy	Luetkemeyer
Cole	Graves (LA)	MacArthur
Collins (GA)	Graves (MO)	Marchant
Collins (NY)	Green, Al	Marino
Comstock	Guthrie	Marshall
Conaway	Handel	Mast
Connolly	Harper	Matsui
Cook	Hartzler	McCarthy
Cooper	Hastings	McCaul
Costa	Herrera Beutler	McHenry
Costello (PA)	Higgins (LA)	McKinley
Cramer	Hill	McMorris
Crawford	Himes	Rodgers
Crist	Huffman	McNerney

□ 1653

Messrs. HOLLINGSWORTH, McNERNEY, PETERSON, and ROSS changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Meehan
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Newhouse
Nolan
Norman
Nunes
O'Halloran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Panetta
Paulsen
Pearce
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Price (NC)
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rooney, Francis

Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (WI)
Scalise
Schiff
Schneider
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shinkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smucker
Soto
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Takano

Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Veasey
Vela
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Womack
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Zeldin

NAYS—169

Amash
Banks (IN)
Barragan
Bass
Beatty
Beyer
Biggs
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brat
Brown (MD)
Buck
Budd
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Chabot
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Clever
Clyburn
Cohen
Comer
Correa
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davidson
Davis, Danny
DeGette
DeLauro
DesJarlais
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Españillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foxy
Fudge
Gallego
Garrett

Gomez
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Graves (GA)
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Harris
Heck
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (NY)
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Jordan
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kind
Labrador
Lamborn
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lofgren
Loudermilk
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Massie
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McSally
Meadows
Meeks

Meng
Messer
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Neal
Noem
Norcross
Pallone
Palmer
Pascarell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Pingree
Polis
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rokita
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sanchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schradner
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Shea-Porter
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Velázquez
Walker
Walz
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wittman
Woodall
Yarmuth
Young (IA)

NOT VOTING—12

Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)

Foster
Granger

Green, Gene
Jones

Kennedy
Napolitano

Pocan
Renacci

Smith (TX)
Suozi

□ 1701

Messrs. CUMMINGS, GOTTHEIMER, and GRIFFITH changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of making a scheduling announcement.

Mr. Speaker, Members are advised that these are the last votes expected in the House for the day, the week, the month, and the year.

Now, I want to thank all of the Members for their service to our Nation. I want to wish you and your families a blessed holiday and a very Merry Christmas, and I look forward to working with all of you in 2018.

NO HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON OUR ROADS ACT

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1532) to disqualify from operating a commercial motor vehicle for life an individual who uses a commercial motor vehicle in committing a felony involving human trafficking, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 393, nays 0, not voting 38, as follows:

[Roll No. 710]

YEAS—393

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragan
Barton
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)

Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield

Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen

Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DeBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Españillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxy
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)

Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Kaptur
Katko
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loeb sack
Long
Loudermilk
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Newhouse
Nolan
Norcross

Norman
O'Halloran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascarell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schradner
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott

Tsongas	Walker	Williams
Turner	Walorski	Wilson (FL)
Upton	Walters, Mimi	Wilson (SC)
Valadao	Walz	Wittman
Vargas	Wasserman	Womack
Veasey	Schultz	Woodall
Vela	Watson Coleman	Yarmuth
Velázquez	Weber (TX)	Yoder
Visclosky	Webster (FL)	Yoho
Wagner	Welch	Young (AK)
Walberg	Wenstrup	Young (IA)
Walden	Westerman	Zeldin

NOT VOTING—38

Arrington	Johnson, E. B.	Neal
Bass	Jones	Nunes
Bridenstine	Joyce (OH)	Pocan
Brooks (AL)	Keating	Quigley
Buchanan	Kennedy	Renacci
Costa	Kihuen	Ryan (OH)
Courtney	Labrador	Shimkus
Duffy	Larson (CT)	Smith (TX)
Foster	Lofgren	Stefanik
Gabbard	Love	Suozzi
Granger	Lynch	Waters, Maxine
Green, Gene	McMorris	
Huizenga	Rodgers	
Johnson (GA)	Napolitano	

□ 1711

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina changed his vote from “present” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and 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

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during rollcall votes No. 701 through 710 due to a death in my family. Had I been present, I would have voted “Yea” on the motion to recommit H.R. 4015, “Nay” on passage of H.R. 4015, “Nay” on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 670. “Nay” on agreeing to H. Res. 670, “Yea” on passage of S. 1393, “Nay” on the motion to concur in the Senate Amendment with an Amendment to H.R. 1370, “Nay” on Passage of H.R. 4667, and “Yea” on passage of S. 1532.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present today, December 21, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted “Yes” on rollcall votes No. 709 and No. 710, and “No” on rollcall vote No. 708.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted “Nay” on rollcall No. 708, “Yea” on rollcall No. 709, and “Yea” on rollcall No. 710.

SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EVIDENCE REPORTING ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARSHALL). The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (S. 1766) to reauthorize the SAFER Act of 2013, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. HANDEL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1715

DECLARING NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO UNUSUAL AND EXTRAORDINARY THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN POLICY, AND ECONOMY OF THE UNITED STATES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 115-83)

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

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, as amended (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued the enclosed Executive Order (the “order”) declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States posed by serious human rights abuse and corruption around the world. In addition to taking action under IEEPA, the order implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (Public Law 114-328) (the “Act”) and delegates certain of its authorities.

The order blocks the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to the order. It also blocks the property and interests in property of any foreign person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General:

(1) to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have directly or indirectly engaged in, serious human rights abuse;

(2) to be a current or former government official, or a person acting for or on behalf of such an official, who is responsible for or complicit in, or has directly or indirectly engaged in:

(a) corruption, including the misappropriation of state assets, the expropriation of private assets for personal gain, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, or bribery; or

(b) the transfer or the facilitation of the transfer of the proceeds of corruption;

(3) to be or have been a leader or official of:

(a) an entity, including any government entity, that has engaged in, or whose members have engaged in, any of the activities described in (1), (2)(a), or (2)(b) above relating to the leader's or official's tenure; or

(b) an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order as a result of activities related to the leader's or the official's tenure; or

(4) to have attempted to engage in any of the activities described in (1), (2)(a), or (2)(b) above.

The order also blocks any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General:

(5) to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of:

(a) any activity described in (1), (2)(a), or (2)

(b) above that is conducted by a foreign person;

(b) any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or

(c) any entity described in (3)(a) above where the activity is conducted by a foreign person;

(6) to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or

(7) to have attempted to engage in any of the activities described in (5) or (6) above.

In addition, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien listed in the Annex or determined to meet one or more of the criteria above.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including adopting rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and the Act, as may be necessary to implement the order and relevant provisions of the Act. I have delegated to the Secretary of State the authority to take such actions, including adopting rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and the Act, as may be necessary to implement the provisions of the order and the Act suspending entry into the United States of certain aliens. All executive departments and agencies are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to implement the order.

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

CHIP IS NOT A BARGAINING CHIP

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

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on my colleagues on both

sides of the aisle to work together to pass the long-term extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program.

178,000 Pennsylvania children rely on CHIP to get their healthcare, thousands of them in my own district. It is a bipartisan program, and for decades it has continued to earn bipartisan support.

The House did its job last month, passing a 5-year extension of the program, and I am grateful for Chairman WALDEN and his leadership and support for CHIP. But just a few minutes ago, the House passed an extension through March, and that is good, but it is not good enough.

Unless the House and Senate can reach a real agreement, Pennsylvanians and their children will again face the prospect of losing their care, and it isn't right to jeopardize kids in the name of partisan bickering.

We have done a lot on the agenda this week: tax reform for the middle class, keeping the government open, important tasks. But CHIP is important, too, and I say to my friends on both sides of the aisle: Don't let this become a bargaining chip. Get it done.

CALIFORNIA IS ABLAZE

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, right now, my home State of California is ablaze, and the communities of Idyllwild, Anza, and Mountain Center in my district are still bruised from the 2013 wildfires and are on high alert for the next fire.

Today, we passed my bill and delivered a win for our firefighters and victims of fires by increasing Federal funding to recover, rebuild, prevent future fires, and keep communities safe.

The 2013 Mountain Fire in my district burned over 27,000 acres, destroyed homes, and cost over \$25 million. I worked with Cal Fire, Idyllwild Fire Protection District, and Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council to author the bipartisan Wildfire Prevention Act, which will deliver tens of millions of dollars to recover, rebuild, prevent future fires, and keep our communities safe.

This bill puts people above partisanship and solutions above ideology to improve the lives of the people we serve. It makes government work for the people.

Thank you to these incredible local partners for working with me to deliver this pragmatic solution for the district and for the community.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that President

Donald Trump and congressional Republicans are delivering on the first meaningful tax cuts in a generation. These tax cuts are in the tradition of Ronald Reagan, allowing American families to keep more of their hard-earned paychecks and creating jobs.

Over 80 percent of hardworking American families will keep more of their own money. As early as February, American families will see more of their own money revealed in their paychecks.

Additionally, by lowering the corporate tax to 21 percent, American businesses will become more competitive overseas and jobs will be created, such as Nephron Pharmaceuticals, led by Lou and Bill Kennedy of Cayce.

I am grateful for the success of Speaker PAUL RYAN, Chairman KEVIN BRADY, and all House Republicans in delivering tax cuts for American families. In the words of the great President Ronald Reagan: "Whenever we lower our tax rates, our entire Nation is better off."

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

I want to thank Ambassador Nikki Haley for standing tall with President Donald Trump for recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

God Bless Guatemala, courageously led by President Jimmy Morales, for being a friend of America today in the United Nations.

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL STUDIES

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, our public schools and public universities are essential for economic growth and educating future generations.

But knowledge alone is not enough. Our Nation's future depends on innovative ideas, and innovative ideas require diverse people working together. In the public schools and public universities across the country, educators are helping foster diverse ideas through cultural studies.

One such educator, Dr. Antoinette Ellis-Williams of New Jersey City University, has used poetry, film, scholarship, and service as a way to help young people explore issues that affect women and minorities. She has spent her career helping public university students understand the experiences of marginalized communities in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Dr. Ellis-Williams and cultural studies educators like her for helping future leaders develop the knowledge and wisdom to work together for a better future. She has been an asset to educating young people in the State of New Jersey for years, and I commend her.

RECOGNIZING CONGRESSIONAL APP CHALLENGE WINNER FROM ARKANSAS' SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Congressional App Challenge winner from Arkansas' Second Congressional District, Anne Li.

Currently a sophomore at Central High School in Little Rock, Anne aspires to major in computer engineering and has the goal of pursuing a career in programming.

STEM education is education for the future, and having serious skills in computer programming and coding open up tremendous opportunities for our youth. It gives them the skills to compete in a 21st century job market as well as the skills to act on their imagination and engage in their entrepreneurial exploration.

I wish Anne the very best as she continues her studies at Central High School and beyond in this critical field.

As a member of the Congressional STEM Education Caucus and the dad of a STEM student at the university, I want to continue to support the growth of STEM education throughout Arkansas and America.

SAVE NET NEUTRALITY

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

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, last week the FCC abdicated its responsibility to serve the public interest and put at risk the free and open internet that we have all come to depend on when its three Republican commissioners voted to repeal the Obama-era net neutrality protection.

Net neutrality keeps access to the internet equal for everyone. It protects free speech. It protects equal access to the marketplace of ideas. It has been the fundamental principle underpinning the massive innovation and opportunity that the internet has unleashed. But that is all at risk now.

Fortunately, Congress has a say. I am proud to support Congressman MIKE DOYLE's resolution to overturn the FCC's decision and restore our net neutrality protections. I also believe the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee should investigate the reports and allegations of fraudulent public comments.

Repealing net neutrality will inhibit innovation, stifle competition, and threaten free speech. It is time for Congress to overturn this decision.

HONORING AMY WRIGHT, 2017 CNN HERO OF THE YEAR

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

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Amy Wright, the co-founder of Bitty & Beau's Coffee Shop in Wilmington, North Carolina, on being named CNN Hero of the Year.

When Amy and her husband, Ben, found out that 70 percent of adults living with disabilities do not have jobs, they opened the doors of Bitty & Beau's in January 2016 with the goal of providing these worthy individuals the opportunity to interact, contribute, grow, and succeed in the workplace.

As those in Wilmington know, Bitty & Beau's is more than just a place to grab coffee. It is a warm, inclusive environment with exceptional customer service. Named after their two children who have Down syndrome, the coffee shop employs 40 exceptional individuals with disabilities.

Congratulations to Amy on this very special honor. Her and Ben's contribution to our community and our fellow man is truly remarkable and an inspiration for us all.

HONORING KEVIN LYNCH

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

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend, Kevin Lynch, who passed away following a 5-year battle with cancer just this week.

Kevin was a great Hoosier, a public servant, a tremendous leader, and a tireless advocate in advancing southeastern Indiana. He served as a Dearborn County commissioner and as the president of the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments.

Kevin was a giant Reds fan and a loyal friend, with a positive spirit, quick with a smile, and an encouraging word.

Kevin served Lawrenceburg and Dearborn County with pride, but his most important priority was his family. He was the loving husband to Mary Jo—"Joey"—for 27 years and the proud father of Michael. Mr. Speaker, my thoughts and prayers are with the entire Lynch family and all those who knew Kevin well.

Congratulations to my good friend Kevin on a tremendous life well done. Godspeed my friend.

□ 1730

HONORING MR. SAM POLLAK

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

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I rise today to recognize the distinguished career of Mr. Sam Pollak on the occasion of his retirement. Mr. Pollak is retiring after 20 years of dedicated service to the Oneonta and Otsego County commu-

nity as editor of the Oneonta Daily Star.

Having worked for decades in newsrooms throughout the Nation, Mr. Pollak brought many years of experience and a proactive leadership to The Daily Star.

I thank Mr. Pollak for his commitment to the people of the State of New York, and I wish him and his wife, Julie, every happiness as they embark upon this new chapter in life.

TAX CUTS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in light of the passage of once-in-a-lifetime, once-in-a-generation tax relief for millions of middle-income families, including the vast majority in my district.

Some, however, are not satisfied with cutting taxes for every income level and are unnerved at the thought of seeing more money in their own monthly paycheck.

I am here to tell those people today that there is a very simple solution to their problem.

As you can see here—outlined on page 92 of the IRS handbook, those individuals who feel right now that they are undertaxed and want to pay more of their income to the U.S. Government can do exactly that. When filing their income tax return, one can simply include a check payable to the Bureau of the Fiscal Service.

The best part is they can help pay down the debt without raising taxes on everyone else—America's hardworking families who deserve a tax break.

So just a reminder, no one is stopping those who are feeling undertaxed from paying as much additional money to the government that they would like. I am sure Uncle Sam would appreciate the Christmas present.

So don't complain about what your neighbor is paying. If you are feeling guilty about it, when you have the opportunity, feel free. Send it in.

UNITED NATIONS JERUSALEM VOTE

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

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express deep disappointment in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/ES-10/L.22 and state my serious concern over the anti-American and anti-Semitic behaviors of the United Nations.

Today, the United Nations continues its ugly legacy of singling out Israel for condemnation. According to the NGO, UN Watch, 86 percent of the U.N. General Assembly resolutions criticizing countries between 2012 and 2015 have targeted Israel.

It is a sad and confounding sight to watch Syria, North Korea, Cuba, and other human rights abusers degrade our ally, Israel, and attempt to nullify a decision made by the United States regarding our own Embassy.

I applaud Ambassador Haley for her resolute remarks and strength of spirit as she stood against rogue regimes for democratic values and American interests.

I look forward to working with the administration and my colleagues in Congress to reassess our foreign aid commitments and realign them with our values and our strategic interests.

44 YEARS OF HOME RULE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to commemorate 44 years of home rule. The Home Rule Act was signed by President Richard Nixon on Christmas Eve 44 years ago after the Home Rule Act was passed by a bipartisan vote.

Although it was a Democratic Congress, I think it is worth noting what President Nixon said in his signing speech. I am going to quote a few of his sentences:

"As a longtime supporter of self-government for the District of Columbia, I am pleased to sign into law a measure which is of historic significance for the citizens of our Nation's Capital. I first voted for home rule as a Member of the House of Representatives in 1948, and I have endorsed the enactment of home rule legislation during both my terms as President."

Then he went on to say: "It is particularly appropriate to assure those persons who live in our Capital City rights the privileges which have long been enjoyed by most of their countrymen."

The bill enjoyed bipartisan support throughout those congressional deliberations.

Mr. Speaker, surely we can get back to that moment. The District of Columbia is proud and pleased that it has been steeped in American history ever since the site of the Nation's Capital was chosen by George Washington himself.

We are proud to be not only hometown D.C., but the Capital of our country.

So this evening, I want to speak about those two roles and about the role of Congress as we move past December 24, 44 years ago—1973—to today, when D.C. residents have every reason to believe that our country is ready and overdue for D.C. statehood itself.

Now, my Republican colleagues understand fully our role as the Nation's Capital. They understand it because they welcome their own constituents,

the tourists who come here. There are something upwards of almost 20 million. Many of them come to their own congressperson's offices first. But Republicans often dissolve the District's role into their role without making the appropriate distinction.

Now, I appreciate it is not easy to understand a jurisdiction that has a double identity, a hometown identity and a Capital identity.

No, we are not schizophrenic here. So let's discuss this evening what this means. I want to discuss it in part because the inevitable turnover in the Congress means that I should come to the floor and explain this dilemma of our creation periodically.

The first thing we want to do is to avoid the slander that the Framers of our Constitution, the Founders of our country, meant to create a Capital City whose residents were not the equals of residents everywhere in the country, because if that had been the case, you wouldn't have had the Capital in the first place.

The Capital was created from two jurisdictions, Maryland and Virginia, where residents had the right to vote and where they had every single right of American citizens. Those two States were convinced to give the territory that is now the District of Columbia for the Nation's Capital. They were not about to give up their votes in the Capital and did not.

Isn't it interesting, during the transition period, the Representatives from Maryland and Virginia continued to vote as they always had and continued to be recognized in their own jurisdictions, all the while, for a 10-year period, when the land was, in fact, being transferred to become what is now the District of Columbia?

The relationship that the District has to the Federal Government, to the Congress of the United States, is an accident of history. It is an anachronistic accident that you would have thought would have been put aside within a few years after the District became the Nation's Capital in 1801.

During the Revolutionary War when the Capital was Philadelphia, Revolutionary War soldiers marched on the Capitol, then in Philadelphia. They wanted their pensions, and they wanted funding. When the Founders saw these men marching on their Capitol, confusion reigned. Whom to turn to bring order? Who was going to protect the Capitol? Was it Philadelphia? Was it Pennsylvania? There certainly weren't any Federal police as yet.

So what developed was fear that the Capital might find itself with that dilemma wherever it was located. Of course, that is not the case. The District is protected by 31 Federal police forces, and the D.C. National Guard and from the Capitol Police to the Park Police. I won't even name them all, there are so many of them.

That is not to mention, and I already have said, of course, the National Guard, and if necessary, the Armed

Forces of the United States. Remember, we are talking about a Federal Government in formation. We can understand that mistake then. What we cannot abide is that mistake being part of the denial to American citizens the same rights that others enjoy.

Protection of the Federal sector is certainly not an issue, or the Federal sector and the Capital itself, more than two centuries later, is not an issue. But what should also not be an issue is that anybody, any resident, any American, would pay taxes and not be represented on this floor and in the Senate.

As I stand here this evening, I represent almost 700,000 American citizens who have been put precisely in that position though—and this is a number to be remembered—they are number one per capita—number one—in taxes paid to support the Government of the United States.

Thus, one of the oldest U.S. jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, is the most—indeed, the only—unequal jurisdiction, that pays taxes without full representation.

To be sure, I vote in committee, and everybody knows that in the committees is where the primary work is done. But imagine the insult to the people I represent who pay huge taxes—\$12,000 per person every year—that matters come up on this floor including matters affecting them, and nobody whom they have voted for can represent them on this floor.

The D.C. budget was just in that continuing resolution that passed. What is it doing over here? Nobody in Congress looked at the D.C. budget. Nobody in this body except me would know what to do with the D.C. budget. But it has to come here to be passed along with the Federal budget.

This is form without substance, Mr. Speaker. The sole reason that the D.C. budget comes here is for Members to try to overturn some of D.C.'s laws that they happen to disagree with. But, in a Federal Union, you can pass your laws. I don't like your laws, but you can't do anything about my laws—except if it is the District of Columbia.

So I think I ought to call the roll on what the District has to abide from Members of this body and the Senate and why, on this 44th anniversary of the Home Rule Act, the District of Columbia is seeking to become the 51st State.

Let's take guns. Senator MARCO RUBIO from Florida and Representative TOM GARRETT from Virginia have a bill to eliminate all the District's gun laws.

□ 1745

It hasn't passed, and most of the bills I will speak of are pending but won't pass, because I have to spend a good deal of my time not only working affirmatively for what the District of Columbia wants, but for keeping bills like this from being passed.

Imagine your Nation's Capital as a city where anybody can have a gun. The most controversial figures in the

world come to your Nation's Capital. They eat in our restaurants. They stroll in our streets. You sometimes see that police stop traffic to let their cars pass in the street.

We keep this City as safe as we can for ourselves, the 700,000 or so who live here, but also for the millions of people who come to do business or to have leisure or to see their iconic monuments.

Representative TOM MASSIE from Kentucky has introduced a bill. We were able to keep it from being passed. But imagine this bill that would say that the District of Columbia had to recognize any and every concealed carry permit as long as you had it from another State.

Some States have very strong concealed carry requirements. Others are very lax. Whatever your State has, just bring it into the District of Columbia.

Mind you, this body, this Congress, my Republican colleagues have seen to it that you can't bring a gun into this Chamber. They want to be protected here, but they don't want to protect even their own constituents in the streets of the District of Columbia and in the hotels and restaurants of the District of Columbia.

Senator TED CRUZ from Texas and Representative MARK MEADOWS of North Carolina have introduced a bill that would require the District of Columbia to use its own funds to send children to private schools. All you have to do is come and ask the District for it.

There have been bills on this floor to allow private school vouchers—none of them have ever passed—but here come two Members wanting the District to give our local funds to anybody who wants to go to a private school.

Are you joking?

I am standing here to say that will never pass as long as I have anything to do with it.

Senator JAMES LANKFORD from Oklahoma and Representative BRAD WENSTRUP from Ohio have introduced a bill to wipe out the District's death with dignity law.

That bill was actually passed in committee. It didn't get to the floor I think because there are six States that have such laws and two of them are States of our Republican leadership.

This is a controversial bill, but other States have similar laws. It allows people to take their own lives if they follow a very strict protocol.

You don't like it here?

Well, you don't live here. You don't pay taxes here.

President Trump's budget also had this provision.

Again, these are pending, and I am telling you that most of them will not pass. But that is because I have had to fight them tooth and nail to keep them from passing. That is unfair to the District and it is an unfair use of my time.

The Local Budget Autonomy Act that passed by 83 percent of the voters in the District of Columbia to keep our own local funds—we raise almost \$8 billion on our own—from coming here for

no purpose except to attach amendments to overturn our laws.

The Local Budget Autonomy Act still stands, but Congress has continued to appropriate the budget. "Appropriate" means simply pass it without looking at it, when it comes to the District of Columbia. Congress has not repealed the Local Budget Autonomy Act. I will stand firm to keep that from happening.

We have been able to overcome attempts to overrule a D.C. law passed to protect private reproductive decisions. The District passed a law that prohibits discrimination within the District—it has nothing to do with the Congress—against any family because of the reproductive health choices of family members.

What am I doing, what is Congress doing, what is the District doing even knowing what your reproductive choice is?

What kind of Congress that believes in local control would so intrusively insert itself into such private matters?

Here is another that was almost laughable. It is a wipes labeling bill.

Representative ANDY HARRIS from Maryland offered—and I thank him for withdrawing it—an amendment at markup. Representative HARRIS is a member of the Appropriations Committee. He would have prohibited the District from using its own funds to keep certain kinds of non-flushable products from being sold in D.C.

Pardon me, but what is Representative HARRIS doing in our toilets and sewers?

To his credit, he did withdraw his proposed amendment.

It was important to the District because these non-flushable materials stop up sewers. They are our sewers. It is our town. Stay out of our business.

The marijuana matter. First, Congress tried to overturn the District's law that enables possession of a couple of ounces of marijuana. I was able to find a flaw in the proposed language. So the marijuana law still stands.

But Congress keeps D.C. from commercializing marijuana, as is done in several States. I think there are eight States. It keeps D.C. from regulating marijuana further. That is dangerous. D.C. ought to be able to regulate marijuana to keep it out of the hands of children, for example.

The interference of this body in the affairs of a local jurisdiction about which it knows nothing is not only outrageous on its face, but yes, it can be dangerous.

The abortion rider or amendment comes annually. It keeps the District from spending its own local funds on abortions for low-income women, although there are upwards of 17 States that use local funds for abortions because they have the autonomy that we seek.

Then, at the last minute this year, there was something that Representative STEVE KING decided that he had to do.

You see, I think when Members intrude in D.C. affairs, they must not have enough to do, and I am calling on their constituents to watch them. If you have a Member that does what—and here I am going to indicate this one shortly, but the ones I have just spoken of—if they have a Member that spends his time writing laws about someone else's jurisdiction, they ought to call him to account.

Representative STEVE KING is from Iowa. He introduced a bill that would make it a Federal crime to commit violence within the District in connection with a legitimate labor dispute.

Well, maybe it ought to be a crime and there may be some Federal legislation that deals with this matter nationwide, but if not, and it takes place within the District of Columbia and there is a legitimate labor dispute and there is violence, we have got enough cops to take care of that, Representative KING. We do not need this to be a Federal crime in D.C. alone.

So, after calling the roll on those proposed anti-home rule provisions, let me indicate most of them I have been able to keep off of the D.C. appropriations bill, the only way they get them passed.

It would be very difficult to get them passed by coming here, get the votes, and then go to the Senate and get the votes. So Members try the easy way: just attach it to the D.C. appropriations bill that should not be here in the first place.

The budget matter really does gall us. More than 7 in 10 Americans believe that the District of Columbia should control its own budget. That is what this board graph shows. More than anything else, the American people guard their own money. That is why this is so important.

Republicans pose as the champions of local control. In fact, they want the Federal Government out of much of its own Federal business and let the States and the localities handle it.

How could they then abandon their cherished principles when it comes to the Nation's Capital?

Look at these numbers, red and blue on this chart. The numbers show that Democrats and Republicans believe D.C. should control D.C.'s budget, slightly more in red or Republican States.

I think numbers like that show that what I am saying about local control and about equality in this body represents the views of the American people. I defy anyone in this body to show differently.

Ultimately, we recognize on this 44th anniversary of the signing of the Home Rule Act that there is no substitute for statehood.

I should mention that Congress experimented with home rule for some time before the Home Rule Act was finally passed in 1973. It gave D.C. home rule in 1820. Sometimes it would take it back, and then try again. Imagine living in a city where they can take back your local control.

To their credit, after the Civil War, the Republican Congress gave D.C. home rule and a Delegate. I am called a Delegate and a Congresswoman. They gave D.C. home rule. That version of home rule is precisely what D.C. has today. The 1973 Home Rule Act essentially is a replica of the home rule given to D.C. by the Republican Congress after the Civil War.

How did we lose it?

The Democrats, controlled by Southerners, took back home rule after Reconstruction and left the District for 100 years struggling to get back the self-government that the Republican Congress had given the District after the Civil War.

This all started with Republicans. It ended with the Home Rule Act, Richard Nixon, and bipartisan support in the Congress.

There is no substitute for being equal to the States. You can't have some second class citizens in the United States today, not in 21st century America.

□ 1800

We are seeking the major elements of statehood, even before we get statehood.

For example, the District of Columbia government has actually shut down when the Federal Government is shut down, even though the D.C. budget is balanced and nobody in the Congress has even looked at it. I have now been able to get a bill every year that allows the District to stay open even if the Congress closes the Federal Government down.

We don't know what will happen over in the Senate even today. We have just passed a continuing resolution—pitiful, though it was—to keep the government open for just a few more weeks. That passed this House. It has to pass the Senate. I can't take the chance that the District will close down for no reason except that the Congress doesn't know how to take care of its own business.

I was finally able to convince the Congress to extricate the District from their fights to keep open, whatever you do to us—and you certainly haven't extricated us altogether because our budget still comes here. But you certainly don't mean to close down a big city like the District of Columbia, its budget, which handles vital matters like the police and keeping order.

I don't mean to say that all Republicans have failed to see this. My hat is off to Representative DARRELL ISSA, who headed the committee that has jurisdiction over the District of Columbia.

He called witnesses from the District of Columbia—the mayor, the city council chairman, the chief financial officer—on a routine hearing since, yes, Congress can do that. It rarely does. He heard—even more important, he listened to—their testimony. And when he heard these officials from the District of Columbia testify about the financial condition of the District of Columbia, its reserves, that its growth

was among the best in the Nation, Representative ISSA—listened.

Maybe you don't think Members of Congress are always listening to your testimony. He was listening to this testimony. Because after hearing that testimony, Representative ISSA from California endorsed D.C. budget autonomy, and he has worked tirelessly with local officials and with me to secure the autonomy of the District's budget so it wouldn't come to Congress.

I haven't asked him, but he may not be for statehood, and I doubt that he is. He is a Republican. But I think he understands, perhaps better than most of his colleagues, that no one has any business, in a Federal public handling somebody's local budget in this Chamber, and I will be forever grateful.

I want to say my thanks, as well, to former Representative Tom Davis, who resigned from the Congress a few years ago, and was instrumental in helping the District get votes for a vote for D.C. in the House and in the Senate. That bill, the D.C. Voting Rights Act, actually passed the House and passed the Senate.

So why don't we have at least the vote in the House now? The reason is that the National Rifle Association convinced some Members to place an amendment that would have wiped out all of the District's gun laws; and, therefore, the residents of the District of Columbia, after helping me for years to achieve their first vote on this floor, had to leave that vote on the table.

I will be forever grateful to Representative Tom Davis for his help.

Now, what kind of jurisdiction are we talking about? It is very important for us to remember that we are talking about a city with a \$14 billion budget, which is larger than the budget of 12 States. Why shouldn't D.C., therefore, have statehood like those States?

We are talking about a city that has a \$2.5 billion surplus. That is the envy of the States. Ask my colleagues how many of them have a surplus that large.

The per capita income of the people I represent is higher than that of any State.

Now, that is an interesting figure that should be explained. There are many poor people in the District of Columbia, but there are many high earners, too; and when you put them together, that is one of the reasons you get the highest per capita taxes paid. That is why you get \$12,000 per year in Federal taxes from D.C. residents.

The personal income of the people I represent is higher than that of seven States; the per capita of personal consumption in expenditures is higher than that of any State; and the total personal consumption expenditures are greater than those of seven States. This is a very productive, a very hard-working city that pays its own way and contributes, as well, mightily to our country. And Americans understand that because the District is attracting residents in large numbers.

We have had, in this city, a 15.3 percent increase in residents since the last census. That becomes, on a monthly basis, 800 new residents coming to live in your Nation's Capital every month—almost 700,000, a larger population today than Wyoming and then Vermont, but these States, they have two Senators. They have the same number of Representatives as the District of Columbia—one.

If the truth be told, the District is about the same in population as seven States. Those seven States have two Senators each and one Representative who votes on this floor. They and I are equivalent in every respect except, of course, for the taxes per capita D.C. residents pay, and yet they have the vote. Notwithstanding that the District is number one per capita in taxes District residents pay, those seven States have the congressional vote and we do not.

This week, in fact, just today, we passed a new tax bill. So imagine how the residents I represent feel about a new tax bill. They are going to end up paying more taxes because SALT, the State and local tax deduction, has been capped. It has been with us for almost 100 years. So instead of taxation without representation, my constituents will have double taxation, at least when it comes to that particular matter, the State and local taxes, double taxation without representation.

So when the bell rang for the tax vote, I did not come down because I could not vote for the citizens of the District of Columbia. When there are votes on this floor for matters involving our military and life and death, I do not come down because I cannot vote.

Still, I remember the purple fingers from the citizens of Iraq and Afghanistan, where they not only were signifying that they had voted, but they were signifying who gave them the vote: members of the military from the United States, including members from the District of Columbia, who have fought and died in every war since the war that created the United States of America.

District residents have overpaid for the equal citizenship they seek, and this chart illustrates it tragically:

World War I, 635 District of Columbia residents lost their lives in that war. That was a figure greater than three different States.

World War II—that was a big one—3,573 District of Columbia residents lost their lives. That was five times greater than the District's losses in World War I, and it was greater than losses in four different States.

Moving on to the Korean war, 547 District residents lost their lives. That figure was greater than the loss of life by the military in eight different States.

And finally, the Vietnam war, 243 casualties in that war. That was a figure greater than 10 different States.

All told, this city, which is a relatively small city, has had almost

200,000 residents serve in the military, and that is only since World War I. I hasten to add that there has never been a war—and I have not counted the 19th century wars—there has never been a war where the residents of your Nation's Capital were not among those who fought and died.

Now, I must ask if there is any Member of Congress who would stand for the Federal Government dictating a local budget or her local matters coming to the House floor after showing what I have shown here this evening about the District of Columbia. Maybe there will be some understanding of why we must protest and resist the treatment of the District of Columbia until the District is given the equality to States by becoming the 51st State.

As I have indicated, it is impossible to lay our present predicament on the Framers of our Constitution. Remember, they went to war, it is they who gave us the slogan of "taxation without representation." They were willing to die, to commit treason, largely because they were paying taxes to the crown and had no representation. How can we possibly lay the present predicament of the District on the Framers? It is not them. It is on us today.

□ 1815

In the 21st century, Congress cannot continue to ask the residents of the Nation's Capital to watch democracy in operation for everybody else except them.

If a matter involves the District of Columbia and has to come before us, then everybody gets to vote on that matter except the Representative of the District of Columbia. You can't justify that alongside American principles, given how much in Federal taxes the people I represent pay, given their sons and daughters who have always gone to war for their country, all of that without a vote in the House and the Senate required by consent of the government.

Well, we have two choices, but when you think about it, we have only one. Congress can continue to exercise autocratic authority over the American citizens who live in their own Nation's Capital, treating them—if I may quote the words of the great Frederick Douglass, whose bicentennial we will be celebrating in 2018 (who was a resident of this City), and who said our country was "Treating the District and its citizens as aliens, not citizens, but subjects."

We are not subjects. We are American citizens. The only alternative today is to live up to the Nation's promise and ideals and pass the Washington, D.C. Admission Act to make the residents of your Nation's Capital equal by affording them the right to live in the 51st State of the Union of States called the United States of America.

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

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it has been quite a week: ups and downs and not knowing whether bills would be passed or the government would be funded, whether we would be able to help America with a much-improving economy in the new year by passing the tax cut bill. But we got it done, and it ended up being a good week, and here we are.

This will be the last opportunity to speak before we are out for Christmas, and I heard some good news today about Ukraine. We have the annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast the first Thursday of February each year, except when the first Thursday is on the 1st, and then it is on the 8th, which it will be this February.

We had representatives from the Ukraine Government come to our National Prayer Breakfast here, and they started one there and began to grow. Now, for the first time, Ukraine legislature has passed a bill recognizing a celebration of Christmas, the day of Jesus' birth. We celebrate Jesus' birth on that day, December 25.

Apparently, from what we are told, it emanates from them coming over, being part of our Prayer Breakfast, where the President comes, and then starting one. And then now we are going to be celebrating the birth of Jesus in America—all those who care to—at the same time the Ukrainian Government will do so. So that is a big bit of news there.

I was listening to the Delegate from the District of Columbia and it took me back to when I first got here as a Member of Congress and I saw the license plate saying, "Taxation Without Representation." I know from studying history—never ceasing to study history that that was one of the war cries for the Revolution: Taxation without representation is tyranny.

And as Benjamin Franklin once said: If we do not get to select even one of the people in Parliament, then that Parliament has no right to place any tax on us.

And then upon hearing that, Puerto Rico, Guam, Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, all of the territories where they have a Delegate or Commissioner but they don't have a full voting member, those are areas that are not required to pay any Federal income tax. In fact, when I found out, the more I looked into it, there is only one place in America where people do not elect a full voting Member of Congress, yet they have to pay Federal income tax, and that is here in the District of Columbia.

For that reason, I filed a bill—because they had tried to get a full voting Member of Congress. But to do that, you have to have a constitutional

amendment. Everybody knew that and agreed to that back in the late 1970s. The proponents of having a full voting Representative got it through the House, got it through the Senate, but they never did get the requisite number of States to sign on, so it failed without ever being ratified by enough States.

I feel sure that would be the case if that were attempted again, but it does require an amendment. And since that doesn't appear it is going to happen anytime soon, then I believe in each of the sessions of Congress I have been, I have filed a bill that would correct that injustice, because it truly is an injustice for the people who live in the District of Columbia, and it is very simple. It just says, basically, that until when and if the District of Columbia has a full voting Representative, they are like any other U.S. territory, they will not have to pay Federal income tax.

I felt like that would certainly make people appreciate that, that they were treated like those in other places that don't elect a full voting Member of the House. So far I haven't been able to get Ms. HOLMES NORTON to sign on as a cosponsor. I am hoping to get her to sign on at some point because it really would help those people who live here in the City of Washington not to have to pay any Federal income tax.

Of course, Puerto Rico pays no Federal income tax, yet they have a higher local income tax than the Federal income tax. You know, a lot of States—I think somebody told me that Californians are paying 10 percent or so. But Puerto Rico, where, I think, over one-third or about one-third or so of the people there work for the government, then the government load is just overwhelming.

Puerto Rico is so beautiful. Even after all the disaster that needs to be cleaned up and fixed, I would hope at some point they become less heavy on the government and more heavy on free-market opportunities. I could see Puerto Rico becoming the Hong Kong of the United States, where that is where people want to go, that is where businesses want to locate because it is such a great place to live. But the taxes have run people out of that area, even though they don't pay Federal income tax. I don't think that would happen here in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, here we are, the last session before Christmas. It has been amazing. The most often cited book in Congress for our country's entire history has been the Bible. There is no book that comes close to the recitations from it that has the Bible.

Throughout our history, we were recognized as a Christian nation. I believe President Obama was right when he said we are not a Christian nation. We were, but we are not anymore. But even the Supreme Court, when it was a much more enlightened Supreme Court well after the Civil War—in fact, 30 years after the Civil War was over—the

Supreme Court looked at all of the evidence and declared in an opinion that the United States was founded as and is a Christian nation.

Not that everybody has to be a Christian here. They absolutely don't. I would humbly submit that the only way any people can truly have freedom of religion is if they have a constitution that is founded on Judeo-Christian principles that recognize that all true rights: life, liberty, pursuit of happiness—you don't have a right to happiness, but a right to pursue it—those come from God, and the Founders recognized that.

It is a shame to hear people deceiving young people in school, teaching them that, no, the real Founders were only deists. They didn't believe in God; Ben Franklin being the leading deist. If they would just teach the children what Ben Franklin said in June of 1787 at the Constitutional Convention. After 5 weeks of nothing but arguing back and forth, 80-year-old Ben Franklin, 2 or 3 years away from meeting his maker, got recognized.

Somebody wrote that President Washington looked so relieved when Dr. Franklin sought recognition. He finally stood up. He had gout and he had terrible arthritis. He was well overweight, but he got up and gave the speech that so many Christians are aware of, where he said what no deist would ever say, despite how many teachers these days say he was a deist. His words were—we know what his words were because he sat down and wrote it down afterwards when he was asked for a copy of what he said.

And he said: "I have lived, Sir, a long time; and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—God governs in the affairs of men. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that 'except the Lord build the House, they labour in vain that build it.'"

He said: "I firmly believe that."

Mr. Speaker, which means he wasn't a deist.

He said: "I also believe that without His"—without God's—"concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the Builders of Babel. We shall be divided by our little partial local interests . . . and we ourselves will become a power down through the ages."

Mr. Speaker, it was at the conclusion of that day's session in the Constitutional Convention that Randolph from here in Virginia, or across the river in Virginia, made a motion that since here we are at the end of June, we are about to celebrate our Nation's birthday, and we all know we have not been able to accomplish anything.

As Franklin said: "We have been going for nearly 5 weeks. We have more noses than eyes on virtually every issue."

And then Franklin went on to say: "How has it happened, Sir, that we

have not . . . thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understandings?"

□ 1830

So Randolph's motion is, since they haven't been able to accomplish really anything, just yelling back and forth—it was all the big 6-foot-4 Washington could do to keep things under control. And, yes, I know in Chernow's biography, he said he was less than 6 foot 2, because he was standing by a guy 6 foot 2 and he was shorter, but he is just wrong on that. George Washington, 1799, when dead, flat on a slab, was measured as 6 foot 3½. Undeniable, 6 foot 4 in the height of his time, but he couldn't control things.

Randolph's motion passed. His motion was that they recess the Constitutional Convention and reconvene together in one of the local churches they agreed on and worship God together and then come back and try it again. That one passed.

They went to the Reformed Calvinist Church—I was sharing that with my friend DAVE BRAT earlier since he attends a Calvinist church—Reverend William Rogers presiding. You can go online and find at least one of the prayers that he prayed.

I have this little book from Dr. Richard G. Lee, what a great man of God, great little booklet. "In God We Still Trust," it is called. It has some great stories from our history.

He noted that Warren Earl Burger, Chief Justice of the United States from 1969 to 1986, delivered the Supreme Court's opinion in the 1985 case of *Lynch v. Donnelly*, which upheld that the city of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, did not violate the Constitution by displaying a nativity scene. Noting that Presidential orders and proclamations from Congress have designated Christmas as a national holiday in religious terms for two centuries and in the Western world for 20 centuries, he wrote:

"There is an unbroken history of official acknowledgement by all three branches of government of the role of religion in American life. The Constitution does not require a complete separation of church and state."

In fact, I would insert here, those words, "separation of church and state," unlike what many say when asked, they are not in the Constitution, they were not intended to be in the Constitution. The Founders did not want church to be separated from state. They wanted the state to stay the heck out of the church business. That is what they wanted.

But Thomas Jefferson mentioned a separation of church and state, a wall of separation, but it was going to be a one-way wall where the state stayed out of people's religion, but expected religion because it was part of our founding and the Bible was so often mentioned as a source of wisdom as they tried to put together a government.

Chief Justice Burger, talking about the Constitution, said:

"It affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any. . . . Anything less would require the 'callous indifference' we have said was never intended by the Establishment Clause. . . . Indeed, we have observed, such hostility would bring us into 'war with our national tradition as embodied in the First Amendment's guarantee of the free exercise of religion.'"

He goes on on the next page, talking about John Hancock. He said: "To celebrate the victorious conclusion of the Revolutionary War, Governor John Hancock of Massachusetts issued a proclamation for a day of Thanksgiving on December 11, 1783."

Just over a week ago was the anniversary of this proclamation from Governor John Hancock, the president that signed as president of the Continental Congress on the Declaration of Independence.

John Hancock said: "Whereas . . . these United States are not only happily rescued from the danger and calamities to which they have been so long exposed, but their freedom, sovereignty, and independence ultimately acknowledged.

"And whereas . . . the interposition of Divine Providence"—and they capitalized "Divine Providence," another expression meaning God—"in our favor hath been most abundantly and most graciously manifested, and the citizens of these United States have every reason for praise and gratitude to the God of their salvation.

"Impressed therefore with an exalted sense of the blessings by which we are surrounded, and of our entire dependence on that Almighty Being"—"Almighty Being" both capitalized—"from whose goodness and bounty they are derived; I do by and with the advice of the council appoint Thursday the 11th day of December next"—the day recommended by the Congress to all the States—"to be religiously observed as a day of thanksgiving and prayer; that all the people may then assemble to celebrate . . . that He"—"He" is capitalized, meaning God—"hath been pleased to continue to us the light of the blessed Gospel; . . . that we also offer up fervent supplications . . . to cause pure religion and virtue to flourish . . . and to fill the world with His—capital H—glory."

That was John Hancock. As he pointed out, that was directed by the Congress of the United States that that day be recognized, but that was just his proclamation as Governor of Massachusetts.

It seems when I mention God, mention some of our heritage, we often get a lot of calls from people who just become irate, which also testifies probably to the importance and to the genuineness of our founding and our founding reliance on God, because nothing else provokes that kind of

anger and hatred. But some people say that has no place in the Capitol of the United States. And bless them; they just are a bit ignorant.

Just down the hall, the original House Chamber was the largest Christian church in the Washington, D.C., area for most of the 1800s. A guy named Thomas Jefferson, that coined the expression "separation of church and state," "wall of separation," he put in a letter to the Danbury Baptists why we should not have, in essence, an official denomination, that that is not the government's role. Jefferson saw no problem in having Christian worship services down the hall because it was nondenominational. Every Sunday that he was in Washington during his 8 years as President, he would come.

Normally, he would ride a horse, according to the Congressional Research Service. You don't have to rely on my historical interpretation. The bipartisan, objective Congressional Research Service said he usually came riding a single horse.

Unlike Jefferson, Madison, who is given credit for writing much of the Constitution, when he was President for those 8 years, he normally came in a horse-drawn carriage with multiple horses drawing his carriage. Jefferson, on the other hand, came to church here in the Capitol normally on a horse by himself, before the days, obviously, of the Secret Service.

Jefferson, in fact, since it was a nondenominational Christian service, saw no problem with inviting the Marine Band to come do the accompaniment many Sundays for the hymns that were to be sung.

The first woman to officially address a group in the U.S. Capitol occurred in the early 1800s, a Christian evangelist, who gave the sermon just down the hall in what was then the House of Representatives Chamber.

I have a book, "Miracles in American History." Susie Federer did this, adapted from William J. Federer's "American Minute." This is a typical story from our history and our Founders, who knew how valuable God's assistance was in getting this little bubble in time and space where, for the first time in history, Christians were not persecuted for being Christians. For the first time since Jesus came over 2,000 years ago, this America, this United States was a place where you weren't persecuted for being a Christian.

Obviously, that is changing, and now we have governmental entities that are afraid of Christians as potentially a big hate group; although, anyone who professes that Christian groups need to be violent in order to accomplish our purposes can't truly be Christian and based on the Bible unless they are enacting government in so doing and acting under Romans 13. But, otherwise, they miss the whole point of Jesus' preaching.

In this book from the Federers, the Battle of Cowpens was January 17, 1781.

Also, January 17 happens to be my father's birthday. I won't tell the age, but he is over 90.

"The Battle of Cowpens, January 17, 1781, depicted in the movie 'The Patriot,' involved American General Daniel Morgan having a line of militia fire into the British General Cornwallis' and Colonel Banastre Tarleton's dragoons, regulars, Highlanders, and loyalists.

"When the Americans hastily retreated, British Colonel Tarleton, known as 'The Butcher,' gave in to the temptation to pursue, only to be surprised by American Continentals waiting over the hill, firing at point-blank range.

"In the confusion, the Americans killed 110 British and captured 830.

"The Battle of Cowpens is widely considered the tactical masterpiece and turning point of the war."

This is talking about the Revolutionary War, of course.

"General Daniel Morgan met up with American General Nathanael Greene, and they made a hasty retreat north toward Virginia.

"Cornwallis regrouped and chased the Americans as fast as he could, burning extra equipment and supplies along the way in order to travel faster.

"Cornwallis arrived at the Catalpa River just 2 hours after the Americans had crossed, but a storm made the river impassable, delaying the British pursuit.

"Cornwallis nearly overtook them as they were getting out of the Yadkin River, but rain flooded the river.

"Now it was a race to the Dan River, but General Nathanael Greene again made it across before the British arrived.

"British Commander Henry Clinton wrote:

"Here the royal army was again stopped by a sudden rise of the waters, which had only just fallen, almost miraculously, to let the enemy over . . ."

"In March 1781, General George Washington wrote to William Gordon:

"We have . . . abundant reasons to thank Providence"—with a capital P; he often referred to God as Providence—to thank Providence for its many favorable interpositions in our behalf. It has at times been my only dependence, for all other resources seemed to have failed us."

"British General Henry Clinton then ordered General Cornwallis to move 8,000 troops to a defensive position where the York River entered the Chesapeake Bay.

□ 1845

By this time, Ben Franklin and Marquis de Lafayette, which is the gentleman depicted in this painting right over here—it is the only full-length portrait of a foreigner in our U.S. Capitol—were finally successful in their efforts to persuade French King Louis XVI to send ships and troops to meet the Americans.

French Admiral de Grasse left off fighting the British in the West Indies;

sailed 24 ships to the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay where, in the Battle of the Capes, he drove off 19 British ships which were trying to evacuate Cornwallis' men.

De Grasse's 3,000 French troops, and General Rochambeau's 6,000 French troops, hurriedly joined General Lafayette's division as they marched to help Washington trap Cornwallis against the sea. They joined the troops of General Benjamin Lincoln, Baron von Steuben, Mordecai Gist, Henry Knox, and John Peter Muhlenberg. All together, 17,000 French and American troops surrounded Cornwallis, and, on October 19, 1781, he surrendered.

Yale President Ezra Stiles wrote on May 8, 1783: "Who but God"—and by the way, this Yale University president, for those who are shocked that Yale had such a strident Christian leader, but actually, originally, Harvard and Yale, you couldn't even get in unless you swore that Jesus was your Lord and Savior in very stark terms.

But Yale University President Ezra Stiles, in 1783, says:

"Who but God could have ordained the critical arrival of the Gallic or French fleet so as to assist in the siege of Yorktown? Should we not ascribe to a Supreme energy the wise generalship displayed by General Greene, leaving the roving Cornwallis to pursue his helter-skelter, ill-fated march into Virginia. It is God who had raised up for us a powerful ally, a chosen army, an enabled force, who sent us a Rochambeau to fight side-by-side with Washington in the Battle of Yorktown."

"To diffuse the general joy through every breast, the general orders"—I am sorry. This is from George Washington. George Washington wrote this. This was one of his orders.

"To diffuse the general joy through every breast, the general orders"—these are his orders. I am quoting from Washington. "Divine service is to be performed tomorrow in the several brigades. The Commander-in-Chief earnestly recommends troops not on duty should universally attend with that gratitude of heart which the recognition of such astonishing interposition of Providence demands."

And then the next year, on October 11, this is what the Congress passed. Congress said: "It being the indispensable duty of all nations to offer up their supplications to Almighty God the United States in Congress assembled do hereby recommend it to the inhabitants of these States in general to observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of solemn thanksgiving to God for his mercies."

September 3, 1783, the Revolutionary War was officially ended with the Treaty of Paris, signed by Ben Franklin, John Adams, John Jay, and David Hartley. And I was surprised, I was going through the State Department with my wife and my pastor, David Dykes, and his wife, Cindy, and we were going through, and there was a copy, an original copy of the Treaty of Paris.

I looked at the big letters that started it, and I was shocked. I said: "Did you know it started that way?" Because David is quite a historian himself. He has written a lot of great books. But he didn't know. We didn't know how it started.

But then it made sense. If you are going to get the British to sign a document swearing that the United States has the right to be free and independent of the most powerful country in the world, the most powerful army, the most powerful navy, which I agree with Washington, it was the grace of God, we were able to defeat. Without the grace of God, there is no defeat. We are not an independent country.

So what do you start that with to make the British swear under that would be something they would not want to break the oath to?

This is how it starts. These were the big letters, huge print, "In the name of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity," then smaller letters for the rest of the document, "It having pleased the Divine Providence" or God "to dispose the hearts of the most serene and most potent Prince George III, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain . . . and of the United States of America, to forget all past misunderstandings and differences."

Anyway, it was signed: "Done at Paris, this third day of September, in the year of our Lord, 1783."

And, of course, our Constitution is dated the same way, in the year of our Lord, 1787.

But those were Founders. Those were things that got us started.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON).

CELEBRATING THE BORDEN COUNTY COYOTES DIVISION 1, 1A SIX-MAN FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), my new friend, great colleague, and mentor as I have made my transition into this great body. He tells me that all freshman Members come in and have big wins like tax reform and these big, tremendous wins, not for the Republican Party, but for the American people. I am so proud to have been a part of that. I am proud to call Mr. GOHMERT my friend.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the Borden County Coyotes' hard-fought victory over Jonesboro in the Division 1, 1A Six-Man Football State Championship. This was the Coyotes' seventh State championship appearance, fifth State championship win, and the second year in a row these two teams faced off in the six-man State championship game.

Going into the championship game, only six opposing teams had scored against the Coyotes all year long. They boast the best six-man defense in the State, have been named the best six-man team in the Nation, and are ranked number 1 in the class 1-A division rankings.

With the discipline and determination they showed all season long, this team turned a two-point lead at half-time into a 60-22 win in the State championship.

I want to commend both teams on their tremendous success and sportsmanship and congratulate, especially, Coach Richey on preparing our Coyotes to achieve a perfect season.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the parents and the teachers and the administrators and the fans who were always there throughout this season to ensure the Coyotes always gave their Borden County best.

There is nothing like high school football in west Texas. Go Coyotes, and go west Texas.

HAPPY 80TH BIRTHDAY TO DR. BILL DEAN

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to wish a happy birthday, 80 years, to a dear friend, a Lubbock native, and a legend at Texas Tech, Dr. Bill Dean.

Dr. Dean has always been a leader and has always had a servant heart when it comes to serving his community and the campus community at Texas Tech. I don't know anyone who loves Texas Tech University and the students at Texas Tech like Bill Dean.

He was elected to the student body presidency when he was a student at Tech. He got 3 degrees and became a professor, an associate dean, and, ultimately, in his current role, serves as CEO of the Texas Tech University Alumni Association.

He was named the best teacher nine times by his students.

Dr. Dean, you are the very best, and you represent the very best of west Texas and Red Raider Nation. I want to say, blessings to you, and I hope you have many, many more years on that college campus because you have had an amazing impact on thousands of the lives of young people who come through that university, like me.

Thank you for your commitment. Thank you for your service and your leadership, and God bless you and Peggy. "Guns Up."

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to share time with my friend from west Texas. We are on opposite sides of the State but same sides of the heart caring for this country.

We have got a lot to be thankful for in this country, and I am thankful that we are going to have 11 months for people to realize that all the gloom and doom that was preached in this room about what the tax bill was going to do. The tax cuts, the reforms, it wasn't made as simple as I would hope, just a flat tax across the board. But there will be more people who don't pay tax, and most everybody should pay less tax.

It is just amazing the things that have been said. One person even said this is the worst bill ever, the tax bill, when—wow, I would have thought those bills that were really punishing slaves and allowing the continuance of slavery, those might have been, well, in my opinion, just nowhere near the

same category. But according to at least one source here across the aisle, this tax bill was worse than all of those, the worst bill ever.

But people are going to have 11 months to see that, even though the stock market was doing better, people weren't really doing better. Incomes had been pretty well flat-lined.

I think there is going to be a great deal to be grateful for. Now it is not just going to be the stock market going up, it is going to be Americans having more money in their own pockets. There are going to be more jobs. There are going to be people making more than they have in the past.

There will be a chance for many in the upcoming generation to experience what many of us did coming out of school, but most of them haven't, and that is having multiple firms, companies, employers, wanting them. It is just going to be a new experience for so many. And I hope when it happens, they will do as our Founders did and know where to give the proper credit.

John Adams, in the fall of 1798, to the officers of the First Brigade—he was President at the time, having succeeded Washington. President Adams said: "We have no government armed with power, capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people."

□ 1900

It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

John Adams, on December 25, 1813, what we call Christmas Day, wrote to his new friend. They had been friends, then when Jefferson had been greatly unfair in the election, defeated Adams, they had nothing to do with each other for many years. Then at Benjamin Rush's recommendation, Adams wrote Thomas Jefferson, and they rekindled a great friendship.

December 25 of 1813, former President John Adams wrote to former President Thomas Jefferson, and said:

"I have examined all religions as well as my narrow sphere, my straightened means, and my busy life would allow; and the result is that the Bible is the best Book in the world. It contains more philosophy than all the libraries I have seen."

Thomas Jefferson. This is inscribed in his monument.

Mr. Speaker, I share this as we leave session the last time before Christmas, because I find that so many people get upset when we mention God or mention the Bible here in Congress, when actually that is the most oft-cited thing in our whole history of Congress.

People have been mis-educated, and this is the one chance to thank God, Mr. Speaker, and help people realize how we came to be as we are.

Thomas Jefferson said:

"God who gave us life gave us liberty."

"And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated, but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that His justice cannot sleep forever."

Mr. Speaker, this was a time when people had turned from God, and it was scaring Jefferson because he knew, as Adams did, if we were not a religious and moral people, the Constitution would cease to serve the needed purpose.

Madison has such great pronouncements. As Madison himself said in 1815:

"No people ought to feel greater obligations to celebrate the goodness of the Great Disposer of events and of the Destiny of nations than the people of the United States. To the same divine author of every good and perfect gift, we are indebted for all those privileges and advantages, religious as well as civil, which are so richly enjoyed in this favored land."

He also referred to our Heavenly Benefactor.

Monroe, same type of messages.

John Quincy Adams, he wrote his son, 1811:

"... so great is my veneration for the Bible, and so strong my belief, that when duly read and meditated on, it is of all books in the world, that which contributes most to make men wise and happy—that the earlier my children begin to read it, the more steadily they pursue the practice of reading it throughout their lives, the more lively and confident will be my hopes that they will prove useful citizens to their country, respectable members of society...."

Abraham Lincoln said this, and it was official. This was his proclamation. Those that think it is inappropriate for government to say these things, this was Abraham Lincoln, who knew wherein our hopes lie.

Lincoln said in his official proclamation:

"... it is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope, that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are only blessed whose God is the Lord."

In his second inaugural, just 45 days before he was struck down by an assassin's bullet, Abraham Lincoln was trying to make sense of such a bloody, horrific war between the North and South, and it is inscribed on the inside wall of the Lincoln Memorial on the north side. Thank God, literally, thank God no one has required that those beautiful words be removed.

But he was trying to reconcile how there could be something so bloody and

awful if there were a good and just God. Obviously, he had done a lot of theological wrestling with that issue, and in talking about the North and South, Abraham Lincoln said:

"Both"—North and South—"read the same Bible and pray to the same God."

"The prayers of both could not be answered. The prayers of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has his own purpose."

But then he quotes Scripture: "Whosoever is lifted up in the world because of offenses."

Lincoln continues on:

"Yet, if God will that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's 250 years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with a sword, as was said 3,000 years ago, so it must be said."

And again quoting the Bible: "The judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

All Presidents have had these types of proclamations.

I like the proclamation Grover Cleveland had in November 1885. Official U.S. Government proclamation. He said:

"The American people have always abundant cause to be thankful to Almighty God, whose watchful care and guiding hand have been manifested in every stage of their national life, guarding and protecting them in time of peril and safely leading them in the hour of darkness and of danger.

"It is fitting and proper that a nation thus favored should on one day every year, for that purpose especially appointed, publicly acknowledge the goodness of God and return thanks to Him for all His gracious gifts."

Moving to Franklin Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt delivered this Christmas Eve message just weeks after we were attacked at Pearl Harbor.

Franklin Roosevelt said:

"Sincere and faithful men and women are asking themselves this Christmas: How can we light our trees? How can we give our gifts? How can we meet and worship with love and with uplifted spirit and heart in a world at war, a world of fighting and suffering and death? How can we pause, even for a day, even for Christmas Day, in our urgent labor of arming a decent humanity against the enemies which beset it? How can we put the world aside, as men and women put the world aside in peaceful years, to rejoice in the birth of Christ?"

Franklin Roosevelt went on to say:

"Looking into the days to come, I have set aside a day of prayer, and in that proclamation, I have said: The year 1941 has brought upon our Nation a war of aggression by powers dominated by arrogant rulers whose selfish purpose is to destroy free institutions. They would thereby take from the freedom-loving peoples of the Earth the hard-won liberties gained over many centuries. The new year of 1942 calls for the courage. Our strength, as the

strength of all men everywhere, is of greater avail as God upholds us.

"Therefore, I"—this is Franklin Roosevelt—"do hereby appoint the first day of the year 1942 as a day of prayer, of asking forgiveness for our shortcomings of the past, of consecration to the task of the present, of asking God's help in days to come. We need His guidance that this people may be humbled in spirit, but strong in the conviction of the right. Steadfast to endure sacrifice, and brave to achieve a victory of liberty and peace. Our strongest weapon in this war is that conviction of the dignity and brotherhood of man, which Christmas Day signifies. Against enemies who preach the principles of hate and practice them, we set our faith in human love and in God's care for us and all men everywhere."

He had so many beautiful, beautiful messages.

One ended like this:

"It is significant that tomorrow, Christmas Day, our plants and factories will be stilled. That is not true of the other holidays we have long been accustomed to celebrate. On all other holidays, work goes on, gladly, for the winning of the war. So Christmas becomes the only holiday in all the year. I like to think this is because Christmas is a holy day. May all it stands for live and grow throughout the years."

Harry Truman, who succeeded him after his death, finished one of his Christmas proclamations this way:

"Our thoughts and aspirations and the hopes of future years turn to a little town in the hills of Judea where, on a winter's night 2,000 years ago, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled.

"Shepherds keeping the watch by night over their flock heard the glad tidings of great joy from the angels of the Lord singing: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth, peace, good will toward men.'"

It is not just from the Bible. This is the President of the United States' official proclamation, government proclamation.

Truman said:

"The message of Bethlehem best sums up our hopes tonight. If we as a nation, and the other nations of the world, will accept it, the star of faith will guide us into the place of peace as it did the shepherds on that day of Christ's birth long ago.

"We shall find strength and courage at this Christmastime because so brave a beginning has been made. So with faith and courage we shall work to hasten the day when the sword is replaced by the plowshare and nations do not 'learn war anymore.'

"Selfishness and greed, individual or national, cause most of our troubles."

□ 1915

"He whose birth we celebrate tonight was the world's greatest teacher. He said: 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men would do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.' Through all the cen-

turies since He spoke, history has vindicated His teaching.

"In this great country of ours has been demonstrated the fundamental unity of Christianity and democracy. Under our heritage of freedom for everyone on equal terms, we also share the responsibilities of government. Our support of individual freedom—free speech, free schools, free press, and a free conscience—transcends all our differences. Although we may not hope for a New Heaven and a New Earth in our day and generation; we may strive with undaunted faith and courage to achieve in the present some measure of that unity with which the Nation's sons and the sons of our allies went forth to win the war.

"We have this glorious land not because of a particular religious faith, not because our ancestors sailed from a particular foreign port. We have our unique national heritage because of a common aspiration to be free and because of our purpose to achieve for ourselves and for our children the good things of life which the Christ declared He came to give to all mankind.

"We have made a good start toward peace in the world. Ahead of us lies the larger task of making the peace secure. The progress we made gives hope that in the coming year we shall reach our goal. May 1947 entitle us to the benediction of the Master."

"Master" is capitalized. He is talking about Jesus.

He quotes Jesus saying: "'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' Because of what we have achieved for peace, because of all the promise our future holds, I say to all my countrymen: Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas, and may God bless you all."

I just want to conclude, Mr. Speaker, with this best message, Ronald Reagan's 1988 official Christmas message. He said: "The themes of Christmas and of coming home for the holidays have long been intertwined in song and story. There is a profound irony and a lesson in this because Christmas celebrates the coming of a Savior who was born without a home.

"There was no room at the inn for the Holy Family. Weary of travel, a young Mary, close to childbirth, and her carpenter husband, Joseph, found but the rude shelter of a stable. There born the King of Kings, the Prince of Peace—an event on which all history would turn.

"Jesus would again be without home, and more than once; on the flight to Egypt and during His public ministry when He said: 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath nowhere to lay his head.'

"From His very infancy, on, our Redeemer was reminding us that, from then on we would never lack a home in Him. Like the shepherds to whom the angel of the Lord appeared on the first Christmas Day, we could always say: 'Let us now go even unto Bethlehem

and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.’

“As we come home with gladness to family and friends this Christmas, let us also remember our neighbors who cannot go home themselves. Our compassion and concern this Christmas and all year long will mean much to the hospitalized, the homeless, the convalescent, the orphaned—and will surely lead us on our way to the joy and peace of Bethlehem and the Christ Child who bids us come. For it is only in finding and living the eternal meaning of the Nativity that we can be truly happy, truly at peace, truly home.

“Merry Christmas, and God bless you.”

Official proclamation of the United States Government by the President of the United States, words well to remember.

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

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker’s table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 117. An act to designate a mountain peak in the State of Montana as “Alex Diekmann Peak”; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

S. 501. An act to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of East Rosebud Creek in Carbon County, Montana, as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 1. An act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 1536. An act to designate a human trafficking prevention coordinator and to expand the scope of activities authorized under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s outreach and education program to include human trafficking prevention activities, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o’clock and 19 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, December 22, 2017, at 2 p.m.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Official Foreign Travel during the fourth quarter of 2017, pursuant to Public Law 95-384, are as follows:

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, ROBERT REEVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN NOV. 21 AND NOV. 25, 2017											
Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem ¹		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²
Robert Reeves	11/22	11/25	Switzerland .....	.....	1,642.86	.....	2,104.56	.....	.....	.....	3,747.42
Scott Kim	11/22	11/25	Switzerland .....	.....	1,642.86	.....	2,104.56	.....	.....	.....	3,747.42
Committee total .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3,285.72	.....	4,209.12	.....	.....	.....	7,494.84

¹ Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.

² If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

ROBERT F. REEVES, December 5, 2017.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

3502. A letter from the Acting Director, PDRA, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program (RIN: 0572-AC37) received December 11, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3503. A letter from the Under Secretary (Comptroller), Department of Defense, transmitting a letter providing a status report on the account balance in the Defense Cooperation Account, as of September 30, 2017, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2608(e); Public Law 101-403, Sec. 202(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 112-81, Sec. 1064(7)); (125 Stat. 1587); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3504. A letter from the Alternate OSD FRLO, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Military Commissions [Docket No.: DOD-2017-OS-0062] (RIN: 0790-AJ58) received December 13, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

3505. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense, Special Operations/

Low Intensity Conflict, Department of Defense, transmitting the FY 2017 annual Regional Defense Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program Report to Congress, pursuant to title 10, U.S.C. 345; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3506. A letter from the Assistant to the Board, Board Of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the Board’s Major final rule — Regulatory Capital Rules: Retention of Certain Existing Transition Provisions for Banking Organizations That Are Not Subject to the Advanced Approaches Capital Rules [Regulation Q; Docket No.: R-1571] (RIN: 7100-AE 83) received December 15, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3507. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency’s final rule — Confidentiality Determinations for Hazardous Waste Export and Import Documents [EPA-HQ-OLEM-2016-0492; FRL-9971-49-OLEM] (RIN: 2050-AG90) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3508. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency’s final rule — Air Plan Approval; Rhode Island; Infrastructure Requirement for the 2010 Sulfur Dioxide and 2010 Nitrogen Dioxide

National Ambient Air Quality Standards [EPA-R01-OAR-2017-0151; FRL-9972-23-Region 1] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3509. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency’s final rule — Approval of Arizona Air Plan Revision; San Manuel, Arizona; Second 10-Year Sulfur Dioxide Maintenance Plan [EPA-R09-2017-0377; FRL-9972-03-Region 9] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3510. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency’s final rule — Approval of California Air Plan Revisions, Placer County and Ventura County Air Pollution Control Districts [EPA-R09-OAR-2017-0332; FRL-9971-76-Region 9] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3511. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency’s final rule — Arizona: Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revisions [EPA-R09-RCRA-2017-0523; FRL-9972-09-Region 9] received December 14,

2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3512. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Authorizing Permissive Use of the "Next Generation" Broadcast Television Standard [GN Docket No.: 16-142] received December 13, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3513. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 16-072, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3514. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 17-028, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3515. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's Semiannual Report to Congress, covering the six-month period ending September 30, 2017, pursuant to the Inspector General Act, as amended, Sec. 5(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3516. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's Semiannual Report to Congress, of the Inspector General, and the Management Response for the period April 1, 2017, to September 30, 2017, pursuant to Sec. 5 of Public Law 95-452, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3517. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a notification of an action on nomination and discontinuation of service in acting role, 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.

3518. A letter from the Executive Secretary, U.S. Agency for International Development, transmitting eleven (11) notifications of discontinuation of service in acting role, change in previously submitted reported information, and designation of acting officer, 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.

3519. A letter from the Acting Chair, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting the Inspector General's Semiannual Report to Congress and the Semiannual Management Report for the period ending September 30, 2017, pursuant to Sec. 5(b) of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3520. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Election Commission, transmitting twelve (12) legislative recommendations approved unanimously by the Commission on December 14, 2017, pursuant to 52 U.S.C. 30111(a)(9); Public Law 92-225, Sec. 311(a)(9) (as amended by Public Law 107-252, Sec. 801(b)); (116 Stat. 1726); to the Committee on House Administration.

3521. A letter from the Division Chief, Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation; Delay and Suspension of Certain Requirements [18X.LLW0310000.L13100000.PP0000] (RIN: 1004-AE54) received December 11, 2017, pursuant

to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3522. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), Department of the Army, Department of Defense, transmitting the 2017 biennial report on the status of the Missouri River Bank Stabilization and Navigation Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Project, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska, pursuant to Public Law 113-121, Sec. 4003(e); (128 Stat. 1313); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3523. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0773; Product Identifier 2017-NM-067-AD; Amendment 39-19101; AD 2017-23-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3524. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0249; Product Identifier 2016-NM-138-AD; Amendment 39-19092; AD 2017-22-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3525. A letter from the Regulations Officer, FHWA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform [Docket No.: FHWA-2017-0003; FHWA RIN: 2125-AF75; FTA RIN: 2132-AB33] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3526. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of the Petaluma Gap Viticultural Area and Modification of the North Coast Viticultural Area [Docket No.: TTB-2016-0009; T.D. TTB-149; Re: Notice No.: 163] (RIN 1513-AC34) received December 15, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3527. A letter from the Acting Chairman, Surface Transportation Board, transmitting the Board's final rule — Expediting Rate Cases [Docket No.: EP 733] received December 15, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3528. A letter from the Deputy General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Small Business Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Small Business Investment Companies — Administrative Fees (RIN: 3245-AG65) received December 11, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Small Business.

3529. A letter from the Impact Analyst, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Secretary (OOREG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Extra-Schedular Evaluations for Individual Disabilities (RIN: 2900-AP48) received December 13, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

3530. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Expansion of the Outer Coast Plain Viticultural Area [Docket No.: TTB-2016-0008; T.D. TTB-148; Re: Notice No.: 162] (RIN: 1513-AC32) received December 15, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3531. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's temporary rule — Implementation of Statutory Amendments Requiring the Modification of the Definition of Hard Cider; Delayed Compliance Date of the Hard Cider Tax Class Labeling Statement Requirement [Docket No.: TTB-2016-0016; T.D. TTB-147A; Re: T.D. TTB-145, T.D. TTB-146, T.D. TTB-147, Notice No.: 168, and Notice No.: 168A] (RIN: 1513-AC31) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3532. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Guidance Under Section 409A for Pre-2009 Section 457A Deferrals [Notice 2017-75] received December 13, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3533. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — 2017 Required Amendments List for Qualified Retirement Plans [Notice 2017-72] received December 13, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3534. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a legislative proposal to remedy non-substantive errors that appear throughout the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296) and other statutes that are organized under title 6 U.S.C.; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

3535. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting the November 2017 report to Congress entitled, "MOX Fuel Fabrication Facility Construction and Operations", pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 2566(a)(3); Public Law 107-314, Sec. 4306(a)(3); (116 Stat. 2747); jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Energy and Commerce.

3536. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's CY 2016 annual report on activities under the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative and the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998, pursuant to 7 U.S.C. 1738m(a); July 10, 1954, ch. 469, title VI, Sec. 614 (as added Public Law 101-624 Sec. 1512); (104 Stat. 3662) and 22 U.S.C. 2431k(a); Public Law 87-195, Sec. 813(a) (as added by Public Law 105-214, Sec. 1); (112 Stat. 893); jointly to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Agriculture.

3537. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting notification of the Secretary's determination that, by reason of the statutory debt limit, the Secretary will be unable to invest fully the Government Securities Investment Fund (G Fund) of the Federal Employees' Retirement System in interest-bearing securities of the United States, beginning on or after December 12, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 8438(h)(1); Public Law 99-335, Sec. 101(a) (as amended by Public Law 104-316, Sec. 103(i)); (110 Stat.

3829); jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Oversight and Government Reform.

3538. A letter from the Chairman, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, transmitting the Commission's report entitled "Physician Supervision Requirements in Critical Access Hospitals and Small Rural Hospitals", pursuant to Public Law 114-255, Sec. 16004(b); (130 Stat. 1327); 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. WOODALL: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 670. Resolution providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1370) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4667) making further supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, for disaster assistance for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and calendar year 2017 wildfires, and for other purposes; and providing for proceedings during the period from December 22, 2017, through January 7, 2018 (Rept. 115-477) Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. BRADY of Texas: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 3168. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide continued access to specialized Medicare Advantage plans for special needs individuals, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-478, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BRADY of Texas: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 3726. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to create alternative sanctions for technical noncompliance with the Stark rule under Medicare, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-479, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BRADY of Texas: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 3727. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to include additional telehealth services for purposes of MA organization bids, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-480, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BRADY of Texas: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 3729. A bill to amend titles XI and XVIII of the Social Security Act to facilitate provider and supplier cost reporting of ambulance services under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-481, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana: Committee on Ethics. In the Matter Regarding the Arrests of Members of the House During a Protest Outside the United States Capitol on December 6, 2017 (Rept. 115-482). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Energy and Commerce discharged from further consideration.

H.R. 3168 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Energy and Commerce discharged from further consideration. H.R. 3726 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Energy and Commerce discharged from further consideration. H.R. 3727 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Energy and Commerce discharged from further consideration. H.R. 3729 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia (for himself, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. COOPER, and Ms. BASS):

H.R. 4706. A bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to provide clarity and modernize the licensing system for musical works under section 115 and to ensure fairness in the establishment of certain rates and fees under sections 114 and 115 of such title, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. GRAVES of Georgia):

H.R. 4707. A bill to authorize a joint assessment of quantity of precision guided munitions for use by Israel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MCCAUL (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. KATKO, and Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana):

H.R. 4708. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security, 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. GRIFFITH:

H.R. 4709. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to amend the Federal medical assistance percentage for the District of Columbia for fiscal years after 2019, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BUCHSHON (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

H.R. 4710. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a moratorium on the registration of certain new 340B hospitals and associated sites, and for other

purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BARR (for himself, Mr. HIMES, and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 4711. A bill to create protections for depository institutions that provide financial services to industrial hemp legitimate businesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr.

ABRAHAM, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. BABIN, Mr. BACON, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. BOST, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. FLORES, Ms. FOXX, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. HUIZENGA, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. JONES, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. MULLIN, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. OLSON, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. STEWART, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. WALKER, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. YODER, Mr. MOOLENAAR, and Mr. EMMER):

H.R. 4712. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KINZINGER (for himself, Mr. COOPER, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. YOHO, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. PITTENGER, and Ms. SINEMA):

H.R. 4713. A bill to increase the long-term fiscal accountability of direct spending legislation; to the Committee on the Budget, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GOHMERT (for himself, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. BARTON, Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. BABIN, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. FLORES, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. MCCAUL, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. OLSON, Mr. HURD, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. CUELLAR, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. CULBERSON):

H.R. 4714. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Don and Deyon Stephens, Founders of Mercy Ships, in recognition of nearly 40 years of service as the leaders of a humanitarian relief organization that exemplifies the compassionate character of America; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. PETERS, Mr. TONKO, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York):

H.R. 4715. 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 Mr. COSTA (for himself, Mr. COOK, Mr. RUIZ, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska):
H.R. 4716. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to inter in national cemeteries individuals who supported the United States in Laos during the Vietnam War era, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CRAWFORD (for himself, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. WOMACK, and Mr. HILL):

H.R. 4717. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a program to recognize farms that have been in continuous operation for 100 years; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. DESANTIS (for himself, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. PITTINGER, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mrs. WALORSKI, Ms. MCSALLY, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. YOHIO, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. MESSER, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. FERGUSON, and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

H.R. 4718. A bill to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to transfer to Jerusalem the United States Embassy located in Tel Aviv; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee (for himself and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 4719. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to address delays in commercial driver's license skills testing and retesting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. EMMER (for himself, Mrs. HANDEL, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, and Mr. WALZ):

H.R. 4720. A bill to authorize the Office on Violence Against Women to improve the handling of crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by incorporating a trauma-informed approach into the initial response to and investigation of such crimes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Mr. VARGAS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 4721. A bill to enact into law a framework for deciding whether certain projectiles are "primarily intended for sporting purposes" for purposes of determining whether the projectiles are armor piercing ammunition; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. FASO (for himself and Ms. SLAUGHTER):

H.R. 4722. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 111 Market Street in Saugerties, New York, as the "Maurice D. Hinchey Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. GOSAR (for himself, Mr. BIGGS, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, and Mr. O'HALLERAN):

H.R. 4723. A bill to approve the settlement of water rights claims of the Hualapai Tribe and certain allottees in the State of Arizona, to authorize construction of a water project relating to those water rights claims, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. HOLDING (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. LANCE, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, and Mr. MEEHAN):

H.R. 4724. A bill to provide for a demonstration project to further examine the

benefits of providing coverage and payment for items and services necessary to administer intravenous immune globulin (IVIG) in the home, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HULTGREN (for himself and Mr. BARR):

H.R. 4725. A bill to amend the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to require short form call reports for certain depository institutions; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. LANGEVIN (for himself and Mr. CICILLINE):

H.R. 4726. A bill to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to add Rhode Island to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 4727. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to assign temporary disability ratings to certain veterans for purposes of compensation and health care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 4728. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the office of the Health Monitor of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. SUOZZI, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. DINGELL, and Mr. PALLONE):

H.R. 4729. A bill to require annual reporting by employers of the number of settlements with employees regarding claims of discrimination on the basis of sex, including verbal and physical sexual harassment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. MCSALLY (for herself, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. ISSA):

H.R. 4730. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act with respect to nonattainment plan provisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. PLASKETT:

H.R. 4731. A bill to extend the retained use estate for the Caneel Bay resort in St. John, United States Virgin Islands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. REICHERT (for himself and Mr. PASCRELL):

H.R. 4732. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint a coin in commemoration of the opening of the National Law Enforcement Museum in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. WELCH (for himself and Mr. MCKINLEY):

H.R. 4733. A bill to establish and fund an Opioids and STOP Pain Initiative to expand, intensify, and coordinate fundamental, translational, and clinical research of the National Institutes of Health with respect to opioid abuse, the understanding of pain, and the discovery and development of safer and more effective treatments and preventive interventions for pain; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to

the Committees on the Budget, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LAMBORN (for himself, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. ROKITA, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. PITTINGER, and Mr. MEADOWS):

H. Res. 671. A resolution expressing strong disapproval of the adoption of United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/ES-10/L.22, which rejects United States recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. JAYAPAL (for herself, Ms. BASS, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. EVANS, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HECK, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. KILMER, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. LEE, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MENG, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SOTO, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California):

H. Res. 672. A resolution honoring Edgar Martinez for excellence in his career as a professional baseball player and for his entrepreneurship, humanitarian work, and philanthropy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. HILL (for himself, Ms. ROSS-LEHTINEN, Mr. TROTT, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York):

H. Res. 673. A resolution expressing concern over attacks on Coptic Christians in Egypt; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

154. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Texas, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 41, urging the United States Congress to direct the Department of Defense to relocate the United States Africa Command to Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston; to the Committee on Armed Services.

155. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Texas, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 30, urging the United States Congress to direct the Bureau of Land Management to affirm the provisions of the Red River Boundary Compact and acknowledge that the vegetation line on the south bank of the Red River forms the boundary between Oklahoma and Texas; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

156. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Texas, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 105, encouraging Congress to pass legislation or adopt policies allowing Texas to manage the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery out to 200 nautical miles; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

157. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Wisconsin, relative to Assembly

Joint Resolution No. 21, requesting the Congress of the United States call a convention of the states to propose amendments to the Constitution of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

158. Also, a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Texas, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 52, urging the United States Congress to enact legislation to ensure that all veterans receive in a timely manner the level of medical care that they have earned and that they so richly deserve; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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. COLLINS of Georgia:

H.R. 4706.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution;

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 4707.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution under the General Welfare Clause.

By Mr. McCAUL:

H.R. 4708.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18. To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. GRIFFITH:

H.R. 4709.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BUCSHON:

H.R. 4710.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 4711.

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

(According to Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution: The Congress shall have power to enact this legislation to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.)

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

H.R. 4712.

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

Congress has authority to extend protection to born-alive abortion survivors under the Supreme Court's Commerce Clause precedents and under the Constitution's grants of powers to Congress under the Equal Protection, Due Process, and Enforcement Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.

By Mr. KINZINGER:

H.R. 4713.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (Legislative Vesting Clause): "The Congress shall have the Power—To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States . . ."

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (Necessary and Proper Clause): "The Congress shall have the Power—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or any Department or Officer thereof."

Article I, Section 9, Clause 7 (Appropriations Clause): "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time."

By Mr. GOHMERT:

H.R. 4714.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 5. To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 4715.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. COSTA:

H.R. 4716.

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

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution

By Mr. CRAWFORD:

H.R. 4717.

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

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the enumerated powers listed in Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. DESANTIS:

H.R. 4718.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;), and 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. DUNCAN of Tennessee:

H.R. 4719.

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

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. EMMER:

H.R. 4720.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses I & 18

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 4721.

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

Article I Section I of the Constitution

By Mr. FASO:

H.R. 4722.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 7: To establish post offices and post roads;

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By Mr. GOSAR:

H.R. 4723.

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

This legislation is constitutionally appropriate pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (the Commerce Clause) which grants Congress the power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among several states and with the Indian Tribes; Article II, Section 2, Clause 2 (the Treaty Clause) which gives the President the Power to make Treaties; Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (the Property Clause) which gives Congress the Power to make all Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States. The Supreme Court, in *Winters v. United States* (1901), reasoned that an Indian Tribe's water rights are established when the reservation is created, regardless of whether the Tribe actually uses the water on that reservation at that time. The Act settles water right claims of the Hualapai Tribe and is thus constitutionally permissible.

By Mr. HOLDING:

H.R. 4724.

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. HULTGREN:

H.R. 4725.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3: To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

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. LANGEVIN:

H.R. 4726.

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

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

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 4727.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 4728.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4729.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Ms. MCSALLY:

H.R. 4730.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United

States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Ms. PLASKETT:

H.R. 4731.

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

Under Article IV, Section 3, of the U.S. Constitution, Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States.

By Mr. REICHERT:

H.R. 4732.

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

"The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 1 (relating to providing for the general welfare of the United States) and clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress), and Article IV, section 3, clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States)."

By Mr. WELCH:

H.R. 4733.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have Power To . . . make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 15: Mr. GOMEZ.

H.R. 173: Mr. DIAZ-BALART and Mr. CROWLEY.

H.R. 299: Ms. TITUS, Mr. SHUSTER, and Mrs. HANDEL.

H.R. 488: Mr. FASO.

H.R. 545: Mr. SHUSTER.

H.R. 548: Mr. MARINO.

H.R. 620: Mr. RICE of South Carolina.

H.R. 632: Mr. COSTA and Mr. HOYER.

H.R. 719: Mr. BURGESS and Mr. STEWART.

H.R. 772: Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 807: Mr. MITCHELL.

H.R. 858: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.

H.R. 908: Mr. PAULSEN.

H.R. 909: Mr. BACON.

H.R. 930: Mr. GAETZ.

H.R. 1017: Mr. GARAMENDI.

H.R. 1155: Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 1205: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

H.R. 1276: Mr. O'HALLERAN.

H.R. 1403: Ms. MENG.

H.R. 1419: Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 1444: Mr. HUNTER and Mr. GRIFFITH.

H.R. 1456: Mr. GRIFFITH.

H.R. 1494: Mr. CURTIS and Mr. BACON.

H.R. 1563: Mr. MCKINLEY and Mr. NORCROSS.

H.R. 1569: Ms. CLARKE of New York.

H.R. 1606: Mr. LONG.

H.R. 1697: Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 1759: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.R. 1762: Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 1825: Mr. MESSER and Mr. OLSON.

H.R. 1828: Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.

H.R. 1847: Mr. BACON.

H.R. 1889: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 1954: Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MOORE, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 1972: Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. UPTON, Mr. FASO, Mr. MARINO, Ms. TENNEY, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KATKO, and Mr. MEEHAN.

H.R. 2077: Ms. STEFANIK.

H.R. 2151: Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. RUIZ, and Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 2234: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

H.R. 2308: Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 2340: Mr. MEEHAN.

H.R. 2341: Mr. WALBERG.

H.R. 2401: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

H.R. 2417: Mr. GOMEZ.

H.R. 2475: Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 2575: Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. ESHOO, and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 2591: Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.

H.R. 2652: Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H.R. 2687: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 2723: Mr. ARRINGTON and Mr. GRIFFITH.

H.R. 2832: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. MESSER, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. ARRINGTON, and Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H.R. 2885: Mr. DELANEY.

H.R. 2983: Mr. GROTHMAN.

H.R. 2996: Mr. KING of Iowa and Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota.

H.R. 3010: Mr. MCKINLEY.

H.R. 3144: Mr. LABRADOR.

H.R. 3197: Mr. PITTINGER.

H.R. 3209: Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 3263: Miss RICE of New York.

H.R. 3272: Mr. HECK, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. FASO, and Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 3273: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 3301: Mr. RASKIN.

H.R. 3304: Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 3324: Mr. FARENTHOLD.

H.R. 3473: Mr. RUIZ.

H.R. 3530: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 3541: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire and Ms. SPEIER.

H.R. 3635: Mrs. BLACKBURN.

H.R. 3641: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina and Mr. McCAUL.

H.R. 3683: Ms. MENG.

H.R. 3738: Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.

H.R. 3800: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 3837: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 3894: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 3976: Mr. GALLEGGO, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. STEWART, and Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 4007: Mr. ELLISON, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KIND, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. POCAN, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr.

SWALWELL of California, Mrs. TORRES, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. POLIS, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. SANCHEZ, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. PASCRELL, and Mr. VEASEY.

H.R. 4016: Mr. DEFazio.

H.R. 4060: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.

H.R. 4077: Mr. SCHRADER and Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 4081: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 4099: Mr. COOK and Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 4139: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 4142: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 4179: Mr. ESPAILLAT and Mrs. TORRES.

H.R. 4202: Mr. BACON and Mr. TED LIEU of California.

H.R. 4222: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 4229: Mr. CURTIS, Ms. CHENEY, Mr. THOMPSON of California, and Mr. RENACCI.

H.R. 4261: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska and Mr. RASKIN.

H.R. 4274: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. MESSER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. HOLDING.

H.R. 4293: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.

H.R. 4295: Mr. GOHMERT.

H.R. 4392: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. ROTHFUS, and Ms. SPEIER.

H.R. 4397: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H.R. 4444: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, and Mr. VARGAS.

H.R. 4489: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 4506: Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 4518: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. CLAY, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. CORREA, Ms. GABBARD, and Mr. WALZ.

H.R. 4541: Mr. CORREA and Mr. CONNOLLY.

H.R. 4591: Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.

H.R. 4598: Mr. SERRANO.

H.R. 4620: Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 4636: Ms. MENG.

H.R. 4647: Mr. COLE.

H.R. 4677: Mr. GROTHMAN.

H.R. 4682: Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. TROTT, and Mr. TAYLOR.

H.R. 4704: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 4705: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.J. Res. 33: Mr. BLUMENAUER and Ms. DELBENE.

H. Con. Res. 63: Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H. Res. 206: Mr. DELANEY.

H. Res. 220: Mr. CURTIS.

H. Res. 244: Ms. BORDALLO.

H. Res. 249: Mr. DELANEY.

H. Res. 257: Mr. DELANEY.

H. Res. 274: Mrs. BUSTOS.

H. Res. 443: Mr. DELANEY.

H. Res. 466: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas and Ms. LEE.

H. Res. 521: Mr. DELANEY.

H. Res. 570: Mr. MESSER.

H. Res. 610: Ms. MENG.



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No. 209

Senate

The Senate met at 10:01 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LUTHER STRANGE, a Senator from the State of Alabama.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Answer us, Eternal One, as we lift our hearts to You. Have mercy upon our lawmakers and hear their prayers. Remind them that You have set apart the godly for Yourself, surrounding them with the shield of Your favor. May they never forget that You alone can keep a nation safe.

Lord, lead them on the path that will bring them to abundant life, telling them what to do and showing them which way to turn. As Hanukkah ended last evening and Christmas approaches, may Your blessings and peace rest on our Nation and world.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 21, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LUTHER STRANGE, a

Senator from the State of Alabama, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. STRANGE thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, throughout this process of tax reform, Senate Republicans explained time and again that we are fighting for the middle class. Our opponents lobbed one attack after another, claiming we were selling hard-working families short. Of course, that is completely wrong. The tax bill we passed was written to help middle-class families from the very beginning. Our goal was to make their taxes lower, simpler, and fairer.

Under our legislation, the typical family of four making the median family income can expect nearly \$2,000 in tax relief next year. Just yesterday, we saw that tax reform has already inspired job creators to increase take-home pay for thousands of their employees. Yet not a single Democrat joined us to pass this tax relief for American families.

What is worse, just before we voted, Senate Democrats raised a point of order that proved who is really going after low-income families. When given the chance, Senate Democrats, led by the junior Senator from Vermont, raised a procedural challenge to strike out a provision that protects colleges that provide students with tuition-free education. Let me say it again. The junior Senator from Vermont raised a procedural challenge to strike out a provision that protects colleges that

provide students with tuition-free education. They chose to do it after the same provision had already passed the Senate before we went to conference. They didn't have to raise this challenge. It is not required. They chose to. In the process, they knowingly hurt schools that provide tuition-free education to students who can't otherwise afford to go to college.

Let me give you an example. Berea College, in my home State of Kentucky, is dedicated to educating students from the Appalachian region who have limited economic resources—in other words, poor kids from Appalachia. Their students' average household income is less than \$30,000 a year. These are kids from families making less than \$30,000 a year. They are from Appalachia, and their families don't have the means to pay for their education.

Here is what they do at Berea. Every single student receives a scholarship, which covers the cost of their tuition—every student. The students work at the school and in their communities to help cover additional living expenses beyond the costs of attending school. In fact, the vast majority of Berea students are able to graduate debt-free because of the model. For example, they have a great restaurant there. You go there and eat lunch. The kids are cooking, and they are serving. They are working their way through school. When they graduate, they don't have any debt.

Berea College, located in one of the most economically challenged areas of my State, offers a quality education to students with the greatest financial need, and it has done so since 1855—1855. It was founded by abolitionists.

In fact, as my friend in the Chair knows, I am originally from his State. Let me tell you about when I first heard of Berea College. My grandmother and my grandfather had an African-American family who helped them around the house, and they had

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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an adopted daughter. I was a little kid, and I remember them talking about her going to college.

I said: Where are you going?

She said: I am going to Berea.

I said: Where is that?

She said: It is up in Kentucky.

It was the closest college that would take African-American students at that time. Since they didn't have the means to pay for the tuition, it was a great opportunity to get a tuition-free education.

A few years ago, I called the president of Berea College and said: I would like to try to locate somebody.

He said: Well, the privacy rules are such that all I can do is to see if we can find them and see if they want to meet you.

I said: That is fair enough. This would be a person about a certain age, who would have originally been from Athens, AL. If you can identify this student, I would love to meet her.

He did. When she came to my office in the Capitol with her daughter, who lives in the area, I found out that she graduated from Berea and went on to be a nurse. She lived in the north most of her life and is now relocated in Athens, AL.

This is Berea College. This is the college these guys over here—every single one of them—voted to target by making their endowment subject to a tax that would otherwise only apply to the really big schools in the country—the Ivy League schools.

Every year, Berea uses the returns on its endowment solely for scholarships, and that sets it apart from nearly every other college and university in the Nation. I worked with the Finance Committee to include a provision to protect schools like Berea from taxes on endowments that apply to private schools who choose to sit on these large funds rather than using them aggressively to reduce the cost of attending school. But Senate Democrats identified this exemption as a bridge too far. Instead of allowing the provision to stand, thereby protecting these students at schools like Berea, they decided to pick partisan politics and attack the measure simply because they could. In the process, they assured that Berea would bear the brunt of their blatant political calculation.

Because Democrats stripped this part of the bill, Berea estimates it could pay a tax penalty of nearly \$1 million every year. Berea's president has already explained to us the effect of this tax: The school will be forced to offer fewer scholarships to kids.

The junior Senator from Vermont and his allies, which included every single Member of the Democratic conference, have chosen to make it harder for low-income students to earn a college degree. This is especially hypocritical coming from the man who claims to support free college for all. During the Presidential campaign last year, I remember he was promising free college to everyone. Apparently, that

is free college to everyone except at Berea College, where it is already free, thanks to generations of donors who built their endowment.

I am at a loss for words. I don't understand how they can claim to fight for students one moment and then make it harder for students to afford college the next. They chose to attack the tax bill by any means necessary, even though they knew the outcome and, in the process, launched a direct attack on the ability of schools like Berea to provide tuition-free education to needy students.

This action by Senate Democrats is deeply disappointing and will provide real and lasting harm. I hope my friends on the other side of the aisle realize the American people will see their partisan tactics for what they really are—an attack on low-income students who want to pursue opportunity and find success.

A number of my colleagues in Congress have said they are interested in fixing this problem, including my colleague from Kentucky, Congressman ANDY BARR. I am committed to working with him and other Members of Congress, and with schools like Berea, to help right this wrong. It is hard not to repeat. This amendment was offered by the man who wanted to provide every student in America with free college tuition but at the same time wanted to reduce the number of scholarships at a college where it is already free, actually, thanks to the generosity of decades of wealthy people who gave to their endowment, believing the mission of providing a college education for poor kids from Appalachia was a worthy goal. We are going to fix this problem. We are going to fix it as soon as we can.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, the Senate has important business to conclude this week. The American people are counting on Congress to reach a government funding agreement. If we were to fail to reach an agreement, we would be failing to ensure that our all-volunteer Armed Forces have all of the resources they need to protect our country in the face of myriad threats from all around the globe. We would be subjecting programs that American families rely on to draconian sequestration cuts that none of us want to take effect.

The Senate stands ready to take up an agreement as soon as one originates over in the House. We are ready to work together, across the aisle, to ensure there is no lapse in funding for critical services. Furthermore, my Republican colleagues in the Senate stand ready and eager to ensure full and long-term funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program. There are 9 million children who receive coverage through CHIP. They and their parents deserve to know that Congress is committed to them.

Republicans agree. We support a provision that would fund CHIP not just for a few weeks but for 5 years. Unfortunately, our Democratic colleagues are unwilling to make that commitment to American families. Thus far, they have opposed all of our efforts to include 5 years of CHIP funding in this week's agreement. Whatever partisan politics are leading my colleagues on the other side to this mystifying conclusion, it is time to put them aside and do right by our constituents. I hope we can all work together and give Americans the peace of mind they deserve, particularly going into the Christmas season.

TRIBUTE TO LUTHER STRANGE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on a completely different matter, I would like to say a few words in tribute to a fine colleague whose all-too-brief time in the Senate will soon draw to a close.

Senator LUTHER STRANGE of Alabama is the newest Member of this body, having been sworn in just this past February, but he did not waste any time in making an impact. In this historic year for the Senate, LUTHER quickly emerged as a strong voice on policy and an important vote on landmark legislation.

On a personal level, it didn't take anyone long to realize that this newcomer would rank among the most diligent, dedicated, and public-spirited Members of this institution. At first, we even wondered whether LUTHER might be a little too diligent.

Upon his arriving in Washington, the Senator dived into the task of meeting his colleagues with the friendly earnestness that is his calling card. The first time LUTHER passed Senator ROBERTS in a Capitol hallway, he stopped to introduce himself and share his excitement to be joining the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. There was nothing unusual there, but I have it on good authority that the very next day, when LUTHER found himself sharing an elevator with Senator ROBERTS, the junior Senator from Alabama introduced himself all over again. Not long after, a chance meeting on the train occasioned yet a third introduction. PAT ROBERTS had to put a stop to it.

"Yes, Luther," he broke in. "I think we've met before—and we're sure glad to have you here, too." We certainly were glad as well.

LUTHER came to the Senate with a national reputation for integrity and excellence in public service. That started young. The proud son of a Navy veteran turned college professor, this Birmingham paperboy made Eagle Scout at age 13—an accomplishment that still shows up on his lapel from time to time.

He received his bachelor's from Tulane, where—and I know this may come as a shock—the man the Senate historian has apparently verified as the tallest Senator in history played scholarship basketball.

After graduation, to save for law school, he spent a year on a boat that supplied oil rigs in the North Sea. He pitched in on everything—did whatever it took to help the team—and helped the crew navigate the ship through choppy waters.

These qualities will sound familiar to everyone who has worked with LUTHER since.

He built a sterling reputation as an up-and-coming lawyer in private practice. He then set it aside to serve the people of the State he loves as Alabama's attorney general.

In the fine Alabama tradition of public servants, like his friends and mentors Jeff Sessions and RICHARD SHELBY, he combined a steel spine with a servant's heart. Whenever the people of the State needed defending—their businesses, their religious liberties, their Second Amendment rights—their attorney general was there for them.

Then as now, he fought fiercely when times required it and his principles demanded it, but no matter how important the issue at hand, from the Supreme Court to the Senate floor, LUTHER never loses his good humor or his conviction that we serve in order to help our constituents, not to aggrandize ourselves.

LUTHER STRANGE reminds us that character counts. He reminds us that deeply held conservative values do not in any way stand opposed to collegiality and common decency. To the contrary, our values require these things.

He reminds us that the American people need not choose between leaders who share their principles and leaders who dignify public service. They should hold their elected officials to a high standard and demand that we do too.

If you cannot tell, LUTHER's colleagues look up to him in more ways than one. We are sorry to see him go.

In the farewell speech that Senator STRANGE delivered on this floor, he challenged his colleagues to revive greater comity in this body. He implored us not to give up on bipartisanship or on building friendships that run deeper than policy disagreements. He reminded us that the Senate's Marble Room, across the hallway from this Chamber, used to be a popular gathering place. Senators from both parties would relax and get to know one another above and beyond the specific disputes of the day. Today, LUTHER pointed out, this room often sits empty.

His advice is well taken, and I have an idea how we could begin to put it into practice. All of us on both sides of the aisle could try to approach our work with more of the optimism, can-do spirit, and reverence for this great institution that LUTHER STRANGE has brought to work every single day.

Of course, the Senate's loss will be a happy gain for LUTHER's beloved family.

Despite the fact that his bright idea for a first date with Melissa was a trip

to the Talladega Superspeedway to take in the Talladega 500, he convinced her to marry him anyway. Their loving partnership has now spanned 36 years and counting. They have raised two sons. I hear that Luke is just an inch shy of his dad's height and that Keehn is an inch taller. In recent years, LUTHER and Melissa have become the proud grandparents of two young boys.

I have it on good authority that a certain black Lab named Sophie might be the most excited of all the Stranges to welcome the Senator back home to Birmingham.

Wherever LUTHER's distinguished career takes him next, I know he is glad it will involve more time with the people he loves most.

He has served with distinction in the Senate during a year of historic achievements. On behalf of Alabamians, he has made vital contributions on the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Armed Services; Budget; and Energy and Natural Resources Committees. He has cast votes to help middle-class families and set America on a brighter trajectory for years to come.

We thank him and wish him every success in his future endeavors, and we salute him for the dedicated service he has rendered to his country and to the people of the great State of Alabama.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WORK OF THE REPUBLICAN-LED CONGRESS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, often here in Washington, it can be difficult to focus on what counts.

We live in an information environment which is increasingly atomized and persistently polarized. Almost all will inevitably focus on who is up and who is down in the endless cycle of partisan gamesmanship. News cycles come and news cycles go. Poll numbers jump, then fall, then jump again, and fall again, but nobody should forget that

what really matters around here, at the end of the day, is policy, and the first year of unified Republican government has delivered plenty of that.

In 2016, the American people faced a stark choice. The Republicans promised a new era of deregulation and limited government—a new policy approach that would entrust free markets and free citizens to drive us forward. The Democrats, on the other hand, renewed and restated their faith in the effectiveness of government, centered here in Washington, to direct and command the national welfare. The American people spoke loudly, and they spoke decisively. The Republicans were given the reins and were instructed to sort all of this out.

Nobody needs to remind me that elections are the beginning of the challenge, not the end. The Republicans may have prevailed in the campaign, but an election won is nothing more than an opportunity seized. It is nothing more than a charge to carry out the promises offered on the trail, and that is precisely what we are doing.

Here in the Senate, despite fits and starts, we are moving the ball forward. Notwithstanding often vicious treatment by the media and the constant obstruction of the Democrats here in Congress, we are getting work done. Promises made in 2016 have become promises kept in 2017. The American people were promised the removal of redtape and infuriating bureaucratic encumbrances on economic growth. As soon as we took office in early 2017, we moved to do just that.

We confirmed Neomi Rao as the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. Under her stewardship, the Executive has cut over a dozen old rules for every single new rule created. Regulation has been subjected to actual cost-savings analysis, and, likely, billions have been saved in the process.

Here in Congress we passed a dozen CRAs to cut down on costly and ineffective rules passed in the twilight hours of the Obama administration. The list of deregulatory items speaks for itself: restoration of free markets and free competition on internet, done; new environmental policy to unleash the potential of American energy production, done; reform of public lands designation and renewal of State and local control over western territories, done; Labor Department reform that restores bargaining power to employees and employers rather than unions and bureaucrats, done. On nearly every front, from education to justice issues and everything in between, there has been substantial progress.

Personnel are often the catalyst to policy, and we still have nominations in several agencies to come. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is in good hands with Mick Mulvaney and will eventually be handed off to a capable permanent Director. Federal Trade Commission nominations should be arriving shortly, and just recently the

Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously reported the next Director of the USPTO, Andrei Iancu. As a long-time champion of intellectual property rights, and head of the High-Tech Task Force, I encourage my colleagues to swiftly confirm him to this post.

Overall, this President has delivered on his nominations, and his nominees have delivered on his promises. While I am on the topic of nominations, I want to talk about the judiciary. Controversy seems to be swirling, due to a few recent—and I would say unfortunate—bumps in the road, but we must not miss the forest no matter how much the press would like to harken on a few of the trees. The accomplishments of this administration and Senate in addressing the judiciary have been historic.

Neil Gorsuch was a superb choice for the Supreme Court. At a critical juncture for our courts, he stands poised to seize the mantle left by Justice Antonin Scalia and carry the cause of originalism and textualism forward for a new generation, but Justice Gorsuch was only the beginning. From the circuit courts to the district courts, judicial nominations across the board have really been outstanding. We have confirmed more circuit court nominees this year than in any President's first year in American history.

We accomplished this despite Democrats using their time-tested obstruction tactics and even coming up with some new ones. They forced us to take 18 cloture votes on judicial nominees alone this year, compared to just one cloture vote during the first year of all previous Presidents combined. Nevertheless, we got the job done. The results will be felt for decades to come.

Whatever our differences on other issues, conservatives across the board heartily approve of the way this administration has handled judicial nominations.

I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Senate Judiciary Committee, as well as Leader MCCONNELL, to confirm these judges. As the rest of our agenda gains steam, judicial selection will remain the vanguard. There are more judges to come this new year, and we are going to keep on confirming them. Each and every week, a new trial or appellate court judge will add to the ranks of a rapidly improving judiciary.

Finally, on the legislative front, this administration and Republican Congress have just delivered the most consequential and far-reaching tax reform package in 30 years. When other administrations and other sessions of Congress couldn't get it done, we did. Individuals will see their tax rates drop. Businesses, from large corporations that employ thousands to small businesses paying passthrough rates, will enjoy new capital for investment, expansion, and more. In fact, seemingly to the dismay of our Democratic colleagues, businesses are already responding to the good news with announcements of bonuses and new ventures, and that is just the beginning.

On top of it all, the individual mandate has been repealed and ObamaCare is now firmly on its way out, thank goodness. Despite earlier difficulties, we are well on our way toward repeal. As we move toward 2018, we can look forward to additional policy success on everything from entitlements to infrastructure to immigration.

In conclusion, I don't want to hear anyone claim that this President and this Congress have not gotten things done. Promises were made and promises were kept. Only a year into things, we are making good on our pledge for historic change in Washington.

NOMINATION OF RYAN NELSON

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, on another matter, I would like to offer a few words of support for the nomination of Ryan Nelson to be the Solicitor for the Department of Interior.

Mr. Nelson has a distinguished legal background. He has worked in both the private and public sector, including in all three branches of the Federal Government. Most importantly, he is respected by those members of the Idaho State Bar who know him best.

He has been endorsed by numerous colleagues representing a broad spectrum of political views. Mr. Nelson's exemplary legal background makes him ideally suited to serve as the Department of Interior's Solicitor, and we owe the people of Utah and the West the opportunity to confirm him at once.

Once confirmed, I am very eager to work with Mr. Nelson and Secretary Ryan Zinke to continue a shared mission of restoring trust between the Federal Government and the people of the West.

There have been some marvelous changes this year, and there will be even more if we could just work together and quit all the bumbling around here as though we hate each other. I am grateful for my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I believe we have made important strides this year, and I think we can make even more. I am grateful for what we have been able to get done this year.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Thank you, Mr. President.

I ask to speak in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this morning to outline some ideas about our national security as we approach the end of the year.

Many Americans are heading into the holiday season with some very reasonable fears about the threats facing our Nation. In 2017, we saw an emboldened North Korean regime testing missiles and nuclear weapons. Terrorist groups

continue to execute attacks across the globe. Violent state and nonstate actors continue to destabilize Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Yemen, Nigeria, and others. We saw Russia continue meddling in elections, just as they did in ours last year.

This is a year of great volatility and uncertainty. However, we also saw the U.S. military leading an international coalition that is loosening the stranglehold ISIS had on parts of Iraq and Syria. We saw the recovery of American hostages, including constituents of mine, held captive for years by terrorists. In Europe, U.S. and NATO forces partnered to counter Russian aggression and dispel propaganda. U.S. development assistance projects helped hundreds of millions of people across the world, including 11 million farmers and 27½ million children under the Feed the Future Program.

Even when it seemed like there were many reasons to be afraid, the U.S. military, diplomats, and development professionals were responsible for a lot of good progress this year.

On Monday of this week, President Trump laid out his administration's national security strategy. I commend the work of the national security professionals who crafted the document which warrants a thorough review. It is a substantial body of work, but it paints a very dark picture of the world and our role in it.

A little more than 2 years ago, I stood on this floor and invoked the words of Senator Vandenberg—the Senator from Michigan back in the World War II era—for “maximum united effort” and Senator Vandenberg's admonition that politics should stop at the water's edge. When I spoke these words, this was at a time when it seemed the only response my Republican colleagues had to the Obama administration's foreign policy moves was categorical condemnation.

I will not categorically condemn the administration's new strategy, but I will pose a challenge to reject the false choice between investing at home and engaging abroad; utilize our diplomatic and development toolkit as much, if not more, than we exercise our defense capabilities; lead by example. The world will indeed become a dark place if we hide America's light under a bushel basket, to use words from Scripture.

In the face of our adversaries' aggression, we can choose between competition and cooperation. The new strategy outlined by the administration references competition nearly three times more than cooperation. I suggest to the administration the words of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who said: “Competition has been shown to be useful up to a certain point and no further, but cooperation, which is a thing we must strive for today, begins where competition leaves off.”

Mr. President, I yield to the distinguished Democratic leader.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

THANKING THE SENATOR FROM PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I very much thank my friend from Pennsylvania. As always, he is a gentleman as well as a great legislator and great leader. I meant those words very sincerely, unrelated to his yielding to me.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on year-end issues, we are staring down a litany of unresolved issues, and we are quickly running out of time to solve them. Not only do we need to pass an extension of government funding, but as I have said many times, we need to deal with budget caps, CHIP, community health centers, 702 FISA, a disaster supplemental, and of course the Dreamers.

I believe we could have resolved all of these issues had my Republican colleagues, especially in the House, not put them on the back burner while jamming through their tax bill. It is unclear still what the House is going to send us to keep the government open and whether it will be acceptable to the Senate.

At the same time, the House may move forward on an unacceptable disaster supplemental which still does not treat fairly California, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. It doesn't include, as best we know—they are still working on it—cost sharing for Puerto Rico and additional funding for Medicaid, mitigation resiliency, and drinking water infrastructure. While House Republicans included some tax provisions in the disaster supplemental, they failed to extend the ITC for Puerto Rico, extend the childcare tax credit consistent with other States, and the tax bill also includes a devastating new business tax that treats Puerto Rico as if it is a foreign country, which could encourage manufacturers to leave the island. This tax could cost thousands of jobs and decimate Puerto Rico's economy at exactly the time when Puerto Rico is hurting from the hurricanes and needs all the help it can get. Those issues must be fixed before a disaster supplemental can move forward. Because of these inadequacies, the disaster supplemental may have to slip to next year. I think we can work it out in a bipartisan way—I certainly do—but just jamming it through without consulting us and not being fair to so many other parts of the country doesn't make sense.

Unfortunately, we still have not reached a deal yet on the Dreamers, who are very important not only to my caucus, not only to some on the Republican side but to the American people.

They have overwhelming support. These kids were brought here very young, through no fault of their own. They learn in our schools, work at our companies, serve in our military, and pledge allegiance to our flag. They are Americans in every single important way but one—their paperwork. This is an issue we have a moral imperative to solve here in Congress.

Democrats want to make sure that we have equal bargaining, and we are not going to allow things like disaster relief go forward without discussing some of the other issues we care about that I have mentioned. We have to solve these issues together, even if that means passing a clean, short-term CR extension of government funding with some anomalies—we always understand there always have to be some anomalies but not those that change the structure—and continuing the negotiations into January.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, on tax. Earlier this week, the Senate passed one of the worst pieces of legislation in at least a decade, maybe longer. The Republican tax bill will go down in history as a rushed, sloppy, partisan rewrite of the Tax Code that benefited those who already have so much while doing little or hurting those who have too little. It will be remembered as throwing the extraordinary income inequality we see today into overdrive and fulfilling very few of the ambitious Republican promises about growth, job creation, and deficit reduction. But perhaps most of all, the Republican tax bill will define the Republican Party as the party of the rich and powerful, the party against the middle class, and that will be a rubric we will hear from now until next November and even further on.

Yesterday in the Oval Office, President Trump admitted that cutting the corporate tax rate was “probably the biggest factor in our plan.” Despite all his rhetoric about this being a middle-class tax bill, as soon as it passes, he admits that lowering the corporate rate was the Republicans' primary goal.

As corporations get a massive, permanent tax break, individuals will get small and temporary ones. By 2027, 145 million American families making under \$200,000—83 percent of the middle class—will be either paying more in taxes or get a cut of less than \$100. That is according to the Joint Committee on Taxation—no partisan affiliation. Meanwhile, the top 1 percent of income earners in our country will reap 83 percent of the benefits from this tax plan. Those facts are what make this bill so dramatically unpopular with the American people by a 2-to-1 margin in some polls, and next year the American people will have the opportunity to reject this bill and move our country in a different direction.

SPECIAL COUNSEL MUELLER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on Special Prosecutor Mueller, I want to take a moment to praise my friend from Virginia, Senator MARK WARNER, vice chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, for his speech yesterday about Special Counsel Mueller. It was an eloquent speech. I would like to associate myself with the substance of his fine remarks. If the President were to fire Special Counsel Mueller, our country would face a constitutional crisis. As my colleague from Virginia said, it would cross a redline. Additionally, there are steps below that brash and brazen act that would also cross redlines here in Congress, as Senator WARNER noted, including the use of the Presidential pardon on members of the Trump campaign who have been convicted, whether those pardons are intended to subvert the investigation or prevent testimony and further cooperation.

So I say to my colleagues, just as firing Special Prosecutor Mueller would cross a redline, so would pardoning people like Manafort and Flynn. The bottom line is this: President Trump must allow this investigation to proceed without a scintilla of interference. He would be wise to listen to Senator WARNER's speech yesterday and act accordingly.

THE REPUBLICAN-LED SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, Mr. President, since this is the last time I might be able to address this Chamber before the end of the year—let's hope so—I would like to look back at what the Senate has accomplished this year. The long and short of it, though, is that the Senate has not accomplished much to be proud of.

Despite winning only a slim majority in the last election—a condition that made this year ripe for cooperation between the parties—the Republicans used their power not to seek consensus or bipartisanship but, rather, to try to jam through a partisan agenda.

My friend the majority leader once promised that if he were ever given the majority, he would return the body to regular order. He cautioned against the Senate becoming an “assembly line for one party's partisan legislative agenda.” That is what MITCH MCCONNELL said a few years ago. Sadly, that is exactly what the Senate has become under his leadership this year. For a man who professed to love the Senate and relish bipartisanship, this is probably the most partisan Senate that I have served in in all the years I have been here, and we have departed from regular order and the customs of the Senate in ways never seen before. For what end? Well, this Chamber, under Republican leadership, has devoted itself to furthering the interests of the wealthy and powerful, while ignoring or harming the interests of the middle class and working America.

Republicans will argue that they had a great year, pointing to three things—Judge Gorsuch, the use of the Congressional Review Act to roll back regulations, and their tax bill. All three of those things help the rich and they will help corporations, but they won't help the middle class.

Senate Republicans engaged in historic obstruction to keep a Supreme Court seat open so the Heritage Foundation and Federalist Society could pick a Justice who would rule on the side of corporations instead of people.

Senate Republicans jammed through Congressional Review Act bills that rolled back protections for women, students, and workers, while lifting requirements placed on bad actors in the big oil, gas, mining, and gun industries.

They capped the year by passing a tax bill that provides huge tax breaks for the rich and biggest corporations, while providing crumbs and even tax hikes for the middle class.

They tried for months to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which would send costs soaring for millions of Americans and cause millions more to lose coverage.

They failed to fully authorize CHIP, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and failed to rebuild our infrastructure, despite the President's promises.

The stock market is up, but wages are flat or nearly flat. The President and Republicans promised that they would stop outsourcing, and that hasn't happened. Even companies the President said he would personally save have sent jobs to Mexico, leaving families in the Midwest and across the country without the income they need this holiday season.

Time and time again, the middle class was an afterthought or simply forgotten by Senate Republicans and President Trump. That has been the story of the year. Republicans haven't accomplished much, but what they have accomplished has only benefited the wealthy and well connected.

The Senate's record this year has exposed the faux populism at the center of President Trump's political identity. Although he rode into office promising to help the forgotten man and woman, those are exactly the people he has forgotten, abandoning them in favor of wealthy special interests. Populism, unfortunately, under President Trump, has been traded for plutocracy.

The millions of Americans in 2016 who were frustrated at a Washington that didn't work for them feel more frustrated today, and the millions of working men and women who voted for President Trump—many of them are already feeling betrayed.

We hope that the future will be different and that our Republican friends realize that their legislative and political goals are better served by bipartisanship and compromise rather than gridlock and strife. If they do, we are willing and ready to work with them, but if they don't, voters will have a

chance to move our country in a dramatically different direction in 2018. We are already seeing a yearning for that new direction in elections in Virginia, New Jersey, Tennessee, and even in deep red Alabama. If the Republicans continue to hurt the middle class and give handouts to big corporations and the wealthy, they are in for a reckoning next November.

I yield the floor, and I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania for his courtesy.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I want to thank the Democratic leader for his remarks.

When I was speaking a few moments ago about national security, I had made a suggestion to the administration that there is a national security strategy that has been outlined and that the administration reject the false choice between investing at home and engaging abroad and make sure that they utilize our diplomatic and development toolkits as much as if not more than they exercise our defense capabilities.

We have major challenges, and that is why I think it is important to outline this morning some of those challenges and some of our responses as we head into the new year.

Just for discussion purposes, I wanted to paint the picture of a nation that—it doesn't describe one nation, but I think we can imagine a country that fits this description or at least a number of countries that might. Imagine a sovereign state, a member of the United Nations, a nation whose leaders are singularly focused on staying in power and who will do anything to remain in power, including undermining their colleagues and erstwhile friends. In this country I am describing, those who speak truth to power are dismissed, ridiculed, or, at worst, treated as criminals. This particular country or profile of a country looks inward, putting its domestic troubles first as its reputation in the world declines. Out of fear of its near-peer competitors, the country retreats from diplomatic engagement and doubles down on military capabilities. Does this sound familiar? It might to some. It may describe a number of countries in whole or in part.

Of course, there are a number of countries that fit this description. Certainly, the dictatorial regimes that rule North Korea, Syria, and Iran prioritize self-preservation over the welfare of their citizens. In Russia and China, journalists and opposition leaders are regularly silenced, jailed, or worse.

Here in the United States, we are going through an especially turbulent chapter in the American story. As we celebrate the holidays, we might be dreading the inevitable political de-

bates with family members or friends whose views differ from ours. However, in that fictitious, oppressive country that I described earlier, you can't have these debates, or you can try, but you won't last too long because the authorities will come knocking.

That is what is great about our country. The United States is the land of the free and the home of the brave, and I am reminded of that every time I meet with servicemembers and veterans who are willing to put their lives on the line every day to defend our inalienable rights to criticize and to disagree with our leaders.

So what about this new strategy that the administration just outlined this week? This new strategy states, in pertinent part, that "America possesses unmatched political, economic, military, and technological advantages." That is what the strategy says, and that is certainly true. But I think we should add a few other advantages, even attributes, that are part of the American story, part of the American advantage.

Certainly, our history of generosity sets us apart from the world, a tradition of pluralism as well, the freedom to debate and dissent without fear, the respect for the rule of law, and finally a culture of innovation unmatched anywhere in the world. As I have said before, Americans don't wait for the future; we invent the future.

Through the execution of its strategy, the administration has an opportunity to invent the future of our Nation, as well as its role in the world—a future where the American economy is firing on all cylinders, where investments here at home lift up everyone, where our researchers and manufacturers lead the world in the production of cutting-edge technologies.

For the last 11 months, this administration has sent the world mixed signals about what "America first" really means, from pulling out of the Paris climate agreement, to threatening to walk away from NATO, to hollowing out the State Department. I believe the strategy implementation presents an opportunity to reverse that course. We cannot turn away from the world and try to go it alone. We should ask our allies, certainly, to pull their weight and pay their fair share. Whether it is NATO or the counter-ISIS coalition, the United States can always press our partners to do more, but not by threatening that we will abandon these alliances or by creating any uncertainty about these alliances. Simply put, we need partners to tackle some of the greatest threats facing our Nation and the world.

Let's go through a couple of them.

North Korea is first on the list. The North Korean regime is unpredictable and armed with nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and the means to deliver them. Just across the demilitarized zone are tens of thousands of U.S. forces and our South Korean allies. Just across the water are more

U.S. military personnel and our Japanese allies. This regime is a significant threat—the North Korean regime. It is a threat exacerbated by reckless ridicule, bombastic statements, and ill-considered tweets. One miscalculation can be disastrous. The administration should accelerate serious, sober diplomacy in lockstep with our allies. For the New Year, let's agree to a new rule for all of us—both branches of government: Leave the tweets for domestic policy only. Sound foreign policy and security policy cannot be done in 280 characters.

Congress has offered the administration powerful leverage in this circumstance in the form of several pieces of legislation. First, the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act passed this summer, and the Banking Restrictions Involving North Korea Act is pending before the Senate now. I support these tough, bipartisan sanctions measures because I believe turning the economic screws, coupled with genuine diplomacy, can yield results. In the New Year, I urge the President to tone down the rhetoric and to empower the Secretary of State and our senior diplomats to find a diplomatic path toward a stable North Korea that doesn't threaten the United States or our allies.

How about terrorist groups around the world? Over the last 16 years, the U.S. military, the intelligence community, and our homeland security professionals have worked hand in hand to meet the rise of terrorist groups head on. We owe the men and women in uniform a debt of gratitude for tirelessly leading the coalition fight that has rolled back ISIS's territorial gains. Implementing the administration's new strategy and its call to fight terrorism at its source is not just about the military fight. The United States should also lead the international community in addressing the underlying issues that drive terrorist recruitment and help to rebuild communities newly liberated from terrorist control.

Think about this. More than 65 million people around the world are displaced from their homes right now. There is no purely military solution for this refugee crisis. A successful counterterrorism strategy requires us to work with our partners for information sharing and for contributions of development assistance.

Another trouble spot in the world is Syria. In Syria, the connection between instability, displacement, and terrorism is clear. This conflict has been raging for nearly 7 years. In the absence of U.S. engagement on a political solution to this crisis, regional powers—namely, Russia, Iran, and Turkey—have run the table, to the benefit of the murderous Assad regime and at the expense of the Syrian people. The United States has abdicated its leadership role and ceded control of the outcome to nations with interests often in direct conflict with our own.

Recently, we learned that the administration will endorse a political tran-

sition plan that leaves Bashar al-Assad in power for at least another 4 years. This is unacceptable and dangerous. Assad is responsible for terrible war crimes that led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Syrians and the displacement of millions more. The strategy outlined by the administration says: "We will seek a settlement to the Syrian civil war that sets the conditions for refugees to return home and rebuild their lives and safety."

I agree with that goal. Most people would agree with that goal, but the administration has missed the bigger picture. We need a strategy that pushes back on Russian and Iranian influence in Syria and addresses the underlying grievances that led to the conflict in the first place.

Let me move to Iran. The Iranian regime remains a powerful force for instability in the Middle East, especially through its support of terrorist proxies and militias. We know that the Iranians want to maintain control of territory linking Tehran with Beirut. So they will continue to act against U.S. interests in Iraq and Syria. Here, again, Congress has offered powerful tools to the administration in the form of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.

The nuclear deal with Iran is giving us an unprecedented visibility on the Iranian nuclear program, but the multilateral diplomatic channels built alongside that agreement have atrophied under this administration. Every time the President threatens to walk away from the Iran nuclear deal, he sends a clear signal to our allies and adversaries alike: U.S. commitments are written in disappearing ink.

If the administration wants to get tough on Iran's nonnuclear bad behavior, there are concrete steps to take today:

No. 1, work with our allies to step up maritime interdictions of any illicit weapons traffic to or from Iran.

No. 2, push the Europeans to do more to combat the financial networks that enrich the Iranian terrorist proxy, Hezbollah. My bipartisan Stop Terrorist Operational Resources and Money Act, or the so-called STORM Act, which is bipartisan, could help with that.

No. 3, begin diplomatic conversations with our allies about a multilateral strategy to curtail the Iranian ballistic missile program.

All of these efforts take cooperation with our allies, which the President makes harder every time he calls into question the future of the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Finally, as to Russia and China, the new strategy by this administration repeatedly describes Russia and China as our competitors. Let me be clear. These countries are not our friends. They actively work against U.S. interests. They are threatened by American military dominance and economic power, and both are trying to game the system to undermine our advantages.

China systemically, perniciously games the international trade system to its advantage. I firmly believe American workers and industry can outinnovate and outproduce any others in the world when the playing field is level. Driven by similar motives, Russia has meddled in elections across the Western world, trying to undermine confidence in one of our most fundamental institutions of democracy. Again, there are concrete steps the administration can take to counter these threats from both China and Russia: No. 1, shore up our electoral systems and help others do the same; No. 2, counter propaganda; No. 3, fight corruption; and No. 4, get serious about holding trade cheaters like China accountable.

Through engagement and cooperation, we can lead the rest of the world away from the Cold War-era clash of major powers that Russia and China want to create.

In conclusion, if this outline of some of the threats and challenges posed seems like a tremendous challenge—a great challenge for our Nation—it is because it always has been so. It has always been a challenge.

President Truman once said:

America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination and on unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.

When faced with a challenge, whether it is Pennsylvanians or Americans, we don't shrink inward. We step up. Our adversaries want us to be divided and dispirited. These adversaries underestimate the courage, the imagination, and the determination of the American people.

President Trump might see it differently, but as we close out 2017, I see a world that needs American leadership more than ever. To paraphrase President Kennedy, we should seek not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war but a genuine peace that makes life on Earth worth living. The American people are ready to rise to that challenge. I hope the administration is too.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The majority whip.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would like to speak briefly today about the year we have had here in Washington, DC.

At times along the way, it wasn't easy. There were more than one or two bumps in the road, and there were times when we got discouraged because we weren't able to accomplish everything we wanted to accomplish on the part of the American people. But looking back, I am proud of what we were able to get done.

The first thing is to notice the speed with which President Trump was able to nominate and we were able to confirm Federal judges. Everyone remembers last January when President

Trump nominated Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court. This was an excellent choice. He is an experienced Federal judge and accomplished scholar who understands the proper role of a judge under our Constitution.

I think the weather and my sinuses are not cooperating here at this moment.

I will be back later.

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. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

VETERANS HEALTHCARE

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I am glad to join my colleague Senator TESTER from Montana on the floor for a discussion of our Veterans' Affairs, our accomplishments over the last 3 years and our challenges for the future.

I want to start out my part of the conversation by saying this. Three years ago, the Veterans' Administration was making big headlines. Those headlines were that they weren't working well, our veterans were waiting too long for care, there were failures in our system throughout, and people were looking for an alternative to the VA system because it was in such a quagmire. Thanks to the work of our committee, which the Presiding Officer today is one of those members, we set out to fix a lot of the problems. No. 1 was the hospital in Denver, which is 40 percent finished. It was 3 years behind, and we closed in. That hospital is open today and operating because the Veterans' Affairs Committee of the Senate buckled its shoes, got to work, got the VA fixed, and got the hospital finished.

The most challenging thing we faced were long wait times for appointments for our veterans and veterans' services for healthcare. It was longer than 30 days just for a routine appointment, sometimes being as long as 6 months to wait, and sometimes they were dying before they got called up from the waiting list, which happened in the Arizona case in Phoenix.

We had some tragic stories that came through. Our committee came together and said: We are going to fix this. We are going to put our shoulders to the grindstone, we are going to work out hard, and we are going to make it happen. Like always, fixing anything requires one element, and that is hard work.

This Committee has worked hard—Democrats and Republicans alike. They have been willing to get the new Secretary, Secretary Shulkin, confirmed. To all of his aides—Tom Bowman, who has been a great aide to our committee for a long time, and now is a direct aide to the Secretary. The committee has asked: What is it we need to do to get it fixed?

We started out this year with 11 bills introduced for the Veterans' Administration improvements in terms of healthcare. Ten of those eleven have passed. There is one left. We are going to have a perfect 11-for-11 year, if we get the votes before the end of this year, we get the CARE bill passed for our veterans, but even if that doesn't make it, we have dealt with long waiting lines for determination of benefits for the VA. Those long waiting lines are beginning to dissipate.

We don't have hospitals being shut down because they can't be finished. We have CBOCs being opened because they are being finished. We don't have near as many cases of horror stories in a VA health facility because the facilities are being run better.

Do we have problems? Sure, we have problems. Anytime you have the second largest agency of the Federal Government—which the VA health system is—you are going to have problems, but we are meeting them head-on. We are not running away from them. We have a Secretary who is really willing to work to make it happen.

I cannot say enough about Secretary Shulkin. He has been fantastic. He has been a great worker. He has given President Trump the message, in terms of what our veterans need, the challenge that we need from the White House to join us, and the White House has substantially done so, to help make a lot of improvements.

Working with our ranking member, we decided we would do a number of things: We would end the long wait times for determination of disability, and we have done that. That is in process. We wanted to see to it that the modern access to healthcare was available to all of our veterans, one way or another. We wanted to make sure we came up with creative ideas by using telemedicine and other techniques to deliver healthcare to our veterans.

Most importantly, we knew the Choice Act we passed 3 years ago, led by Senator MCCAIN—who is in our prayers and thoughts every day. I might add from the floor of the Senate today, we wish him the very best if he is listening. Senator MCCAIN went to work and came up with the first aspect of Choice, which passed 3 years ago. I was on the conference committee. We had this crazy idea that we were going to let veterans choose where they want to go for their healthcare. We set up the system to do that. The system worked pretty well in some cases. Senator TESTER will say in rural America it didn't work all that well, in some cases, but it was a good effort of ours to take the private sector in America and make it a force multiplier for the healthcare services delivered to our veterans and expand the access of healthcare to our vets.

Well, now we have before the Senate what we call the Care Act. It is the finishing touches of what was originally in the Choice Act. We are taking the things we learned and repealing what

was wrong. We are taking things we learned are right, and we are enhancing them. I hope every Member of the Senate who can hear my voice today will join me sometime in the next few weeks ahead to finish the job and pass the Care Act. Our committee passed it out 14 to 1, with Democrats and Republicans alike, shoulder to shoulder, voting for it. It is the right thing to do for our vets. We are hopefully going to do the same thing on the floor.

The Care Act does a lot of amazing things, but it takes what we have learned in 3 years and applies it to the real world for our veterans. It says a veteran has a choice for his healthcare, public or private, VA or private sector. The veteran and his or her doctor may determine where they want to go. The physician providing the services who is outside the system will cooperate with the VA, so we have good medical records for that veteran, and they will work together to choose doctors who have the quality, the reputation, and the ability to deliver the service, whether they are in the VA or outside the VA.

The veteran comes first in Veterans Choice. In the Caring for Our Veterans Act, the veteran comes first, not Members of the Senate, not employees of the VA. The veteran comes first, which is what we need to do.

I hope everyone will join Senator TESTER and me in seeing to it, when we get this to the floor—and we are trying every day—that they join us in helping pass the Care Act.

One last thing I want to mention about the Care Act is it also contains the funding necessary to complete the year for the Veterans' Administration in terms of health services. More importantly, it consolidates the stovepipes of funding in the VA so we no longer have this Mickey Mouse game, which we have all experienced for the last 5 or 6 years, where the VA is always running out of money.

The Congress has never cut off the VA. When we had the biggest shutdown 5 or 6 years ago—or potential shutdown for the government that we had, we passed bills that exempted the VA to demonstrate long and hard that we would never leave our veterans in need of healthcare coverage waiting because we couldn't act in the Congress, and that would happen today if that was threatening us.

I want to underline, this is not a matter of anybody threatening anybody. This is a matter of finishing the job for our veterans and seeing to it that the Veterans' Administration has the resources necessary to deliver the services to our veterans.

For those who can hear this plea—and it is a plea—understand I am coming before us today to say three things: One is thank you. Thank you to every Member of the Senate who voted with us to get us where we are today. We have passed 10 of the 11 bills we brought in this year for veterans' healthcare services. Thank you very much.

I say to Senator TESTER, as the ranking member, thank you for your co-operation. We have worked together to find a solution to every impasse we confronted throughout the year.

To the Senator from Alaska, who is presiding today and is a member of the committee, thank you for what you did for those veterans in need in our States that have limited access to healthcare, like Alaska. We need to make sure the Alaskan veteran has the same access and the same benefits they signed up for as one does in Georgia or in any other State.

Senator TESTER from Montana has worked so hard to see to it that rural America has the same type of access. There may not be as many doctors, there may not be as many VA facilities, but we can design a system that gives them the very best access and the very best care for that region where they choose to live.

That is our challenge. Our challenge in the VA is not to say: Well, you should have lived somewhere else. Our challenge is to say we should have concentrated more in the VA to see to it that where you live is the right place to be in terms of veterans' services, and we are going to do that.

Lastly, I thank Secretary Shulkin. He was approved 100 to nothing by the Senate. I believe I am right that he is the only Cabinet member who was confirmed by the Senate 100 to nothing. As everybody knows from watching us the last 8 or 9 months, we haven't agreed on much of anything. We haven't had any unanimous consent votes on hardly anything. We did with David Shulkin, and he has delivered, in response to that 100-to-nothing vote, time and time again, working for our veterans, helping to direct problems, helping to work with us together.

I look forward to next year, as we bring a close to the Care Act and pass it, moving forward with those new things we need to pay attention to.

I look forward to working with Senator TESTER from Montana and the members of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party in our committee.

Remember, we are veterans first. We are Americans first. God bless our veterans. May God bless the United States of America.

I yield to Senator TESTER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I thank Senator ISAKSON for his words. I thank the Presiding Officer, who is currently sitting in the chair, for his work on the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

I want to talk a little bit about Chairman ISAKSON before I talk about the Care Act. Over the last year, I have been able to work with a great man from Georgia who has done great work. When we started out, we talked about doing stuff we could agree upon and set the stuff we disagree upon apart, and it has ended up where we have agreed on a lot of stuff, and we have been able to get a lot of stuff done.

I would just say, in a body that is full of impasse over this last year, Chairman ISAKSON has been a great guy to work with because the fact is, we have set aside the political labels, and we have worked for our veterans in that committee. It is not only JOHNNY and myself, but members on both sides of the aisle in that committee have worked very well together and communicated so very well to make sure we could take care of the needs of our veterans across this country, whether it was in rural America or whether it was in urban America, but our work is not done.

The Care Act Chairman ISAKSON talked about is a very important piece of legislation. It is a bipartisan compromise. It is a bill we all negotiated on, so not everybody got everything. There are always things in it that you wish would be better, regardless of where you are in the spectrum, but this program does a lot of good things for our veterans.

It, first of all, will eliminate the Veterans First Program and replace it with one that is much easier for veterans to navigate in a system that puts in place where the veterans can seek care. It puts that system in the hands of a veteran and their doctor.

This is a bill that passed out of committee 14 to 1, and it has 26 veterans service organizations, representing millions of veterans who have endorsed this bill. It is a good bill.

I wish the Veterans' Administration, which we worked so closely with on this bill, would come out and forcefully endorse it. I think that would help a lot.

What it does is it establishes a Veterans Community Care Program. It merges seven VA community care programs into one program, with one set of rules for both providers and the veterans. It puts the decision of where to seek care in the hands of the veteran and their doctor. No more one-size-fits-all eligibility.

If a local VA doesn't have the equipment for a certain test and there is not another VA locally that can provide that test, the vet can go to the community doc. If the roads to another VA facility are closed for snow, veterans could go to their local doctor rather than waiting for the roads to clear, which is a big issue in rural America.

If a nearer VA clinic has a type of doc a vet needs to see, but there is a community doc closer and the vet has a bad back, that vet can see that doc in that community, as an example. It offers convenient, walk-in care so vets can get care closer to home for minor illnesses.

Third-party administrators—also known as government contractors—will have a smaller role at the local level, and the local VA will have the flexibility of when to use them for scheduling so what makes more sense for the local VA will not be decided by bureaucrats in Washington.

The second thing it does is it improves accountability and trans-

parency of VA's spending. It requires the VA to give Congress more notice when funding levels of programs that impact veterans are running low. It forces the VA to put together a businesslike plan about how it is going to spend taxpayer dollars, and it gives Congress more visibility in the VA contracts. It requires accountability at the medical center, regional, and the Federal levels. If the clinic isn't brought back up to snuff, we know who has failed to do their job.

I could give you a timeline on what has been going on in the last 3 years with the Choice Program—not having enough money, having more than enough money, not having enough money. That will end when we pass this bill. Congress will be able to have the oversight over the Community Care Program that it needs.

It will give long-term certainty to our veterans because a lack of long-term certainty is devastating to those veterans, and it will give those who have served the consistency and the certainty they need. No more band-aids. We need a cure.

The third thing it does is it improves VA resources in healthcare. Veterans tell me, time and time again, once they get through the door, they love the care the VA gives them. I have been told by a number of veterans that VA has saved their lives. The problem has always been getting through the door, and the biggest reason for those delays to get through that door is workforce shortages.

So our bill incentivizes medical staff to work in rural and underserved areas and Tribal VA facilities. It deploys more mobile teams to provide additional care. It removes the barriers for veterans to access telemedicine, including mental health care, closer to home. It brings more nurses and heart and lung specialists to work at the VA and clinical staff to work at vet centers.

The answer to the VA is not privatization. It is to build the VA and use the private sector to fill in the gaps that the VA cannot provide. That is what this bill does.

It also expands the VA caregiver program to veterans of all areas and their caregivers. Right now, the VA caregiver program only applies to post-9/11 veterans. We have a whole lot of veterans—especially the folks from the Vietnam war—who are getting a lot older, and this caregiver program expansion to the veterans before 9/11 is absolutely critical.

So the bottom line is this: We have worked well on the committee. We have put out a good bill. We put out a bill that works for the taxpayer and, most importantly, for the veterans.

This bill is a long-term solution. We don't need another bandaid fix. The Care Act is our long-term solution. It provides the VA what it needs to hire staff for top-notch care. It provides an integrated network of community providers to fill in the gaps for that care.

It is a balance between those two, and the veterans win.

The VSOs are on board. They were part of the discussion on this bill. We talked to the VA extensively to make sure this bill would work for the VA, and they agreed.

As I said earlier, I would love to have the VA come out forcefully for this bill. I think it would help get it passed in this body.

One thing in closing. We are going to pass a temporary stopgap measure for our budget, and VA Choice funding will probably be a part of it. I will tell my colleagues that this is the last bandaid that I am willing to put on the Choice Program. We need a long-term solution, and if we don't get that long-term solution, we are not doing right by our veterans in this country.

With that, I would again like to thank Chairman ISAKSON for his leadership and for his good work on the VA Committee. When we come back here in 2018, hopefully we can get this bill passed early in the session because it is the right thing to do for our veterans.

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. FRANKEN. 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. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for as much time as I may consume.

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

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, this is my final speech on the floor of the U.S. Senate. I have come to the floor many times, as we all have. We come to the floor to cast our votes on bills and amendments. We come here to discuss and debate the issues that are important to our States and to the country. We introduce and explain legislation. We talk about our States and what we learned on our latest visit to a community health center, a farm, or a small business. What we don't talk about all that often is the work of all the men and women on our staffs who make all of this possible.

I have been fortunate to have had a dedicated, hard-working staff both in Washington and in Minnesota, and I have no doubt that they will go on to do great things and to serve our Nation well.

I am also very lucky to have a wonderful family who has stood by me throughout the good times and the tough times of being a Senator. As Senators, we have packed schedules. There are late nights. There are difficult votes on divisive issues and a lot of time invested in better understanding the challenges our constitu-

ents face every day. All too often, that important work doesn't leave enough time for our families. I am grateful for my wife, my children, and their spouses, who stood by me and who have helped me to do my work effectively.

Finally, as I leave the Senate, I take great comfort in knowing that my successor, Senator-designate Tina Smith, has a well-earned reputation for being a smart, diligent, hard-working public servant, and I have no doubt that Senator Smith will serve Minnesotans and all Americans exceptionally well.

When most people think about politics, they think about arguments—the arguments they have around the dinner table, the arguments they have online, and most of all, the arguments we have here in Washington. That is a big part of the reason why a lot of people just don't like politics.

Often, the debate here in Washington can sometimes seem arcane and tough to understand. Other times—especially in recent years—it can be so bitter that it doesn't even feel like we are trying to resolve anything, just venting our spleens at each other. I get that. I get why people want us to stop arguing and start doing stuff.

But since I am leaving the Senate, I thought I would take a big risk and say a few words in favor of arguments. After all, there is no single magic solution that can bring all 100 of us together because there is no one set of values that brought all of us here in the first place. I think many of my colleagues have heard me talk about what brought me to politics and what makes me a Democrat, and it is my wife Fran.

When she was 17 months old, her father, a decorated World War II veteran, died in a car accident, leaving her mom widowed at age 29 with five kids. There was one sibling younger than Franni, Bootsie, who was 3 months old. Franni's family made it—barely, but they made it—thanks to Social Security survivor benefits. Sometimes they had to turn the heat off in the winter. This was in Portland, ME. Sometimes—often—they were hungry because there wasn't enough food. But they made it.

Franni and her three sisters all went to college on combinations of scholarships and Pell grants. At the time, a full Pell grant paid for about 80 percent of a public college education, but today it only pays about 35 percent.

When Bootsie went to high school, my mother-in-law got a GI loan for \$300 and went to college. She got three more loans, graduated from college, and became an elementary school teacher. And because she taught title I kids—poor kids—all her loans were forgiven.

My brother-in-law went into the Coast Guard and became an electrical engineer.

Every member of Franni's family became a productive member of society and a member of the middle class.

They tell you in this country to pull yourself up by your bootstraps, but

first you have to have the boots. The Federal Government, through Social Security survivor benefits and Pell grants and the GI bill and title I, gave my wife's family the boots. That is why I am a Democrat. That is why I am a Democrat.

Over the years, I have heard Democrats and Republicans talk about their own values, the things they believe brought them to politics, the things that make them care about what happens here. I have learned so much from listening to the arguments we have in this country and the arguments we have here in this Chamber. I have learned from Republicans. I have learned to respect but not always agree with their opinions, and I have learned how their backgrounds can lead them to reach, in good faith, a conclusion that I never could have imagined. And, of course, I have learned so much from my fellow Democrats.

But the person I learned the most from is someone who isn't here. For 12 years, the seat I currently occupy was held by Paul Wellstone. As I have said before, Paul was a tireless, passionate champion for working families—for working families in Minnesota and across the Nation. He fought for veterans, for farmers, and for those who simply needed a voice.

Paul was my friend. Paul had a saying that I think perfectly represents the values and the principles for which he fought. He used to say: "We all do better when we all do better." That was Paul's creed. What Paul meant by that is that the whole country—the working poor, the middle class, and the well off—the whole country does better when each and every one of us is able to contribute to and participate fairly in our economy and in our democracy.

I think Paul was right, but not everybody does. Some people's values are different. Some people believe that those at the top are there for a reason and that they shouldn't have to concern themselves with what is going on in the lives of people who haven't been so lucky or even so accomplished. Some people believe honestly—honestly, legitimately, believe—that not everyone deserves to have the same standing in this country. They believe that your standing as a citizen should depend, in part, on where you were born or what you believe or whom you love or what you do for a living. Some people believe that at some fundamental level, we are all in this on our own. I don't agree with any of those values, but I respect that some people hold them, and that is why arguments matter.

When we argue, whether it is across the fence with your neighbor or on a cable news show or here on the floor of the Senate, it can help us sharpen our ability to articulate what we want and challenge us to examine our own views with a more critical eye and help highlight the choice for the American people, because, after all, in a democracy, the people get to choose.

As I prepare to leave the Senate, I have been thinking a lot about my values and Paul's values—the values we share with many of my colleagues here in the Senate and many of the progressive activists I have met and worked alongside in Minnesota and around the country. That is because, regrettably, the policies pursued by the Trump administration and congressional Republicans today could not stand in a starker contrast to the principles Paul championed and the values I have fought for during my time here in the Senate.

The values being advanced by the President and his allies in Congress simply don't represent my belief that our economy, our democracy, and our country work best when they work for everyone. Indeed, the values propelling the Republican agenda today are about consolidating political and economic power in the hands of corporations and the very wealthy.

Just take the tax bill Congress passed this week. At virtually each and every step of the process, Republicans drafting this bill chose to embrace the failed trickle-down policies of the past, crafting an enormous—*an enormous*—giveaway that benefits their corporate campaign backers and wealthy donors. For instance, according to the non-partisan Tax Policy Center, by 2027, 83 percent of the benefits in the Republican tax bill will accrue to the top 1 percent of income earners; that is, people who make more than \$912,000 a year. Eighty-three percent of the benefits go to the top 1 percent. Do we really need any other data point? Well, here is one: At the same time, the Republican tax bill would increase taxes on 35 million low- and middle-income families.

During his inaugural address, President Trump vowed that “the forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer.” But the Republican tax bill represents a slap in the face to those forgotten men and women. I guess the President forgot about them.

Make no mistake, the Senate-passed version of the Republican tax bill was deeply flawed, but when Republicans later attempted to reconcile differences between the House and Senate bills—a process that took place behind closed doors—even more favors were doled out to Republican donors and to special interests. New rules were created to give real estate developers like President Trump and his son-in-law the ability to pay less tax on passthrough income. The top individual rate, which applies to millionaires and billionaires, was cut to 37 percent—a rate lower than either the House or Senate versions of the bill. And provisions in the original bills that were designed to stop foreign corporations from avoiding taxes by shifting their profits overseas—a practice known as earnings stripping—were dropped altogether.

The problem in this country is not that the wealthy aren't doing well

enough. After all, the top 1 percent of the country's population controls nearly 40 percent of its wealth. The problem is that too many working families have been left out of the economic growth that the top 1 percent has enjoyed in recent years. But rather than use the tax reform bill as an opportunity to help those working families, Republicans have instead decided to shower corporations and wealthy donors with tax breaks and special favors.

The tax bill didn't just come out of the blue—quite the contrary. This tax bill comes on the heels of countless Republican attempts to shred policies that offer protection to working families and the environment. But corporations and wealthy donors who support my Republican colleagues believe that these policies stand in the way of their profits.

Take healthcare, for example. Despite President Trump's campaign promise that “We're going to have insurance for everybody,” when his administration attempted to deliver on that promise, House Republicans devised and passed a bill that would have resulted in 23 million fewer people having health insurance, including 14 million people who rely on Medicaid. Facing unprecedented public outcry, Republican Senators eventually proposed a narrower bill—one that didn't repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act outright but instead undermined some of its foundational provisions. But this narrower Senate bill still would have left 16 million more Americans uninsured, all while spiking premiums by 20 percent, according to CBO.

The American people continued to fight, demanding that the Senate kill the bill. Thanks to the incredibly hard work of organizers and activists, including the American Medical Association and everyday Americans, that is exactly what happened. Republican attempts to repeal the ACA failed, but it seems my Republican colleagues have not learned their lesson.

Finding themselves unable to sustain an open assault on the Affordable Care Act, they instead included a measure in the tax bill that will repeal an essential component of that law—the individual mandate. As a result, 13 million fewer Americans will have health insurance in the years to come. But that doesn't matter to President Trump and his allies, who claim they need to repeal this central pillar of ObamaCare in order to pay for the massive tax cuts that their wealthy donors demand.

Those same wealthy donors also demand that Republicans turn a blind eye to climate change—an existential threat to humanity. Climate change is not just an environmental problem. Climate change stands to affect virtually every aspect of our lives, posing a great threat to public health, national security, our country's infrastructure, and our economy. Circumstances require that we take immediate action in order to protect the welfare of future generations.

Almost every Republican in Congress refuses to take the issue of climate change seriously. They continue to deny the underlying evidence and science behind it, even as Americans suffer the devastating consequences of their denial. This year alone, hurricanes ravaged Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and wildfires raged across the West, most recently in Los Angeles.

We know that climate change makes these extreme weather events worse, and this is just the beginning. What we are witnessing is the beginning of a new normal—a new normal that this country simply cannot endure.

It doesn't have to be this way. It is possible to address climate change while at the same time growing our economy and creating jobs. During the Obama administration, the Federal Government increased research and development investments in clean energy technology, both through tax credits designed to incentivize investment and through the energy title that I was proud to help write in the farm bill, which allowed people in rural America to participate in the clean energy revolution. Those investments paid off. Since 2009, the cost of wind power has decreased by 66 percent, and the cost of solar power has dropped by 85 percent. But we need to do more.

I championed an energy efficiency standard that would require utilities to become more efficient. I led legislation to encourage energy storage, a game changer that allows wind and solar to be used when the wind isn't blowing and the sun isn't shining. I pushed to deploy distributed energy that makes our grid more resilient and reliable.

Rather than join me and my Democratic colleagues in confronting the challenge of climate change by driving innovation, Republicans ordered a retreat. At the behest of the fossil fuel industry and other corporate interests, Republicans have put forward nominees for key environmental posts who cut their teeth defending corporate polluters, not enforcing the laws that keep our air and water clean, and they have pushed an agenda that guts funding for science and innovation. The Republican strategy of denial and obfuscation isn't just an affront to the government; it is an affront to common sense.

The Trump administration and its allies in Congress have never let science or common sense stand in the way of ideology. Time and again, they have acted to roll back evidence-based, commonsense protections put in place to improve the lives of minority or marginalized communities, including women and LGBT people.

For example, in October, the Trump administration announced a new rule that guts a provision in the Affordable Care Act that requires health insurance plans to cover birth control free of charge—a policy that has benefited more than 62 million American women.

The ability to access affordable reproductive healthcare has a powerful effect on the choices that women and families make every day—choices about whether to finish college, buy a home, or start a business. Ensuring that women have access to contraception is vital to the economic security of our families, and that is why I filed a brief in support of the ACA's contraceptive coverage requirement when it was challenged before the Supreme Court.

Despite the millions of women who have benefited from the policy, and despite the science demonstrating that restricting access to contraception has negative health consequences, the Trump administration has eviscerated the policy.

In February, the Trump administration rescinded Obama-era guidelines that instructed schools on how to protect transgender students under a Federal law called title IX. LGBT students deserve to learn in an environment free from discrimination, and they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. But far too often, LGBT kids, particularly transgender kids, experience bullying and harassment. When that happens, those students are deprived of an equal education. That is why I led the Senate in calling on the Obama administration to issue those guidelines back in 2015. Nonetheless, the Trump administration decided to scrap that guidance—a callous and mean-spirited decision that sent a terrible message to LGBT children and their parents and took away a tool designed to protect our children. It is our responsibility, not just as Senators but as adults—as adults—to protect our children, not turn a blind eye when they face prejudice and cruelty.

Nothing that Republicans have done is more galling, nothing poses a greater threat to the fabric of our democracy than their deliberate and sustained attack on the right to vote. Let's start with the Supreme Court's disastrous 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, a 5-to-4 decision in which the Court's conservative Justices effectively gutted the Voting Rights Act and eliminated a check on States with a history of discrimination at the polls.

After the *Shelby County* decision, States swiftly began to enact harsh restrictions on the right to vote, in many cases citing the myth of so-called voter fraud as justification.

Take North Carolina, for example. Just a few months after *Shelby County*, the State enacted one of the Nation's strictest voter ID laws. Without any evidence, the State described the new restrictions as necessary to prevent fraud. Without the protections of the Voting Rights Act, those changes went into effect, keeping poor and minority voters from casting a ballot.

When North Carolina's restrictions were eventually challenged in court, the Fourth Circuit found that the primary purpose of the restrictions wasn't to fight fraud but to make it harder for

Black people to vote. The court found that “the new provisions target African Americans with almost surgical precision.”

The fact that North Carolina's restrictions stand as a blatant example of race discrimination is undeniable, but the strategy behind adopting such harsh restrictions is even more insidious. The strategy here is designed to ensure that voters who don't agree with their candidates or their policies aren't able to vote against them.

Paul Wellstone's words are more important today than ever before: “We all do better when we all do better.” I believe that to my core. But the policies pursued by President Trump and his allies are not about lifting people out of poverty or about giving the politically powerless a louder voice in our democracy. These policies are intended to line the pockets of wealthy donors and to protect the power of those who already wield outsized influence in our democracy. That is a far cry from Paul's creed.

When I think about what has gone wrong here, when I reflect on how this country has strayed so far from the values that I believe a majority of Americans share, I have to say that I think there is something wrong with the way we are arguing, and it started long before 2016. Lurking behind each of those issues isn't just a difference of opinion or a difference of values. There is something far worse: a lie.

Take, for example, the Trump administration's efforts to suppress votes. Shortly after winning the Presidential election, then President-Elect Trump was confronted with the unpleasant fact that he lost the popular vote. He tweeted: “In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally.”

Let's be clear. President Trump lost the popular vote by more than 2.8 million votes. What he claimed in that tweet was that nearly 3 million fraudulent votes were cast. In fact, he later claimed that between 3 and 5 million illegal votes caused him to lose the popular vote, citing no evidence.

There were 138 million votes cast in the 2016 Presidential election. State election and law enforcement officials found virtually no credible evidence of fraud, and no States—not one—recorded any indication of widespread fraud—none. But that didn't stop the Trump administration from quickly turning the President's tweets into policy. The White House created a new commission to investigate the President's wild and unsubstantiated claim—a commission led by Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, a rightwing extremist who has made a career out of trafficking in the voter fraud myth and who was fined for repeatedly lying to a Federal court in voter ID litigation. When Kobach was asked whether he believed the President's claim that millions of people voted illegally, he said: We may never

know the answer to that question. Really?

This episode could almost be considered funny if the ramifications weren't so deadly serious. Kobach's voter fraud commission requested sensitive information about voters—including names, dates of birth, party registration, and voting history—from all 50 States. This is information that could lay the groundwork for disenfranchising scores of eligible voters, which is why more than 40 States refused to comply with that request. At the same time, the Trump-Sessions Justice Department quickly dropped legal challenges to discriminatory voting practices in States, further signaling that protecting the right to vote will no longer be a priority of the Justice Department. It is all based on a lie—and not a lie President Trump came up with. Rightwing conservatives have been raising a false alarm about so-called voter fraud for years despite the fact that no credible evidence has ever been produced to demonstrate that it is a real problem.

Or take the Trump administration's attacks on LGBT rights. Again and again, lurking behind these policies are lies—the lie that advocates of LGBT rights want to trample on people's religious freedom, the lie that families led by a gay or a lesbian couple don't provide safe environments for children, the lie that allowing transgender people to use the appropriate bathroom opens the door to sexual assault. President Trump didn't invent these lies, but he and his administration proudly repeat them.

Or take the attacks on science, especially climate science. We now have enough evidence to conclude that climate change is real, and it is man-made. It is a threat to our Nation's security and is an existential threat to the planet. Defense Secretary Mattis knows this; yet, for years, so-called scientists who have been funded by industry have been hard at work in casting doubt on the well-established scientific consensus. Heck, a recent Washington Post report revealed that Trump administration officials have prohibited the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—our Nation's premier public health and research institute—from using the terms “evidence-based” and “science-based” in budget planning documents. President Trump didn't launch the war on science, but now he is leading the charge.

Or take healthcare. President Trump promised that everyone would have insurance, but an analysis by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office revealed that under the House Republican healthcare bill, 23 million fewer people would have had health insurance than are currently covered today—23 million people. To add insult to injury, the House bill would have hit the most vulnerable among us, and it would have hit them the hardest.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, 14 million of the 23 million people who would have lost coverage

under the House Republicans' plan would have been Medicaid beneficiaries.

That is right. Despite candidate Trump's assurances that "everybody's going to be taken care of much better than they're taken care of now," the Republican bill would have cut funding to Medicaid—a vital safety net program that ensures that our seniors, people with disabilities, pregnant women, and families with children have access to the healthcare they need. On top of that, the Republican plan would have driven up the costs of premiums, with older and sicker people having experienced the deepest increases.

Indeed, the healthcare debate has long been predicated on lies—lies that "well over 90 percent of what Planned Parenthood does" is provide abortion services, the lie that women rely on birth control only because they are sexually promiscuous, the lie that the Affordable Care Act is collapsing under its own weight when, in fact, the Trump administration and the Republicans here in Congress have been doing everything they can do to sabotage it.

Then there is the tax debate. Over the last year, Republicans have repeatedly claimed that they would advance policies that are designed to benefit middle-class families, not the wealthy. President Trump pledged not to forget the "forgotten men and women of our country." Steve Mnuchin, the Secretary of the Treasury, promised that the Republican tax plan would help the middle class. He vowed that any tax cuts for upper income earners would be offset by getting rid of deductions that benefit the wealthy. That is what he said, that "there will be no absolute tax cut for the upper class." Again, 83 percent of the benefits in the Republican tax bill go to the richest 1 percent. What he said is not true.

Just the other day, the White House Press Secretary claimed that President Trump, himself, will pay more because of this bill. We don't know exactly what the effect will be on his personal finances because the White House has refused to release his tax returns. They have claimed in another lie that he cannot release them because they are under audit. You can release tax returns while you are under audit. What we do know is that tax breaks in the Republican bill for real estate developers like President Trump and his family will save him millions upon millions of dollars.

I could go on and on.

Before I came to the Senate, I was known as something of an obsessive on the subject of honesty in public discourse, but as I leave the Senate, I have to admit that it feels as though we are losing the war on truth. Maybe it is already lost. If that is the case, if that is what happens, then we have lost the ability to have the kinds of arguments that have helped to build consensus—I see LAMAR ALEXANDER here; we have done that on the HELP Com-

mittee; I thank the chairman for when we have done that—or at least to have helped the American people make informed choices about the issues that affect their lives.

So what is to be done? Who will stand up and fight for a more honest debate—to insist that even though we have a different set of opinions, we cannot honorably advance our competing agendas unless we use the same set of facts? I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will stand up for truth. The thing is, I have spent enough time with my Republican friends over the last 8½ years to know that they are motivated by values just like Democrats. I just hope that they will fight for those values forthrightly.

At the end of the day, it is going to be up to the American people just as it has always been. We will always have the democracy we deserve, if not the government we want. It is going to take ordinary Americans deciding to become more informed consumers of political news and opinion and deciding that they are willing to be a part of the argument themselves instead of, simply, tuning out all of the noise. If they do, I know that we will get this country back on track.

In October, 15 years after we lost Paul, I took to the Senate floor to remember him and to celebrate his life. Paul understood better than anyone I know the meaning and the power of politics, and I think he would have a lot to say about where we find ourselves today.

Paul said:

Politics is not about power. Politics is not about money. Politics is not about winning for the sake of winning. Politics is about the improvement of people's lives.

Even in the face of everything that is happening today, I still believe in Paul's words: "Politics is about the improvement of people's lives." I know those words to be true because I know that the American people still believe in justice and equality and opportunity, and I see evidence of that every day.

I saw it in January when more than 4 million people across the United States joined in the Women's March. They stood in solidarity with their mothers and sisters and daughters and wives.

I saw it later that same month after President Trump issued an Executive order that sought to ban travelers from Muslim-majority countries from entering our country. Hundreds of lawyers responded to the call to help. They rushed to airports and offered their services in support of affected families.

I saw it in May when a transgender boy in Wisconsin who was discriminated against by his school had the courage to take them to court, and he won.

I saw it in September when tens of thousands of Americans mobilized in opposition to attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and succeeded in killing the bill.

I also saw it at the ballot box when voters in Virginia and Alabama resisted the temptation to give in to anger and cynicism and, instead, exercised their right to vote.

"Politics is about the improvement of people's lives." The American people know that to be true, and they fill me with hope for our country.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I ask for 3 minutes to talk about my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

TRIBUTES TO AL FRANKEN

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, you heard in Senator FRANKEN's closing words the passion he has for all of the work that he has done in this Chamber and for the people of our State. You saw the love that he has for his family—for Franni—and the love that he has for his staff. They are not good staff; they are wonderful staff.

I think about all of the legacies that AL will leave. One of them is his staff, to whom he has been so devoted. Another is all of the work he has done for veterans, the work he has done for healthcare with the medical loss ratio—one of the major achievements in the Affordable Care Act. One is the work he has done, way ahead of his time, for the LGBTQ community, and another is the work he has done for our Tribal communities. That was his No. 1 ask when he arrived in the Senate—to be on the Indian Affairs Committee. That is not what other people ask for. He did that. Another is the work he did on bullying in schools. For the kids who had no voice, he gave them a voice. Another is the work he did in carrying on Paul Wellstone's work for those with mental illness.

When I think about what I will miss about AL, I will miss, first of all, how he defied expectations when he got elected. I think about all of those headlines that he mentions in his book. No matter what he did in the first few years he was in office, they would read with things like: AL FRANKEN passes a bill. That's no joke. AL FRANKEN gets reelected. That's no joke. Yet he still carried on and defied expectations every single day that he was here.

Another thing I will miss is all of the Senators approaching him in his first few weeks in office with their bad jokes, which he would smile at, and then he would later tell me they were not good jokes.

Another thing I will always miss about AL is the passion he had for his work. I think many people were captivated by the pointed questioning of witnesses and nominees in the last year, but it was that kind of focus that he took to all of his work when he would examine policies he thought were good or bad. He never gave up on that.

The other thing I will greatly miss is sitting next to AL in the Judiciary Committee. While he would do the serious work, he would never miss an opportunity to show me or Senator DURBIN or Senator WHITEHOUSE or anyone near him the latest pictures of his grandchildren and his family or, maybe, the doodles that he did of Senator GRASSLEY.

The other thing I will miss greatly is the way he would talk about Paul Wellstone. Today, he managed to do it without crying, but so many times, whenever he would talk about Paul, he would start to cry. He would do it in private, and he would do it in public because he understood the legacy that Paul left behind and the burden that we all have to carry it on.

One thing I know, as you heard in his last speech, is that when AL leaves here, he will not be quieted in any way. His work will live on, and his voice will be stronger than ever. I think the last call of action that he left us with of the war for truth—for truth in what we do and for truth in our politics—is something that no one should forget in this Chamber. It is one way that AL's work will live on because I know he will keep calling people on the truth.

While I will no longer be sitting next to him in Judiciary, I know we will stay friends forever. I thank Senator FRANKEN so much for his work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant minority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, years ago, a man with a famous name aspired to be President of the United States. Critics dismissed this idea as ridiculous. One of the leading political columnists of the day wrote that the man's initials stood for "Feather Duster Roosevelt, a lightweight"—nothing to him.

AL FRANKEN's decision to run for a seat in this Senate from Minnesota was met in many quarters with the same sort of mockery.

Many people said: He is a comedian. He doesn't have the knowledge or the skill or the patience or the vision to be a lawmaker. You can't joke your way into the Senate.

The pundits were wrong about FDR. He was one of our greatest Presidents during one of our darkest hours.

Madam President, the doubters were wrong about AL FRANKEN too. AL FRANKEN has been my friend, my personal friend, for more than two decades. For the last 7-plus years, he has been my colleague in the Senate. He has been a credit to the Senate, a passionate advocate for his home State of Minnesota, a defender of our Constitution, and a determined fighter for justice. He became a better Senator every year. His work in the Senate has made life for millions of people better in Minnesota and far beyond. He and his dedicated staff can take pride in that fact. AL FRANKEN has been and I am sure will continue to be an effective champion for those whose daily strug-

gles too often go unnoticed and unaddressed in the places of power.

During his time in the Senate, AL FRANKEN has always been there when his Senate colleagues asked for help. He was one of the most sought-after voices in our party. He never failed to pack a bag, catch a plane, and spend another night away from his family to help each and every one of us.

Twenty years ago, when I first met him, he was this well known, successful comedian on "Saturday Night Live" who happened to play the role of a fellow named Paul Simon, a Senator from Illinois who was my predecessor. Paul Simon invited AL FRANKEN to come to Makanda, IL. It is not even close to Chicago. He agreed on a Sunday afternoon to be there on behalf of my campaign, although we had never met, and he came. He limped onto Paul Simon's front porch, saying: "I twisted my ankle playing squash." I thought it was another perfect example of a reason he could have used to avoid the invitation, but he came anyway. We had a great afternoon and a terrific time with Paul Simon of "Saturday Night Live" and the real Paul Simon and a senatorial candidate who was grateful for AL FRANKEN's presence that day.

When people ask me to describe my politics, I say that I follow the gospel of St. Paul. By that, I mean I try to emulate three of my greatest political heroes, who happen to share that name.

The first Senator, Paul Douglas of Illinois, was a champion of honesty, economic justice, and civil rights, and the man for whom I had the good fortune of interning when I was a college student; Paul Simon, whom I just mentioned, my predecessor from Illinois, who was one of the smartest, most decent men I have ever met in any walk of life; and Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, who has received many deserved tributes today. Paul Wellstone was the champion of farmers, hotel maids, grocery clerks, cafeteria workers, and everyone who worked hard and struggled for dignity and enough money just to pay the bills.

Paul Wellstone, as we have heard from both Senator KLOBUCHAR and from AL FRANKEN himself, is the man AL FRANKEN chose to emulate in public life. He stated Paul Wellstone's famous quote: "We all do better when we all do better." It is a simple statement, a profound truth, and it has been the guiding light for AL FRANKEN's Senate career.

Senator Wellstone died 15 years ago in a tragic plane crash. On the 10th anniversary of that terrible loss, Senator FRANKEN wrote an essay about Paul Wellstone's legacy for *The Atlantic* magazine. I want to read a short section from that essay.

Senator FRANKEN wrote:

One of Paul's most famous quotes is this: "Politics is not about power. Politics is not about money. Politics is not about winning for the sake of winning. Politics is about the improvement of people's lives."

That quote is often used to criticize those on the other side who seem to forget the human consequences of their political agenda. But progressives should keep it in mind, as well.

The big fights—war and peace, justice and liberty—are important. But there aren't any small fights. And where Paul made the biggest impact—where his work resulted in the greatest improvement of people's lives—was on issues that don't usually lead anyone's stump speech: mental health, domestic violence, homelessness among veterans.

When future historians look back at the legacy of Senator AL FRANKEN, I believe they will say: Here is a man who loved his State and his country, who worked hard to be a good Senator, and who never hesitated to take up an important issue, large or small.

AL FRANKEN and I served together on the Senate Judiciary Committee. Over the years, I have watched him mature into one of the best, most insightful questioners on that committee. His questioning of Supreme Court Nominee Gorsuch, now Supreme Court Justice Gorsuch, helped to expose the Justice's troubling record of ruling against workers and families.

It was a story about a truckdriver who deserted his position on the road-way, was freezing in the middle of the night, who finally got his day in court, and the decision by Judge Gorsuch at the time, in my opinion and AL's opinion, did not serve justice. Many of us raised that issue; no one raised it more effectively than AL FRANKEN.

His probing questioning also exposed Attorney General Sessions for misleading America about his meetings with Russians during the 2016 Presidential campaign.

He has been equally effective on the HELP Committee. His questioning of the future Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, showed her to be unfamiliar with some of the most basic and important debates in education policy and clearly exposed the fact that she was unready to serve as our Nation's leader at the Department of Education.

I guess some people seek elected office to make a name for themselves, but AL FRANKEN didn't need to be a Senator to achieve that. He already had a well-known name as an entertainer, radio host, and best-selling author before he entered politics. He and his wife Franni have a good life, two great kids, and wonderful grandchildren who followed.

Mr. FRANKEN. Terrific. Terrific.

Mr. DURBIN. "Terrific" is the word. Terrific grandchildren who followed.

When it came down to it, AL FRANKEN wanted to do more than just entertain and be well known; he wanted to make a difference in the lives of others. More than anyone, as he said this morning, his wife Franni inspired him. As he explained in his book, her family wasn't as lucky as a lot of us. Her dad died when she was a young baby girl. Her mom raised five kids on Social Security survivor benefits and a paycheck from a local supermarket. But every member of Franni's family

made it to the middle class because of Social Security, Pell grants, the GI bill, and title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

AL writes:

They tell you in this country you have to pull yourself up by your bootstraps. And we all believe that. But first you've got to have the boots. And the federal government gave Franni's family the boots.

"Opportunity is supposed to be for everyone." That is one of the articles of faith animating everything that AL FRANKEN has done or sought to achieve in the Senate.

I am going to miss my friend AL FRANKEN, my colleague, and one of my fellow members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. I am sorry he is leaving under these circumstances, but he is going to be remembered, and he is going to have an opportunity to use his voice for others in the future.

Every person who has ever lived has had moments they wish they could erase and words they wish they could take back. In this life of both calm and stormy seas, we all draw strength from the healing power of redemption, and we can take heart in the knowledge that tomorrow is another day with new opportunities to offer a helping hand and make our lives count.

I am happy to hear AL FRANKEN say that while he may be giving up the Senate, he is not giving up his voice in public life. I wish AL FRANKEN, Franni, and their great family the very best and thank them again for what they have given to all of us.

Madam President, I yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask to speak for 3 minutes on behalf of my departing friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, Senator FRANKEN will shortly go on to his next chapter, which I hope will be wonderful for him and for Franni and for their family. I hope and believe that he leaves us with everyone's good will here in the Senate. He certainly leaves with mine.

AL FRANKEN has been an unusually good Senator, in part because he has such a good staff. He has also, to me, been an unusually good friend, particularly in this hard town where you are supposed to buy a dog if you want a friend. We served together on the HELP and Judiciary Committees, where he did great committee work. He stood out particularly for his talent on Judiciary without even being a lawyer.

I will miss him. The Senate will come to miss him, too, I expect. He was a lot of things that one would want in a Senator: principled, innovative, hard-working, supersmart, bipartisan, generous, caring. Things will be different around here without him. It will be quieter on the floor without his big, bursting laugh. We will miss his presence on personal privacy issues, on monopoly power issues, on forced manda-

tory arbitration, and in championing LGBT kids, where he has real passion and expertise.

Senate hearing witnesses who have been up to no good will breathe a lot easier knowing they won't have to face AL FRANKEN's pointed questioning. The Senate Secret Santa, a Franken legacy, will probably continue. Selfishly, I will miss Franni's amazing homemade pies.

As my friend departs, I am left at this difficult moment with this thought: I have been fortunate in the Senate to have had a colleague to whom it is so hard to say good-bye.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, back in 2007 and 2008, a group of us who had never run for Congress or for the Senate jumped into campaigns against incumbent Members of this body, hoping to fight for a vision of government of, by, and for the people. AL FRANKEN was one of those individuals taking on an incumbent, Republican Norm Coleman, and as I heard Senator FRANKEN on the campaign trail, I heard what we heard today in his speech: a willingness to fight for that vision so embodied in our Constitution of government that would provide a foundation for families to thrive, that would lift everyone up; not a government of, by, and for the privileged; not a government of, by, and for the powerful.

It takes a lot of guts to throw yourself into the political world, but because he did and because he won that campaign, we were able to advance a number of policies.

I shared with AL the experience not only of running against an incumbent Republican but not having results on election night. However, I only had to wait 2 days; I didn't have to wait the many months that he did to come and be part of this body.

Because he came, we were able to pass the Affordable Care Act. My home State of Oregon went from 15 percent uninsured to 5 percent uninsured. Hundreds of thousands of people gained access to healthcare through the expansion of Medicaid and through the healthcare exchange made affordable by the tax credits provided by that bill. In that bill, we were able to provide free preventive healthcare practices. We all know that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and we embodied that in the healthcare bill. In that bill, we fought for folks to be able to stay on their parents' policies until age 26. In that bill, we fought to say that if someone had a preexisting condition, they wouldn't have to pay any more than anyone else would, creating healthcare opportunities for millions of people who thought they would never have a chance to have an insurance policy again.

AL FRANKEN threw himself into public life, and he made that happen not just for the folks back home in Minnesota but for people across this entire Nation.

Another such battle was the Dodd-Frank battle, and again I doubt we would have been able to win that battle without his coming to share in that effort. I think about the fact that we had seen so many millions of families devastated by predatory mortgages with exploding interest rates—interest rates that, upon presentation, started at 3 percent or 4 percent but 2 years later would jump to 9 or 10 percent, and a family would end up in foreclosure. The fact is we had Wall Street writing securities based on those mortgages, which then disintegrated in 2007, 2008 and caused people not to just lose their homes but to also lose their jobs, to lose their retirement, and to be incredibly devastated and see their whole lifetime's work to become financially stable evaporate, destroyed, exploded. That CFPB portion, or Consumer Financial Protection Bureau portion, has given us ongoing efforts to take on predatory mortgages and that enables financial instruments to be a foundation for families to thrive and to have home ownership be the dream of home ownership and not the nightmare of home ownership. This, again, is an example of a bill passed because AL FRANKEN threw himself into that battle, and there are many more on this list.

I was particularly appreciative of his support for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Senator Kennedy, as he was in declining health, had asked me to take on and carry the torch for that bill, which was a huge honor to me as an incoming freshman. I felt he was on my shoulder every day saying: Why haven't you gotten it done yet? In 2013, we finally got it on the floor. I had been pushing hard for leadership to get it on the floor, and we got it on the floor. I thought: What if we lose this bill fighting for equality and to end discrimination in employment? But because AL was here helping in that fight, we won that bill. We did not win it in the House because the House didn't put it on the floor of the House. So it is unfinished business—fighting for equality of opportunity, that vision in our Constitution.

As we heard today, as we heard AL in his campaign in 2008, as we heard AL on the floor today, and we have heard of this fight for a country of, by, and for the people, I know that we are going to hear his voice in that fight for many years to come.

I thank Senator FRANKEN for being willing to put himself in the public world, for being willing to fight here on the floor of the Senate for bill after bill after bill that made life better for Americans and for the many battles he will be in in the years to come. Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. BLUNT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his suggestion?

Mr. MERKLEY. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, we are quickly approaching the end of this year, and I think it is a good time to reflect on what has been done this year. Certainly, the Senate and the Trump administration have been able to do a number of things that are really going to have a significant impact on hard-working families.

Yesterday, we sent the most significant tax reform legislation in more than three decades to the President's desk, and we had a chance to hear the President and others respond to that. The President, at the end of that ceremony at the White House, turned to the Congress and said: "This is the work that you have done." I think the Members of Congress appreciated that. That showed a President who is constantly learning and constantly understanding how important relationships are here.

I thought it was interesting that we heard Chairman BRADY, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, say that there are three important dates about to occur for America's economy and America's families. One is January 1, when the new tax bill goes into effect, and as to the wages people are earning, people are going to be allowed more of those wages to stay in their billfold rather than go to the government's billfold. It doesn't stay very long in the government's billfold; that is for sure. January 1 is important. As for February 1, by then, that is the time by which we hope all of the new information is out to employers, and people are going to see in their February check more money than they saw in that same-sized check this year going home with them. This is about who is a better person to spend your money—you or the government. It is also about a debate about whether the government is better off with higher taxes or more taxpayers and, of course, it is better off with more taxpayers.

Chairman BRADY said that the other date is April 15, because that is the last time in the foreseeable future that families are going to have to deal with a Tax Code that they don't understand, that they believe to be unfair, that they believe does not treat everybody equitably in how that Tax Code is applied. Many of the special provisions are going to be out of the Tax Code. Next April 15, probably 9 out of 10 taxpayers would have filled out an income tax form on a card about this big and, for 9 out of 10 taxpayers, they are going to look at double the personal exemption from this year—that is \$24,000, if you are a married couple, that you just subtract immediately from your income—and double the child tax credit, up to \$2,000. Somebody said to me just yesterday: You mean my son with his three children is going to be able to take \$6,000 off of whatever their tax bill would be at the bottom of that form, and the answer is yes. If they didn't have a tax bill, at the bottom of that form that totals \$6,000, those families

get a credit that allows them to take money for other taxes they have paid and take that home with them.

So this is after a decade of historically low growth, a decade that defies virtually the entire history of the country going back to 1789, where 3 percent growth has been the normal growth. Less than 2 percent growth has been the normal growth for 9 of the last 10 years. The 1 year that is going to be an exception is this year. It looks like we are going to get close to and maybe even exceed 3 percent and get back to where the economy should be growing. I think with the new tax bill, we may exceed that and most of people's concerns about a lot of the things in this bill will go away when the economy starts growing again.

Buying power is almost 3 percent lower this year than it was in the 1990s. Now, their wages may have gone up between now and the 1990s, but prices have gone up more, and it is time to get our economy growing again and let families have more of the money they have earned to spend on their family. If you are a family of four earning about \$73,000 this year and \$73,000 next year, next year, your tax is going to be \$2,000 less than it is this year. If you are a single parent with one child earning \$41,000, next year your tax will be \$1,300 less than it is this year.

Now, some will say—as a matter of fact, I have heard it on the floor of the Senate—a few hundred dollars a month will not matter. Well, now that is clearly somebody who doesn't know how much a few hundred dollars a month or a few hundred dollars a year does matter.

This bill will give us ways to compete that we don't have now. The bill also will provide Missouri families and other families more jobs and more opportunities because we are going to be more competitive. We will have moved our corporate tax rate. It will not be the lowest in the world, but it will no longer be the highest in the world. It will be in the very middle. Twenty-one percent is right in the middle of the countries we compete with. At the time that 35 percent was our rate in 1986, it was the middle, too, but every other country that we compete with has figured out that that gives you a competitive disadvantage, and they have all lowered their taxes as our corporate tax stayed the same. We are restoring our competitive position. We are hoping and actually going to go ahead and tax the money that is trapped overseas, whether it comes back or not. So I think it is safe to assume that somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2 trillion will come back into our economy.

There is more U.S. money overseas that would like to come home—but wasn't going to come home if we took 35 percent out of it—than at any time before. There is more U.S. capital in this country on the sidelines than at any time before. You put that money into the economy, and you put that 2

trillion or so dollars into the economy. You make us the best, safest, and most predictable place in the world to invest money. Foreign investment in our economy—not in their economy but in our economy—will increase, and it is time for that to happen.

This Tax Code will increase take-home pay immediately, and it will make us more competitive, and we will have jobs that pay more in the future.

The rolling back of redtape is one of the reasons that the economy in our country is already growing faster than it has in a decade. People saw the regulatory overreach. Most importantly, President Trump saw the regulatory overreach. The House and the Senate saw the regulatory overreach. We were able to block 15 regulations before they went into effect. Other regulations, like the totally ridiculous power rule that was proposed, which in my State would have doubled the utility bill in less than 12 years, is not going to happen now. The waters of the United States, which would have suddenly put the EPA in charge of anything involving water, is not going to happen now. The \$52 million increase in just the cost of getting something where you could start, which was the anticipated cost of the waters of the United States, is not going to happen now.

Chairman ISAKSON of the Veterans' Affairs Committee was on the floor earlier, talking about what we have done with his leadership for veterans, and that list is long. The Veterans Choice Act continues to give veterans more opportunity to get the care where they want it rather than to be stuck in a system that didn't seem to always care that much whether veterans got care or not. It was more about the Veterans' Administration than the veterans, and competition and choice is in the process of ending that with good leadership at the VA administration and being sure that happens.

We were able to pass a bill that I sponsored, the HIRE Vets Act. It is being implemented right now to recognize companies that hire vets, that promote vets, and that give vets credit for the skills they learned in the military. The Department of Labor has worked hard to put that on fast-forward and get it done.

In the military, the Military Family Stability Act means that families, for the first time, have the opportunity that they have always hoped to have for the family to move a little earlier or stay a little longer, if that works for education purposes or the spouse's education or career purposes. This is a dramatic step, appreciating the fact that the strength of the military is in military families. We recruit, generally in the military, single adults, and we retire from the military adults with spouses and children, and this looks at that.

There is a lot to talk about as we end this session. It is never perfect, but that is why we come back for the next session. There are going to be things

that could have been done better, but so many things have happened that haven't happened in a generation. I know that I am eager to go home and talk about those, as I was on the radio this morning and yesterday morning doing that already. I know that my colleagues are too.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I wish to thank my colleague from Missouri for highlighting a lot of the good work of this past year in the Senate and touching on some highlights, particularly in the veterans area, that have great impact across the country. It is something on which we all joined together compassionately, wanting to help our veterans and wanting to make sure they get the best care in the best way as quickly as possible, and I appreciate his highlighting that.

I wish to highlight the positive change that this Republican majority has brought to the American people in the first year of President Trump's administration. I am going to talk about a few different things than my colleague from Missouri, and I think you would expect that. I come from the State of West Virginia. Certain policies impact us differently, and so that is what having the time to talk about our accomplishments over the past year gives us the ability to do.

I can't begin without talking about one of the biggest and boldest actions that we have taken this week, and that is our pro-growth tax reform bill. Throughout the process, I traveled across the State and heard from many constituents—friends and many strangers—all about this effort. Not only at the beginning did they realize what a difference this will make in their lives, but, as my colleague from Missouri said, as we move through this year, when you start to see your paychecks change and you bring home more of your own money because your rate went down or when you begin to file in April, realizing that this is the last time you have to file this complicated thing—I am going to be able to make it easier on myself—families, workers, and small businesses across our State are really counting on relief, and this week we delivered on that.

In West Virginia, particularly when asked "How is this really going to help the bulk of the people in the middle-wage earning families?" I like to highlight the fact that in my State in particular, 83 percent of our tax filers don't take itemizations. They file with the standard deduction. That has now been doubled.

The child tax credit has been doubled, as the gentleman from Wyoming said. It gives that child tax credit, and that goes right to the heart of the middle-wage earning family trying to make ends meet at the end of the day.

They are predictions, but we feel certain that with the doubling of these deductions and this credit, more people

will file on the smaller form and also push that number to maybe over 90 percent.

This year, we also delivered on significant regulatory reforms, especially in the energy realm, which is absolutely impactful in my area of the country. Under the Congressional Review Act, the Senate has repealed 14 of President Obama's very onerous regulations.

I led the effort to enact a CRA to fix the burdensome stream protection rule. This rule really threatened what was left of the coal industry in our region. The Obama-era rule would have prohibited many forms of coal mining in Appalachia. I kept saying: Let's balance this.

Under Scott Pruitt's leadership, the EPA repealed the Clean Power Plan—another onerous regulation with minimal benefit. We can do it better, and I believe, in this EPA, we will.

For years, I asked the Obama administration—Madam President, we serve on the same committee—I asked the EPA to come to my State and see what the impacts are of the rules and the regulations that they are putting forward. They never came. This year, the EPA finally answered my calls and came to the State of West Virginia—the State capital, Charleston, WV—to listen to both sides of those who will be impacted by any regulations that the EPA puts forward.

We also reformed the waters of the United States—or WOTUS—rule, which has severe impacts not only in the mining community but particularly in the agriculture community and other industries in and around the country.

Many parts of West Virginia continue to feel the impact of the devastating floods that we suffered a year ago June. So with my service on the Appropriations Committee, I worked diligently with others to ensure that our community needs are met.

That is the great thing about this country. I know Texas certainly and Florida, Puerto Rico, and other areas are weaving through these devastating weather-related and natural disasters. With all the sadness that is occurring and all the destruction that we see, the one thing we appreciate as Americans is our ability to come together and help one another. The first person I met when I was going to see the floods had traveled 51½ hours with their church to come and help those who had been flooded out of their homes. On the Appropriations Committee, we were able to get more funding for damage to roads and other property and individuals so that West Virginians could get back to work and provide for their families.

I also focused my efforts on ensuring that our State had the resources it needs to fight back against the continued devastation wrought by the drug epidemic.

Just yesterday or today, the CDC came out with a report that had lines on a graph that showed the different

age groups and the number of deaths that occurred because of opioids, and every line was going up.

The State of West Virginia has been particularly hard hit with this. We have the highest rate of opioid drug overdose deaths per 100,000 of any State in the Union.

I worked with the new CMS to try to help secure a Medicaid waiver that would allow West Virginians to expand substance abuse treatment and also services for Medicaid members and expand the ability for treatment to be offered to folks who have Medicaid. I partnered with officials from the Office of National Drug Control Policy to hear directly from West Virginians at a roundtable. The Chief of Staff of the White House office also participated in roundtables at the White House.

In honor of West Virginian Jessie Grubb, Senator MANCHIN and I saw the passage of Jessie's Law. This law bolsters our fight by requiring HHS to develop standards for hospitals and health professionals on a patient's history with addiction. Jessie Grubb admitted she was addicted when she was in the hospital. She wasn't in the hospital for addiction issues; she admitted she had an addiction problem. She left with opioids. She didn't live another 24 hours. In her honor, Senator MANCHIN and I have worked hard to see that this doesn't happen to another family.

As West Virginia continues to be ground zero for this epidemic, I won't stop my work for those who are suffering, including looking at innovative solutions like those we have at Lily's Place in Huntington for the babies who are born drug-exposed—again, innocent victims of those rising lines I saw in the charts the CDC put forward.

We have been working with law enforcement to ensure that they have the tools they need to administer emergency assistance, such as naloxone, to those who may be overdosing, or build on telehealth projects, demonstration projects that can help with substance abuse treatment.

I have always said that we need a spectrum of solutions. As we look back, we have done a lot. As we look forward, we have to do more because the problem is getting worse.

I think we also have had tremendous success and impact in our quest to connect West Virginia. I created a program called Capito Connect that would move high-speed internet connectivity into the rural parts of our country, in places like West Virginia that are underserved. Through Capito Connect and my GO Act, we have seen accelerated broadband access in West Virginia certainly but also in rural America. I was able to work with the USDA to get our local communities a consortium to secure a USDA loan to be able to move broadband to 9,000 more West Virginians.

So working with other agencies, EDA and others, on not just moving on broadband but economic development projects, we have seen impacts in 45 of

the 55 counties that I represent but also being able to create an associated 1,400 jobs.

Federal grants like these help not only our communities but our universities, such as Marshall and West Virginia Universities, which provide great benefits to our communities.

These are tangible achievements over the last year—both more global, such as the tax reform, and more local, as in broadband deployment.

The Senate also plays an important role by giving advice and consent on President Trump's nominations and confirming them. This year, Republicans made significant progress in shaping the judiciary, most certainly starting with the confirmation of our Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch. His strong record and straightforward approach are just what we expect from a Supreme Court Justice. I was proud to vote for his confirmation this year. We have also confirmed 12 circuit judges—the highest number during a President's first year since 1891.

I am pleased to say that as of yesterday, we had confirmed both of our U.S. attorneys in the State of West Virginia. I am very grateful for that because this fight against opioids has to have the U.S. attorney's help. It has to have the U.S. attorney aggression—not just with law enforcement but also helping with treatment.

So this year, I am proud that we addressed a lot of America's concerns. We have tackled challenges head-on and delivered real results. I am proud that President Trump and his administration are listening to the needs of small States like mine, West Virginia, and working with me to deliver that relief.

It has been an honor for me to host some Cabinet members in the State of West Virginia—I didn't see that over the last 8 years—Secretary Perry, Secretary of Energy; Secretary Mnuchin, Secretary of Treasury; and also the Secretary of Labor. We went on a coal mine tour with Secretary Acosta. This helps them see the kinds of ups and downs of life in rural and central United States—in Appalachia in particular.

We have a lot we have to do. We have a lot on our plate. I think it is always this time of year that, in my personal life, I like to look back at some of the great things that we have accomplished as a family or for those whom I love or some of the things that happened to us that maybe haven't been quite as good as we would have hoped. I also take this time to be a grateful person, to be a grateful American, to be a grateful West Virginian because we are so blessed with where we live and how we live and the bounty of our friendships. But I also take the time to look forward to what we are going to be able to do. So when I see tax reform kicking in next year, in 2018, that is what I am going to be looking forward to for so many hard-working West Virginians, so many hard-working small business owners, and so many people

who have been waiting for years—decades, in some cases—for the kind of reform that we put forward.

With that, I would like to yield back my time, but first I would just like to say that I am grateful to be serving with the three Members who are in here with me today. I wish everybody here and everybody listening in this country a very wonderful holiday season.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, let me make a comment to the Senator from West Virginia. One of the problems we have right now is that during the last administration, there was a war on fossil fuel—which includes coal and nuclear also—and some of the damage has already been done. Unfortunately, we can't come in with a ready fix now and assume—because a lot of the generators out there had done field switching out of coal, so you can't switch it back. So I will say it was help coming not quite on time, but nonetheless it is here now.

VA ACCOUNTABILITY AND VETERANS HEALTHCARE

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, let me mention something that is very significant to me personally. I remember it was 2 years ago today that I picked up USA TODAY, and in a USA TODAY article, they singled out my State of Oklahoma and said that we are not treating our veterans right. We were in shock at that time. In fact, the article detailed some really appalling things that were going on and were not going on in my State of Oklahoma. There were things the inspector general reported during the Obama administration that we had no way of knowing about.

We seem to have more veterans per capita in Oklahoma. One of the reasons is we have five major military establishments, and Oklahoma is a great place to live, so a lot of them retire there. They were not getting the help they need, and they were not getting the treatment to the highest standards that were available.

This isn't how we take care of veterans in Oklahoma. Senator LANKFORD and I and two of the House Members worked on this and talked to regional Veterans' Administration leadership. We talked to the veterans. We talked to whistleblowers. And we identified three key problems that we needed to fix. This is interesting because these are three problems in my State of Oklahoma, but they would be the same thing in Nebraska or any other State because it is not just in our State of Oklahoma.

The first one was that the VA couldn't fire bad employees.

This is always a problem. You go into an organization and you find that things are not going very well because there are one or two bad employees.

Yet it takes you a year before you are able to get rid of these people. Despite having been identified, it takes forever to terminate an employee.

Well, we fixed that this past summer when President Trump signed the VA Accountability Act that included our language to allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to immediately fire employees for misconduct or poor performance. That was successful. We did it. That is history.

I have to say that during President Trump's administration so far, he has used this firing authority on over 500 bad actors from the VA, and we are finally creating a culture of accountability in the VA, which is having positive results. That is the first reform.

The second one: Too many veterans were forced to receive care from VA facilities that were hours away or didn't provide specialized care.

This is a problem. A lot of these veterans don't have the capability to move around and get the care they need, and they didn't have the choices. So we actually had to make a change, and we did. We worked with the President and reauthorized the bipartisan VA Choice Program.

The VA Choice Program is great because it allowed our veterans to actually, in those hard-to-reach areas, get high-quality healthcare, regardless of where they had to travel to get it done. That was a success.

Finally, after the USA TODAY article, we requested an accredited third-party look at the problem at our VA facilities because previous reports from the Obama Veterans Affairs inspector general failed to identify and correct these problems. Well, my request was denied. It is just like any bureaucracy. They don't want someone looking over their shoulder, so they said: No, we are not going to allow you to have a third party accompany the VA to look into the problem that you have.

Some are not aware of this, but in the Senate, when someone is nominated, we can put a hold on them and not allow them to go through confirmation—at least for a long period of time. At that time, the President—our current President—had nominated a person to be the inspector general of the Veterans' Administration. We put a hold on him until they allowed someone to come in and monitor the evaluation that the VA was doing of their own bureaucracy in Oklahoma. That worked, except the problem with that is it was a one-time authorization. We needed to make that a permanent part of our structure. I am pleased to say we did that.

When we signed the Enhancing Veteran Care Act, it permanently granted the VISN directors—that is one of the director levels of the VA—and gave the medical center directors the authority to request, at their request, an outside oversight in order to evaluate what they had done. It has been very successful.

It is important for the regional directors to have the authority because

they have the best idea of the reality of care at their facilities.

I appreciate the work of my colleagues, Senator JAMES LANKFORD, Congressman MARKWAYNE MULLIN, and Congressman STEVE RUSSELL. It turned out to be a real good team, and we are able to get these things done. We are already starting to see real progress in improving the veterans' care in Oklahoma and across the country because as we are improving the system we had in Oklahoma, that same system can be improved in Nebraska or any other State.

We need to get our VA facilities from their current ratings to the highest standard. The highest standard rating is five stars. We are now up to three stars in Oklahoma. We were at one star when we first discovered this problem on that fateful day 2 years ago today in an article in USA TODAY.

President Trump will continue to be an important partner for Oklahoma as we continue to improve our veterans' care.

SUPPORTING OUR MILITARY

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, President Trump's commitment to our veterans is only matched by his commitment to our servicemembers and our national security. You can't really segregate it out and say, well, we are going to take care of our veterans' activities and then still say we are not going to allow our country to have the national security they fought so hard for.

We saw that earlier this week when the President outlined his national security strategy, charting a new course for American foreign policy, leaving behind the failed policies of the Obama administration. With his national security strategy, President Trump has been clear that he is committed to protecting the homeland, promoting American prosperity, and advancing peace through strength. Have you ever heard that before, peace through strength? I am one of the few who is old enough around here who remember our great President we had who talked about peace through strength when he had to rebuild the military after the Carter administration. It was actually as bad—or as downgraded as our military has become from the last administration.

Now he is asserting America's leadership in the free world. We saw how under President Obama the military was forced to divert resources for priorities that weren't even about defending America. He used the military to advance his liberal agenda, which led to the wasteful spending on what they call the green Navy and the green bullets. The idea that climate change was the largest threat to our national security, all of that has changed and not a moment too soon.

President Trump is focused on what matters, rightfully taking out things like just worrying about climate

change as opposed to rebuilding our military, and he is building it at a very rapid rate right now.

We passed the bill, the Defense authorization bill, and we have made a great start on this.

Now, when the President came into office, our military was facing a readiness crisis, and Americans didn't really understand this. They didn't know. They had not been told this. We had a biased media that didn't allow this information to get out. As an example, our Air Force today, right now, is short 1,500 pilots, and 1,300 of those are actually fighter pilots. Only 50 percent of the Air Force squadrons are trained and ready to conduct all of their assigned missions. I have to repeat that. Only 50 percent of our Air Force squadrons are trained and ready to defend America.

The Navy is the smallest and least ready it has been in years. It currently can only meet 40 percent of the demand for regional combat. The commanders in the field include only enough personnel to man six and a half of our nine carrier air wing.

A carrier air wing is something a lot of people are not familiar with. A carrier air wing has approximately 75 combat aircraft. Currently, we have manned only 6½ wings and are 8,000 sailors short.

This is an air wing. They have F-18s, they have EA-18s, they have F-35s, they have C-2As. Again, just a little over half of ours are actually ready. Well, that is the problem we are faced with right now. More than half of the Navy's F-18s are grounded because they are awaiting maintenance or lack of necessary parts. If you look at our Marines, our Marines are using F-18s, and 62 percent of F-18s will not fly. People are just shocked when they find out about it. It is because we don't have the spare parts. Well, we are getting busy on that. We are going to make sure we correct those problems.

The Army has said that only about one-third of their brigade combat teams, one-fourth of their air aviation brigades, and one-half of their division headquarters are currently ready.

A brigade combat team consists of 7 battalions, approximately 4,500 students. I wish I had time to come up with a chart on this, but the carrier wing is one that is absolutely necessary to get folks straight, and we plan on doing that.

Faced with the most dangerous threats I have seen in my lifetime, these are critical gaps in our military we simply cannot accept.

I often say, when I look back at the good old days of the Cold War, where we had two superpowers—and the superpowers, we knew what they had, they knew what we had. It is totally different now.

You have a country like North Korea, which has demonstrated that they have the capacity now to reach an American city. We learned that on November 28, when they actually dem-

onstrated a range that would reach one of our continental U.S. cities.

They tried to give us a little bit of comfort in saying, well, we don't know that they would be able to carry a warhead. We don't think they would have the capacity to do that. Well, we don't know that. That is not much comfort.

When they say: We don't have the capacity to be accurate on a reentry because of what a missile has to go through on a reentry, well, that is not very comforting that this would happen.

Anyway, the NDAA—the bill we passed, that the President signed into law—would be a good step in correcting the readiness shortfalls. I look forward to continuing to work with him on this critical process.

We have a committee that already is having hearings about the problems we are having. We had one, actually, in the subcommittee hearing I chaired just this week. We are busy correcting these problems.

Meanwhile, back to our VA problems in Oklahoma, we put two new great directors in the VA clinics. We have a level of veterans' care Oklahomans are proud of. Only yesterday, President Trump signed the Enhancing Veteran Care Act to ensure that we continue to give our veterans the best care. They deserve it, and they are going to get it.

At the same time, we are going to restore and rebuild the military as our Nation's No. 1 priority. Our troops deserve it, and they are going to get it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from South Carolina.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. President.

This week, we took a major step toward helping the middle- and working-class family by passing the first significant tax reform package in a generation.

I wanted to take a few minutes to thank a lot of folks for their efforts, hard work, and dedication to this process. At the Member level, both Leader MCCONNELL and Chairman HATCH did amazing work leading us through this process.

I also had the privilege of working as part of the Core 4, with PAT TOOMEY, JOHN THUNE, and ROB PORTMAN, over the past year developing this bill. Those three guys are some of the hardest working Members we have.

I also thank MARCO RUBIO for his dedication to improving the child tax credit, as well as MIKE LEE and Ivanka Trump.

We were also able to include my Investing in Opportunity Act as a part of the legislation. This is legislation that will help distressed communities throughout the country. More than 50 million Americans today live in those distressed communities, and the Investing in Opportunity Act can usher

in trillions of dollars of investment to improve the quality of life and create a spark in some of the most challenging areas of our country economically.

I thank my House sponsor of the bill, PAT TIBERI, and my Democratic cosponsors, Corey Booker and RON KIND.

We could not have gotten this far without the hard work and dedication of the Finance Committee staff. I thank, in particular, Jay, Mark, Jeff, Jenn, as well as the entire Finance team for their amazing work.

I also want to take a few minutes to thank my staff. I have been blessed with an amazing staff here on Capitol Hill, one of the hardest working staffs I have ever seen. I want to start off by thanking my tax guru, Shay Hawkins, who has done a tremendous job of leading us through this process—fielding thousands of calls and responding to tens of thousands of emails. I would also like to thank my LD, Charles Cogar, for his dedication and his leadership through this time. My chief of staff, Jennifer DeCasper, has done an amazing job of making sure we stayed focused on the objective. The objective was not to simply pass legislation; the objective was, in fact, to change lives where we live, to help the average American experience a little more hope, a little more opportunity by keeping a little more of their money. I also thank my commerce director who has done a fabulous job, Sean Smith, in making sure we communicated effectively the message of hope and opportunity, and my scheduler, Brie Kelly. Thank God for someone who could keep me moving in the right direction. One of the hardest jobs in Washington is being a scheduler for a Member, and being a scheduler for this Member is perhaps the hardest job of scheduling.

My entire team worked diligently, long hours, but that is why we are here. We are here to work long hours, but to produce results—unparalleled results—that will make the American people have just a little more confidence in their elected officials.

Finally, I have to thank the good people of South Carolina. I was first elected to Congress in 2010, and one of my first pieces of legislation was the Tax Reform Act of 2011—February of 2011—to lower the corporate tax rate and to work on restructuring our Tax Code.

Since my first days in Congress, I have been working on this issue. The good people of South Carolina allowed me to serve as a Senator. I was elected in 2014 and reelected in 2016. I will continue to make sure my focus is back at home, where the good South Carolinians who elected me have given me a great privilege.

I will focus on the fact that our work, our dedication should be focused on those folks. The good news is, during this holiday season, we believe this tax reform package will be an early Christmas present.

Let me just say to all the folks, no matter what side of the aisle you are

on, no matter where you live in this country, we are blessed—truly blessed—to live in the greatest country on God's green Earth. Merry Christmas, and may the good Lord bless us with an amazing new year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

POWER ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, as we all know, more and more brave women are speaking out about the abuse that has been reported in the papers—abuse by the powerful, in many cases. I want to say at the outset that the country applauds these women for their courage and for setting an example for others.

Some of the stories we have heard about involve sexual harassment, but some of the other stories also appear to involve even more serious crimes, including domestic violence and sexual assault, which is an incredibly important issue that often gets underreported all across the country. As a result of these news stories, I am certainly hopeful these kinds of problems—the domestic violence problems we have in America—are going to start to receive the attention they need and deserve.

Just as we are seeing more men fired from jobs because of sexual harassment and assault, we also need to see more get the punishment they deserve, in a court of law, for violent abuse. We also need to make sure victims are protected and that they have an advocate—a lawyer—who is on their side in these cases.

Unfortunately, many who are suffering from domestic abuse and sexual assault can't afford attorneys to file charges or, importantly, to even protect themselves and their families, their kids. Here is the big irony: When someone is charged with a crime—say a sexual assault crime, say an accused rapist—that person gets a Sixth Amendment right to counsel under the U.S. Constitution. So the perpetrator gets the right to a lawyer. What does the victim get? The victim gets nothing—no attorney, no right to an attorney.

Think about that. An accused rapist gets a lawyer under the Constitution and the victim gets nothing. In fact, what they often get, in terms of crimes, are prosecutors, if it is a criminal case. Prosecutors do a good job, but they are often looking to score a win rather than looking out for the victim and the survivor. If it is a civil case, survivors usually go without attorneys.

I believe this is wrong. Fortunately, we have been working on this in this body. We have a bill to change that. Senator HERTKAMP and I introduced a bill in the Senate that was passed unanimously by this body several months ago—and actually passed it last Congress as well—called the Pro

bono Work to Empower and Represent Act, known as the POWER Act. Congressman JOE KENNEDY in the House has introduced a companion bill where it likewise has enjoyed broad bipartisan support. Some of the most conservative Republicans and some of the most liberal Democrats are showing a broad array of support in the House just as it has enjoyed in the Senate.

When it passes through both Chambers, the bill will be a robust first step in making more lawyers available, working on a pro bono basis for victims and survivors who can't afford representation. There are thousands—tens of thousands—who fall into that category, unfortunately.

So what is the problem we are trying to solve? Domestic violence and sexual assault happens every hour, every day, in every part of our country. According to a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control, roughly 25 percent of American women will be victims of domestic assault in their lifetimes—one in four—25 percent. That is a horrendous statistic. Every day in the United States, on average, three women are killed by a current or former intimate partner, according to the National Network to End Domestic Violence. That is also a shocking, horrendous statistic.

No place is immune. This kind of violence happens in small towns, in big cities, on college campuses, and in suburban homes. This violence transcends political affiliation, race, and socioeconomic status. I know a number of my colleagues have watched as I like to come to the Senate floor and talk about my State—the great State of Alaska—and I like to talk about how many things are so wonderful about Alaska. One thing that isn't wonderful about Alaska is, we have the highest rates of domestic violence and sexual assault in the country. So this is certainly happening in my State, and it is one of the reasons I care so much about this issue. It is happening in every State—every State represented in the U.S. Senate.

There are no simple solutions to combat this issue of nationwide domestic violence, but experts do agree that securing a lawyer for victims is one of the best ways, if not the best way, to get victims and survivors out of their difficult situation—out of what often is a cycle of violence—to get them shelter, housing, and medical care, and protective orders.

Studies have shown that when an abused victim is represented by an attorney, their ability to break out of the cycle of violence increases dramatically. One study found that 83 percent of victims represented by a lawyer were able to obtain a protective order compared to just 32 percent in domestic violence situations when they weren't represented by an attorney.

Not only would more legal representation help victims and survivors of abuse, but it would also help protect children. In these situations, children

are often abused as well. Paige Hodson from Anchorage is a survivor herself. She has been working for years with thousands of women as an advocate for women who are trying to get out of abusive relationships and women who are also trying to protect their children. These are complicated and often difficult issues and cases, but Paige has said it is critical for both the safety of the mom and the kids to make sure they are represented by an attorney.

So what does the POWER Act do? Every area of our country—every part of America—is represented by a judicial district that is represented by a U.S. attorney. Under the authority of the Justice Department, some States have several U.S. attorney districts. Alaska has only one.

Utilizing this national framework of all of our different U.S. attorneys throughout America, the POWER Act sets out a way to increase connections between lawyers and victims, between advocates and survivors. The bill, which has already passed the Senate, directs each U.S. attorney to hold at least one annual event, inviting lawyers and legal service representatives who want to provide their legal services and pro bono time to empower victims by representing them.

It also requires U.S. attorneys to plan and hold events with a focus on addressing these kinds of crimes—domestic violence and sexual assault—in Indian Country and among Alaska Native populations, where some of the abuse in the lower 40 and in my State is very, very high.

Another important point about the POWER Act is that it would not add a dime—not one penny—to the Federal debt. But here is what it would do: It would create an army of lawyers—thousands of lawyers—to defend survivors of abuse. Think about that positive vision. Think about that positive vision and goal. What a great way for Americans, especially attorneys, to rise up in a positive and constructive way in response to all the bad news we are reading almost daily about these issues and show the better angles, the better side of our country.

The model for this bill came from my State of Alaska. As I mentioned, we have the highest rates of domestic violence and sexual assault in the country—something that no Alaskan is proud of. When I was attorney general, working closely with our legislature, our Governor, and many of the victims advocacy groups, we launched a strategy called the Choose Respect Campaign. The Choose Respect Campaign highlighted this problem in our great State.

We did public service announcements about how real Alaskan men choose respect; we changed the laws to make the penalties for perpetrators much harder; and we provided increased services for victims. One way we did that was to hold what were called pro bono legal summits. I hosted those summits. We brought together lawyers and victims

advocacy groups, legal services groups, and this actually worked. It worked. By 2014, over 100 cases in our State were handled by volunteer attorneys providing thousands and thousands of hours of volunteer legal assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Think about that. Alaska has a little over 700,000 people, and we had over 100 attorneys come out—thousands of hours, just in our State, with a small population. If we could take this model to 300 million Americans, we literally would have an army of lawyers helping survivors with volunteer time and helping meet this significant unmet need throughout our country.

As I mentioned, the POWER Act passed unanimously in the Senate, but, unfortunately, it is being held up in the House. Ironically, it is stuck in the Judiciary Committee—the committee focused on bringing justice to Americans. It is stuck there. Remember, this is not going to cost a dime, yet it has been stuck for months in the Judiciary Committee. It is kind of ironic. These victims need help, and this bill will do that.

It is not only my bill to help victims and survivors of sexual assault that is stuck in the Judiciary Committee. My colleague, the majority whip from Texas, Senator CORNYN, has a very important bill that he came to the floor of the Senate just last week to talk about. It is called the SAFER Act and will help States ease the nationwide backlog of thousands of untested rape kits that currently sit untested in labs and on police storage shelves across the country. There are thousands. Ending this backlog could take perpetrators off the streets and provide victims and survivors the justice they deserve. We know this would work. We know that would help.

The SAFER Act passed the Senate under the leadership of Senator CORNYN. Let me talk about how important that bill is to the country. In my State, there are 3,484 untested rape kits, more per capita than any State in the country. Anchorage, my hometown, has one untested kit for every 164 residents. In Juneau, AK, it is one for every 160 residents. The backlogs are all across the country. As Senator CORNYN pointed out in his speech, there are 2,000 kits that remain untested in his State, the State of Texas. In Virginia, where the State legislature has made this kind of testing a priority, there are also more than 2,000 kits sitting on police shelves.

The Detroit Free Press recently reported on how, in 2009, officials stumbled onto more than 11,000 untested rape kits. After they raised enough money to test them, 817 serial rapists were identified. That is why this is so important. Once these kits are processed, they often give us the evidence to go after the abusers, the criminals.

It is remarkable to me that both of these bills—the SAFER Act that Senator CORNYN has championed and the

POWER Act that Senator HEITKAMP and I have championed—are sitting in the House Judiciary Committee. Victims are not getting justice right now with these bills sitting there.

Why on Earth would such bipartisan legislation, which would literally end up helping thousands of survivors and probably bring to justice hundreds of criminals who commit these heinous crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence—why on Earth would we have bills, which have bipartisan support and little to no impact on the Federal Treasury, stuck in the House Judiciary Committee? It is beyond comprehension.

To my colleagues in the House, let's move this. Let's move these bills before the holidays. Let's start focusing on bringing justice to people who really need it.

Helping victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault is not a Republican issue, it is not a Democratic issue, it is not a women's issue, and it is not a men's issue. It is an issue that affects all of us. Working together—as Senators, as Members of the House, as Americans—we should clearly unite in this cause, which transcends politics or ideologies, because we can start changing the culture of abuse. That is what we have been trying to do in Alaska. It is going to take a long time. It is going to take a long time, but we need to act.

I am hopeful that my colleagues in the House—my colleagues particularly in the Judiciary Committee—recognize the urgency of these kinds of situations and will move the SAFER Act and the POWER Act out of committee and get it on the floor for a vote as soon as possible.

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. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague, Senator MARK WARNER from Virginia, for his powerful and eloquent remarks on the floor less than 24 hours ago. He talked about the threat that exists now—looming larger every day—of a constitutional crisis. It is a crisis that threatens the foundations of our democracy. It involves a potential confrontation and, indeed, a legal conflagration between the President of the United States and the special counsel who has been appointed to investigate wrongdoing in our government.

None of the facts that justified—indeed, required—the appointment of a special counsel has been controverted in any reasonable way by anyone since

the appointment of that special counsel. Now a campaign of mistruth and misdirection has been launched against that special counsel investigation. It is a campaign that is calculated, concerted, and coordinated. It is calculated because it is planned and premeditated; it is concerted in its consistency and vehemence; and it is coordinated among officials within the government, including the U.S. Congress and commentators and individuals outside the government.

The danger of a constitutional crisis is real and urgent, and we must come together in the U.S. Senate to face it and address it and deal with it.

This body has come together in the past when America has faced a foreign adversary that has sought to do our Nation harm. We have come together to hold our leaders accountable when they have broken faith with the American people. We have come together when forces of dissension and misdirection have sought to undermine or weaken respect for the law and law enforcement and, indeed, the rule of law. What is at stake here is nothing less than the rule of law.

Let's recognize what is happening. The President, in effect, is going down two tracks. On the one hand, he is saying that he has no present intention to fire the special counsel or to pardon anyone—yet. He adds that word very distinctly. The other track involves a coordinated, concerted, and calculated campaign that is continuing—indeed, rising—in intensity and volume.

The President's supporters, even in raising that volume, have reached extraordinary lows. Let's remember. At first, our Republican colleagues appeared to recognize that Robert Mueller was eminently—indeed, uniquely—qualified for his important task. Republican House Members called him a “man of the utmost integrity” and “someone we all trust.” Now we hear that the Mueller investigation is somehow biased. One commentator known to be close to President Trump suggested that the special counsel should not only be fired, he should be arrested. Even Members of Congress who once recognized Mr. Mueller's stellar record as a member of the Armed Forces, as well as in his capacity as the FBI Director, as a prosecutor, and as a public servant, have impugned his integrity. Indeed, they have begun to sow seeds of doubt.

A chorus of defenders and sycophants has launched this campaign—calculated, concerted, and coordinated—to smear the special counsel, to impugn the integrity of the FBI—to, indeed, directly attack this great and important institution. They have decided to do it in that concerted and coordinated and calculated way. The President, himself, has said that the FBI's reputation is in tatters.

An article that appeared today in *POLITICO* described an effort by a House Republican on the Intelligence Committee to initiate a sustained at-

tack on the Department of Justice and the FBI. The President's chorus of defenders and sycophants describes routine law enforcement activities as a “coup” and traffics in the kinds of conspiracy theories that we usually associate with fringe internet chat rooms.

What is their justification for this vituperative attack on the Department of Justice and the FBI?

One of the FBI agents expressed his political views in a private text to an FBI attorney, but the special counsel took swift and decisive and deliberate action to remove that FBI agent from the investigation.

More broadly, let's recognize the reality here. As a Federal prosecutor, as the U.S. attorney for Connecticut for 4½ years, and then as the State attorney general for 20 years, I know—and all of us who have been prosecutors know—that investigators, like FBI agents, have political views. Some are on the right end of the political spectrum; some are on the left. The mark of their professionalism is that they leave them at home when they go to work. They park them at the door, not just because it is what they are taught and trained to do, but they believe in unbiased law enforcement because they know that a criminal investigation, ultimately, comes down to facts and law. It cannot be based on political opinions. Investigations that are biased by political opinions are doomed to disaster.

Perhaps most importantly, there is not a scintilla of fact—not a shred of evidence—that the special counsel investigation has been impacted in any way by any political view of any FBI agent or, for that matter, anyone else in that investigation. There is, simply, no evidence that political views have impacted the special counsel's investigation.

The simple fact that prosecutors know is that all such investigations must seek to uncover the facts and apply the law, and that is what Special Counsel Robert Mueller has done. The proof is in the results so far—two powerful convictions that have shattered the Trump Presidency and two indictments that indicate this investigation is just at its beginning, not at the beginning of the end but, simply, the end of the beginning. These trials of the two indictments will go well into next year, as will the investigation. That there will be more convictions and more indictments, I think, can be pretty reliably predicted to a near certainty.

Beyond this investigation, we all know in this Chamber—and, certainly, any of us who have been involved in law enforcement—that public trust and confidence are essential. The President, himself, has said he is “a true friend and loyal champion” for law enforcement and “more loyal than anyone else can be.” He has pointed out that law enforcement officials, like our police and FBI agents and DEA and others, “rush into danger every day,”

and he has criticized the folks who have subjected them to “relentless criticism.” He has promised to always stand with them. Those promises apply, apparently, to law enforcement as long as they are not investigating him.

The President has said that he has no present intention to fire the special counsel, but he has far from ruled it out. For anyone who thinks it would be too outside the bounds of normal standards, remember that the firing of Jim Comey as FBI Director was regarded as unthinkable. It was unthinkable until President Trump did it.

Equally important, this chorus of defenders and sycophants can undermine the Mueller investigation even if Mueller, himself, is never fired. They can poison the well of public opinion and, indeed, a jury pool. They can sow seeds of doubt regarding the special counsel and his team, and they can lay the groundwork for firing Robert Mueller as well as for issuing pardons.

Let no one have any doubt. Firing Robert Mueller would create a firestorm that would be every bit as vehement as the Saturday Night Massacre. It would provoke an uprising, an outcry, and outrage in the American people and in this Chamber. The time to make that fact clear is now, not just for this side of the aisle but with unanimity and force on both sides.

That chorus of defenders and sycophants may think or imagine it can prevent the special counsel from revealing his finding or reporting to the American people at the conclusion of his investigation or that it can discredit or demean those findings or that it can undermine his credibility before a jury. It would be wrong because this body and our colleagues are committed to uncovering the truth, to pursuing it wherever it leads, and to enforcing the law.

That is my hope and belief, but it must not only be a hope; it must be reflected in action—in real action. That involves passing legislation that will send a message about this body's resolute and unwavering commitment to making sure that the special counsel cannot be fired, that pardons cannot be issued, and that this investigation cannot be a victim of political interference.

The President has indicated that he is averse to hearing about Russia or considering its threat to this country. That aversion certainly sets back his ability to defend this country against the Russian threat by sanctions and other means and deterrents that will assure that Russia is made to pay a price so they do not do it again.

In conclusion, let me just say that that aversion must be overcome. We need to send a signal, as we did by passing sanctions, that we will take action against Russia to stop it from interfering again in this election, that we will make sure that Russia is made to pay a price, and that our constituents know that we will insist on a fair

and independent investigation without political interference, passing legislation that is bipartisan that has been offered by Republicans as well as Democrats, including myself, and should be moved through the Judiciary Committee and to the floor of this Congress. That message is all the more important now as this investigation penetrates the White House for the first time in the Flynn conviction, coming closer to the Oval Office itself. A real and robust congressional investigation of those efforts through the Judiciary Committee, as well as obstruction of justice, continues to be necessary, but we should combine our efforts to make sure that law enforcement and the judicial process moves forward without political interference that will undermine its credibility.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, I yield the floor to Senators JOHNSON and MARKEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I wish to thank my colleagues Senator WARNER and Senator BLUMENTHAL for their words on the Senate floor—Senator WARNER's words yesterday especially, defending Special Counsel Robert Mueller, in his leadership on the Senate Intelligence Committee's Russia investigation. Senator WARNER is absolutely right that we must protect the integrity of the Justice Department's independent investigation.

Congress needs to make clear that there are redlines. Any attempt to fire Robert Mueller, to shut down the investigation, or to presumptively pardon key witnesses essential to the investigation would be an abuse of power and a direct threat to the rule of law and to our constitutional system.

Ohio's Ukrainian community knows the impact of unchecked Russian aggression in Russia's effort to undermine democracy around the world. Getting to the bottom of Russian interference and protecting our future elections from that interference are critical.

My priority is getting to the bottom of what happened so that our democratic process is upheld and so we can move forward with the business we were sent here to do—creating jobs, combatting the opioid crisis, as Senators JOHNSON, MARKEY, and I will speak about in a moment, and helping middle-class families. Any efforts to delay that conclusion or interfere in the investigation, I believe, will not be tolerated by Senators in either party.

Thanks to Senator WARNER for making that clear. Thanks to my colleagues in both parties who take this seriously. All of us have had serious conversations with Members of both parties to discuss what all this means, and thank you for all of us working to-

gether to complete the independent Senate investigation. It is important that we make clear to the American people that this is not a partisan issue. It is about the integrity of our elections, about protecting our country from foreign powers.

Any attempt to discredit Robert Mueller and his investigation and to turn it into a partisan issue makes us less safe as a nation. Let's allow the Justice Department and the special counsel to do their jobs. Let's get back to doing ours.

INTERDICT ACT

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, as we await Senator MARKEY's and Senator JOHNSON's remarks, I wish to set the stage. The CDC released a new report last night showing a massive increase in the number of Americans dying from drug overdoses.

My State is second to the Presiding Officer's State. It has the second highest rate of deaths per capita in the country. In my State of Ohio, unfortunately, far too many people die from opioid overdoses than any other State in country. Families are torn apart. Children lose parents. Parents lose sons and daughters.

The CDC pins much of the blame of this epidemic on this relatively new deadly synthetic fentanyl. Fentanyl is 50 times stronger than heroin. Senator CAPITO knows that, as do Senators Johnson and Markey. All of us in the Senate are aware of that.

This drug is being illegally trafficked into this country from Mexico and China. We have a bill to stop this today. The INTERDICT Act. I want to thank Senator MARKEY for his leadership on this bill and also my colleague Senator PORTMAN for his support. Senator PORTMAN and I have been working on a number of issues across party lines for months and months. It would provide more funds for Customs and Border Protection to screen packages effectively and safely, to stop fentanyl whenever possible before it reaches Akron, Toledo, Dayton, or the smaller cities of Chillicothe, Mansfield, and Zanesville.

This passed the House with only two or three negative votes. It has the support of major law enforcement organizations, including sheriffs and police officers. Our law enforcement officials, better than anybody, see the devastation that fentanyl causes our communities. They know the risk our officers face dealing with this deadly substance. That is why this bill needs to pass into law.

Just this week, the National FOP, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the Police Assisted Addiction Recovery Initiative—a recent phenomenon, unfortunately—all publicly asked us to pass the bill.

Americans are dying in record numbers. Life expectancy in our country—I believe, for the first time in the lifetimes of any of us—actually dropped last year. Think about that.

We have made progress, as I mentioned, in this body. I wear a pin on my lapel of a canary in a bird cage. The mine workers in West Virginia, Ohio, and elsewhere would take this canary down to the mines. If the canary died, the mine worker was on his own. He didn't have a union strong enough or a government that cared enough to help him. In those days, people lived 45 years on average—for a person born in the United States in 1900.

Today we live 30 years longer for a whole host of public health reasons—from Medicare to Medicaid, to safe drinking laws, to clean air, to minimum wage—all the things that we do. For the first time, I believe, in our lifetime, life expectancy actually has dropped because of drug overdoses for the second year in a row, and it is in large part because of these overdose deaths.

Why shouldn't we take steps today to stop this? We can do this by putting the INTERDICT Act on the President's desk, immediately giving law enforcement the tools they need to keep fentanyl out of the country and off our streets.

Mr. MARKEY. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BROWN. Of course.

Mr. MARKEY. I thank the Senator for yielding, and I thank the Senator from Ohio for talking about this very important issue.

Fentanyl is a killer that is descending upon every single community in the United States. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times more powerful than morphine. Fentanyl is the Godzilla of opioids.

Senator BROWN represents Ohio; I represent Massachusetts. The fentanyl epidemic has a bull's-eye on Ohio and a bull's-eye on Massachusetts. The deaths from fentanyl are skyrocketing. In 2016, upwards of 70 to 75 percent of all of the opioid deaths in Massachusetts were because of fentanyl. Fentanyl was found in the blood system of those people who died. Last year, 2,000 people in Massachusetts died of overdoses. Three-quarters of them had fentanyl. If the epidemic had been hitting the rest of the country at the same rate that it has been hitting Massachusetts, last year 75,000 people would have died with fentanyl in their blood systems.

Last night, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released shocking new numbers on drug overdose deaths in the United States. These numbers show the spike in deaths caused by fentanyl and other synthetic opioids.

Here are the new numbers nationwide. More than 42,000 Americans died from an opioid overdose last year. That is a 27-percent increase over the number of Americans who died from an opioid overdose in 2015. It went up 27 percent from 2015 to 2016. Of the 42,000 lives lost to opioids last year, nearly half of them nationwide—just over

19,000—can be directly attributed to fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. The number is a much higher percentage in Massachusetts.

Fentanyl is overrunning our communities, laying waste to them. There is no easy solution, but we know that we must staunch the flow of this drug before we lose an entire generation to this terrible killer. That is why I introduced legislation with Senator BROWN and Senator RUBIO to help those on the frontlines stop this deadly drug from ever getting into our communities. The bill is called the INTERDICT Act. It provides badly needed high-tech equipment and other scientific resources to U.S. Customs and Border Protection to catch illicit fentanyl being trafficked into the United States, mainly from China and Mexico.

When U.S. Customs and Border Protection detects a suspicious package or substance, it has had very good success identifying an illicit drug like fentanyl with the help of high-tech, hand-held chemical screening devices. Using these devices, Customs and Border Protection agents can detect, identify, and seize illicit drugs like fentanyl on the spot. Those rapid results provide vital information for border agents to continue their investigation and, if appropriate, proceed with seizure and arrest.

What is more, these devices and their ability to immediately identify fentanyl and other hazardous illicit substances also serve to safeguard the health and well-being of Customs and Border Protection agents so they are not accidentally exposed to fentanyl. That is what these devices help to make possible.

So we introduced the INTERDICT Act with SHERROD BROWN of Ohio; Senator CAPITO, the Presiding Officer in the Senate today; Senator RUBIO; and we have added another 16 Senators from both sides of the aisle.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I would be glad to yield.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I thank Senator MARKEY for his leadership on this issue. This has gotten this far because of his efforts in so many ways.

I want to enter into the RECORD three letters that are dated yesterday and today. Actually, one is from the National Fraternal Order of Police, signed by Chuck Canterbury, their national president, in support of this bill, with a very persuasive, passionate laying out of reasons it matters. The second is a letter from the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, signed by Dominick Stokes. Mr. Stokes is a longtime friend of mine. The third letter is from the Police Assisted Addiction Recovery Initiative group, signed by Frederick Ryan, all making endorsements for this bill.

I ask unanimous consent those three letters be printed in the RECORD.

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

NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE,

Washington, DC, December 20, 2017.

Hon. A. MITCHELL MCCONNELL, JR.,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS MCCONNELL AND SCHUMER: I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to urge the Senate to consider H.R. 2142, the "International Narcotics Trafficking Emergency Response by Detecting Incoming Contraband with Technology (INTERDICT) Act," which passed the House 412-3 in October.

Heroin and prescription opiates have created a devastating epidemic across our country, and now these overdoses outnumber gunshot deaths and motor vehicle deaths. This epidemic has worsened with the influx of synthetic opiates like fentanyl from foreign countries, especially China and Mexico. For example, synthetic fentanyl is cheaper than normal opiates bought on the street and it is 50 times more deadly than heroin.

Our law enforcement officers at the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are on the forefront of stopping the deadly influx of synthetic fentanyl into our communities from these foreign countries. The CBP needs all the resources they can get to stop this devastating flow of drugs into our country.

This legislation will ensure that CBP will have additional portable chemical screening devices at ports of entry, mail and express consignment facilities, and more fixed chemical screening devices at CBP laboratories. The bill will also provide CBP with sufficient resources, personnel, and facilities, including scientists to interpret the screening test results from the field.

With all the additional resources CBP will be better equipped on all fronts to thwart the deadly flow of synthetic opiates across our borders.

On behalf of the more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I want to thank you for helping fight against the heroin and opioid epidemic and fighting every day to rid our communities of these drugs. If I can be of any additional help to you, please feel free to contact me or my Senior Advisor, Jim Pasco, in my Washington office.

Sincerely,

CHUCK CANTERBURY,
National President.

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

OFFICERS ASSOCIATION,

Cabin John, MD, December 21, 2017.

Hon. A. MITCHELL MCCONNELL, JR.,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS MCCONNELL AND SCHUMER: I am writing on behalf of the members of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA) which is a professional organization representing more than 26,000 federal officers and agents in 65 law enforcement agencies including the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP). FLEOA has endorsed H.R. 2142, the "International Narcotics Trafficking Emergency Response by Detecting Incoming Contraband and Technology (INTERDICT) Act" which passed the House with a 412-3 vote. I urge the Senate to consider this bill for passage.

Probably the most serious crisis facing law enforcement is the proliferation of heroin and opiate drugs, which are causing more deaths from overdoses than ever experienced before. In fact, synthetic opiates like fentanyl are now the leading cause of overdoses because they are cheaper and dramatically stronger than heroin.

The INTERDICT Act will provide CBP with portable screening devices at ports of entry

and mail facilities. In addition, it will increase detection devices at CBP testing facilities and laboratories. The Act will also provide CBP with additional staffing and resources. This will allow CBP to successfully diminish the importation of synthetic opiates into the United States.

FLEOA applauds your assistance in helping CBP and the other federal agencies in their efforts to reduce the plague these illegal substances have induced on our country.

Sincerely,

DOMINICK STOKES,
FLEOA V.P. for Legislation.

POLICE ASSISTED

ADDICTION RECOVERY INITIATIVE,

Gloucester, MA, December 21, 2017.

Hon. A. MITCHELL MCCONNELL, JR.,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS MCCONNELL AND SCHUMER: The Police Assisted Addiction Recovery Initiative (PAARI) is a nonprofit organization that trains and supports more than 360 law enforcement agencies that have launched programs that serve as a pre-arrest bridge to treatment. PAARI was pleased to offer its strong support for S. 708, the bipartisan INTERDICT Act, which was introduced by Senators Markey, Rubio, Brown, and Capito. This bill will expand U.S. Customs and Border Protection's ability to use technology to detect fentanyl and other narcotics coming into the United States from abroad and which are causing a public health epidemic in our communities.

While the Senate has yet to act on S. 708, the House of Representatives took action and on 25 October 2017, passed companion legislation HR 2142, by a vote of 412-3. As this year draws to a close, we urge the Senate to take up and pass the House version of INTERDICT this year.

Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the United States, with more than 54,000 overdose deaths reported in 2015. Almost 33,000 of those overdose deaths—roughly 60 percent—involved opioids, including prescription opioid pain relievers, heroin, or the synthetic opioid fentanyl. In particular, as the CDC's recent report has just shown, fentanyl and its analogs are becoming increasingly responsible for these overdose deaths.

Fentanyl is up to 50 times more powerful than heroin and 100 times more powerful than morphine. It is dangerous and potentially life-threatening to simply touch or accidentally inhale the white powdery substance. Sometimes, unbeknownst to the user, fentanyl is often mixed with heroin or other substances, or formed to resemble prescription opioid pills. Most illicit fentanyl comes to the United States from China and Mexico, delivered through the mail or express consignment carriers, or smuggled across the southwest border of the United States. The INTERDICT Act will help the United States better identify and stop these dangerous substances from landing in communities across America.

Now is the time to act. This holiday season too many seats at too many tables are empty due to the unrelenting flow of fentanyl into the United States. We must give our law enforcement personnel the tools necessary to stop this flow. We can do that, in part, by getting the INTERDICT Act to the President's desk this year. That is why PAARI strongly supports this important legislation which will give U.S. Customs and Border Protection the additional resources it needs to fight the flow of fentanyl and other deadly drugs into the United States.

Sincerely,

FREDERICK RYAN,

*Chief of Police, Arlington
Massachusetts,*

*PAARI Board of Directors Co-Chairman,
PAARI National Police Council Chairman.*

Mr. BROWN. I think it is pretty clear how important this is. This bill got, I believe, 2 or maybe 3 negative votes out of 400-some in the House of Representatives. There is no organization I know of that opposes it. I hear from people in my State consistently about how important this is, from police organizations to parents, to individual police officers and county sheriffs and all, and deputy sheriffs.

There is just no reason we shouldn't be able to do this before we go home for Christmas. There are a lot of things we should do before we go home for Christmas, including the Children's Health Insurance Program, but this is one we know we can do. There seems to be no substantive disagreement from any large number of groups or individuals that I can see, so I am hopeful we can move forward with this in the next few minutes.

Mr. MARKEY. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BROWN. Yes.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I thank the Senator for yielding.

Can I just list the names of the organizations that support this bill so the police can interdict, stop the fentanyl from coming into our country?

It is the National Fraternal Order of Police, it is the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, it is the National Border Control Council, it is the Police Assisted Recovery Initiative, it is the National Sheriffs' Association, the National Tactical Officers Association, the National Association of Police Organizations, the National Narcotics Officers' Associations' Coalition, the Sergeants Benevolent Association, the American Legion, the International Union of Police Associations, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Major County Sheriffs of America, and the Massachusetts Coalition of Police. So it is pretty much every single law enforcement agency at all levels in the country saying: Please give us this tool now so we can detect this incredible killer in our country.

Three former Commissioners of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, appointed by both Democratic and Republican Presidents, support the INTERDICTION Act. President Trump's nominee to head the agency, Kevin McAleenan, testified that he supports getting more of these high-tech scanners into the hands of Customs and Border Patrol.

Despite working for months with Senate leadership to try and secure authorization for funding, we just can't seem to get this over the finish line so that in the new year they have these devices. The way it works is, you just put the device up next to a package, and it will tell you if it has got fentanyl or not. Right now, many law enforcement agencies will not even allow one of their police dogs to sniff

for fentanyl because it will kill the police dog. That is how dangerous fentanyl is, and that is why these electronic devices are so important. It ensures that we have minimized the exposure of our officers to these substances and, at the same time, dramatically increase the likelihood that we are going to identify the fentanyl in a package and, as a result, deter these people from China or from Mexico who bring it into our country and are killing us by the thousands.

At 42,000 deaths last year, it is now approximating the total number of deaths in the war in Vietnam throughout its entire history. That is just 1 year, 42,000 people—1 year. That is a terrorist attack of a magnitude on our own streets that is unimaginable.

With these devices, we don't completely solve the problem, but we put more weapons in the hands of our law enforcement officials, detection devices that can minimize the likelihood that these terrible people from China, from Mexico, principally, can bring this stuff into our country.

So this is a huge issue. It goes right to the heart of the seriousness of dealing with this issue. My only hope is, we have an ability to be able to move this thing forward in a way that lets the American people say: We understand the issues you want us to work on, and the opioid crisis is at the top of the list. It is indiscriminate. It affects potentially every family. No one is immune to addiction. No family is immune from addiction. It could hit any family at any time, and fentanyl is the ultimate killer.

I thank the Senator.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I thank Senator MARKEY and hope we can work things out with Senator JOHNSON on this issue.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. BROWN. Yesterday, Madam President, a bunch of Members of Congress, with healthcare paid for by taxpayers, went to the White House and celebrated a handout for corporations that sends jobs overseas—companies that shut down in Mansfield, in Zanesville, in Lima, and Toledo moved to Wuhan and Sheshan and Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Families here in America, at the same time—I am still incredulous about this. Families in this country, at the same time—in this State of Virginia, just a few miles from here—are getting letters in the mail saying their kids are about to be kicked off their health insurance through something that was bipartisan and never interrupted for 20 years since Chairman HATCH and Senator Rockefeller and Senator KENNEDY wrote this bill to create CHIP—and a number of us worked on it in the House of Representatives—because Congress hasn't done its job.

Think about that. Because Congress hasn't done its job, we are about to go

home for Christmas—most of us—and those who don't celebrate Christmas are about to go home for the holidays and celebrate the new year. My grandchildren are coming from Columbus, and another one is coming from the Virgin Islands with his father—our son and his daughter-in-law. We are going to go home, and our families have health insurance, but Members of Congress who get good health insurance paid for by taxpayers are willing to leave here and not reauthorize, not continue the Children's Health Insurance Program. To make it worse, several States, including Virginia—Ohio is in a little better position because there is a little more money left over to take care of this—but letters are going out in State after State after State to parents saying: Sorry, the health insurance for your children is going to expire. The health insurance for your children will no longer be there.

Imagine you are a parent, and you get this letter. You are just vaguely aware that Congress is fighting about something. You are vaguely aware of the hard-heartedness of a whole lot of people in this Congress. You are vaguely aware that a bunch of politicians—privileged, elected officials who make good salaries and make good benefits—are going to turn their backs on you. You don't really think much about that. All you know is, you take this piece of paper, tear open this envelope, and you start reading this letter, and you see, oh, my gosh, the insurance for my children.

Now, overwhelmingly, these parents are people who are working. They are earning \$8, \$10, \$12, \$15 an hour. They are not making enough that they can afford insurance for their families. They are not working at a job where insurance is provided as part of the compensation your employer is paying you. So that is why the Children's Health Insurance Program is so important.

A new report from the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families reports that 1.9 million children could lose coverage in January—1.9 million children. Almost all of them have a mother or a father who will open a letter and see that, oh, my gosh, the insurance for my daughter, for my son is about to expire. That is 1.9 million in January and another 1 million will lose insurance by the end of February.

Parents will panic, parents will be confused, and parents, to be sure, will have their Christmas ruined by this. Think about those families getting that letter. It should be a joyful time of year for families, spending time with family, enjoying the holidays. Imagine checking that mailbox and kind of thinking maybe this is a Christmas card and opening it and finding out it is that letter. Imagine telling your daughter: I am sorry, honey. Santa is not going to bring much this year. We don't make a lot of money—you know that—but we will not have any presents under the tree. Then you have to

look into your children's eyes—you have to look into your son's eyes, you have to look into your daughter's eyes, and you hope they don't see the worry in your eyes because you just got this letter. Now you are wondering how you will afford to take him or her to the doctor if he or she gets sick. These are often families with two working parents who, as I said, aren't lucky enough to work for an employer who provides insurance.

These are often families with children who have special needs. Like Crystal Lett and her son Noble, a first-grader in Dublin, OH, which is a suburb just west and northwest of Columbus. Crystal and her son Noble—I met them. This is obviously Noble. I met Noble and his mother Crystal in Washington this spring when they came all the way from Ohio to talk about what CHIP means to their family.

Noble was born with a rare genetic disorder. He needs three therapy sessions a week. He needs daily hormone injections to treat his condition. His medications run about \$1,500 a month.

I talked to Crystal again at the end of last month. She and her family are scared to death about what will happen to them if Congress doesn't save CHIP. She said CHIP is "the difference between living a middle class lifestyle, or being part of the poverty line." It is the difference between a middle-class lifestyle or being part of the poverty line.

Over the last several weeks, Congress was busy. Congress had the time to hand out massive tax cuts to the richest Americans and the biggest corporations but didn't have time to help these families. Some of you may have been in this Chamber a few nights ago when I pointed down the hall to Senator MCCONNELL's office, the Senate Republican leader, and described the lobbyists who went in and out of his office to get these tax breaks. It was the lobbyists from the oil companies and from the oil industry. There were lobbyists walking in and out of Senator MCCONNELL's office, the leader's office, from the tobacco companies. The lobbyists from the big drug companies and the lobbyists from Wall Street were going in and out of his office.

When you look down the hall to Senator MCCONNELL's office, do you know who didn't come out of his office? There were no lobbyists for the Children's Health Insurance Program because, you know what, children like Noble don't have lobbyists. They can't hire lobbyists. Parents are just hoping to keep their head above water because they have a child who needs medical attention, and any child obviously can need medical attention. That is the importance of CHIP.

So CHIP doesn't have a lobbyist. CHIP has people like Crystal Lett, who stands up for her family, who stands up for her children, but she can't come to Washington full time. She came here with a delegation from Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus.

Congress had time to hand out these massive tax cuts, but they don't have time for Noble Lett. It is a disgrace. It is a program that was bipartisan, and it has always been bipartisan. It was voted out of committee bipartisanly, but I guess the right crowd of lobbyists hasn't visited Senator MCCONNELL down the hall in his office. It is despicable.

We passed a bipartisan CHIP extension out of the Finance Committee. It is ready to go. If Republican leaders would put it on the floor today, it would pass. I assume it would pass with at least 90 votes. There is no excuse for this delay.

There is talk the House is going to pass a 3-month CHIP extension. We have never done that. We have extended CHIP 1 year, 2 years, 3 years. This is going to get a 5-year extension. That is what we ought to do. They are going to do a 3-month extension.

Three months provides no certainty to the States that are running CHIP. It provides no certainty to Crystal Lett to take care of Noble and manage his healthcare. It provides no certainty to anybody. The Presiding Officer's State of Alabama is already taking steps to close down their programs and freeze enrollment. I know Senator STRANGE doesn't want that to happen, but I also know Senate Republicans need to talk to their leader to make this happen.

States have to give families a heads-up so these parents have time to do what they can. Maybe some of these parents can find an alternative source of coverage, maybe they are going to fit in one more doctor's appointment before their coverage lapses. Think of that. You get this letter in the mail saying the insurance for your children is about to expire, so what do you do? You start dialing the hospital and dialing the doctor's office because you have CHIP coverage for another month or another 5 weeks or whatever, and you start scheduling any possible appointment you can, the Christmas season notwithstanding.

Providing a 3-month extension doesn't solve this problem; it just makes the situation more complicated. This body can pass massive permanent tax cuts, but they can't give families certainty? I know the tax cuts are permanent for corporations, and I know they are temporary for individual people in this country. Of course, this Congress—as special-interest controlled as it is—first takes care of corporations, but it would be nice if they gave some certainty to these children's families.

I want my colleagues to explain to the Crystal Letts in your State—because every State has thousands of concerned parents who don't know what to do with the expiration of this. My State has 209,000 children who rely on this program.

Senator HATCH said last month: We are going to get it done. Now we are hearing that Senator MCCONNELL is only going to let us vote on a 3-month extension.

This is about whose side you are on. Do we work for corporations that send our jobs overseas, or do we work for families, such as Crystal Lett and her son Noble? Do we work for families who might wake up on Christmas morning without health insurance? I guess the answer is pretty clear: Most people in this body are working for large corporations that are getting huge tax cuts and that send their jobs overseas, and they are turning their backs on those families who need us to simply do our jobs and pass this extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, yesterday President Trump and congressional Republicans went to the White House to celebrate the passage of tax legislation that was partisan and that was rammed through the Senate earlier this week without one public hearing.

Debate on this bill in the Senate is over, but I think we must not lose sight of the impact this legislation will have on so many families and on our economy.

Make no mistake—this tax bill is not tax reform. Instead, it asks middle-class families and future generations to foot the bill for massive tax breaks for large corporations and the wealthy. By adding over \$1 trillion to the national debt, this tax plan will undermine our ability to address so many of the real challenges that face this country and middle-class families in America.

Indeed, Republicans have already made clear that this tax bill is just step No. 1. What we have already heard from Members of the House is that step No. 2 is going to be next year, and that includes deep cuts to Social Security, to Medicare, and to Medicaid. They are saying we are going to have to do that to address the deficits that have been made far worse by this bill.

Meanwhile, the majority's headlong rush to ram through this tax bill has meant they jeopardized access to healthcare for tens of millions of Americans.

My colleague from Ohio just talked about so many families in his State who are worried about losing their children's health insurance. We are seeing that in New Hampshire, as well, and across this country. By considering only stop-gap, short-term reauthorizations of critical healthcare programs, fear and uncertainty have been created for countless American families.

Because the Congress has failed to enact a long-term reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program, health coverage for nearly 9 million children across the United States is at risk. Congress has failed to enact a long-term reauthorization of the

community health centers, which more than 25 million Americans rely on for essential healthcare. And according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the tax bill's repeal of the individual mandate means that nearly 13 million fewer Americans will have health coverage in the next year, and many millions more are going to pay increases in their rates.

In addition, the majority has also failed to enact a long-term reauthorization of the Special Diabetes Program. That is a devastating blow to nearly 1.25 million Americans who are living with type 1 diabetes.

All of these programs have earned strong bipartisan support. That is what is so hard to understand about this. All of these programs should have been fully reauthorized for the long term because I know my colleagues in the Senate support these programs.

Once again, we have missed a prime opportunity to address the opioid crisis. We desperately need a Federal response to the opioid epidemic that includes robust, sustained resources that match the scale of this epidemic.

Just this week, we learned from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that because of soaring overdose mortality rates, life expectancy in the United States has declined for the second year in a row. For the first time since the early 1960s, we have seen the second year of decline in life expectancy because so many people are overdosing because of substance use disorders. In 2016, 63,000 people died from overdoses. If we were losing that many people to a war in the Middle East, there would be an outcry in this country. I want to know where the outcry is, and when is this body going to act?

On Tuesday, the University of New Hampshire released a study that cited a fivefold increase over the past decade in our State of babies who were born addicted because of their parents' substance use disorders. Yet, in the face of this uncontrolled national public health emergency, the majority has once again failed to find appropriate funding.

Again, this is an issue that I know has bipartisan support. I worked with my colleagues here on the other side of the aisle to try to address this issue. Yet it has not been a priority, just as funding children's health insurance and the community health centers and other healthcare initiatives—the Special Diabetes Program—have not been a priority for funding.

This is an enormous lost opportunity. We could have written bipartisan legislation to address all of these issues, and we could have fully authorized, in a timely manner, critical health programs on which tens of millions of Americans rely. We could have addressed the opioid emergency, which is ravaging communities across this country. But instead, what did we get? We got a tax bill that makes a mockery of reform. It makes the Tax Code more complex, not less. It will grow

the deficits and our national debt. And instead of helping the middle class in reducing the complexity of our outdated Tax Code, it creates a bonanza of new loopholes for the large corporations and the wealthiest in this country.

The majority here in the Senate had no problem coming up with \$1.5 trillion in unpaid-for tax cuts for the biggest corporations in this country. In the final days before passing the tax bill, they had no problem creating a new \$700 million loophole for oil and gas partnerships that will benefit oil giants, such as Shell and Valero. They had no problem creating a new loophole for wealthy individuals with large real estate holdings—a loophole that has been described as a jackpot for the Trump family and for several Members of Congress. They had no problem retaining the carried interest loophole at a cost to the Treasury of \$20 billion. I remember during the campaign when Candidate Donald Trump railed against the carried interest loophole as a giveaway to Wall Street that was unfair to American workers. Again and again, Candidate Trump promised to kill this loophole, but President Trump now enthusiastically supports keeping it in the tax bill.

Yesterday at the White House, Republican leaders and President Trump celebrated the tax bill, while at the same time, many in the majority party insist that the Federal Government can't afford to help 9 million children who depend on the CHIP program and tens of millions of working Americans who rely on community health centers or the Affordable Care Act for access to healthcare.

Well, according to a study by the bipartisan Joint Committee on Taxation released this week, by the time many of the provisions of this tax bill expire in 2027, large corporations and the wealthiest Americans will continue to enjoy the massive permanent tax cuts because those cuts are not set to expire, but almost every income group below \$75,000 will see tax increases by 2027.

Make no mistake—this tax bill is a betrayal of middle-class Americans, and it is especially a betrayal of tens of millions of Americans who placed their faith in President Trump.

This tax bill is also a case of sadly misplaced priorities. The majority in Congress have been single-mindedly focused on passing this bill at every step, adding more and more giveaways to large corporations, instead of working across the aisle to focus on the needs of the middle class. Meanwhile, they have shortchanged the Children's Health Insurance Program, they have shortchanged community health centers, and they have shortchanged the Special Diabetes Program. They have caused hospitals and clinics across my State and across America to begin the process of reducing their services. This really demonstrates a lack of understanding and a total disregard for the

needs and priorities of so many Americans.

Yesterday, Republican leaders and the President celebrated the passage of their misguided tax bill, but Senators who care deeply about regular order and bipartisanship in this body are not celebrating. Americans concerned about our national debt and our children's future are not celebrating. Americans who see growing income inequality as a threat to our democracy—a threat made far worse by this tax bill—are not celebrating either. And parents of the 9 million children who rely on the Children's Health Insurance Program are dreading notifications from their States that their children will no longer have health insurance. These families aren't celebrating during this holiday season either.

As I said earlier, the debate on this bill is over, but I intend to continue to speak out against this very damaging tax legislation. I pledge to continue to speak out in support of the real needs of working people across America, including the need for affordable healthcare.

In the new year ahead, I certainly hope to be able to work with Senators on both sides of the aisle to address these urgent needs. The American people deserve better than this legislation. They also deserve a Senate that values bipartisanship, that values cooperation and compromise and the service of all Americans, not just the largest corporations and the wealthiest in this country.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to discuss the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP.

As we all know, the authorization for CHIP expired at the end of September. Since that time, States have been utilizing their reserve funds in order to cover the healthcare needs of kids. For a number of States, those funds are due to run out in the near future.

There have been a number of claims from our friends on the other side and some of their allies in the media that Republicans have ignored the CHIP program; that we don't intend to reauthorize it; or that we supposedly placed a higher priority on tax cuts for the rich than on providing health insurance for needy children. Those claims are absolutely ridiculous, and they know it. It gets a little old sometimes—some of the stupid politics that are being played by the other side.

I come at this issue from two angles. I am both the original author of CHIP, and I currently chair the committee with jurisdiction over the program. Nobody should doubt my commitment to

continuing the CHIP program. For two decades now, I have been a supporter of CHIP, and I worked with Members of both parties to keep it moving forward and functioning properly—even in times when my Democratic colleagues have pursued a more divisive approach with the program. That commitment continues to this day.

On October 4, the Senate Finance Committee unanimously reported a bipartisan bill that would reauthorize CHIP for 5 years. In my view, a long-term reauthorization is essential so that States, including my home State of Utah, can plan well into the future and the families who benefit from CHIP can be sure that coverage for their needy children won't just disappear.

It appears that the year-end continuing resolution could include a short-term reauthorization for CHIP. That is far from ideal, and as the leading advocate for this program, I have no desire to see it become subject to repeated short-term fixes and constantly looming deadlines.

I intend to continue working with Senator WYDEN and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in both the Senate and the House to enact the KIDS Act in a fiscally responsible manner as soon as possible. Doing so is essential to providing certainty for families and States.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, with this week's passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, many throughout the country are rightly celebrating the first substantive reform of our Nation's Tax Code in more than three decades.

While the popular narrative surrounding this bill has been that Congress has moved quickly to pass this legislation, I don't think anyone who has worked on tax reform over the last several years would agree with that assessment. This week's success is made possible by years of hard work and the efforts of countless policymakers, experts, advocates, and public servants.

Over the last several years, I have come to the floor on many occasions to advocate for tax reform. I am glad today to be able to rise and acknowledge the efforts of many people whose work made the historic occasion possible.

First, I would like to thank those Members who went before us. Former Chairmen Camp, GRASSLEY, and Baucus spent the better part of the decade laying the groundwork for this effort.

I also want to thank Senator WYDEN, who, along with Chairman Baucus, worked with me on the Finance Committee over the last several years as we produced reports and options papers, convened bipartisan working groups, and held more than 70 hearings to discuss tax policy.

While I have been disappointed that my Democratic colleagues have opted not to participate in this year's efforts to produce this particular bill, they

definitely contributed to this knowledge and policy base we worked from to put our legislation together.

For years, I have reiterated the importance of Presidential leadership when it comes to tax reform. I am grateful that President Trump has been willing to engage with Congress on this issue and to put some political skin in the game in order to move us forward.

From the outset of this administration, Secretary Mnuchin and Director Cohn have been actively working to make this success a reality. I thank them for their engagement in this effort and the work they and their staffs have put in.

From the Treasury staff, I would like to thank Justin Muzinich, Dan Kowalski, and Jay Mackie.

From Director Cohn's staff at the National Economic Council, I need to thank Jeremy Katz and Shahira Knight.

From the White House, thanks to Mark Short, Amy Swonger, Andy Koenig, Joseph Lai, and Jim Goyer.

These staffers from the administration have worked for the better part of the year with leaders from both Chambers to produce this bill and get it over the finish line. Their success is shared with our colleagues over in the House, led by Chairman BRADY and Speaker RYAN. I thank my colleagues for their hard work and their willingness to find common ground when many believed that it was impossible to do so.

From the Ways and Means staff, I want to thank David Stewart, Matt Weidinger, Allison Halataei, Rick Limardo, and Paul Guaglianone. Special thanks is owed to the committee tax staff: Barbara Angus, Aharon Friedman, John Sandell, Victoria Glover, John Schoenecker, Randy Gartin, Aaron Junge, Donald Scheider, Danielle Dubose, Kathryn Chakmak, and Loren Ponds.

From the Speaker's office, I want to thank Jonathan Burks, Austin Smythe, George Callas, Derrick Dockery, and Josh Althouse.

From the House majority whip's office, I need to thank both Marty Reiser and Kelly Hudak.

Of course, here in the Senate, we have been ably led by the majority leader. I want to thank Senator MCCONNELL for his commitment to get this done and for his leadership throughout this entire endeavor.

From the leader's staff, I want to thank Sharon Soderstrom, Brendan Dunn, Antonia Ferrier, Hazen Marshall, Erica Suares, Terry Van Doren, Don Stewart, and Jane Lee.

Joining Senator MCCONNELL, as always, has been our distinguished majority whip. I thank Senator CORNYN for his efforts in shoring up support and addressing our Members' concerns from the beginning of this process until final passage of the conference report.

From the whip's staff, I want to thank Monica Popp and Sam Beaver.

Of course, when it came time to draft the Senate's tax reform legislation,

most of the real work was done in the Finance Committee. The committee bill was truly a shared product that included the input and addressed the interests of every majority member on our dais. Without their work, we wouldn't have had a bill, and without their commitment to seeing this through, we wouldn't have gotten to where we are.

I want to thank Senators GRASSLEY, CRAPO, ROBERTS, ENZI, CORNYN, THUNE, BURR, ISAKSON, PORTMAN, TOOMEY, HELLER, SCOTT, and CASSIDY for the months of work they put into producing and passing this legislation. I also need to thank their staffs who, until this week, haven't slept in months.

My thanks also go to the tax staffers on the committee, namely, Chris Allen, Joseph Boddicker, Chris Conlin, Shay Hawkins, Randy Herndon, Bart Massey, Monica McGuire, Mike Quickel, Zachary Rudisill, Andrew Siracuse, Robert Sneden, Derek Theurer, and Mark Warren.

My thanks go, as well, to the committee's legislative directors: Charles Cogar, Ken Flanz, Chris Gillott, Brad Grantz, Amber Kirchhoefer, Kurt Kovarik, Jessica McBride, Sarah Paul, Landon Stropko, Jay Sulzmann, Stephen Tausend, Pam Thiessen, and Christopher Toppings.

Of course, when the Democrats signaled their refusal to even meet on tax reform, we knew we would need a well-crafted budget resolution with the right instruction to get tax reform passed. So I need to thank my good friend, Chairman ENZI, and the Budget Committee for their work, which made a seemingly mundane and tedious process look easy.

From the Budget Committee staff, I want to thank Joe Brenckle, Jim Neill, Betsy McDonnell, Matt Giroux, Paul Vinovich, Becky Cole, Eric Ueland, Steve Townsend, Jeremy Dalrymple, and Thomas Fueller.

Once we had a resolution, we had to hold a markup. In the Finance Committee, that can be a challenging process, particularly on a bill this big and complex.

Thankfully, we have been ably served by a professional staff who helped us through that whole process, namely, Joshua Levasseur, Jewel Harper, Joe Carnucci, Mark Blair, Athena Schritz, Susanna Segal, Eliza Smith, Tim Corley, and Michael Pinkerton.

The Joint Committee on Taxation was also critical throughout the committee process, as well as when we moved the bill onto the floor. They worked countless hours doing the work that often just made everybody mad at one point or another. There is an often thankless but really critical job, and I am grateful for their dedication and earnestness.

Specifically, I need to thank Tom Barthold and his team for making sure both parties in the House and the Senate were getting all the information that was needed, at times under challenging time constraints. Tom does a

terrific job for the Senate, and I personally appreciate him and value him as a friend.

After moving a mark through the committee, we relied on assistance from the Senate Legislative Counsel's office to put together the legislative text. That was a critical step, and we could not have done it without Mark McGunagle, Jim Fransen, and their team.

Then as we began to prep the bill for the floor, we spent countless hours debating different provisions before the Parliamentarian. This process can be difficult, and I would like to offer my thanks to our Parliamentarian, Elizabeth MacDonough, and her team for the hours and days they put into helping us comply with the rules of the Senate.

As the bill neared its final phase, we were grateful to be able to work with Senator MURKOWSKI on the second title of the bill, and as we moved to conference committee, Senator MURKOWSKI's counterparts in the House also played an instrumental role in helping to finalize this legislation.

Of course, there are those who work hard to make sure things go smoothly here on the floor. I thank the majority floor staff for their assistance, particularly, Laura Dove, Robert Duncan, and Megan Mercer.

As I said, this has been a long process, and throughout this entire venture, I have had the benefit of working with a skilled and committed staff. My staff have sacrificed time, energy, sleep, and, in some cases, likely their physical and mental health for the passage of this bill. It has been an incredible effort, and I need to thank all of them.

I want to single out my chief tax counsel, Mark Prater. I think everyone in this Chamber and everyone in Washington would agree that we could not have done any of this without Mark.

I also need to thank my staff director, Jay Khosla, who has been the tip of the spear, managing the incoming and outgoing issues with apparent ease. I also want to thank his assistant, Jason Stegmaier, for helping to keep Jay from forgetting the important details, like remembering to eat lunch.

I want to thank my entire tax staff: Jennifer Acuna, Tony Coughlan, Christopher Hanna, Alex Monie, Eric Oman, Marty Pippins, Preston Rutledge, and Nick Wyatt.

I need to thank the members of my senior team as well: Matt Hoffmann, Jeff Wrase, Julia Lawless, Jennifer Kuskowski, Chris Armstrong, Bryan Hickman, and Shane Warren.

I want to thank my communications staff on the committee: Katie Niederee, Nicole Hager, and Joshua Blume.

I also want to thank a couple of former Finance Committee staff members, specifically, Chris Campbell, my former staff director, who helped to set the stage for this entire effort, and Jim Lyons, my tax counsel who passed

away last year, much to the sorrow of us. He spent years working on tax reform, and I know we all wish he could have been here to celebrate with us this week.

From my personal office staff, I want to thank my legislative assistant, James Williams, and Matt Sandgren, my chief of staff.

There are many more people who deserve thanks this week—far too many to mention at this time. They are not forgotten, though, believe me.

We have done a good thing here this week. This is truly a historic success.

Some of our colleagues on the other side last night said that the American people will remember what happened here this week. To that, all I can say is that I hope they do. This new tax law will do a lot of good for a great number of people throughout our country, and I am humbled to have been a part of the efforts of so many people who were willing to get this thing done for the American people.

I am grateful to my staff. I am grateful to the staffs of our Senators on the committee. I am grateful for everyone involved in the Finance Committee and for the good efforts that they put forward. But I am really grateful that I serve in the U.S. Senate, the greatest deliberative body in the world, and this is a perfect illustration of why.

I am very grateful to be able to stand on this floor and show my complete devotion to this wonderful government. To both sides of the floor—Democrats and Republicans alike—I am grateful. I am grateful that we have this Constitution to guide us, and I am grateful that for the most part, we have abided by it.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The Senator from Oklahoma.

NOMINATIONS PROCESS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, maybe my colleagues have heard through public and private conversations over the past year that I believe the Senate is moving gridlock from here on Capitol Hill to all across the city and across the Nation. The reason for that is how we do nominations and the length of time on nominations. It is time for the Senate to fix the Senate's rules.

Here is how it works. As this body knows extremely well, we have over 1,000 nominees who come from the President. In the first year of a new Presidency, a vast amount of time is spent in getting those 1,000 people through the nomination process. Each one of those is selected by the White House. They do their own vetting, and then they send them over to the Senate.

The Senate has the constitutional responsibility for advice and consent. When they come through the Senate, they will go through background checks, evaluations, and conversations with staff on both sides of the aisle.

They then come to the committee, go through a committee process and a hearing, they are voted on in that time period, and then they move to the floor.

When they move to the floor for debate, typically, for most of the years of the Senate, they have already gone through the committee process. Every Member of the Senate has the opportunity to be able to take a look at their information. And then they move through with a simple-majority vote. That is the way nominations have moved for most of the history of the Senate.

A few years ago—20 or so—some individual Senators started asking for cloture votes. Those cloture votes started to slow down the process on about 3 or 4 nominations a year; then it became 9 or so nominations a year; then it moved to as crazy of a number as 13 or so a year, of the 1,000 or so moving through.

That became such a nuisance that in 2013, my Democratic colleagues called for something they called the nuclear option, to say we will just take nominations not from 60 required to be able to get to cloture but just to 51. There was debate and internal conversation about that because Republicans, quite frankly, were holding up 15 or so nominations a year with the cloture process. So there was a big debate about that.

In the beginning of President Obama's second term, Republicans and Democrats came together and they changed the rules of the Senate for 2 years and said: OK, truce. The simple rule of the Senate was for any cloture vote, if there was one called for—again, typically, you would never call for one, but if there was one called for, there would be 2 hours of debate for a district court judge, 8 hours of debate for most nominees, and 30 hours of debate for Supreme Court, circuit court, or a Cabinet-level appointment. But even Harry Reid, when he stood on the floor, said this would be only—his words—“extraordinary circumstances” if you should ask for a cloture vote at all. But if they were asked for, it would be 2 hours, 8 hours, or 30 hours. Prior to that, all nominations were 30 hours of debate, literally taking up an entire day to move one person, knowing that you have to move 1,000.

A few months after that, still in 2013, Democrats still frustrated that Republicans were calling for some cloture votes still, moved to have the nuclear option entirely and just transition all nominations, except for the Supreme Court, to just 51 votes. So now they had the rule of expediting 2 hours, 8 hours, and 30 hours, and the new ability to move them all with just 51 votes.

Quite frankly, if you are going to change the rule to 51 votes, you probably need to change the cloture rule as well. They just did it in reverse. They changed the rule for how many hours it would take and then later changed the rule for how many people it takes to go through the process.

Now what has happened? Remember I argued that we had 13, 14, 15 people held up in cloture in a year? This year, so far, there have been 64 nominations held up in cloture votes. That is 64 days in the Senate we could do nothing else but sit here waiting. Now, it wasn't for debate. It may sound as if it is being held for 30 hours of debate for that time period. Debate normally didn't happen. Most of the time, this Chamber was empty. It was just that 30 hours was demanded to shut down the body as a whole, 64 of those in this year.

What has it brought us? It has brought us more animosity, more division, and more frustration. My Democratic colleagues a few years ago were screaming that we should have the nuclear option because Republicans were so irrational with 15 cloture votes. Yet we have watched 64 occur this year.

Earlier this week, I sat down with the Rules Committee and brought a very simple option to everyone, Democrats and Republicans alike, and we had a great turnout to be able to just talk through the process. My simple presentation was, let's take the rule that was agreed to in 2013, that Harry Reid and the Democrats brought at the beginning of the second term of President Obama, and let's have the rule for each nomination be 2 hours, 8 hours, and 30 hours. Let's move back to the tradition that Harry Reid had, which is to say let's make cloture votes only extraordinary on a nomination, if needed at all, but if they are, 2 hours, 8 hours, or 30 hours. To do the exact same thing now is what was agreed on in 2013 and 2014.

By the way, Republicans joined with Democrats during that time period and passed that new rule, which would put us at disadvantage with 78 votes.

I don't think it is too much to ask to say that if we are going to get the Senate back to work again, then let's actually get back to work again. Let's put us in a process that actually gets there.

What happens in the meantime when that does not occur? I will tell you what happens. In the meantime, we have agencies all over this town that can't answer a question because the bureaucrats are waiting on a Senate-confirmed individual to be able to lead that agency—to be the Secretary, Under Secretary, Deputy Secretary, whatever the task may be, the counsel for that particular agency—so they sit and wait. So our constituents who are trying to get a permit in certain places or trying to get an answer or trying to get disaster relief—all they can say in the office is, we can't do that until we get a Senate-confirmed position in place. But we can't get Senate-confirmed positions in place until my Democratic colleagues will actually allow individuals to actually come up and be debated.

What else happens? The other thing that happens is, we can't do legislation in this body; we can only do nominations. With 1,000 different positions

that are open, typically they move through rather quickly and they move through the process. But when 64 days are held up just for that, during that time period, you can't do anything else but sit and go through what is called the cloture 30 hours. You can't bring up other legislation.

Then what happens? Well, then my Democratic colleagues come to the floor and say: We haven't had a single debate in this body on CHIP. We haven't had a debate on infrastructure. We haven't had debate on any of these things. Why won't we move a bill on all of these things?

At the same time, they know it is because they blocked the floor from being able to move legislation because of continual cloture votes over and over and over. It is a bizarre game that doesn't lead to solutions; it leads to greater animosity. It is the same frustration that has existed for a while; it is just getting louder.

At some point, we have to put in a process and say: How do we get out of this? How do we fix this? I think the best way to fix this is to take a bipartisan solution that was agreed to before when Democrats were in the lead, to agree to it now and say that is going to be the permanent rule, just to be able to move a set of ideas.

For what is historically called the greatest deliberative body in the world, wouldn't it be nice to actually get back to deliberating again, spending more time on legislation rather than more time arguing about why aren't debating it when everyone secretly knows the reason, which is because we can't get it to the floor?

I do grow tired. I grow tired of hearing all the political statements and accusations.

Republicans hate children.

They want to throw them out.

They don't want them to have health care.

They hate people of color.

They are trying to exclude people from voting.

They are trying to keep people from having tax reform.

They only care about the wealthy.

Just over and over, when at the same time, the undercurrent is out there to keep anything from being discussed on the floor. It is an interesting strategy to paint your "enemy," but it doesn't help the country—intentionally divisive without a solution.

In 2001, the first year of a new President, there were 51 nominations pending that first year.

There is an interesting thing in the Senate rules. It is the wonderful rule XXXI that no one has heard of. It states that at the end of a year, any nominations that are still out there can be automatically thrown back to the White House and they have to start all over again. They have to renominate them. They have to go through the whole process. They have to go through committees.

At the end of the first year of President Bush, there were 51 nominations

still sitting there at the end of that year. On 49 of them, this body, by unanimous consent, said: No, we will just hold them over. We are fine. We don't have to send them all back to the President.

In 2009, in President Obama's first term, there were 72 folks. For 64 of those, this body—every Republican and Democrat—agreed to just leave them here and not make them go through the whole process again, which would have been absurd.

As of now, we have 122 pending at the end of President Trump's first year. I am interested to know, when Republicans gave Democrats unanimous consent to be able to maintain their nominations in the past, what happens now. Will this be yet another sign of pure politics rather than actually helping the country get stuff done?

I look forward to the day when we can work toward solutions, not just argue and banter back and forth with political statements. If we are going to get stuff solved, let's not pretend and play games and put each other down; let's actually sit down in a room and get stuff solved. Let's fix the rules of the Senate, whether they be the budget rules that keep us from actually having real budget debates or the rules of the Senate that keep us from actually working rather than allowing us to actually do work.

The rules of the Senate and the process in the Senate are determined by the Senators, so we alone are to blame when the Senate is not working. There is no finger-pointing. There is no "it is that party." There is no "it is that person." It is all of us.

So my recommendation is simple. Let's fix it. Let's resolve the issue. Let's do the right thing in the right way.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, this is not the topic that I came to the floor to talk about; I will talk about it in a minute. But while the Senator from Oklahoma is here, I thought I would just respond to what he was saying—not on the merits of his particular proposal, because I haven't had a chance to study that yet, but to his plea that this place start to work again. I couldn't agree more with that sentiment.

The Founding Fathers were very deliberate people, and they understood that in exercising self-government in the Republic that they were establishing, which subsequent generations of Americans have made more democratic over time, that we would have disputes. People these days in our political system and especially on the cable television at night seem to be astounded that there are people who don't see the world the way they see the world. The Founders knew that, by definition, if we were going to be a self-governing republic, we would have disagreements, and they set out to form

an incredibly elegant mechanism to resolve those disputes. It was elegant on the outside of this Chamber—freedom to assemble, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to vote—and it was elegant on the inside of this Chamber. And generations of people who occupied this place understood that the way it was meant to work was not that you always got your way all the time and that part of being here was not just to have disputes but to resolve disputes—and not even our disputes but disagreements that the country might have for a legitimate reason—and, on average, hoped that we would move the country forward.

I quite agree that recently—certainly in the time that I have been here—we have been using this place simply to have disputes, not to resolve them. That may be OK if we were in North Korea or in the Soviet Union—the old Soviet Union; it doesn't work in a democratic republic.

I want to finish a little bit of the history that my friend from Oklahoma talked about. After the Democrats invoked the nuclear option, which I have said before on this floor is the worst vote that I ever took as a Senator, the now majority leader pocketed that precedent when we changed the rules in the middle and used it—used the nuclear option to change the rules so that now a person gets a lifetime appointment on the Supreme Court not with 60 votes but with just 51 votes. My issue with that is that now your party can advance people to the Supreme Court without any reasonable expectation that my party should take responsibility for it, or vice versa.

Instead of having potential nominees come here and say: You should put me on the court because I can attract both Democratic and Republican votes because I have an open mind, I worry we are going to have people from both sides say: We are going to have a litmus test for Supreme Court nominees, which says we either have the most conservative jurist in the country or the most liberal jurist in the country, depending on who it is. We have infected the Supreme Court with the partisanship of this body.

My hope is, we can actually come together on a set of rule changes that would recognize not just that this place may need to move a little faster in the 21st century but that we ought to be pushing people together to work in a bipartisan way on behalf of the country.

Without passing on the merits of the proposal, I thank the Senator for coming to the floor to talk about—to put it in the vernacular—how busted this place is.

DACA

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I wish to talk about the Dreamers.

As I have from the time I was a school superintendent in Denver until now, I had the opportunity to spend

time last weekend or the week before with a group of Dreamers in Alamosa, a small town in Southern Colorado.

These meetings are usually occasions for people to lay out their dreams for the future in America, the only country they know and the only country they love. This meeting was different than other meetings I have had recently. Instead of the hope and self-confidence I am so used to hearing from young people, what I heard was fear, anxiety, and pain.

Everybody in the group I met the other day came to this country as undocumented immigrants when they were children, some just months old. None of them made the decision to come here. They grew up here, and they know no other country besides the United States of America.

In 2012, they joined 800,000 Dreamers who came forward across the country to share their information for temporary legal status under the DACA Program. Over the past 5 years, many of these Dreamers grew into young adults, finishing school, starting families, launching businesses. They went about their lives, trusting our government would keep its word and find a way for them to stay in the only country they know. Then, in September, President Trump rescinded DACA, throwing every one of their lives into chaos.

During our meeting in Alamosa, not a single person could share their story without breaking into tears. One young man, Julio Maldonado, told me about the iPhone repair business he opened on Main Street. Like so many immigrants, he poured himself into that enterprise as an entrepreneur. Thanks to his efforts, it is now not only turning a profit, it is providing a service to his community and supporting his family. Now all of that is in jeopardy.

As I said, Julio couldn't tell his story without starting to cry. When he turned to his business partner who was also there to help, his partner began crying too. Versions of that played out again and again in our meetings and in the meetings I have been having here in Washington, DC, as Dreamers take the risk to travel to Washington to share their stories—honest dream after honest dream being crushed by uncertainty, young people trembling in fear.

We hear a lot around this place about how we don't have to act until the last moment. We don't have to act until March 5. This is not true. There are so many children, young people, and young adults in my State who are losing their status as we sit here, unable to accomplish something everybody seems to say they want to accomplish. The President says he wants to accomplish it. The Speaker says he wants to accomplish it. Senators on both sides say they want to accomplish it. We have created this crisis that President Trump set off when he rescinded DACA.

This isn't just affecting Dreamers, although that ought to be enough for us

to do the job we are supposed to do. For years, farmers and ranchers have told us they need workers with clear legal status. Undocumented workers have told us they face exploitation without legal resources. Families have told us they fear being split apart and sent to places they hardly know, and, today, this week, those fears were confirmed again as we lost another father from Colorado. Just last week, we had a family torn apart in Colorado.

Melecio Andazola came to America in 1998 as an undocumented immigrant. Over the last 19 years, he has paid taxes in America, he has raised four children in America, he has followed the rules. Then, on Friday, he was deported.

Now it is unclear whether he will ever see his daughter walk across the stage for her college graduation next spring at Yale, in New Haven. It is unclear how he will be able to support his four kids. Because of the choices we have made in Washington, the lives of everyone in that family have been spun into chaos, like so many other families across the country.

For years, stories like this have demanded action. That is why the Senator from Illinois who is here today, Senator DURBIN, has led this charge for so many years, standing on the floor with photos of the Dreamers from his State and across the United States. It is the reason I was so honored to have the chance to work with him and six others of our colleagues back in 2013, the so-called Gang of 8, a group of four Democrats and four Republicans.

I was just talking with my friend from Oklahoma about how this place doesn't work. That was an instance where it worked. We came together to write a bipartisan proposal for immigration reform. Over the course of 8 months, in Washington, we worked through a process that I think would make every American proud for once—both sides sitting down to solve problems. The result was a great piece of legislation.

Our bill had more funding for border security, not just a wall but smart and effective border security. It had more funding for internal security. It had a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented people who are here, including all of the Dreamers. Part of that bill had the most progressive DREAM Act ever written. It got 68 votes on the floor of the Senate. Not everyone got what they wanted. As I just said to the Senator from Oklahoma in a different context, it is unreasonable to expect that here. Each side had to give, but the result was a great vote. It got almost 70 votes in the Senate, at a time when you can't pass anything through the Senate.

For the first time in a generation, we had a real opportunity to resolve our differences on immigration, but as is so often the case in Washington, politics got in the way. In the House, Republican leaders denied our bill a simple up-or-down vote, which would have

passed. They preferred to keep immigration alive as a political weapon to divide the American people and distract from the real challenges in our economy.

By the way, the Senator from Illinois will remember this. We heard a lot of stretching this week about how much economic growth this tax bill was going to create—0.6 percent here or 0.1 percent over there. The CBO estimate on the Gang of 8 immigration bill was that by bringing people out of the shadows and putting them in a position to contribute legally to the economy, that would have added 3 percentage points to our GDP, to our Nation's economy over the first 10 years, and five incremental points over the second 10 years. That would have been a useful thing to do for our economy.

As a result of what happened—or didn't happen—in the House, the rhetoric around immigration has just become more toxic, evermore divisive, evermore unrecognizable in America, a Nation that has inarguably been made great by immigrants.

As I said, there are a lot of economists who are awfully skeptical about the economic claims that have been made about this tax bill. If we look at what happened in 2001 and 2003, when they tried to do it before, we all know how that story is going to end. On the other hand, nearly every expert agrees that forcing out the Dreamers would hurt our economy.

The Cato Institute found that removing the Dreamers would stunt economic growth by \$280 billion. Another study found that comprehensive immigration reform would grow the economy by \$1.5 trillion over 10 years and support nearly 1 million new jobs.

Despite these facts, there has been a lot of talk around here about how immigrants detract from America or how they somehow leach off the system and lack our values. Those claims are then used to justify actions like canceling DACA. It would be hard for me to believe that anybody making a claim like that had ever sat down with a Dreamer.

Daniela Gomez Castro came to Colorado when she was just a year old. As a child, Daniela looked up to her grandmother—one of the few women doctors in her area—and dreamed of following her into medicine. She took classes in biology and excelled in our public schools, graduating from Smoky Hill High School in 2015.

To become a doctor, she knew college was the next step, so she enrolled at the University of Colorado Denver as a prehealth major, and in between classes, she worked as a nurse's assistant, restaurant hostess, and student mentor to help cover tuition. Everything was on track. Then, last year, she learned her legal status meant she couldn't get a medical license. After working so hard for so long, her dream is now frozen in place by forces in Washington totally beyond her control.

Today, America—especially places like rural Colorado—is desperate for

physicians. The Association of American Medical Colleges predicts that, by 2030, we will have a shortage of 100,000 doctors nationwide. As I say, we are feeling that shortage right now in rural Colorado. We don't have enough clinics and treatment centers, even as we face an epidemic of opioid addiction. Two of our counties don't have a single doctor, and a lot of our rural counties have no primary care doctor or nurse.

Given that, it doesn't seem to me to make any sense that we should send Daniela back to a place she doesn't remember and doesn't call her home, especially when we need her here. That obviously would be cruel, but my point is, it would also be incredibly shortsighted.

Apolinar Lopez Garcia also came here when he was just a year old. His family eventually made their way to Greeley, CO. He thrived in school and joined the Junior ROTC Program in Northridge High School, where he excelled as a cadet. He relished the ROTC sense of community, self-discipline, and duty, so much so that after graduating from high school, he wanted to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps. He filled out the paperwork and waited, but when the reply came, Apolinar was crushed. Because of his legal status, the Marines couldn't accept him.

We should think about that. Of all the paths available to a bright, young person like Apolinar, he wanted to serve the country in uniform. You don't feel called to serve a place you don't consider home. You don't feel called to serve a place where you don't share the values, to defend a community that is not your own. Apolinar's choice flies in the face of every specious attack we have heard against immigrants in this debate. He doesn't detract from America.

Apolinar wants to defend America. Daniela wants to treat sick Americans. Julio wants to create jobs for Americans. They join 800,000 Dreamers who, for years, have invested in America by paying taxes, starting businesses, and serving their communities. For years, America has invested in them, by educating them, by training them, and instilling in them the confidence and love of country we hope for each new generation of Americans.

It is unimaginable now that we wouldn't find a way to resolve their status. We can't avoid this any longer. The Senate and the House are so good at putting off what they should have done last week or last month or last year. This is not one of those cases anymore.

On each day we do nothing, 112 people are deported. Over 12,000 people have been deported since September. Every one of them represents a family torn apart, a business shuttered, a payroll not made, an education interrupted, a dream shattered. In the end, our most basic job here—lost in this sometimes—is to look out for the next generation of Americans. Instead of looking after them, we have spent an entire year trampling over them.

Let's review the record.

With the Dreamers, we have ransomed their futures for political leverage. We are doing it right now. With our backtracking on climate change, we have made their futures more dangerous and costly. With our failure to reauthorize CHIP, we have jeopardized the healthcare of, among others, 90,000 kids in Colorado who may lose healthcare if we don't act. Now, with this tax bill, we have handed another \$1.4 trillion in debt to people whose futures we are not investing in because we say we cannot afford to do it—by rebuilding our roads, by improving our schools, by spurring innovation. Instead, we have taken another bet on trickle-down economics at a time when we already have a substantial budget deficit.

That is what brings us here at the end of the year, once again, with our not having done our work and passing something called a continuing resolution that no other government enterprise in America gets to do—a temporary budget that doesn't reflect the priorities of the American people. In that mix, the Dreamers find themselves caught up in a political discussion without any assurance that it will be resolved.

The good news is that I know there are Republican colleagues here, as well as Democrats, who want a solution for the Dreamers. They see in these young people all of the qualities we cherish as Americans—family, community, service, enterprise, and patriotism.

I would just say, as we get ready to leave here, that I think we shouldn't leave here today. I think we should commit to this issue with our Dreamers. This should be our No. 1 priority together—to figure out how to get this done so we don't have inadvertent casualties occur. After a while, something inadvertent has to be advertent because if you have knowledge of it and if you know what is going to happen, it leads you to believe that you should have acted. We need to stop the brinksmanship and the partisanship, and we need to work together to ensure that their futures will be here in the United States, where we need them, in the only country they know.

I thank my colleagues for their indulgence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Colorado. We have been engaged in this battle of immigration reform for years. He is a worthy ally, thoughtful, and always thinking of a solution. I thank him for his continuing commitment to this cause.

In the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln got so frustrated with General McClellan that he sent him a message. He couldn't get him to attack. He wouldn't do anything.

He asked: General McClellan, if you are not going to use your Army, can I use it? Can I borrow your Army?

So I would like to ask the leaders of the House and Senate: If you are not going to use your Congress, can I borrow it for a minute? Can we fill up this empty Chamber and actually have a real debate over a real bill to solve a real problem?

I think that might be a worthy thing for us to do. In fact, I think that is what we are paid to do; isn't it? Didn't we swear to uphold this Constitution? Didn't we take this historic job on with the goal of making America a better place?

On September 5, President Trump, along with Attorney General Sessions, eliminated the DACA Program. This was a program that gave to almost 800,000 young people—brought to the United States when they were little kids—a chance to go to school, to work, to have futures in this country. They had to go through criminal background checks, turn over all of their information, and pay their taxes—all of the above. Then, for 2 years, they could operate in America. They were not citizens, but they were legally in America. On September 5, President Trump and Attorney General Sessions said: It is over—as of March 5, 2018, no more.

Then the President said: I challenge you, Congress. Do something about it. Pass a law.

That was almost 4 months ago. What have we done in 4 months to address this problem that affects the lives of 800,000 DACA-protected young people? Nothing. We are not using this Congress. General McClellan was not using the Army. Isn't it time that we do something? Wouldn't the American people be so pleasantly surprised if we did something on a bipartisan basis that solved a problem in America?

I know my Republican colleagues are euphoric over their tax bill. Two out of three Americans are not. I am not. I will put it aside for a minute. They spent a lot of time. They passed it. So be it. They did it on a strictly partisan basis. They had a right under the Senate rules to do it that way, and they did it that way. This cannot be done on a strictly partisan basis. You cannot fix the immigration system unless you engage both political parties in the solution.

I am lucky. I care about this. I also found some Republican Senators who care just as much. JEFF FLAKE of Arizona announced his retirement. I am sorry to see him go because he is a good person of good values. He stepped up and cosponsored the Dream Act that we are talking about here. I didn't even have to call him on the phone. I thanked him, and he said: It is the right thing to do. LINDSEY GRAHAM, a Republican of South Carolina, was my cosponsor. CORY GARDNER of Colorado and LISA MURKOWSKI of Alaska stepped up and said: It is the right thing to do for these young people, to give them an opportunity to earn their way into legal status, to earn their way to citizenship.

I thank them for that. We need eight more. If we get 8 more, we will have 12

Republicans out of 52. With eight more, we are ready. We are ready to put 60 votes up when they call the roll. With 60 votes in the Senate, you can get things done.

What has happened? What opportunities have we had in the almost 4 months since the President eliminated this program? None—not one.

Senator MCCONNELL said to Senator FLAKE when his vote on the tax bill was in doubt: I promise you that we will bring this up in January—this coming January.

I can tell you that I read the promise very closely, and there are a lot of contingencies on there. I hope that Senator MCCONNELL is going to give us our chance early in January to find out if we can come up with a bipartisan solution to this problem.

If you think there aren't other Republicans who support this, 34 Republicans in the House of Representatives sent a letter to Speaker PAUL RYAN and wrote: Pass the Dreamer legislation this year—34 Republicans. So we are not alone. They are not the only ones.

Yesterday, 11 Governors—11 of them, Republicans and Democrats—sent a letter to Congress, calling on us to do this. The letter was signed by the Democratic Governors from Minnesota, Montana, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina and by the Republican Governors from Nevada, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Utah, and by Alaska's Independent Governor.

We are hearing from those in the business community. They want this done. They have seen these Dreamers. They have seen these young people. They believe in them, and they want us to do something to help them. We have heard it from the labor organizations, and we have heard it from the faith organizations.

Across the board, 76 percent of the American people support what we are trying to do here—76 percent. What issues get 76 percent? The flag? I will bet you it gets even more, but not many others get 76 percent approval, including 61 percent of the Trump voters. They think it is the right thing to do. Do you know why? Because many of these people have met the Dreamers. When you come to know them and hear their stories, you come to the conclusion—at least I do—that, for goodness' sake, these are extraordinary young people. Somehow or another, they have survived and have even flourished in a country that doesn't recognize them as legal. They went to our schools. They pledged allegiance to our flag. They sang the national anthem. That is the country they know.

Let me tell you about one before I turn the floor over to my colleague from Maryland. This young lady's name is Miriam Gonzalez. She is the 105th Dreamer whose story I have told on the floor.

When she was 6 years old, her family brought her to the United States from Mexico, and she grew up near Los An-

geles. She was a good student and a good athlete. In high school she played softball and golf. She was a member of the bible club, the chemistry club, and the reading club. She was an active volunteer in her community, including assistant teaching at the local elementary school. She was the valedictorian of her high school class. She was accepted at UCLA. She majored in anthropology and minored in classical civilization.

Let me give a postscript here. If you are undocumented and go to college in America, you get no Federal assistance—no Pell grant, no Federal loan. You have to earn the money. You have to work jobs to do it. She did. She held down the necessary jobs and commuted to school from her parents' home by taking public transportation for 2 hours each way on every schoolday.

She was involved in student groups, mentored students at Van Nuys High School, and encouraged them to go to college. She continued to excel academically. She made the dean's honor roll and was awarded a certificate for her research at UCLA. Today, she is assisting students in low-income neighborhoods and schools.

After graduation, she went to work with Teach For America. Do you know what that means? It means taking a job that pays hardly anything to teach in one of the most challenging schools in America. She did it. She taught seventh- and eighth-grade students in L.A. She teaches five classes for students who are having trouble with math and reading, and she gives one-on-one tutoring.

She is involved in the school's parents committee and tries to get the parents of these kids who need their helping hands to excel as well. She is a full-time graduate student at Loyola Marymount University, where she is pursuing a master's degree in education.

I am going to read her letter and then turn over the floor.

Every day for [my] first two months [as a teacher] my students would ask me if I would be returning the next day, week, and month, and I would reassure them that I was there to stay. Eventually, they began to trust me and believe that I was there to support them. . . . Now students believe that I am there for them and truly care about helping and preparing [them] to succeed academically. My students have made huge improvements academically, [and] I am particularly proud of how hard they all work. After hearing about the fate of DACA—

She is talking about President Trump abolishing DACA—

my students were worried that they would be losing me. I continue to reassure them that I am not going anywhere anytime soon and will fight to be able to see them finish middle school.

What is going to happen to her if we don't do what we are supposed to do—if we don't use this Senate and that House to solve this problem? What is going to happen to her and her students? Are we so busy? Do you notice it on the floor? Are we so busy that we

can't take up a piece of legislation here, debate it, and pass it today?

Before the end of the day, we are going to pass a measure to keep the government open and functioning for about 3 or 4 weeks. It is something that may pass the House. We will find out later this afternoon. I am troubled by it. It doesn't have one word in it to deal with this challenge, and we have known for 4 months that it was coming and that we had to do it.

I am going to be voting no on that, and it is not because of the merits of the continuing resolution. Until we address this issue and take the time to use the Senate and use the House to solve this problem, I am not going to be standing here and saying: I am going home for Christmas. I don't know what is going to happen to Miriam. I don't know what is going to happen to 800,000 others—get back to you later. The time is now for us to solve this problem.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator DURBIN for his extraordinary leadership on this issue and so many others.

The Dreamers are part of this country. They are America's future. They are helping to build this great Nation, and they need our attention now.

The Republicans control the House, the Senate, and the White House. One of their principal responsibilities is to pass a budget. We are now 3 months into the fiscal year, and we don't have a budget, and we are talking about another continuing resolution. A couple of weeks ago, we were told on the floor to give it a couple of more weeks, and we would work out some of these issues. I agree with Senator DURBIN. The time to act is now. We should not be going into recess without dealing with the problems of our country. We need to deal with the budget problem, and we, certainly, need to deal with the problem of the Dreamers. Let me just talk a little bit about them.

They entered the United States before they were 16 years old—that is required—before 2007. Under President Obama's Executive order of 2012, they were entitled to a 2-year renewable work permit and the ability to remain in this country without being in fear of deportation. Each one has to go through a criminal background check. They need to be enrolled in school. They must either be high school graduates or in the U.S. military. In the United States today, we have 800,000 who are registered under the Dreamers. There are 10,000 in my State of Maryland, and they are contributing a half a billion dollars to Maryland's GDP, or gross domestic product. They are our next generation of teachers, doctor, engineers, and entrepreneurs. They are going to help build America, and they know no other country but the United States, which is their home.

In our values, what makes America the great Nation that it is is that we

are a welcoming country. We are a country in which people have come over the years to build this great Nation. That is America's strength.

Are we going to turn our back now on the values that built this country? Are we going to rip families apart? Is that what America stands for? I find that hard to imagine. Would we do this to our own economy and hurt ourselves, as we are growing with their help?

I have met with many Dreamers, not as many as Senator DURBIN. He probably has the record. But I met with several Dreamers in Maryland. We had one in our office yesterday who had tears in her eyes. She said: I have an expiration date on my back. She doesn't know what is going to happen when that date occurs.

How would you like to live under that fear in the United States of America? We are not talking about some communist country. We are talking about America, where people are living in fear.

I have had several roundtable discussions with Dreamers in Maryland. I have had them in College Park, Baltimore, and in other areas. Let me mention two Dreamers I met with. Adam was originally born in Canada. His family grew up in Pakistan. He came to the United States with his parents when he was very young. Becky was born in Peru and came here with her parents to the United States. I mention them collectively because they both attend the University of Maryland at College Park. Our State allows Dreamers to have in-state tuition so they can go to college and get the tools they need in order to succeed. They need work permits because they have to work. Otherwise, they never would have been able to get through school. They need a driver's license. Adam explained to me that he needed a driver's license to go to a magnet school so that he could advance his own education. That was all possible through President Obama's Executive order. Now all of that has been put into doubt because of President Trump's announcements that the program will end. It puts their lives on hold and in fear, and they wonder whether they need to go into the shadows in the United States of America.

President Trump's actions were wrong. We can correct that, and Congress must act. We must act now before we go home for the holidays.

I wish to talk about a similar group of people in our country—a large number in my State of Maryland—those under Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, because it is a similar situation. There are 437,000 people in America from El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. In Maryland, 22,500 people are here from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti—from those three countries alone—and 90 percent of the TPS people in this country are from El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti, the three principal countries. My own

State's recipients contribute \$1.2 billion of our gross domestic product. This is a very similar situation to the Dreamers. They get a 6- to 18-month extension. They have been here for decades because the underlying conditions in the countries from which they came still exist today. I have been to Central America. I can tell you that it is not safe for these people to be returned to those gang activities. They have the same similar situation. They know no other country but America. If they are required to go back to the country in which they were born, it will tear families apart. They have been disadvantaged by the President's actions where he is now threatening to end these programs.

We need to act. We need to act in order to protect this group of citizens. I want to acknowledge that my colleagues have introduced legislation on this. S. 2144 provides a pathway to citizenship for those with TPS status. It is sponsored by Senators Van Hollen, Feinstein, and others. We should take that bill up and pass it. Let's provide protections. Let's strengthen American values. Let's do our work. Let's do it now. Let's do it before we go on recess. It is the right thing to do.

Let me just conclude by quoting from Becky again, one of the Dreamers I met. She said the best present she ever got was on her 13th birthday, when President Obama executed the Executive order that gave her legal status and hope here in America.

Well, we can give her an even better present right now before we take the recess for the Christmas holidays. We can give her a present of Congress, acting to provide protection for the Dreamers and for those on TPS so they don't have to worry again and they know they have a home here in America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am delighted to join my colleagues here in support of these kids who are known as Dreamers or DACA kids, who came in under the statute or under President Obama's program and who have lived here for many years in this country, passed all the requirements, and met all the standards. These are good kids. There is absolutely no reason for them to be the target of the kind of anxiety and fear that they are being put through to score political points. It really doesn't make sense.

By definition, these kids came to the United States of America under the age of 16. You can't even enforce a contract against a minor in this country. They do not have the legal capacity in most places to buy a sofa. Yet we are holding them to account for decisions that their parents made when they were small children.

One of the Rhode Islanders who will be affected by this came to the United States when she was 8 years old. Think of the kind of decisions that your 8-

year-old kids make or that you were making when you were 8 years old. This is a very successful young lady who is now at the Brown medical school. She is going to make enormous contributions to our country. Tossing her out or putting her in peril makes no sense whatsoever, particularly when the problems started when she was brought to this country by her parents when she was 8 years old.

Another Rhode Islander who contacted me came to the country when she was 7 years old. She is now a teacher in a middle school in Central Falls, RI. Central Falls is a community that is emerging from bankruptcy. It has got its feet back under it now. It has a wonderful, exciting young mayor. Spirits are up, and things are going well. But it is not easy to be a middle-school teacher anywhere, and to be a middle-school teacher in a small city that has just come out of bankruptcy is not easy. This is a valuable person to Rhode Island. Losing her adds no value to anyone.

Another person who contacted me came to the United States at 10 months old. At 10 months old, they barely even knew where they were. He came from Portugal at 10 months old. Now he has a college degree in computer science. He is ready to make his contribution to our country. He has done everything right and has played by the rules, and we are loading him up with all this anxiety and peril because of a decision his parents made when he was 10 months old.

You can't go out, as I said, and buy a sofa on the installment plan at 8 years old. Yet we are trying to penalize these kids. It makes no sense at all.

It doesn't even make economic sense. The studies I have seen show that disrupting the lives of these 800,000 Dreamer kids—90 percent of whom are in the workforce—would reduce the U.S. GDP by \$460 billion over the next decade. They are making a serious contribution here.

In Rhode Island, the delta is about \$200 million in annual State GDP between having the Dream Act pass and losing the DACA kids. We would stand to gain as much as \$150 million in annual GDP if the Dream Act passes, and ending DACA will result in an annual loss of \$60 million to our GDP. So just in my small State, there is \$200 million in economic result annually from solving this problem in a way that is humane and consistent with the way we treat children in virtually every other element of the law.

Sadly, a lot of this is twisted up in the continued fight over immigration, which the Senate really tried to solve. I am on the Judiciary Committee. Senator DURBIN was on the Judiciary Committee at the time. Under Chairman LEAHY's leadership, we went through hundreds of amendments and we took dozens of votes. Some 90 amendments were incorporated into the bill. It came out of the Judiciary Committee by a bipartisan vote of 13 to 5.

It came on to the Senate floor, where there were amendments. There actually was some regular order. Hundreds of amendments were considered, and the final bill passed on June 27 by 68 to 32.

Then our bipartisan Senate bill went over to the House, where the Speaker of the House refused even to bring it up—no hearing, no vote, nothing. They just froze it out. So there is a long history of why we are here today, but the price should not be paid by these kids, not when the original problem was something that was done when they were children—10 months old.

President Lincoln talked about “the better angels of our nature.” Let's show these kids the better angels of our nature. Let's do something decent, something bipartisan, something that is right, and let's do it soon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, over the years there has been a lot of debate on the Senate floor, from healthcare to tax reform. There is no doubt that some days it feels impossible to get the majority of Republicans onboard with policies that truly help the families we represent. But there is one thing that unites not only a large bipartisan contingent in Congress but also the vast majority of American people, and that is finding a path forward for the estimated 800,000 young men and women whose lives are right now in limbo—800,000 people, including 17,000 men, women, boys, and girls from my home State of Washington who shared their information, paid a large fee, and upheld their end of the bargain, only to have President Trump rip the rug out from under them 3 months ago when he and Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the end of the DACA Program.

This Congress may not be able to change the Trump administration's hateful rhetoric or shortsighted policies overnight, but we can and we should pass the Dream Act as soon as possible. That is why we need more Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle ready to roll up their sleeves and get this done. Because every single day that Republican leaders refuse to bring the Dream Act to the floor to a vote, another 122 young people lose their DACA status, they lose their ability to work legally, and they lose their protection from deportation. That means that every day, 122 of our neighbors, students, coworkers, and friends could be forced from the only country they know, despite the promise the Federal Government made to them when they signed up for DACA and despite their innumerable contributions to our schools, our hospitals, our universities, our stores, our farms, our churches, our offices, and so much more. That means small and large businesses are forced to lay off DACA recipients each day—vital employees in whom businesses have invested money to train and support, employees who

help our economy and the small businesses in my State grow.

My friends on the other side of the aisle are constantly claiming they want to help our small businesses grow. I listened to weeks of their speeches on this as they tried to justify the tax bill. But instead of a giveaway to the wealthiest 1 percent, one way my friends across the aisle could actually help small businesses is to bring the Dream Act up for a vote.

This morning, I had the great honor of sitting down with Dreamers who traveled all the way here from my State across the Nation to fight for action, young people who had no control over how they came to this country but who have made conscious choices to improve their own lives and make life better for their own community. They are passionate, they are frustrated, and their stories need to be heard.

Here is just one of them. Paul was brought here to this country at the age of 7 to be reunited with his father. Paul excelled in schools in Pasco, WA, not far from where my own dad grew up. Paul and his parents worried that despite Paul's success in K-12, going to college and starting a career might be impossible. But DACA provided him and his family with stability. Paul went to Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA, as a double major in political science and economics, and he now works in our State legislature.

Now, with DACA in question, it is not just Paul who isn't sure what comes next for him but also his younger brother, Jose. Jose, who was only 2 years old when he came here, grew up seeing what Paul, his older brother, was able to achieve. He saw that DACA allowed Paul to live without that constant fear. Jose was ready to follow in Paul's footsteps and enroll in the DACA Program so he could pursue his dream of an engineering degree at the University of Washington. Now, if Congress doesn't act, we will have one less engineer in this country.

Paul and Jose are great examples of Dreamers who have worked hard. They have aimed high, and they participate in our community and our economy, making our country a better place. This country should be rolling out the welcome mat to our Dreamers, not slamming the door shut on them. And that is why I am here today with my colleagues to echo their fear and frustration on the floor of the Senate and to call on Republican leaders to work with us. Stop letting so many promising young men and women fall off the rolls of this program each and every day. Stop kicking this can down the road. Come together to do what is right for these young people.

Ending the DACA Program is not what our country is all about. It doesn't do anything to fix our immigration system, prepare for our future, or grow our economy. Ending DACA won't heal the divisions we have seen in our communities or make them any easier to fix. And ending the DACA

Program certainly doesn't reflect a country of opportunity or promise—something the United States has always aspired to be.

I urge my colleagues here in the Senate and over in the House to think about the communities you represent. Think about the young men and women who are currently studying for finals or caring for our sick or teaching our children or responding to natural disasters or opening businesses in the communities you travel to and live in. Think about the young men and women who hope to serve in our military and defend your freedom some day. Think of the Dreamers who have grown up in our country and whose children are the future of our Nation. Think about how much good we could do for these young men and women if my Republican friends brought the same commitment and zeal to this task as they did to their tax bill. Finally, work with Democrats to find a real solution to end this unnecessary uncertainty.

I want to thank Paul and all the other advocates from my State whom I met with in my office this morning and the many thousands of others who are showing up in every way they can to make their voices heard and to call on us here in Congress to act. Dr. Martin Luther King once said that justice too long delayed is justice denied, and Dreamers are not asking for anything other than what we have promised to them.

This is an incredibly difficult and uncertain time for so many people, but Dreamers need to know that many of us in Congress and so many across the country have their backs. We will get this done. We have to get this done.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, just yesterday, the Republican-controlled Congress passed a massive tax giveaway that will shovel truckloads of money into pockets of giant corporations and the superrich, while it leaves working families behind. And that is just the latest in a laundry list of presents that have been doled out to folks at the top. For everyone else, it has been one broken promise after another.

One of those promises was to protect 800,000 Dreamers who were brought to the United States as kids. Trump broke this promise when he ended DACA, the program that allows Dreamers to live, work, and study in the United States without fear of being deported to countries they barely know. Because Trump broke his promise, it is up to Congress to stand up and protect Dreamers by passing a clean Dream Act—a bill that gives legal status and a path of citizenship to those young people.

I want to introduce you to one of those Dreamers—Elias Rosenfeld. Elias was 6 years old when his parents brought him and his sister to the United States. He doesn't have many

memories of his life in Venezuela, but he did hear stories from his parents and his grandfather about the everyday risks that they faced. One day, while his mother was driving, she pulled up to a stop light, and a man pulled a gun on her. Another day, his grandfather withdrew money from an ATM and then was robbed at gunpoint.

So when Elias's mother, who was an executive at a multimedia company, had an opportunity to transfer to an office in Miami, FL, she jumped at it. Elias's family came to the United States legally. They applied for and they received a visa that allows executives and managers from other countries to work in the United States and eventually apply for permanent resident status. Under that visa, the entire family would become permanent residents and would never have to worry about losing their status in the United States. "Permanent" is the key word here. Well, at least that had been their plan, only things didn't go the way they had been planned.

When Elias was 11, his mother died of cancer. He didn't know it at the time, but the day his mother died, Elias and his family lost their path to permanent resident status and became undocumented.

After his mother died, Elias clung to the belief that an education was his ticket to a better life. He challenged himself academically, taking 13 advanced placement courses and earning A's in almost every class. He also juggled a number of extracurricular activities, including speech and debate, student government, volunteering with children and the homeless, and starting his school's first traveling Model United Nations. His excellence earned him a place on the dean's list, as well as a long list of awards, including the Miami-Dade Homeless Trust Change Maker Award.

Elias so impressed the school's staff that his high school activities director called Elias a hero and said: "I've been teaching for 20 years and I have never seen a student like this young man." Scholarship committees also recognized Elias's accomplishments, and he won a coveted Myra Kraft Transitional Year Program scholarship, which provided him a full ride to Brandeis University in Waltham, MA. He is now a sophomore at Brandeis, where he continues to make his mark.

Before DACA came along, Elias lived in constant fear that ICE would break down his door and deport him and his sister. DACA changed his life. The fear subsided. He knew that ICE agents wouldn't break down his door or seize him on his way to school. Elias told me that DACA has been a source of optimism and a light of protection.

America is the only country Elias knows. It is the only country many Dreamers know. This is their home. Dreamers like Elias have had the courage to step forward. They have come out of the shadows to tell their stories. Now Congress could show some courage

and protect Dreamers by passing a clean Dream Act. We have waited too long already. Every day that we delay, more than 100 Dreamers lose protected status. They must return to the shadows. They must think about ICE agents breaking down their doors or seizing them if they go to school or to work. The time for Congress to act is now, right now, today. We should not leave here so that we can celebrate the holidays with our families while nearly 800,000 Dreamers fear being ripped apart from their brothers, their sisters, their mothers, their fathers, and deported to countries they barely know.

If we held a vote today on the Dream Act, it would pass. So my question to Senator MCCONNELL is this: What are you waiting for? Let us vote.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I also rise to advocate the passage of a clean Dream Act now.

I had a youngster say to me—and I am going to tell the stories of a few of the youngsters—at an event in November, a Dreamer in Northern Virginia: "You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one." It is a beautiful line, as we know, from the song "Imagine" by John Lennon. "You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one."

There are 800,000 Dreamers in this country—more than 800,000. More than 13,000 of the Dreamers live in Virginia, and they are from all corners of the world. I have met with Dreamers in Virginia who were originally born in Sweden, Nigeria, Latin America, many countries in Asia. They are a rainbow but also a source of strength for our country, and we need to act on their behalf.

I also stand here in the Christmas spirit. We will all, so many of us, hear the retelling of the Christmas story. In the aftermath of the birth of the poor child in a manger, the story goes that he was taken by his parents to another country essentially as a refugee. There were threats of violence against the firstborn children of the land, and so he was spirited across a border into Egypt to be protected.

I know many of these Dreamers, and I know so many like them. I worked as a missionary in Honduras in 1980 and 1981, and I had the opportunity to work with youngsters in a country that was then and still is beset with violence and poverty and where so many parents have to make an agonizing choice. In some instances, they make the choice to try to find a better land for their children, just as Jesus and Mary did as they fled to Egypt at the Christmas season more than 2,000 years ago.

So I stand here in that moment, in that spirit, knowing that hundreds of thousands of Dreamers need our protection and, frankly, deserve it. Are we less compassionate than those societies of old that have found refuge for those who have come fleeing hardship? I

don't believe we are. I know the American public isn't, and I know the Virginia public isn't. The question is, Is Congress as compassionate as we need to be?

We tell the story of some of the Dreamers in Virginia, and I have made many speeches on this floor and told many of their stories.

Juan de la Rosa is a DACA recipient—one of our 13,500. He is a Richmonder. I first came to know Juan when I was the mayor of Richmond. He arrived at age 5. In a comment to me, he said: In one way or another, you have always been an active part of teaching me how being involved in the political process is the key toward positive change.

He started when he arrived here at 5 years old, and he excelled immediately. He went to Manchester High School in Chesterfield County and graduated in 2014. He was a drum major in the marching band, class representative, and a president of several honor societies.

After graduating at the top of his class at this very competitive suburban high school, he continued at Virginia Tech. At Virginia Tech, he started Tech DREAMers, which is a student organization there trying to create a more inclusive environment for the Dreamers on the campus. Through Tech DREAMers, he hosted dialogues around immigration reform and other issues—not just with Hokies but with students all around Virginia and around the country.

This past May, Juan de la Rosa graduated magna cum laude from Virginia Tech, and he continues to be active. He works in the admissions office as a Dreamer, traveling the country and telling students all over this country about the opportunity that was offered by this great university in the Commonwealth. He says: "All of this would not have been possible, had it not been for the opportunities afforded me because of DACA."

Juan, like so many other undocumented young people, is the very embodiment of the Virginia Tech motto. The motto of Virginia Tech University is "Ut Prosim," Latin for "That I May Serve." That is what Juan is doing. He wants Congress to pass a clean Dream Act now so there is a permanent solution for him and so many others.

Alejandro Zuniga is the internal president of DREAMers Empowered at Northern Virginia Community College. I sat down with him a few weeks ago at a roundtable I held with these Dreamers. He was from Bolivia. He lived there until he was 7. His parents brought him here. He was not fully aware of what it was to be undocumented until he was ready to go to college, and his parents explained it to him. His favorite thing as a kid growing up in the DC area was to go to the Air and Space Museum. Now he is at Northern Virginia Community College making honor grades, studying to be an aerospace engineer.

Monday, I sat down at the Richmond Public Library with a group of Dream-

ers from the Richmond area. A few stopped by my office on a day I wasn't there and asked for a meeting. We sat down together. Let me tell you about some of them and some of their parents.

Mateo is a Dreamer and sophomore at VCU. He went to the same high school my daughter went to. My daughter Annella graduated from the Governor's School in Petersburg in 2013. Mateo was a freshman, and he graduated in 2016. He is part of a group called UndocuRams, a student organization whose mission is to foster inclusion for Dreamers on the VCU campus.

Mateo's mom came with him to the meeting to show her support for her son. She is heartbroken seeing him work so hard and so afraid of what might happen to him and so afraid of what might happen to her. She prays that this system may find a just result for her child and for herself.

Finally, at the same meeting, I had Bertha. Bertha is both a Dreamer and a mom. She is a young mother. Her parents brought her here in 1998 from Mexico as a young child. She is an exceptional member of her community. She works in a local Catholic Church, volunteers with the PTA at her children's school, and coaches her children's and other children's soccer teams. Bertha told me she has learned the values of volunteering and helping others from being here in the United States. This is an interesting one. I hadn't heard this before. Bertha told me that where she came from in Mexico, there wasn't a great tradition of volunteer organizations. There was sort of the government, and there were churches. She said, coming to the United States, she has become aware of a whole sector of society that was not familiar to her: volunteer organizations—groups of people who get together to try to tutor other kids to be Big Brothers or Big Sisters.

She said what she has learned from the United States, more than anything else, is this amazing power of volunteerism and the network of social service groups that are run by volunteers. She said: I want to be just like that—and that is what she is doing.

Why would we want to lose a mother, a Dreamer like Bertha from our community? She has explained, as so many have—folks here on the Hill engaged in rallies have explained with tears in their eyes the fear they feel. They had a President, who, though he said some tough things about immigrants during the campaign, he always said about Dreamers: Dreamers will have nothing to worry about in me. These Dreamers are good kids. They were taken by complete surprise when, in September, the President announced he would terminate the DACA Program in 6 months. From that moment, it has been unrelenting fear for these young people and for their families.

The only thing in the President's announcement that I think we could probably all agree to is—even though I

was a strong supporter of President Obama's Executive action; firmly believed it was within his legal power—a statutory fix is better than an Executive action because an Executive action depends upon the temperament of the particular President; whereas, a statutory fix provides people with some permanence, some confidence, and some security, and that is what we are called to do.

Again, in the spirit of the Christmas season—and because I am seeing this particular Presiding Officer—I am reminded of a beautiful phrase of Pope Francis whom the Presiding Officer and I have talked about before. In a letter he issued on Ash Wednesday in 2015, he called on us to be "islas de misericordia en el medio de un mar de indiferencia"—islands of mercy in the middle of a sea of indifference. That is a powerful phrase. Let's be islands of mercy in the middle of a sea of indifference. It was interesting. He didn't say: In the middle of a sea of hatred, in the middle of a sea of prejudice. He could have said all of those things. What he said was: "in a sea of indifference."

Surely, as we hear of the virtues and the dreams, the achievements and the accomplishments of these beautiful young people, we can call on our inner spirit to be merciful, rather than indifferent. That is my hope; that this body will do that by passing a clean Dream Act and accepting with open arms the wonderful gifts these young people bring to our communities.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. 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. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise, once again today, to express my strong support for taking action on the Dream Act. I thank all the Dreamers who, in recent weeks, traveled from all across the country to Washington to make their voices heard.

Last month, I met with 50 Minnesotans, who traveled here by bus to show their support for the Dream Act. They took time away from their jobs, from their education, and from their families because this issue is so critical to them and to their loved ones.

I want to get this bill passed, and while I remain hopeful we will reach an agreement soon, I know this has real consequences with each and every day, as over 100 Dreamers lose their status per day.

We have already seen the harmful effects of the administration's decision to end DACA, and the situation will continue to get worse until we take action. For the eligible DACA recipients with statuses set to expire over the upcoming weeks, the uncertainty is unbelievably difficult.

These are people who were told previously by our government that they could stay. They registered with our government, and now, with each and every day, more and more of them are losing their status. Just since I spoke about this issue on the Senate floor last week, an estimated 800 additional Dreamers have lost their DACA status. In March, the number of Dreamers with expiring protections will increase to 1,000 a day if we have not found a solution by that time.

This is an issue where we should be able to find bipartisan consensus. Americans want us to protect Dreamers. In fact, one recent poll found that 86 percent of Americans support action to allow Dreamers to stay in the United States. The Dream Act, which my colleague Senator DURBIN has led in the Senate for 16 years now, is based on a simple principle: Dreamers who are brought to the United States as children, and only know this country as their home, should be given the opportunity to contribute to our Nation and become citizens.

These young people were brought here through no fault of their own. On average, when they came over, they were only about 6½ years old. Imagine being told that you have to go back to a country you have not stepped foot in since you were 6, where you may not know anyone or even speak the language.

To receive DACA status, all Dreamers have already passed background checks, paid fees, and met educational requirements. They already did this so they could stay in the United States and contribute to our communities across the country.

Dreamers are already contributing. More than 97 percent of these Dreamers, of the DACA recipients, are now in school or in the workforce. In fact, 72 percent of them currently in school are pursuing a bachelor's degree or higher. The American Medical Association has urged us to take action on this issue, noting our current shortage of physicians in the United States—something the Presiding Officer is aware of—and estimating that passing the Dream Act could add 5,400 physicians to the U.S. healthcare system in the coming decades. According to the American Association of Medical Colleges, more than 100 students with DACA status applied to medical school last year, and about 70 Dreamers are currently enrolled in medical school.

In Minnesota, our large refugee and immigrant community has contributed so much to the cultural and economic vitality of our State. We are proud to have big communities of Somali, Liberian, and Oromo populations, as well as the second largest Hmong population. In fact, we have the biggest population of Somalis in the country, the biggest population of Liberians, the biggest population of Oromos, and we are also proud to be the home of more than 6,000 Dreamers.

Ending DACA in my State, where the unemployment rate is hovering in the

3-percent range, would cost Minnesota more than \$376 million in annual revenue, let alone the immeasurable impact to families who may be ripped apart.

REMEMBERING JOSEPH MEDINA

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, last week on the Senate floor, I talked about how I have always tried to find examples of Dreamers so that the citizens in my State can understand what we are talking about when we talk about the fact that someone could be brought over to our country and not even realize it and have this Dreamer status.

I talked about Joseph Medina. He was a decorated Army veteran. He served in World War II. He lived in Minnesota. I am sad to say that he passed away last July at the ripe old age of 103 years old. There was a story about Joe in today's edition of our largest newspaper in Minnesota, honoring his contributions to our Nation during World War II and through his nearly a century as a proud and hard-working Minnesotan.

Joe lost both of his parents before he was 1 year old. He was brought to the United States from Mexico by his aunt when he was just 5, and he didn't find out that he was undocumented during his whole time growing up. When did he find out? When he tried to join the Army in World War II.

So what he did then, because he wasn't a citizen—back then, it was pretty simple; what they would do is have people go to Canada, especially if they lived in Minnesota, and that is how they would become citizens. So they sent Joe Medina to Canada for 1 day. I remember his telling me this story—that this is what they did during World War II when they wanted people to sign up and serve. He stayed in a hotel for 1 night, and he came back, and with the help of our military, he became a citizen.

He then served under General MacArthur in the Pacific. Then he came home, got married, had a son, and that son served in the Vietnam war.

Joe came to Washington, DC, with his son for the first and last time to see the World War II Memorial at age 99. I stood there by his side as he looked at the Minnesota part of that Memorial and thought of the people he knew who were no longer with us and thought of his service and how much he loved serving our country in World War II.

At his side, along with his own son who had served in Vietnam, were two Dreamers—two high school students who were in high school in the suburban part of the Twin Cities, and they also wanted to join the military. If I remember right, they wanted to join the Air Force. Do you know what? The way the rules were a few years ago, they weren't allowed to do that. Joseph Medina couldn't understand that because the proudest part of his life was serving in our military, serving despite

the fact that he was born in another country but lived almost his entire life—98 years of his 103 years—in America.

So I join with all those in my State in remembering Joseph Medina and honoring his service to our country as we continue to work toward finding a solution for the Dreamers in the Senate.

I note that we should also take action here at the end of the year, and we should be staying to get a number of priorities done, including a long-term reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program, dealing with the medical device tax, renewing funding for community health centers. There are so many things we need to do.

In closing, I just want to make clear that I stand with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have spoken out in support of the Dream Act. We need to pass this bill.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

A RECAP OF THE YEAR AND AN OUTLINE OF THE CHALLENGES OF THE YEAR AHEAD

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, as I try to do every year, if time permits—this will be my seventh year in the U.S. Senate; sometimes our work here finishes in a different fashion, but if possible, I try to come on the last day of the legislative year and give a speech to kind of recap the year behind us and outline the challenges of the year ahead.

For me, it was, obviously, an eventful year, a productive one, and I believe it has been one for this Chamber, as well, in what is a unique political environment in which politics today is practiced and covered in ways we have never seen before—almost like entertainment. Nevertheless, it was a year that we got a lot of good things done, and I wanted to highlight some of them in the hope that this gives us momentum into the new year.

This has been my first experience with a new President—obviously, not just a new President but a new administration that brought with it a set of individuals in different positions, so I think for all of us it was a transition in that regard. It also was the beginning of a second term, which, at one time, I didn't know I was even going to pursue.

In arriving here earlier this year and getting to work, we slowly but surely got going on a number of key priorities that we had been working on for a very long time. The first one that happened

was the VA accountability bill. This was a bill that I had been working on for a number of years. It basically gave the Secretary of the VA the power to fire people at the VA who are not doing a good job. It is that simple. It is not anything more complicated than that. It made it easier to fire people who were not doing a good job. They still have due process to defend themselves.

For the better part of 3 years, there were a lot of objections to that proposal from the previous administration and some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Then everything lined up this year. Senator TESTER and Senator ISAKSON, who are the ranking member and chairman of that committee, came onboard and really helped to push this and to move it forward. It passed in both Chambers and was signed into law by the President. This was a substantial achievement.

What is interesting about it is that because it was bipartisan, because there was cooperation, and because no one was fighting with anyone on it, it didn't get a lot of press coverage. But it happened, and people need to know about it.

Does it make the VA perfect? No. Are there still challenges that need to be confronted? Absolutely. This is something that has to do with accountability and the ability to get rid of people who were not doing a good job. It is something that, for years, could not get done because someone always objected and found a way to stop it. Then it came together with people working across the aisle to make it happen. Today, it is the law. Today, there are people who were not doing a good job who are no longer employed at the VA, thanks to this. That is an important thing that people need to know.

I always remind everyone that the overwhelming majority of people who work at the VA are doing a good job. The ones who are not are the ones we need to replace.

The year went on, and I had an opportunity to interface and interact with the National Security Council and with the White House on two foreign policy issues that didn't really require legislation but that I am grateful and excited about having the opportunity to help craft.

The first was the new direction on U.S. policy toward Cuba. The previous administration had basically changed our policies toward Cuba—opened it up to much fanfare and, quite frankly, a lot of editorial board excitement.

It was the enlightened position, apparently, to argue that doing more trade with Cuba was going to somehow help Cuba transition to a democracy. But after 2½ years, it has become apparent that this change has done nothing other than flow more dollars into the hands of that regime and help them in their efforts to normalize.

When President Trump was elected, one of the things he wanted to talk about was what we needed to do to change that relationship back to some-

thing that favored the Cuban people and not the Cuban regime. Those changes came about. They were announced earlier this year at an event in South Florida.

To cut to the chase, what it does is this: It says that people can still travel to Cuba. Americans can still go to Cuba as part of a group or as an individual going to support the Cuban people. But if you go to Cuba, whether off a cruise ship, an airplane, or if you are there in support of the Cuban people, you have to spend your money at places that are owned by Cubans—by everyday Cuban people—not by the Cuban military, which is trying to create a monopoly.

For the first time in the history of that tyranny, there is a U.S. policy that places individuals in Cuba—private individuals in Cuba—in a favored position in comparison to the military and the Castro government. I believe this law will slowly but surely pay dividends as it becomes abundantly clear to the small, independent, private sector in Cuba that the reason they are aren't growing—the reason they aren't attracting more customers—has nothing to do with U.S. policy. It is because their own government does not want to allow them to be able to grow their businesses.

The Cuban Government feels threatened by private business, No. 1, because they are Communists and, No. 2, because they don't want people in Cuba to be able to support themselves. They want people to be dependent upon them; that is how they control politically.

We will see what decision the Cuban Government makes in the months and years to come, but here it is abundantly clear that there are people—Americans—who, under our law, can travel to Cuba, can spend money in Cuba, and they will have to stay at an Airbnb or in a private home or even, if the Cuban Government allows it, a hotel that is owned by a private entity. Where they cannot stay is in places controlled by the Cuban military or companies controlled by the Cuban military.

The second foreign policy issue that we were able to get involved in is another tragedy in our hemisphere; that is, what is happening in Venezuela. To cut to the chase, we have a tyrant who is afraid that he won't get reelected. He lost control of the National Assembly, which is their legislative body. His name is Nicolas Maduro. So what does he do? He basically figures out a way to create an alternative Congress called the Constituent Assembly, basically modeled after the fraudulent Cuban constituent assembly-like model. What it basically does is it guarantees that certain sectors in society have seats of representation. Instead of seats in Congress by a district or state, they are represented by different sectors, like labor, electricians, you name it.

But here is the funny part about it: The only people who can run for it are

the people they allow to run for it, and they also get to count the votes. As you can imagine, that fraudulent Constituent Assembly basically votes 100 percent in favor of whatever he wants, literally with very little dissent. It is not democratically elected. Meanwhile, the legitimate, democratically elected Congress, to use terms that we use here, has basically been intimidated and stripped of their power. Maduro doesn't allow them to be paid anymore; they don't staff anymore; all sorts of things of that nature.

We encourage the President of the United States to pursue first individual sanctions. We encourage the President to grow the list of individuals in Venezuela who are sanctioned and no longer able to benefit from ill-found gains here in the United States and ultimately to prevent them from continuing to do something they have been doing for far too long.

For far too long, they have been stealing the oil from Venezuela. They are selling it in global markets at a discount. Then they use those—to use rough numbers, they take \$1 million worth of oil and sell it for half a million dollars. Then they will take some of that half a million dollars and use it to pay the interest on the debt they already owe. Then the rest of that cash, they use for themselves, and they sprinkle a little bit of it to some of the elites around them just to keep them loyal to the regime. Those are the mid-level or high-level military officials who decide, well, things aren't great in Venezuela, but at least my family is better off than everybody else because we are loyal to the regime.

The President moved to stop that. Today, U.S. entities can no longer trade in these fraudulent, illegal bonds that are stolen from the people of Venezuela. This is a tragic situation. This is not an embargo. This is not economic warfare, which is what Maduro calls it. This, basically, is preventing them from continuing to steal.

I would add one more point to this. I encourage every one of you, if you can, to read an article in the New York Times that appeared last weekend, a pretty extensive series on starvation. Children are literally starving to death in Venezuela. Venezuela is the richest country in the hemisphere, the richest country in South America, in terms of being one of the most oil-rich countries in the world. Venezuela is a nation with a long history of stable economics and even the longest democratic tradition in South America. There are children starving. We see images that we normally associate with other continents at other times in our history—children starving to death in Venezuela. Meanwhile, he looks as though he weighs more than he ever has before, and all the people who surround him in his government are heavier, fatter than they have ever been before. People are starving because of that. It is not because of U.S. policy. It is not because of sanctions. There is no one in

the world, other than his handful of cronies, who would argue that it has anything to do with sanctions. It is because of them, because in addition to being incompetent, they are criminals.

The Venezuelan Government, from the top down and everywhere in between, is filled with narcotraffickers, with people who allow narcotraffickers from Mexico and from Colombia to fly into and use airports in Venezuela to traffic drugs. Just imagine for a moment, in this country, if our elected officials said to certain drug dealers: If you pay us, not only will the DEA not stop you from trafficking in drugs, but they will help you move it. That is what happens in Venezuela. Imagine for a moment if the Department of Defense went to drug dealers and said: If you pay us, not only will we allow your planes to fly, we will tell you what time to take off and we will escort you in our airspace. That is Venezuela—state-sponsored narcotrafficking at every level.

By the way, they offer another service. If you don't pay them, they will tell you: Don't worry, we will arrest the rival drug dealer, but we will protect the ones who pay us.

There are some very wealthy people in that government. In addition to corruption and stealing from the people of Venezuela, they are narcotraffickers. The Vice President of Venezuela is a narcotrafficker, sanctioned by the United States as a drug kingpin, and it goes on from there. The Vice President of the party, who controls their intelligence services—a thug by the name of Diosdado Cabello—is a drug trafficker. The nephews of the President of Venezuela, the nephews of his wife, the First Lady, were just convicted and sentenced last week, in a court in New York, for drug trafficking. By the way, in their testimony, it is all filled with evidence.

I hope in the new year that we can find a way to continue to support the brave people of Venezuela and a better way forward. We would hope, by the way, that even in the Venezuelan Government, even in that fraudulent Constituent Assembly, we would hope that there are people there, like Hugo Chavez, who believed in the stuff he believed in—but they would have to see that this is a disaster, that this incompetent man is destroying their country and starving their children, and that there is no future in the direction they are headed. We hope this situation improves in the years to come.

Senator CARDIN was on the floor yesterday discussing this, and I want to reiterate that I hope that early next year, we can move on a bill that we introduced together called the Venezuelan Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act of 2017. This helps address this problem. It puts in place a plan to help with this humanitarian crisis. We need a government that allows us to do it. But knowing that the United States, working with Canada, Mexico, Argentina,

Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Spain, and the European Union—knowing that these countries are ready to step in and help might be an incentive for decent people still left in that government to step forward and begin a process of transition.

It was an interesting year, and one more legislative initiative that we took on was the RACE for Children. It is a pediatric cancer initiative. There are not enough innovations in pediatric cancer when you compare it to adult cancer. This law requires pharmaceuticals to begin testing adult drugs on pediatric populations so that hopefully we can develop more pediatric medicines. I worked on that with Senator BENNET of Colorado. We got it passed and signed into law. Again, it is not something that got a lot of attention because it was bipartisan and not controversial, but it is important. We are proud of the good work we accomplished this year in that regard.

We had hurricanes that impacted Florida not once but twice, first Hurricane Irma and then Hurricane Maria, which struck Puerto Rico and had an impact on Florida as well. Approximately 200,000 U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico have moved to Florida because there is no electricity, because the island had already been hit previously, and because it is facing a financial disaster, and now it got hit by the storm. We were very involved in helping there. In particular, we worked with Resident Commissioner Jenniffer Gonzalez, who is a true and dedicated public servant to the people of Puerto Rico, No. 1, in getting the right response. It took a little too long for the response to get going, but it finally started moving. But there is still so much to be done. The estimates are that it will be another 8 months before power is restored.

A disaster like that is never good news, but for the first time at least in 7 years, I feel as though my colleagues know more about Puerto Rico than ever before. They understand the challenges it faces because of its unique status. They understand the pre-existing challenges it faced before the storm, and they understand what lies ahead.

I don't mean this disrespectfully, but there was a time when people sometimes would talk to me about Puerto Rico as though it were a foreign country. We have to remind them that these are U.S. citizens. On a per capita basis, they volunteer to serve in the Armed Forces as much as or more than anyone else in the United States.

I hope that in the year to come we will redouble our efforts, particularly in disaster relief, to ensure that Puerto Rico doesn't just recover but is rebuilt stronger than ever so that we don't have to continue to revisit this in the future when the inevitable happens, because they will face a storm again.

Of course, just a few days ago, we passed tax reform. Not everybody likes it, but I think more people will as they

start to see its true implications. By March of this year, the overwhelming majority of Americans are going to notice that their paychecks are bigger than they were a year ago, and if they didn't get a raise, it will be solely based on tax reform. If I were king for a day, the law would look a little different. But we don't have kings in America; we have a constitutional republic in which making things better is our goal. Sometimes if you get 70 or 80 percent of what you want, that is certainly a victory. Sometimes if you get 50 percent of what you want, that is a victory. Most change in America happens incrementally through our constitutional republic. Every now and then, we can take major steps forward.

Here is the bottom line: America's Tax Code today is better than it was before this bill passed. Do I think we went a little too far in the direction of multinational corporations? Perhaps—not that it is going to hurt the economy. But I thought some of that could have been geared toward working families through a further expansion of the child tax credit. But over all, I do believe it will help grow our economy, and more importantly, I do believe it will leave more money in the hands of Americans to be able to spend it on their families. It is their money. It is not ours.

The best way to look at it is, if I came here and said that I wanted to spend \$2 trillion over the next 10 years—borrowed money—to give it to the government so the government could stimulate the economy, there would be a lot of support from the other side of the aisle and from the press. They would call it genius and enlightened for a Republican to think that way. But if we say we want to leave \$1.5 to \$2 trillion in the hands of the American people and the private sector so they can stimulate the economy instead, it is a disaster and it is irresponsible. It is just a philosophical difference of opinion.

There is a role for government. We must fund it. We have to rebuild our military. We talked about disaster relief. There are important things for government to do. But by and large, a dollar spent by the private sector or by an individual family is going to generate more growth than a dollar spent by the government. We fund government not to grow the economy but to help sustain it and protect it and keep us safe and the food that we eat and the airplanes we travel on and certainly from threats foreign and domestic. Economic growth is a function of the private sector and of individuals, and tax reform helps to achieve it. That alone won't be enough.

One of the singular challenges in America today that we must confront in the new year, hopefully, is the skills gap. It is not just a throwaway phrase; it is the fact that the best paying jobs, the ones that actually pay enough to raise a family and save for retirement—those jobs require skills that

our schools aren't teaching. Those jobs require skills that millions of Americans do not have. We have to change that. We have to make it easier not just to graduate people at 18 years of age ready to work, we have to make it easier for people at 45 to be able to go back to some sort of school and acquire the skills they need for a better paying job. That will lead to economic growth. That will help fill the 2 million to 3 million unfilled jobs that we cannot find people in this country with the right skills to fill. That is how people get a raise as a part of economic growth, and I hope the new year provides an opportunity for that.

I would add that, in addition to that, the new year will provide us an opportunity to focus on infrastructure, which is critical. My State of Florida is particularly impacted by not just storms but sea level rise in coastal areas, and there are things we can do to mitigate against it. We need to restore the Everglades, and, of course, we need roads and bridges and to improve our infrastructure and airports. Hopefully, we can confront that as we work on infrastructure.

Mr. President, 2018 will be a year that we will deal with the farm bill. I hope action will be taken to reform crop insurance, to ensure that my State's farmers are never in the position they were put in after Hurricane Irma, with neither a reliable safety net, nor a reliable commitment from the Federal Government to step in when Federal programs fail to meet disaster needs.

Next year could be a water resources year, a water year. Again, it is an opportunity for us to do critical things for our infrastructure. In Florida, beach renourishment and intercoastal navigation projects are important not just to our way of life but to our tourism industry. There are harbor dredging projects with the expansion of the Panama Canal. It is important that these things get done next year. They won't get as much controversy or fanfare, but these are critical things that we can do.

Another opportunity next year that we have heard some talk about is the ability to reform the social safety net. On that front, I would say that is an issue that I have pushed for for a very long time. But sometimes when you talk about reform, people think you are coming at it because you want to cut. For me, it is not so much about cutting; it is about improving the way we deliver the same services. How can we use the money we are already spending in the safety net but in a better way?

I believe in the safety net. I actually don't believe free enterprise works unless we have one. People are not going to take risks, people are not going to strive if they think that if they fail, the consequences will be economic devastation. You have to have a safety net to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves—the permanently

disabled, the elderly and the like—but you also have to have a safety net for people who have come upon tough times until they can get back on their feet and try again.

But I fear—in fact, I realized long ago—that our safety net programs treat the symptoms of poverty, but they do not cure it. That is why I hope that if and when we tackle the social safety net—and I hope we will in 2018—it will not be so much about cutting as it will be about reorganizing and improving. Yes, we will take care of people in their emergent and immediate needs. But we will also make it easier for you to go back to school and get a degree or a technical certification so that you can find a job and never again rely on the government. If we do that for enough people, it will save us money because fewer people will be on the social safety net. But that should not be the reason we tackle it—not as a cost-saving exercise, but as a way to lift up more Americans.

We are in a global competition, and our chief geopolitical competitor in the economic space in the 21st century will be China. China has over three times as many people as we do, and we have to compete against them. They have 1 billion, and we have 380 million or 400 million people. We are competing against an economy with three times as many people. We need everyone. We are not a nation that can afford economically to leave anyone behind, and we are a nation in which leaving anyone behind would be a betrayal of our founding principles. That is why I hope we will tackle it next year—if we tackle the social safety net—with job training programs.

In a few moments, the Senate will hopefully take up and vote on the continuing resolution. I know everyone is anxious to return to their States and homes for the holiday. I will say that I am disappointed we are leaving here at the end of this year not having taken on a disaster relief bill that I know the people in Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico, and—with the wildfires—out West need. I believe we will confront it in the early part of next year, along with a permanent extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program and other matters.

Next year will bring an opportunity, as well, to deal with things like immigration security, the opportunity to deal with young people brought to this country, through no fault of their own, by their parents who now find themselves here, illegally, in the country. I believe there is a real chance next year to provide them certainty and the ability to stay in this country for the future.

All these things are there, and they will happen in the early part of the year. But, at least when it comes to disaster relief, it is disappointing that we won't be able to do that—largely for legislative strategic reasons, not for policy ones. But I am confident we will deal with it in the early part of next year.

I actually think that in 2018, despite it being an election year, if we allow the momentum that closed out this year to carry over to the new one, we will have a chance to do good things for our country.

In the end, given our differences that exist in this country today, it is hard to imagine we will ever always agree that every idea is a good one, but I hope we can all agree that our job here is to make things better. Sometimes making things better means 1 step forward, and sometimes it means 50 steps forward. But as long as we are moving forward in a pattern of perpetual improvement, I think we should be proud of the work we are doing.

I think, by and large, in 2017, despite the fits and starts, despite the controversies, despite the headlines every morning about the outrage of the day or questions in the afternoon that usually begin with "How did you feel about the tweet on this or on that?"—despite all those distractions, I think 2017 will go down as a year of consequential improvement, where things happened in this Chamber and in this city that made America better, not worse. On that, I hope we can continue to work.

I wish all the people of Florida, all my colleagues, all the people of this great country and around the world a happy Hanukkah, a merry Christmas, and a happy New Year. I look forward to working together and making things better in the year to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. REED. Mr. President, yesterday, we saw a very unusual celebration at the White House as Members of Congress took turns exalting the President and speaking in glowing terms about the tax bill they had passed. There appeared to be quite a contrast between the celebration at the White House and the reaction by working Americans.

Why weren't working middle-class Americans celebrating so vigorously? Why does poll after poll find that this is the most unpopular tax bill since the 1980s, in fact, including tax hikes by Presidents George Herbert Walker Bush and President Bill Clinton? This bill is even less popular than those tax increases.

Speaker RYAN seems to think the Republican tax bill is unpopular because Americans don't know what is in it. He is wrong. The American people are smart. They get it. They don't like this tax bill because they do know what is in it: lots of goodies for President Trump and his family and very little for theirs.

This tax bill isn't popular with working people because they know that if Republicans really wanted to give them a tax break, Republicans would have given it to them directly and not to corporate executives. Middle-class

Americans remember the corporate excesses that led us to the terrible losses of the great recession. They sacrificed and worked hard to help the economy recover. They remember the tough choices we had to make in order to get our economy working again, and they don't want to see that progress turned back. But the recovered economy President Trump inherited from President Obama is in danger of backsliding under this trickle-down approach, with Republicans once again breaking the Federal bank to give huge tax breaks to the wealthy.

Middle-class Americans weren't popping champagne bottles yesterday because they know that they will be on the hook again when reality sets in on the massive deficits and irresponsible excesses of the Trump economy. The real economy isn't a chart or a graph to them; it is their ability to put food on the table, send their children to college, and plan for retirement. Republican economics have not historically worked out well for them. The economy created over 11 times as many jobs under President Clinton as it did under President George Herbert Walker Bush. It created over 10 times as many jobs under President Obama as President George W. Bush. Today, U.S. job openings are nearing all-time highs and 15 million Americans have gained employment since 2010.

We have much, much more work to do to address issues like underemployment, labor force participation, and wage growth, but the economy Republicans are gambling with today is one that middle-class families worked hard and sacrificed to create. Moreover, middle-class Americans are not easily fooled when it comes to their bottom line. It will take more than focus groups and political publicity stunts to convince them that this Republican bill was written with their interests in mind.

Many Americans opened their paper this morning to read that major corporations like Wells Fargo and others were boosting U.S. investment or providing bonuses in the wake of the huge tax breaks provided to them by the Republican legislation. It is certainly a good thing that many of these companies are considering greater investments in their American workforce, but the relationship between these tax breaks and higher pay or bonuses seems to fall apart under scrutiny. Some companies, like Wells Fargo, have already admitted that these pay raises were preplanned and not the direct result of the tax bill. Indeed, this coordinated announcement appears more intended to appeal to the Trump administration than to prove anything about the effectiveness of the Republican tax bill for American workers.

Moreover, it appears the real problem many Americans have with the Republican bill is that they believe it will balloon the public debt in order to disproportionately benefit the rich. Based on every credible analysis of the bill to

date, they are very likely correct. So, rather than watch for publicity stunts, Americans should, in the coming weeks, watch how much corporate executives take in bonuses. They should look at the more than \$70 billion in share buybacks that major corporations have announced since the Senate passed the Republican tax bill. Once corporations got the clear signal that this legislation would likely pass, their reaction was not to raise wages, not to stabilize the pension funds, but to buy back their shares, which is a double benefit for the managers of these companies and for the shareholders.

First, it typically raises the price of the stock on the market, which makes the value go up and gives direct benefits to shareholders. For the managers, most or much of their pay is related to their shareholdings. By the way, they are usually incentivized to increase share price, so their other pay is increased. So it is no surprise that this is the reaction of most corporations. It is quite telling that some company executives have made it clear that their plan for the funds released by this tax bill will be devoted to share buybacks. It is, in fact, ironic because many of these companies were having to pay an effective tax rate of less than 10 percent, much less than the new statutory rate. Does that mean they are going to give even higher wages? If a company was paying an effective tax rate of 8 percent and wasn't significantly raising the wages of their workforce, what does the new statutory rate of 21 percent do to their incentive? Nothing at all.

Americans can and will also consider the fact that 35 percent of American company stock is owned by foreign nationals, who are projected to pocket a \$48 billion windfall by 2019 as a result of corporate tax breaks. Yes, this tax bill will incentivize corporations to buy back stock, a significant amount of which is owned by foreign entities, individuals, and corporations. So \$48 billion of these funds will go overseas; it won't be devoted to salary increases, wage increases, R&D; it won't even be devoted in some sense to the United States because it will flow overseas.

They should ask: In light of these historically huge gains for the corporate investor class, how many of these corporations will make sure their pension funds, for example, are fully funded? There is no requirement that would prevent a company from buying back stock even while its pension fund is not actuarially sound. That has happened in the past. That is likely to happen in the future. So you have to ask yourself, as working families are: If I have a company that is giving its shareholders and management huge benefits, and my pension is questionable—it is not fully funded—is that right? I think the answer is, honestly: No, that is wrong.

How many companies will ship jobs overseas because they will see a financial advantage? In fact, corporate ex-

ecutives will feel a fiduciary duty to the shareholders to do that. How many companies will continue to replace their workers with contractors who may have no healthcare from the company and no pension benefits? Jobs that could be filled and were filled in the past by real employees with real benefits will now be shipped away from the company to contractors.

I supported efforts by several of my Democratic colleagues to place conditions on these massive corporate tax breaks so that there would be at least some requirement that American workers share in this multitrillion dollar giveaway, but all of these proposals were rejected by our Republican colleagues. I believe they will have to explain to the working men and women of America why shareholders are getting huge benefits and they don't have a fully sound pension fund. Why are additional Americans being laid off by these corporations at the same time they are providing huge buybacks of their stocks to their shareholders? These are a series of questions I think American working families and the middle-class will continue to ask.

They are already aware this bill was not designed for them. It was designed for the wealthiest corporations and the wealthiest individuals in America and, indeed, globally. When the evidence mounts, it will further confirm those views. I think they are very, very accurate.

I know Americans will continue to work hard. They will continue to try to build this economy. But with the passage of this bill, this is clearly now President Trump's economy. All of the sacrifice and effort to build jobs under President Obama, which cut the unemployment rate from double digits down to 4.5 and 5 percent—all those could be jeopardized by what has transpired here, and the President owns it.

As we go forward, I think we have to realize this legislation is not going to help working families.

I have heard my colleagues, very sincerely and very eloquently, talk about some of the challenges we face, like job training. We are facing a situation in which many experts predict that within the next 12 years—by 2030—we will lose one-third of the jobs in the United States. They will go away because of technology and because of artificial intelligence. What is going to happen to the 30- or 40-year-old working man or woman? What does one do when a job he or she has prepared well for, and done very well, is suddenly taken over by a machine? Will one turn to private corporations and ask, please, help me?

I know what the answer will be: Not our responsibility. We only have an obligation to our shareholders—to enrich them. That is all we do. Thank you very much.

They will turn to the government. What will we do? We will say: We are sorry. We are already \$1.5 trillion in the hole. Because of the tax bill, we can't afford any job training, career

transition, long-term unemployment sustainment, which we will need to allow people to make this transition. Oh, by the way, as to those retirement benefits that are under huge pressure, we cannot help you. We have the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, but that is so underwater. Sorry.

By the way, with natural phenomena—the floods that are coming—we are currently talking about a disaster relief bill. In this Chamber, we are all aware that our National Flood Insurance Program is in a deep hole. It is—no pun intended—underwater. Where are we going to get this money to pay for the obligations we have already put on our books for the National Flood Insurance Program? What are the cities and communities going to do when we say we don't have it anymore, that we gave the money away?

We are now facing very difficult situations—we know they are coming—with unavoidable costs. There is our national defense. We have to rebuild our nuclear triad, our submarines, our bomber fleets, our land-based systems. Over several years, that will be hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars. We know we have to do it.

Instead of doing that, yesterday, we decided to give \$1.5 trillion or more in deficit spending to the wealthiest Americans and the wealthiest corporations. I don't think it makes good sense. I think working Americans and middle-class Americans understand that very well—in fact, better than we do, collectively. What they have done, essentially, and what they are saying to anyone who would ask is, this is a terrible piece of legislation. Why did Congress pass it?

That is a question that will reverberate throughout this year and next year and, unfortunately, I think, for a long time because it will take us time and effort and sacrifice and tough votes, as we had in the nineties and again in 2009 and beyond, to get back on track for working families.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUNT). The Senator from South Dakota.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— EXECUTIVE CALENDAR NO. 261

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise to voice my strong support for the nomination of Ronald Batory to be the Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration at the Department of Transportation and to express my deep frustration that this noncontroversial, highly qualified nominee has been languishing in the Senate for over 4 months due to objections by a handful of Democrats over a parochial issue entirely unrelated to the nominee's qualifications.

The Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee held a hearing on his nomination on July 26, 2017, and reported his nomination favorably out of

committee with a unanimous voice vote on August 2, 2017. At that time, not a single Senator on the committee, Republican or Democrat, expressed any doubt about Mr. Batory's extensive expertise on rail safety issues.

Mr. Batory has over 45 years of experience in the railroad industry, in both management and operational positions, and he is a respected leader in driving organizational change and, most importantly, in advancing safety improvements. In fact, Railway Age called him noncontroversial and said: "He is the best-qualified person to be the Federal Railroad Administrator in a very long time, perhaps in the agency's history."

Yet, despite his unanimous approval from the committee, he has been blocked from assuming his leadership duties at this important safety regulatory agency. The FRA has critical safety decisions to make on a daily basis, and the agency needs strong strategic direction and management on time-sensitive safety issues. A senior adviser, which is Mr. Batory's current role at the DOT, does not have the same legal authority or ability to lead an agency as does a Senate-confirmed Administrator.

It is time to stop hamstringing Mr. Batory and get him confirmed so he can operate at full capacity. Unfortunately, it appears that we will not be able to do that without, once again, engaging in the cloture process on a noncontroversial nominee. This takes up valuable floor time that could be spent on other priorities. Yet it will, undoubtedly, still lead to his being confirmed by a large, bipartisan majority of the Senate. This pattern of obstruction—burning up a week or more of time to confirm two or three nominees who end up with overwhelming cloture and confirmation votes—must end.

The Batory nomination is also significant for another reason. Earlier this week, we saw the terrible tragedy of the Amtrak Cascades 501 derailment in Washington. Our heartfelt thoughts and prayers are with all of those affected, especially during this holiday season. As the NTSB continues its ongoing investigation, we will learn more about the causes of this derailment and the measures that might have prevented it.

To be clear, the tragic events of this week were not caused by a vacancy at the helm of the FRA, but the Senate must act now to install a leader at this agency to advance any safety solutions and oversight found to be needed as a result of the accident.

To date, much of the discussion surrounding this accident has been focused on positive train control or what we call PTC. While it is still early to know what, if any, impact PTC would have had on this accident, I could not agree more with the Democratic leader who earlier this week said: "We need Positive Train Control." He went on to say: "The Federal Department of Transportation is not pushing Federal PTC hard enough."

If he truly believes the DOT needs to do more, why is he, along with a few of his colleagues, standing in the way of Mr. Batory's nomination? After all, Congress has tasked the FRA Administrator with providing the oversight and strong push that will be needed to ensure railroads meet next year's December 31, 2018, deadline for full PTC installation and training.

Make no mistake, a strong push is what many passenger railroads need. According to the FRA's latest quarterly progress report for passenger railroads, only 50 percent of locomotives are equipped and PTC operable; 64 percent of required PTC radio towers are installed; and only 24 percent of required route miles are in operation.

The Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee expects to continue to play its role in conducting strong oversight of PTC implementation, including holding a hearing in 2018. However, what I do not expect the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee to do is to grant any further change to the PTC deadline framework that is established in current law. That is why we need Mr. Batory. When finally confirmed, he will play a significant role in pushing expeditious and successful PTC implementation.

This is not just the view of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, I might add, which, again, approved Mr. Batory, as I said earlier, unanimously, but also of the rail professionals who advance safety on the ground. The States for Passenger Rail Coalition, which consists of 25 State Departments of Transportation, wrote in July:

The issues facing the railroad industry today are significant, and it is vital that we have an experienced, capable and dedicated leader like Mr. Batory, who is willing to work with the states to make the improvements necessary to build a national rail system with an emphasis on increasing mobility and reliability, while enhancing safety and security now, and in the years to come.

Likewise, rail labor—representing conductors and communication workers—and other industry groups urged the Senate to proceed to Mr. Batory's nomination "as soon as possible," stressing "the importance of having Mr. Batory's expertise and leadership at the agency responsible for railroad safety."

That letter was written in September. It is now December. There is no reason for this delay.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that both of these letters be printed in the RECORD.

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

SEPTEMBER 15, 2017.

Senator MCCONNELL,
Senate Majority Leader,
Washington, DC.
Senator SCHUMER,
Senate Minority Leader,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPUBLICAN LEADER MCCONNELL AND DEMOCRATIC LEADER SCHUMER: As rail industry stakeholders, we write to support the nomination of Ronald Batory for Federal

Railroad Administrator. We urge the Senate to proceed to Mr. Batory's nomination as soon as possible.

Mr. Batory's nomination was announced in July, unanimously approved and reported by the Senate Commerce Committee in August, and now awaits action on the Senate floor. Mr. Batory is eminently qualified to be FRA Administrator and we believe he will have considerable bipartisan Member support once the Senate turns to his nomination.

We ask that his nomination be considered soon by the full Senate, in light of the importance of having Mr. Batory's expertise and leadership at the agency responsible for railroad safety.

Thank you for considering our views on this important matter.

Association of American Railroads (AAR); BNSF Railway; Canadian National Railway; Canadian Pacific Railway; CSX Transportation; Kansas City Southern Railroad; Norfolk Southern Railway; Union Pacific Railroad; American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA); International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART); Transportation Communications Union/IAM.

National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP); National Railroad Construction & Maintenance Association (NRC); Railway Engineering-Maintenance Suppliers Association (REMSA); Railway Supply Institute (RSI); States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC); American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners (AAPRCO); AECOM; GE Transportation; Progress Rail Services; Siemens.

JULY 19, 2017.

Hon. JOHN THUNE,
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. BILL NELSON,
Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THUNE AND RANKING MEMBER NELSON: On behalf of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc (SPRC), I write in support of the confirmation of Ronald L. Batory as Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT).

The SPRC's mission is to promote the research, development, implementation, operation, sustainability, and expansion of publicly supported intercity passenger rail services. On behalf of its membership representing 25 state departments of transportation and passenger rail authorities, SPRC advocates for ongoing federal funding and programmatic support for intercity passenger rail initiatives, including efforts to improve safety on our nation's rail system and at highway-rail at-grade crossings.

We are impressed with Mr. Batory's extensive experience in the railroad industry and appreciate his plan to improve communications within the agency, and we encourage him to collaborate closely with public and private stakeholders to achieve policy goals. We are especially encouraged by his reputation as a good listener with a sound analytical approach. We commend his affirmation of the need for the FRA to move to performance-based rulemaking and fact-based policy making. Focusing upon these two objectives will strengthen the role of the states in promoting the development of a safe, reliable and efficient vibrant national network of freight and passenger rail services.

We ask that the Committee act speedily to confirm Mr. Batory. The issues facing the railroad industry today are significant, and it is vital that we have an experienced, capa-

ble and dedicated leader like Mr. Batory, who is willing to work with the states to make the improvements necessary to build a national rail system with an emphasis on increasing mobility and reliability, while enhancing safety and security now, and in the years to come.

Sincerely,

PAUL C. WORLEY, *CPM, Chair,*
States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we have had an immensely qualified leader, Ronald Batory, ready to lead an important safety agency for over 4 months. The time for playing political games with the leadership of this railroad safety agency should be over. It is long past time that my Democratic colleagues end the obstruction, and this body must confirm Ronald Batory.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar No. 261, Ronald Batory. I further ask that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SCHUMER. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I am kind of beyond words to explain why we are objecting to someone who was unanimously approved out of the committee, is highly qualified, noncontroversial, and would run an incredibly important safety agency in this country. I just don't have words to explain what that objection might be.

I hope this is the last time the Democrats in the Senate will object to getting this important position filled with an individual who comes highly regarded, highly qualified, and has gone through the entire process—answered all of the questions through his confirmation—and is ready now for a final vote in the U.S. Senate, which would allow him to get the job and to get about the important work of ensuring that there is safety on the railroads in this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

OPIOID CRISIS

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, at some point this evening, we expect the House of Representatives to send the Senate a bill that would keep the Federal Government open for another few weeks before our heading home for Christmas. For most families, the holidays are an opportunity to take a break away from our busy lives and enjoy time with the people we love. It is safe to say, however, that will not be the case for tens of thousands of American families who have lost a loved one this year due to a drug overdose.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released two important new reports this week. First, they found that life expectancy decreased in the United States for the second year in a row. Second, the likely cause of that decrease in 2016 is that over 63,000 people died of drug overdoses. That is more than 144 deaths per day, and it is a 21-percent increase from 2015.

This is a crisis. People are dying in communities across this country every single day. Congress must do much more to address this scourge. Here in Washington, we have talked at length about the massive size and scope of the problem.

Last year, we passed bipartisan legislation that was signed into law and is providing our local communities with more tools to fight the epidemic, and we approved initial funding to begin to support these and other efforts.

I was proud to help bring nearly \$11 million of that funding to Indiana. Earlier this fall, the President rightly declared the opioid abuse epidemic to be a nationwide public health emergency. On the frontlines, in places like my home State of Indiana, however, the battle is raging. Despite a unified response, there is more work to do.

Our Governor, Governor Holcomb, has made the fight against opioid abuse the priority it needs to be. He and his administration are working closely with local communities to provide resources and support. Together, we have engaged our healthcare providers—both public and private—the business community, our educators, and the clergy who are all committed to this cause. Yet the message I continue to hear from people on the ground is, we need more resources and we need to expand treatment capabilities as soon as possible.

We all know this is not a partisan issue. Over the last few years, I have been honored to work with seven of my Republican colleagues to introduce seven bills and amendments that address everything from prescribing practices to the shortage of addiction treatment professionals, and many of these ideas have already been signed into law.

I am partnering with my State's Republican Governor to make sure we do everything in our power to help those who are battling with addiction, but it is not enough unless we provide our communities with the resources they are asking for and they need.

This is the time of year that many Americans reflect on the year that has passed and identify the priorities in the years to come. In Congress, we need to do the same. More than 63,000 Americans died last year from opioid abuse. Those are 63,000 moms and dads, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, sons and daughters who are not with us this year. We must make this issue a priority.

I hope Congress will demonstrate to the American people that fighting the opioid epidemic is a priority. One way

to do that is to include meaningful resources in the bill to fund our Federal Government and key programs when we deal with this again before January 19 of next year.

I implore my colleagues to make this a priority, to provide the robust and meaningful funding our communities need to seriously address this problem. We are in the midst of a crisis. We must do more in 2018. We have families all across our Nation with broken hearts tonight for the ones they love and the ones they miss. Let's make sure there are no more in 2018; that this ends today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes and that after I speak, Senator WYDEN be recognized.

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

EXTREME RHETORIC

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, 6 months ago, on a beautiful June morning, just a few miles from here in Alexandria, VA, a man with a gun opened fire on me and several of my Republican colleagues.

In the chaotic aftermath of that awful morning, the gunman's purpose slowly became clear. Because of our beliefs and our political affiliation, this individual believed my colleagues and I should die. Since that day, I struggled to understand this thinking. How could any American look onto a field that June morning, where a bunch of middle-aged men were playing baseball, and see the enemy?

Some of the bombastic rhetoric being offered this week in response to the tax reform bill has given me pause. If you listen to some of the hyperbolic vitriol that opponents of this bill are producing, the attitude that nearly killed my friend STEVE SCALISE and threatened many more lives begins to make a perverse kind of sense.

When respectable public figures go on television or take to Twitter and announce that thousands, if not millions, of Americans are going to die as a direct result of the passage of a tax reform bill, what impact do we expect this to have on the thinking of many Americans? If a person takes such outlandish statements as true, attacking Members of Congress in support of the measure almost appears to be a moral action. This could lead someone to believe that killing a few legislators might save the lives of millions of Americans.

Beyond the physical danger of promoting such misinformation, these claims do grave harm to the legislative process. How are we expected to work together to achieve anything if one side's position is viewed as the end of America as we know it? One of my colleagues called this tax reform bill "the worst bill in the history of Congress."

Upon the bill's passage, one media pundit went so far as to encourage

young Americans to flee their country and declared "America died tonight."

Full-throated and passionate debate should always be encouraged. We all love arguing the merits of supply-side economics, but this is not that. This is demonizing of the worst kind. It leaves us all in this body unable to engage in the kind of negotiations and compromise that Congress was created to foster.

To be clear, this is not a problem with one party or of one moment. During the public debate over the Affordable Care Act, Members of my party engaged in similar tactics. I was in the House Chamber when one of my Republican colleagues stood and yelled "You lie" at the President of the United States. The accusation that passage of healthcare reform legislation would result in so-called death panels was promoted far and wide by many Republicans. One conservative commentator suggested the government would begin educating seniors on how to end their own lives.

A Republican legislator claimed that the bill would put seniors in a position of being "put to death by their government." This rhetoric was wrong then, and it is wrong now.

The threat posed to all of us and to the democratic process for giving in to extreme rhetoric is not theoretical. Some of us faced it on that baseball field in Alexandria in June, and all of us have witnessed its corrosive effect on Congress. I urge my colleagues, all of us, let's end this practice where raw politics drowns out the supplications of the better angels of our nature. Let us all be more humble as to our predictive powers when it comes to placing a value on the work we do here. In reality, this legislation will probably not turn out to be as good as the proponents assert, nor as bad as the opponents contend.

The country is watching. It is my hope that we—all of us—can eschew contempt and vitriol in our speech and be more measured in our tone.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor tonight to discuss the Senate's investigation into Russia in the 2016 election. Specifically, I have been reviewing for months documents in the possession of the Senate's Intelligence Committee. I regret to say, the depth of the committee's investigation is completely unsatisfactory into the crucial issues of what I call following the money.

Early in 2017, I began asking the committee leadership to look into any and all financial relationships between Russia and Donald Trump and his associates. In an open hearing the committee held in March, I noted a number of public facts. First, there is an extraordinary history of money laun-

dering in Russia. Billions of dollars from corruption and other illegal activities have been moved out of the country. Second, the President's son said in 2008: "Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets." Third, entities associated with the President had already been the subject of millions of dollars of fines for willful, repeated, and long-standing violations of anti-money laundering laws. Fourth, the Congress and the American people still haven't seen the President's tax returns.

Since then, there have been numerous additional press stories about associates of the President and their financial connections to Russia. In my view, these stories require thorough, detailed investigation. It is not just by the press. The special counsel's indictment against former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort included extensive detailed allegations of laundering of millions of dollars from pro-Russia-Ukrainian interests. This indictment provided a clear example of how a foreign-influenced campaign can be financed through illicit means and why the importance of following the money is so crucial.

There have been others, acknowledged financial connections, such as former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn and his payment from RT, the television station that is part of Russia's state-run propaganda apparatus.

Then there are the strange denials, such as when Jared Kushner wrote in his statement in July, "I have not relied on Russian funds to finance my business activities in the private sector."

I can state, that is some kind of good lawyering because the word "rely" is subjective. Mr. Kushner did not deny financial ties to Russia. He said he hadn't relied on those funds, not whether he had any, not whether he ever had any, but he hadn't relied on them. That is about as lawyerly and subjective a statement as you can imagine.

My bottom line is, these financial ties need to be a central focus of the Intelligence Committee's inquiry. The reason I say this, I want to spell out what the connection here is. Our inquiry covered counterintelligence concerns related to Russia and the election, including any intelligence regarding links between Russia and individuals associated with political campaigns. Following the money is counterintelligence 101.

If you want to compromise somebody, money is one of the best ways to do it. Well, let me repeat that. That is the connection. That is the connection between the counterintelligence work that is so important and part of the committee's charge. That counterintelligence work involves following the money because that is key to really getting into the question of whether somebody's been compromised because one of the best ways to do it is through funds.

Tonight, based on this review of documents, I call again on the committee to follow the money aspects of this inquiry, including by holding public hearings specifically on this topic.

In addition, it is not just the Intelligence Committee that ought to focus on these issues. As I have been saying since March, the Senate Finance Committee, of which I am the ranking Democrat, has a crucial role to play on follow-the-money issues as well. Relevant documents produced by elements of the Treasury Department which are outside the intelligence community, such as the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, ought to be reviewed. There is a need to review these documents by the Finance Committee staff because we have specific experience and expertise in financial investigation.

In addition, the Finance Committee specifically has oversight responsibilities for tax matters. The Manafort indictment, which included tax evasion, demonstrated clearly that taxes, tax evasion, offshore accounts, and suspicious real estate transactions are all connected. They are all connected, and they ought to be part of any serious investigation into ties between Russia, the President, and his associates. Unfortunately, I and our committee have gotten no cooperation from the Treasury Department. Despite my repeated requests as the ranking Democrat on the Finance Committee, the Treasury Department has just stonewalled—plain old stonewalling—the lead committee with jurisdiction for the agency.

For that reason, I want to announce tonight that I will hold indefinitely the nomination of the individual to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Intelligence and Analysis until the Department cooperates with the Finance Committee and provides the committee with documents it needs to do its job.

Again, I regret that I have to take this step. By the way, many of these documents are unclassified in nature, so the Treasury Department is denying the Finance Committee access to unclassified documents. That is just completely unacceptable.

We all understand that we are in the midst of extraordinary and dangerous times. As our own intelligence community assessed in January, Russia interfered in our election with a clear preference for Donald Trump. No one, other than Donald Trump, has apparently called this assessment into question. For the sake of our national security and the future of our country, it is important to get to the bottom of every aspect of this attack on our democracy. The American people have clearly stated the urgency behind this.

My view is that the Congress has an obligation to follow the money wherever the evidence leads and to conduct a thorough investigation that leaves no stones unturned and presents to the public what we find. I will close by way of saying that I don't see how you can

do the essential counterintelligence work that is so important to our committee—and I note that the distinguished Presiding Officer of the Senate, the Senator from Missouri, is a member of the committee and a valued one—I don't see how the committee can do its counterintelligence work without following the money, because we know that those financial issues are absolutely key—that money is the key to compromising an individual—it is obviously so important in trying to ensure that we have policies in this country that protect our security and our role in the world.

I yield the floor.

REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT FUNDING BILL

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the Republican continuing resolution.

In addition to the many, many problems I have with how this bill was secretly written without any attempt to work with Democrats, I also cannot support it because of the absence of the Dream Act and long-term funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program.

On four occasions, Republicans tried to repeal the Affordable Care Act with bills they drafted in secret. These bills had no input from Democrats—or really anyone who would have actually been affected by repeal.

Then they drafted a so-called tax reform bill, again entirely in secret, not consulting anyone outside a small group of Republican lawmakers.

So it is not a surprise that the bill they jammed through is actually nothing more than a tax cut for the richest Americans and large corporations, and all at the expense of American families, who will actually pay higher taxes.

Now, doubling down on their failed strategy of secrecy, Republicans came up with a government funding bill at the very last minute that ignores many of our highest priority needs, including passing the Dream Act and coming up with a long-term solution for CHIP.

I hope that Republicans will finally realize that this isn't the right way to govern. You are not representing the country when you govern 1 month at a time and rush through poorly written bills that only benefit certain special interests.

It is time to return to regular order.

Now I would like to speak about the absence of the Dream Act in this bill, a negligent decision that even the majority of Republicans in this country disagree with.

To say that Republicans have sent mixed signals on DACA is an understatement.

During his campaign, Donald Trump said he supported deporting all undocumented immigrants, including those who had registered for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program.

Later, he said DACA recipients had nothing to worry about. Then, in Sep-

tember, the Justice Department canceled the DACA program. I can't even imagine the uncertainty that DACA recipients have felt since Donald Trump's election.

DACA was put in place in 2012 by President Obama to remove the crushing fear of deportation experienced by hundreds of thousands of young people. These are outstanding individuals who were brought into the country through no choice of their own, at very young ages, and who know no other country than the United States.

In fact, the average DACA recipient was brought into the United States at the age of 6.

Now, there are nearly 700,000 individuals with DACA in the United States, approximately 220,000 of whom live in California. Each day, more than 100 lose their DACA protection, plunging them back into the uncertainty that President Obama relieved.

These young people study, they work, they pay their taxes. They are patriotic. They are American in every way that counts, and to leave them in such uncertainty is nothing less than cruel.

One family in particular has really brought this issue home for me, and that is the Sanchez family from Oakland.

Maria and Eusebio Sanchez lived in the United States for more than 20 years before they were deported in August.

Maria was an oncology nurse, and Eusebio was a truck driver.

They had no criminal records, they paid their taxes, they owned a home, and they contributed to their community.

They also had four children, three of whom are U.S. citizens.

Little Jesus is just 12.

Elizabeth is 16 and currently enrolled in a community learning center.

Melin is 21 and is currently enrolled at UC Santa Cruz, studying molecular cell and developmental biology. She wants to be a pediatrician.

Their oldest daughter, Vianney, is 23, and she is not a citizen.

She is, however, protected under DACA. She graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a degree in psychology, and today Vianney is taking care of her three siblings.

Imagine being thrust into the role of caregiver to your three siblings after your parents are kicked out of the country, but your own ability to remain here also remains uncertain.

Vianney will lose her DACA status in August. Imagine the fear and stress she carries with her every day.

All DACA recipients have to register with the government, so immigration officials know where Vianney lives and works. They could show up any day and deport her, leaving her three younger citizen siblings behind with no one to care for them.

Sadly, the experience of this family isn't rare. There are families like this across the country, people who came to

America looking for a better life, who work and follow the law and contribute.

By ignoring their plight, by not prioritizing the Dream Act, Republicans are telling them they are just not important enough.

I simply can't accept this and ask my Republican colleagues to look into their hearts and find their compassion. Tell these young people they are safe. Tell them they deserve to stay and the Dream Act will pass.

This bill also fails to provide long-term funding stability for the Children's Health Insurance Program and for community health centers. Both of these programs are vital to our communities and provide healthcare for millions of Americans.

CHIP provides health coverage for nearly 9 million children. In California, 1.3 million are currently enrolled in the program and around 2 million are covered at some point during the year.

This program is absolutely critical to support children in working families that are moderate income and can't afford private coverage. Around a quarter of kids on CHIP have special healthcare needs.

I have been hearing from my constituents about how important this program is.

Rachel, from Orange, wrote me to say, "There are many who depend on this assistance to stay alive. I was a type 1 diabetic at 12 with two disabled parents. If not for governmental assistance, I would be dead. Don't leave someone in this same situation hopeless."

Kathleen from Arcata wrote to me and said, "I am a single mom and though my kids are grown now, I had the CHIP for them. I can't imagine what it would be like to raise a child living in similar circumstances now without this program."

CHIP is also an important program for pregnant women. In California, 30,000 expecting mothers depend on the program.

This care is so important for ensuring healthy moms and babies. If funding lapses, these expectant mothers are at risk of losing their coverage.

Funding for community health centers is also at risk.

There are more than 10,400 centers that see more than 25 million patients across the country.

In California, we have more than 1,500 centers that care for more than 4.4 million patients each year in California. If we don't provide long-term funding for these centers, there is no doubt they will have to limit hours, lay off staff, or even close.

Supporting community health centers isn't just the right thing to do for access, but for positive outcomes and cost-effectiveness as well.

Health center patients have an 18 percent lower rate of emergency room visits. Medicaid patients receiving care at health centers have costs that are 24 percent lower, and the quality of care

is exceptional. Patients do better, and it costs less.

For all the talk about bipartisan support for these two programs, I am profoundly disappointed that we have not addressed their funding in a meaningful way.

Healthcare coverage for kids and access to basic healthcare services in our communities should be a no-brainer. I strongly support these programs and hope we can provide stability soon.

In conclusion, this has been a bad year for governance, and it is being capped off by yet another disappointing display by Republicans.

All of us saw and heard the thousands of Dreamers who visited our offices. We saw not only their passion but also their desire to make a difference.

Many of these young people live in fear every day.

Congress has a chance to improve their lives and provide for them a positive, productive future.

Republicans have chosen to ignore truly time-sensitive issues like DACA, CHIP, and basic government funding. Instead, they chose to spend months on tax cuts for rich Americans and big corporations.

Tax cuts for rich people aren't time-sensitive. Protecting children is.

Let's get back on track, let's add the Dream Act and CHIP to this bill, and let's return to the good governance that our people expect.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

DEFICITS

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, the question is, Do deficits matter? We often say they do. You will hear Republicans say they do, and for the last week or two, you have heard from Democrats that they were against cutting taxes because it might add to the deficit. Well, if this is true, tonight we will get a chance to vote on the deficit because, you see, Congress about 6 years ago, put something forward called pay-go budget caps. What does that mean? They kept seeing the deficit explode. So they put in these budget caps, and if we were to adhere to them, we would actually get the debt under control. Guess what. Congress has evaded them 29 times.

So tonight we will have a bill, and it will be the 30th time that Congress has evaded their own rules on the debt. Is it any surprise that the debt under George W. Bush went from \$5 trillion to \$10 trillion? Is it any surprise that under President Obama it went from \$10 trillion to \$20 trillion? Is it any surprise that the debt continues to rise? No, because both parties are responsible for it.

Look, I was all for the tax cut. I think it is good for the country, but I am also for restraining spending. So we did the tax cut earlier in the week, and now we are going to do a spending bill. We have rules in place, and the rules in

place say that there are budget caps. So they have a special little waiver that they have put in the spending bills because we are now going to exceed those caps.

So the question is, Are we serious about the debt? Are we serious about adding a million dollars a minute to the debt? That is what happens. We borrow a million dollars a minute. The deficit this year will be over \$700 billion—\$20 trillion in total. The total debt is bigger than our entire economy.

So both sides give lip service to it, and yet both sides want more spending. On the Republican side, this year's request is \$80 billion above the caps for military. On the Democratic side, they say: Well, you don't get yours unless we get ours. Yet nobody cares about the debt. So really the debt is being driven by the GOP, who want more military money but the only way they can get it is giving the Democrats more welfare money.

So the interesting thing about this vote is—you have heard the other side of the aisle saying it—they can't vote for the tax cut because of the debt. If they care about the debt, let's cut spending. This is their chance. This will be a vote on cutting spending. These pay-go budget caps were put in place by the Democrats when they were in the majority in 2010. These are their budget caps, and yet everybody is clamoring to waive them on both sides.

We have a real problem in our country, and we must do something about it. Ultimately, there will be a day of reckoning. You cannot continue to borrow so much money. Ultimately, it bankrupts the Nation, or the currency becomes worthless, or you get to a point where the interest on the debt actually becomes the No. 1 spending item. Within about a decade, interest will push out all other spending, and it will be the No. 1 item. We will spend more on interest than national defense. We will spend more on interest than welfare and anything else. So there are those who say: Well, we have to have more money for military; we have to have more money for welfare. You are going to have none of that if you keep spending money at this rate because we are going to ruin the country through debt.

So can we have a strong military? Yes. We spend about \$600 billion, but you can't necessarily spend \$700 billion. That extra \$100 billion is making the debt worse. But it is the same on the other side of the ledger with the Democrats.

So we have a chance. There really is a chance. The media would say: Oh, you are irresponsible for voting for the tax cuts. No, you are irresponsible if you are not also willing to vote for spending cuts.

So tonight I will put forward in a few minutes a motion, and this motion will be to say that we should obey the spending caps. We have put them in place. Unless our outrage over debt is fake outrage, if we truly care about the

debt, we should vote to keep in place the rules we have put in place. These are spending caps. If we care about the next generation, we should vote for the spending caps. So I will put forward a motion that says: Let's obey our own rules.

It will be interesting to watch the vote and to see how it turns out—who truly cares about the debt on either side of the aisle, who is willing to say: You know what; I am for tax cuts but I am also for saying across the board that we need to have spending restraint. Will we obey our own rules? We have broken our own rules. This will be the 30th time we broke our own rules on budget caps since 2010. If you go back farther, it is in the hundreds of times. If you were scoring Congress on integrity and honesty about the rules we have set up, it would be a zero. We aren't adhering to our own rules.

So what I would admonish my colleagues to do is, if they care about debt, is to vote for this point of order that says that we should adhere to our budget caps and we should really truly care about the budget deficit.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

MEDICARE FUNDING

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to the point of order that will be offered by the Senator from Kentucky, which would have the effect of allowing harmful, indiscriminate budget cuts to be triggered. While there are certain safety net programs like Medicaid, food stamps, and Social Security that are exempt from these automatic cuts, the Medicare Program is not exempt, and there are a number of other vital programs in addition to Medicare, including Federal education programs, agricultural support for farmers, and funding for Citizenship and Immigration Services, among others, that would be subject to immediate automatic cuts if we failed to take action tonight to avert that outcome.

It has been deeply disturbing to me to see seniors frightened about the possibility that a \$25 billion cut in Medicare—that is a 4-percent reduction—would be automatically triggered. By waiving this point of order, we will prevent such cuts from taking place, reassuring our Nation's seniors and their loved ones.

Although the law that could cause this reduction has been waived some 16 times—and indeed never implemented since it was enacted—I felt that it was essential that our leaders publicly commit that Medicare reductions would not be triggered, given the amount of fear, anxiety, and misinformation that is out there.

I wrote to the Senate majority leader, urging that we immediately remove the threat of an automatic cut in Medicare's funding. In response, I am pleased to say that both the majority

leader and the Speaker of the House released a joint statement that pledged this will not happen, and that is the issue before us tonight.

Medicare provides essential healthcare benefits to our Nation's seniors. We must remove, immediately, the threat that an automatic reduction in the program's funding could occur, which would affect healthcare providers and diminish access that beneficiaries—including our seniors and disabled individuals—have to the services they need.

Earlier this month, AARP sent a letter to the House and the Senate leadership, alluding and supporting my inquiry and warning Congress of the potential consequences. The letter says:

The sudden cut to Medicare provider funding in 2018 would have an immediate and lasting impact, including fewer healthcare providers participating in Medicare and reduced access to care for Medicare beneficiaries. Healthcare providers may choose to stop accepting Medicare patients at a time when the Medicare population is growing by 10,000 new beneficiaries each day. . . . Furthermore, Medicare Advantage plans and Part D prescription drug plans may charge higher premiums or cost sharing in future years to make up for these cuts now.

These potential cuts would have an enormous impact on our hospitals, our nursing homes, our home health agencies, and other essential healthcare providers who play a critical role in providing healthcare services and also as important economic drivers in our communities.

It is critical for Congress to act quickly, to act tonight before we go home, so seniors do not have the anxiety of wondering whether the tax bill will somehow negatively affect their healthcare. We can act tonight to remove that anxiety and assure them it will not.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the exchange of letters I had with Majority Leader MCCONNELL and also the letter from AARP be printed in the RECORD.

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

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, November 28, 2017.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL: I write to express my deep concerns with the Congressional Budget Office's determination that an automatic four percent cut to Medicare, estimated to be roughly \$25 billion for fiscal year 2018, could be triggered by the passage of tax reform legislation as a result of the Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (PAYGO) even though there is no intention for such a reduction to occur.

Since I do not believe it is anyone's intention to allow automatic cuts to Medicare to occur, I urge swift action to waive the PAYGO requirements. Medicare provides essential benefits to our nation's seniors, and we must remove immediately the threat that an automatic reduction in the program's funding could occur.

Since PAYGO was enacted, sixteen laws that would have otherwise triggered PAYGO's automatic spending cuts have in-

cluded provisions to exclude all or part of the law's budgetary impact, including the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 that was enacted under the previous Administration.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that no Medicare cuts are triggered under PAYGO, a goal I believe is supported by members on both sides of the aisle. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

SUSAN M. COLLINS, U.S. SENATOR.

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, December 1, 2017.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR COLLINS: Thank you for your letter expressing concern about the across-the-board spending cuts. You will be pleased to know that Speaker Paul Ryan and I issued the following joint statement earlier today:

"Critics of tax reform are claiming the legislation would lead to massive, across-the-board spending cuts in vital programs—including a 4-percent reduction in Medicare—due to the Pay-Go law enacted in 2010. This will not happen. Congress has readily available methods to waive this law, which has never been enforced since its enactment. There is no reason to believe that Congress would not act again to prevent a sequester, and we will work to ensure these spending cuts are prevented."

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader.

AARP®,

December 7, 2017.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
U.S. Senate,
U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.
Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,
U.S. Senate,
U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.
Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
House of Representatives,
U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.
Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
House of Representatives,
U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL, MINORITY LEADER SCHUMER, SPEAKER RYAN, AND MINORITY LEADER PELOSI: On behalf of our members and all Americans age 50 and older, AARP is writing to express concerns about the potential for automatic cuts to Medicare beginning in January 2018. AARP, with its nearly 38 million members in all 50 States and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, represents millions of individuals whose health care depends on Medicare. We urge you to act now to prevent these cuts to Medicare.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently provided an explanation of the impact H.R. 1 and its \$1.5 trillion deficit increase will have on Medicare and other programs. The CBO estimated that because of statutory pay-as-you-go and the increase in the deficit, Medicare providers will be subject to an automatic \$25 billion cut in fiscal year 2018, and additional cuts in subsequent fiscal years. According to CBO, the automatic cuts, or sequester, would begin as soon as January, 2018.

In a statement responding to Senator Collins's inquiry on statutory pay-as-you-go and the risk of Medicare cuts, Leader McConnell and Speaker Ryan provided the following assurance: "Congress has readily available methods to waive this law, which has never been enforced since its enactment. There is no reason to believe that Congress

would not act again to prevent a sequester, and we will work to ensure these spending cuts are prevented." It is of paramount interest to our members, and other older Americans, that you act to prevent these spending cuts as soon as possible.

The sudden cut to Medicare provider funding in 2018 would have an immediate and lasting impact, including fewer providers participating in Medicare and reduced access to care for Medicare beneficiaries. Health care providers may choose to stop accepting Medicare patients at a time when the Medicare population is growing by 10,000 new beneficiaries each day. Cutting reimbursement in 2018, and possibly each year thereafter, would discourage health care providers from treating this growing population. We need to protect and strengthen the Medicare program and ensure there is a health care workforce able and willing to take on new patients. Furthermore, Medicare Advantage plans and Part D prescription drug plans may charge higher premiums or cost-sharing in future years to make up for the cuts now. These cuts also come at a critical time in the program when providers are adopting the new payment systems according to MACRA (P.L. 114-10) which overwhelmingly passed Congress in 2015. An across-the-board cut to provider reimbursement will leave health care providers fewer resources to invest in their practices, and make them less inclined to take on risk in new alternative payment models. The sudden payment cut will stifle the transition toward payment based on value, having implications for future Medicare cost growth. In any event, Medicare beneficiaries will pay the price for these sudden and significant cuts.

Our members and other older Americans are counting on you to preserve their access to Medicare services, including their doctors and hospitals. We urge you to act swiftly to prevent automatic cuts to Medicare. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me or contact Joyce Rogers, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs.

Sincerely,

JO ANN C. JENKINS,
Chief Executive Officer.

Ms. COLLINS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The majority leader.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the message to accompany H.R. 1370.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1370) entitled "An Act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes.", with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1370.

I ask unanimous consent that Senator PAUL be recognized for up to 2

minutes to make a budget point of order; that Senator COLLINS or her designee be recognized for up to 2 minutes to make a motion to waive the point of order; that Senator LEAHY be recognized for up to 5 minutes; that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the motion to waive; and that following the disposition of the motion to waive, the Senate vote on the motion to concur, with a 60 affirmative vote threshold, all without any other intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, the question is, Do deficits matter? We have had a lot of debate over deficits and people complaining that tax cuts add to deficits. Well, tonight we will have a vote on whether we should honor what are called pay-go budget caps. We have had these in place for about 6 years. Congress has disobeyed their own rules 30 times as of tonight. These budget caps would keep spending in order. Yet we are going to have them waived tonight.

My budget point of order would actually say that we should not waive these budget caps. We should honor them because deficits do matter.

We borrow \$1 million a minute. The deficit this year will be over \$700 billion. The overall debt is \$20 trillion. We have a spending problem. We have rules to keep spending in check, and we disobey our own rules.

With that, I make a point of order on the statutory pay-go scorecard that says we should spend within certain limits. This budget point of order is pursuant to section 306 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, we simply cannot allow these harmful, indiscriminate budget cuts to be triggered. It is so disturbing to see our seniors worried about the possibility of a \$25 billion cut in the Medicare Program. That is a 4-percent reduction. That would affect healthcare providers and healthcare services. There is no need for this indiscriminate cut to occur.

It is critical that Congress act tonight, act immediately, so that seniors and our disabled citizens do not have the anxiety of wondering whether the tax bill will somehow negatively affect their healthcare. By voting to waive the point of order, we can remove that anxiety and prevent the indiscriminate cuts in Medicare and other essential programs from occurring.

Pursuant to section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and the waiver provisions of applicable budget resolutions, I move to waive all applicable sections of that act and applicable budget resolutions for purposes of the House message to accompany H.R. 1370, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. LEAHY. 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. LEAHY. Mr. President, I yield back the time on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on agreeing to the motion to waive.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The result was announced—yeas 91, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 324 Leg.]

YEAS—91

Alexander	Franken	Nelson
Baldwin	Gardner	Perdue
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Graham	Portman
Blumenthal	Grassley	Reed
Blunt	Harris	Roberts
Booker	Hassan	Rounds
Boozman	Hatch	Rubio
Brown	Heinrich	Sanders
Burr	Heitkamp	Schatz
Cantwell	Heller	Schumer
Capito	Hirono	Scott
Cardin	Hoeven	Shaheen
Carper	Inhofe	Shelby
Casey	Isakson	Stabenow
Cassidy	Johnson	Strange
Cochran	Kaine	Sullivan
Collins	King	Tester
Coons	Klobuchar	Thune
Corker	Lankford	Tillis
Cornyn	Leahy	Toomey
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Udall
Cotton	Markey	Van Hollen
Daines	McCaskey	Warner
Donnelly	McConnell	Warren
Duckworth	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Wyden
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Feinstein	Murphy	
Fischer	Murray	

NAYS—8

Crapo	Kennedy	Risch
Cruz	Lee	Sasse
Flake	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 91, the nays are 8.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to and the point of order falls.

VOTE ON MOTION TO CONCUR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur.

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 66, nays 32, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 325 Leg.]

YEAS—66

Alexander	Gardner	Perdue
Barrasso	Graham	Peters
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hassan	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heinrich	Rounds
Carper	Heitkamp	Rubio
Cassidy	Heller	Sasse
Cochran	Hoeben	Scott
Collins	Inhofe	Shaheen
Coons	Johnson	Shelby
Corker	Kaine	Stabenow
Cornyn	Kennedy	Strange
Cotton	King	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Tester
Cruz	Leahy	Thune
Daines	Manchin	Tillis
Donnelly	McCaskill	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Udall
Ernst	Moran	Warner
Fischer	Murkowski	Wicker
Flake	Nelson	Young

NAYS—32

Baldwin	Feinstein	Murray
Bennet	Franken	Paul
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Reed
Booker	Harris	Sanders
Brown	Hirono	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Lee	Van Hollen
Casey	Markey	Warren
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Merkley	Wyden
Durbin	Murphy	

NOT VOTING—2

Isakson McCain

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will speak very briefly.

While I voted to keep the government going, this is not the way to govern. We should not be doing stopgap measures. We will be back here soon. We will have a relatively short time—a couple of weeks—to finally do our work, the work we should have done for the last 6 months. We will have to address sequestration on both sides of the ledger—on defense and non-defense—and raise the caps for both. We have to speak on one of the greatest issues in our country today, and that is the Dreamers, and we have to address that and have votes up or down on the Senate floor. I intend to vote to protect Dreamers. We have to vote on the Children's Health Insurance Program. There are so many others.

I want Senators on both sides of the aisle to know—and I have talked to both Republicans and Democrats—Senator COCHRAN and I and others have tried to keep the appropriations process going. We will continue to do that.

We will do that when we come back. There will not be another continuing resolution without a bipartisan budget agreement.

Mr. President, this is not how we should govern in the U.S. Senate. We have once again found ourselves on the edge of a manufactured, made-in-Washington crisis. Once again, we are forced into political games at the eleventh hour by the imminent threat of a Republican shutdown. This time that threat has fallen right before Christmas and the holidays.

There is no reason we should find ourselves in this situation. There has always been a proven path forward to avoid this crisis, and that path is to reach a bipartisan budget deal that is based on parity. Sequestration has had devastating consequences on our country that will impact a generation, and we must raise the budget caps on both sides of the ledger—defense and non-defense.

This is not an academic exercise. Our decisions are having real and devastating consequences. We are letting our infrastructure crumble. We are letting down our veterans. We are allowing our education programs to fall behind, and we are harming our military's readiness.

Regrettably, our Republican Colleagues took the path of delay, no compromise, government by crisis. Here we are, 3 months into the fiscal year without a budget. The continuing resolution that is before us provides a 1-month extension to fund the government, but we are no closer to a bipartisan budget deal. I intend to vote for this continuing resolution because a government shutdown helps no one, but I implore my fellow Senators to use the next month wisely. We owe it to the American people.

Those on the other side of the aisle need to come to the table to negotiate an agreement that will provide funding for healthcare to our veterans, build infrastructure for a growing economy, and make us more secure.

But this is not the only thing we must accomplish in the coming month. Our list of unfinished business is long. We also need to pass the Dream Act. President Trump's decision to end the DACA program was as cruel as it was senseless. Dreamers are American in every way except on paper, having been brought here as children through no fault of their own. By definition, Dreamers are law-abiding strivers, serving our communities as doctors and teachers and defending our homeland as brave men and women in uniform.

Instead of working with Congress to find a permanent legislative solution while keeping DACA protections in place, the President yielded to xenophobic nativists in his administration and terminated protections for our Nation's Dreamers.

I am greatly disappointed that Republicans would not consider including the Dream Act on this continuing reso-

lution. We simply cannot fail to pass the Dream Act, and we must do so, and we must do so soon. The future of Dreamers—and I believe the fate of the American Dream itself—lies in our hands.

We also need a permanent reauthorization for the Children's Health Insurance Program. It has been 3 months since Congress let funds expire for the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, putting at risk the 9 million children nationwide who depend on the program for health insurance coverage.

Vermont's CHIP program, known as Dr. Dynasaur, covers over 5,000 children whose families are now worried whether their kids will be covered next year. Instead of moving forward with a bipartisan reauthorization for 5 years, as has been proposed in the Senate, this continuing resolution extends the program only temporarily.

What is worse, the majority is insisting on offsetting this extension by cutting funding for prevention and public health programs. This is robbing Peter to pay Paul. If we can pass a tax cut that benefits the wealthiest Americans and which will add, at a minimum, \$1.5 trillion to our deficit, we should be able to reauthorize CHIP—for longer than 3 months—without undermining public health. We should not have to make this choice, but here we are, being forced to choose between a misguided short-term patch or a wholesale government shutdown.

Again, I call on our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to use the next month to negotiate solutions to these real problems. That includes having a debate about American's privacy rights. Section 702 of the FISA Amendments Act was intended to be a powerful foreign intelligence surveillance tool, and it is, but it also sweeps up massive amounts of Americans' communications, which can then be accessed without a warrant. That has long been a concern of mine, and I have stated that we should reauthorize 702, but we should not do so at the expense of our own civil liberties.

A 1-month extension gives Congress an opportunity—and I believe, an obligation—to debate this program on the floor, just like we did in 2012. All Members deserve an opportunity to weigh in on this critical surveillance tool, and this short, clean reauthorization of Section 702 allows for just that.

To be clear, the Republicans are in charge of the House, the Senate, and the White House. It is clear that they bear the burden of bringing us to this crisis point, and they need to answer to the American people for the unfinished business before us. We should never have gotten to this point.

We can still reach a bipartisan budget deal. I remain ready to work with Chairman COCHRAN, the Appropriations Committee, and Members from both sides of the aisle to secure the funding agreements we need to complete our appropriations, keep the lights on, and resolve the other pressing matters before us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, as the jet fumes swirl around the Halls of Congress and Members get ready to head to the airport to get home for the holidays, I rise to remind my colleagues that there are still hundreds of thousands of people in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico who are still hurting from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. They will be spending Christmas not in their homes but in a hotel or with family and friends or in temporary housing.

All across these regions, there are houses, businesses, schools, churches, and community establishments that still need to be rebuilt. They are waiting, counting on our help. It is wrong. Indeed, it is maddening to those in the affected regions that the Senate is not taking up legislation today to give them what they need to continue to rebuild and recover.

In my home State, there is no doubting that Texas's gulf coast communities suffered tremendous losses in Hurricane Harvey, but the hurricane also brought out the best in Texas. We saw Texans standing together and lifting up each other, first through rescue and response and now as we come together and rebuild our communities. The Nation witnessed our iconic moments, from the thousands of Texans who went out on boats to save their neighbors, to Houstonians of all ages lining up to volunteer at disaster recovery centers, embodying the Texas can-do spirit.

Texas has worked diligently since August on cleanup and recovery efforts from Hurricane Harvey, but I am sorry to say that the U.S. Senate is now leaving town without delivering on its commitment to help Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico recover.

Congress has already passed two disaster relief bills in the wake of these hurricanes. In addition, Congress passed a bipartisan disaster relief tax bill that I was proud to offer. But there is still much more that needs to be done.

Just hours ago, our colleagues in the House passed a bill to further provide for emergency rebuilding efforts. This bill represents progress, but much more work needs to be done to make sure that it does enough, especially for Texas, which was promised by both this Congress and by the administration that Texas would be given everything we need to rebuild. Early estimates from the supplemental bill that passed the House are that Texas would be eligible for only a small percentage of the \$81 billion in that legislation. That is unacceptable, and the Senate needs to fix it.

Texas experienced the worst flood event in U.S. history. Hurricane Harvey was unlike any other storm we

have seen before in Texas—the number of people impacted, the scope. It brought 250 miles of devastation to our Texas gulf coast as winds obliterated whole communities and rain flooded out parts of Texas that have never flooded before.

Due to the level of damage the storm caused to homes, businesses, and infrastructure, Hurricane Harvey was the costliest disaster this year and may well prove the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history. According to the Governor of Texas, the damage to our State from the hurricane is well over \$120 billion and could prove to be closer to \$180 billion. Any bill to provide disaster funding brought to this floor should recognize the unprecedented level of damage wreaked upon the State and should provide the level of assistance necessary to help Texas rebuild.

I spoke this afternoon with Governor Greg Abbott, and he expressed serious concerns that the supplemental bill coming out of the House does not direct nearly enough resources to the State of Texas given the magnitude of the damage, the magnitude of the suffering. Disaster relief needs to focus where the suffering occurred and where the disaster occurred.

I am hopeful that when this body returns in 2 weeks, we will work together in a bipartisan way to ensure that the promises made to the State of Texas are fulfilled and that the resources are there to help our State rebuild. The emergency response is over, but recovery and rebuilding efforts go on. As we keep working to keep our promises, I remain determined to keep fighting to ensure that Texas has the Federal resources to which the State is entitled under Federal law.

The spirit of Texas is strong. Some weeks ago, I tweeted out a picture that I think captured some of that spirit. It was a picture of a man in his living room. The Sheetrock was torn down from all the walls—nothing but studs on the walls and no carpet. The flooring was taken up. There was no furniture. He had a lawn chair. He had an Igloo ice chest as a coffee table and a TV screen, and he was wearing a Houston Astros jersey and cheering as the Astros won the World Series. The tweet simply said: “This is why it matters.” That is the spirit of Texas. We need to remember that spirit, and we need to make sure the disaster relief responds to the real damage and real suffering that Hurricane Harvey visited upon the State of Texas.

I look forward to working with my colleagues, hopefully from both sides of the aisle, to deliver on that commitment that Texans are owed.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

PRESSING ISSUES AT YEAR END

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, as we know all too well, the Senate of the

United States has an annual job to do—to adopt a budget and then appropriate it; to lay out the framework for what to spend and then to make deliberate decisions in the Appropriations Committee and move forward by the end of the fiscal year.

This may not be well or widely known, but the Federal fiscal year begins October 1. It is by October 1 that we are supposed to figure out what we are going to spend and how we are going to spend it and why we are going to spend it.

As we all head home to celebrate the holidays on December 21, I just wanted to take a moment and go over the list of things that are unaddressed and unresolved at the end of this calendar year.

The way it is supposed to work here and the way it is actually working here are strikingly different. In my 7 years now in the Senate on both the Budget Committee and the Appropriations Committee, I have seen people of good will of both parties try mightily and so far consistently fail to get us back to regular order and to end this process of moving crisis to crisis, continuing resolution to continuing resolution.

While I didn't hope that tonight the Federal Government of the United States would shut down, it is depressing, concerning, even alarming to me that we head home having not resolved so many issues.

We have heard from other Members here about the pressing needs of their home States. We have concerns all over our country, such as the Children's Health Insurance Program, known as CHIP, which is a literal lifeline to 9 million low-income children. Authorization and funding ran out months ago. Some States are already notifying parents that their children's health insurance coverage will lapse. There are community health centers on which 26 million patients rely. There is the pressing need to fund a response to the opioid crisis, the need to fund veterans' care, infrastructure, shore up pension plans, invest in education, and, of course, respond to natural disasters. From Americans in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to Americans in Texas and Florida and Louisiana, to those in California and the West—whether it is hurricanes or forest fires, parts of our Nation are literally flooding and burning. Yet we head home having not addressed their challenges.

Of course, I feel concerned that we have failed to act to protect the Dreamers here in our country, the young men and women brought here who have never known any other country, men and women who reflect the best of our country. I met many in my home State of Delaware. They are high school and college students, members of our military, parts of our neighborhoods and communities. But given the Trump administration's decision, the President's decision to end an administrative policy allowing these young people to come out of the shadows and

live without fear of being deported, we wait for bipartisan legislative action to give them the security they deserve and the ability to participate wholly in the American Dream.

I believe we can pass a bipartisan Dream Act that both protects Dreamers and makes our borders more secure, but all of these issues seem to become more partisan and more difficult fights than they need to be. We should be able to work together to resolve our differences and not have to go home with yet another continuing resolution, keeping the government afloat while we head out to celebrate. Our constituents didn't send us here to fight endless partisan battles, to avoid the strictures of the Budget Act and the appropriations process, and when things get tough, to just kick the can down the road.

Before I leave the floor, I want to speak about one other pressing concern I have, and that is about the importance of maintaining the independence of the investigation currently underway under the leadership of Special Counsel Robert Mueller. I have heard concerning, even alarming attacks on the special counsel by colleagues in the other Chamber and by folks in the press.

I just want to take a moment to say that our Nation relies on a few key institutions and principles that protect this experiment in democracy, and none are more important than the rule of law and the institutions that make up our system of justice. As partisanship, gridlock, and distress have become more prevalent in our country and corrosive to our politics, these institutions that sustain our democratic system are more important than ever.

I have traveled to other countries that have on pieces of paper Constitutions and legal systems that literally mirror our own, but they are ineffective and their systems are nondemocratic because their courts are not independent and their national leaders are not held accountable.

Across our country for generations, from classrooms to courtrooms, in Congress and communities, we have affirmed to Americans of all backgrounds the importance of the principle that no one is above the rule of law. Our country has been able to grow and change and improve because we are a nation of laws—laws that can be debated and changed but must be followed and respected.

The Department of Justice isn't respected because of its role on a piece of paper, no matter how treasured and important, or because of its title engraved above the door of the building or its motto; it is respected, trusted, and relied upon because it has strived to uphold our highest ideals and to enforce the law.

It is easier to save an institution like the rule of law than it is to restore it once torn down. This is why I helped author bipartisan legislation that would seek to further affirm the rule of

law and the independence of the Department of Justice specifically by protecting special counsel investigations from unwarranted political interference.

We have spirited debates over taxation, immigration, our Federal budget, but this issue is too important for me to yield the floor before this end of the year without urging my colleagues to seriously consider the important task we face to maintain the independence of the Department of Justice and uphold the rule of law.

I hope folks in this Chamber will consider the importance of protecting this investigation and this special counsel and, frankly, of continuing to protect the independence and integrity of the Department of Justice and our system of courts and law into the future. It is part of the bedrock on which our democracy rests, a bedrock which we cannot afford to have shaken.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN VOLLEYBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2017 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise this evening to call up and adopt a resolution recognizing this year's NCAA champions in women's volleyball—the Huskers from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This is the program's fifth national championship and second title in 3 years.

During the NCAA tournament, Nebraska played remarkably well, winning 18 sets and finishing on a 19-match winning streak. They were so fun to watch.

The entire team contributed to the outstanding victory, and I want to acknowledge their extraordinary effort: Annika Albrecht, Mikaela Foecke, Hunter Atherton, Hayley Densberger, Allie Havers, Briana Holman, Kenzie Maloney, Kelly Hunter, Chesney McClellan, Sami Slaughter, Lauren Stivrins, Jazz Sweet, Anezka Szabo, and Sydney Townsend all had their hard work pay off and they worked together to win a championship.

The Nebraska coaches worked hard, helped train our athletes, and strategized this championship run.

Head coach John Cook won his fourth national champion as a Husker head coach. He was joined by assistant coach Tyler Hildebrand, assistant coach Kayla Banwarth, volunteer assistant coach Ryan Coomes, director of operations Lindsay Peterson, video coordinator Kelly O'Connor, and graduate managers Joe Klein, John Henry, and Bre Mackie. Together, as a team, they guided that outstanding group of women to another national championship. These coaches have created a foundation and a winning tradition—

winning the national championship in front of a record-setting crowd of Husker fans—the best fans in college football. Nebraskans couldn't be more proud of this volleyball team and the coaching staff.

The Huskers won this national championship the Nebraska way—with hard work, sportsmanship, and determination. They deserve to be saluted by the Senate, and I urge my colleagues to pass this resolution and recognize their outstanding accomplishment.

I congratulate them on their victory and know they will continue to be great role models to girls and athletes everywhere.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I thank my senior Senator for leading us in this resolution.

Nebraska volleyball continues to dominate. If there is any debate about the best volleyball State in the Union, there should be no more. Nebraska has proved, yet again, we have the best team, the best coaching staff, and indisputably the best fans in the country.

Two years ago, this team won the national championship at home in Omaha, setting records with the crowds that attended the games there, and last week in Kansas City, we set another alltime record with the most watched championship volleyball game ever at 18,516 fans, including my 6-year old who stayed awake at nearly 11 p.m. as we were finishing, and he was deciding to watch it upside down, hanging over the seats from the upper decks at the arena in Kansas City.

So I proudly join the senior Senator and Husker nation in congratulating these young women, saying “Go Big Red” on behalf of all 1.9 million Nebraskans.

Just two stats of note. First, in the earlier round at the final four, Nebraska beat Penn State. Those are the two winningest teams in the history of volleyball. Nebraska has the most wins at 1,308. Penn State has the greatest winning percentage. We have now won five championships in 22 years, as well as three runner-up, second-place finishes in the last 30 years.

Coach Cook, as Senator FISCHER mentioned, has won four championships at Nebraska over the last 17 years. The alltime record for the history of volleyball is five national championships, and we expect that Coach Cook will set that new record.

So I join my senior Senator in urging the Senate to pass this resolution for the University of Nebraska women's volleyball team.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 365, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 365) congratulating the University of Nebraska-Lincoln volleyball team for winning the 2017 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Volleyball Championship.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mrs. FISCHER. 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. 365) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mrs. FISCHER. Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, first, I congratulate the Nebraska women's volleyball team and say I was proud to be here on the floor to be one of those who did not object to this wonderful resolution just offered by my colleagues from Nebraska.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am standing here tonight to talk about a couple of things, and first is the tax legislation that was passed this week in Congress. This is going to help everybody I represent because it is going to help our entire country. It is going to lift up our country in ways we are already beginning to see.

There have been a lot of people to thank, and today I was at the signing ceremony where Speaker RYAN and President pro tempore ORRIN HATCH signed the official legislation that is now on its way to the President for his signature. I start by thanking them—Speaker RYAN, Chairman HATCH, and also Chairman BRADY of the Ways and Means Committee, with whom I worked closely on this. He was a gentleman. He was, as always, someone who was looking for ways to solve problems and to get to yes, and I commend him for that.

I also want to thank some of the colleagues on the Finance Committee whom I worked closely with. This Core 4 group includes Senator JOHN THUNE, Senator PAT TOOMEY, Senator TIM SCOTT.

Maybe, most importantly, is the staff. We had an enormous undertaking here, and it was ambitious to try to meet the goals that were set out early on of real, middle-class tax cuts, also energizing the economy through helping small businesses, and then changing the whole international system so we could level the playing field. It was a lot to do, and it took a lot of expertise and a lot of time and effort. So to

Mark Prater, Jay Khosla, and Brendan Dunn, who led that effort, we all owe you our thanks. Then, of course, there are a slew of other staff, including Zach Rudisill of my staff, who just spent hours and hours and put his heart and soul into this. Thank you—all of you—for helping us get to this point.

For years, Democrats and Republicans alike have called for middle-class tax cuts. We talk about it in campaigns. I am proud to say that this week we delivered on it.

I know some of my Democratic colleagues have been critical of the legislation, and some have said: Well, these are not real, middle-class tax cuts because they expire. Yes, they expire after 8 years. We wished they didn't. Those are the budget rules here, but that is the same thing that happened with the 2001 tax cuts, the 2003 tax cuts, and Congress worked to extend those using the same budget rules for about 95 percent of those taxpayers. I am strongly hoping we will do the same thing, and I believe we will.

This is real tax relief. For families in Ohio of median income, the average will be just over \$2,000 every year. That helps the family budget. That is a little money you can put aside for retirement. Maybe that is money to use for a vacation you didn't have. If you are living paycheck to paycheck, which is true with a lot of people I represent, that is a big help. It is a big help. That is from doubling the child credit, that is from doubling the standard deduction, essentially creating \$14,000 of a zero income bracket.

By the way, doing those sorts of things in this bill means that about 3 million Americans or more are going to be leaving the tax rolls all together. These are people who have tax liability now and, under the new bill, starting in a couple of weeks, they will not have an income tax liability. They will be out from under the IRS. They will be able, as they move many of them from welfare to work or from a Federal program into gainful employment, to not worry about the taxman. That is really important too. I am proud of the legislation because I think it is going to really help the people I represent in an immediate way.

People will see it in their paychecks. The proof is in the paychecks because they will see it, and probably starting in February, the withholding will change. The IRS has to go through a process on that. I wrote a letter to them yesterday encouraging them to move on that quickly because people want to see that in their paychecks. So the tax relief starts in a couple of weeks, January 1. It will be in the paychecks when the withholding changes—hopefully sometime in late January, February—and people will see less money being withheld from their paycheck because of the tax cuts that enable them to have a healthier family budget.

I have to tell you I believe this is going to go well beyond that for the

people I represent. As important as those middle-class tax cuts are, equally as important is what we are doing to stimulate more investment in this economy, and that is through the changes for small businesses that will now be able to put more money into the business rather than paying more taxes. Many of these businesses—so-called passthrough companies, which are most of the businesses in America—pay taxes as individuals. They don't pay the business tax rate; they pay the individual tax rate. Many of them do take a dividend. They take money out of the company every year for one purpose, and that is to pay their taxes. To the extent they are not taking the money out as much to pay those taxes because of the changes we made here for small businesses, they are going to be able to invest more in their people, more in their equipment, more in their plants—and I am hearing this from small business people around the State of Ohio.

Last weekend, I was with a number of them, and they are excited about this because they want to be able to invest more in their business, they want to be able to invest more in their people, and they want to be able to give people who work for them the opportunity to have a higher wage.

Right now, wages are flat, and they really have been for the past couple of decades when you take inflation into account. This has the incredible opportunity for us not just to provide middle-class tax cuts, which are important not just to help businesses invest, but actually to help get wages up so people will see that if they work hard and play by the rules, they are going to see higher wages, the ability to get ahead, and have more hope for themselves and for their kids and their grandkids. Everyone, regardless of economic status, region, or party is going to see the benefits of this tax reform bill.

By the way, some workers are already seeing the benefit, as we talked today, because there are a bunch of companies that announced today that because of the tax reform and tax cuts legislation, they are already taking steps to increase the pay of their employees, increase benefits, or invest more money in building plants, equipment, or adding more jobs to investment or both. These companies include some big companies you have heard of like Comcast. It includes other companies like Wells Fargo and Boeing and AT&T. They have made these announcements today.

One company that announced it today is in my hometown. It is the Fifth Third Bank. It is kind of an unusual name, Fifth Third, but that makes them distinctive, right? They said today, you know what, we are going to start paying our people a higher entry level pay—instead of 13-something an hour, it is going to be \$15 an hour—and we are going to provide bonuses to other employees who are not affected by that. They are going to

do it right now, and they are doing it because of the tax relief legislation.

So to those who say: Gosh. What about me? I would just say: Look at your paycheck. If you work for one of these businesses that has already made an announcement, of course, you are feeling good about it, but even if you work for another company that maybe is a little quieter about what they are doing—maybe they are not going to make a big announcement—trust me, it is going to be in their interest now, in a competitive market out there, to invest in those companies, to invest in their people, to invest in training, to invest in better equipment, better technology. Those are the sorts of things that, over time, are going to make the biggest difference, I think, in this tax bill.

If you look at what is happening in our economy today, the reason wages are flat—by the way, expenses are not flat. Expenses are up and wages are flat. That is called the middle-class squeeze, and that is very real. What is the biggest expense? For most people, it is healthcare.

The way to deal with that is to get this economy moving and, specifically, to increase the productivity. That is what the economists say; that our productivity is low right now. When you have low productivity, you have low economic growth, and that is what we have had, under 2 percent economic growth. That is not the America I grew up in, and that is not the America I want my kids to grow up in.

By making these investments in better technology, in better equipment, in better training, what happens? You get better productivity, you get higher efficiency, you get the opportunity to increase your business, and therefore hire more people. That is something, I think, over time, will play out and will create the opportunity to lift up everybody.

John F. Kennedy was a Democrat, but he had a lot of things to say that sounded more like what Republicans are talking about today. One thing he said was that “a rising tide lifts all boats.” In the 1960s, he did cut capital gains, by the way, and that tax cut actually generated more economic activity.

Ronald Reagan, in 1986, actually put in place tax reform, with a bipartisan group here in the Congress, that ended up with strong economic growth in the 1980s and the 1990s, but that was 31 years ago. That is the last time we made these kinds of substantive comprehensive changes in the Tax Code. It is past time to do it again.

The final thing I will say about the tax reform proposal is that when you talk to businesses that are competing globally, which is more and more companies, including a lot of smaller companies now, the global economy is upon us. Some people said: Gosh, I wonder when the economy is going to affect me globally? Well, it does. It affects all of us. In your town, wherever it is, and in

your business, wherever you work, you are probably competing directly or indirectly on a global basis.

I will give you an example. There is a little company in my hometown called Standard Textiles. It is a great company. They make linens. It is a company that competes every day globally. In fact, a lot of the companies they compete with, as you can imagine, are companies that make these linens somewhere else—say, in Asia, where traditionally people have been able to find lower costs. Guess what they are looking at now with this tax reform bill: the ability to invest more here in America—American workers, American-made linens. They tell me, as do other companies, that this is going to give them a better competitive situation because no longer are you going to have a tax code that has the highest business rate in the entire industrialized world and an international system that says: If you keep your money overseas rather than bringing it back, when you earn money, you can save on your taxes. That is what resulted in \$2.5 to \$3 trillion being locked out of America and kept overseas.

This tax reform proposal unlocks that. It allows us to bring that money back. People call it repatriation. I guess that is accurate—repatriation. I wish it had never been “unpatriated” in the first place. If you are a patriot, you should want that money to be spent here in America. That is what is going to happen with this tax reform proposal.

It is about the tax cuts for working families—hard-working families who deserve it, who are now stuck in a situation where it is tough to get ahead. This will help immediately.

It is about helping small businesses and other companies here in America to be able to invest more, to be able to write off equipment right away when they buy it, and, as an example, having a lower rate.

It is also about leveling that playing field and saying that America, once again, is going to reposition itself as the leader in the world. Once again, it will be that beacon of opportunity that other countries look to and say: We would like to be like that—a free market economy where people who work hard and play by the rules can get ahead.

You can't say that now with our current Tax Code because workers literally are competing on an unlevel playing field with one hand tied behind their back because of our Tax Code. Three times as many American companies were purchased by foreign companies last year as the other way around. Because of our Tax Code, 4,700 U.S. companies became foreign companies over the last decade or so. That is based on an Ernst & Young study that came out recently that said, if this tax reform proposal we have now passed had been in place, those 4,700 companies would still be American companies.

All of us are patriots here in this body. All of us should want to bring back those jobs to America, repatriate those profits here to America, and give American workers the ability to compete on a level playing field.

I know there were some differences in this legislation. We heard a lot of it from the other side of the aisle, but on this issue, it has been bipartisan in the past. I hope it will be bipartisan going forward to hold these reforms in place so we can show that we have confidence and faith in American workers and that we have confidence that if we give them the right tools—in this case, the right Tax Code to work with—they can compete and they can win. I think we are going to see that.

I think, again, with the hopeful signs we are seeing, even today, of companies providing better pay or benefits or making additional commitments on investments. Even well beyond that, we are going to see, maybe quietly, that it will spread out all over the country in ways that will not be as obvious—in decisions that are going to be made, business budgets that are going to change as a result of this tax reform bill. I am hearing it from small businesses. I am hearing it from the bigger companies that compete directly globally, and I am certainly hearing it from families who are happy to see a little tax break to be able to help them as we go into the holidays.

That is all good news, and I think passing that legislation is really going to help the people I represent.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I also wish to talk about something tonight that was not accomplished. It was not accomplished in this vote we just had, which was the continuing resolution that keeps the government funded until January.

Some of us pushed hard to include various things in this legislation. I understand that some of these items are controversial, and it was hard to get it done because you needed 60 votes tonight. You needed a bipartisan consensus on how to move forward and not shut down the government.

I am not a fan of government shutdowns. They don't work. They are inefficient. They cost the taxpayer more at the end of the day, and they cause a lot of pain in the process.

We had the opportunity to pass certain things tonight that were not controversial. I don't understand why we didn't do it. Some issues, I understand on the spending front, were more controversial. I understand some issues were more controversial in terms of how you deal with the immigration issue. The DACA issue is one that I support resolving. I think we should codify it and resolve that. There were different points of view. People wanted to add different things there.

Let me tell you about one where I don't think there was any disagreement. If we could have passed it tonight, it would have provided a lot of certainty and predictability to families in Ohio and around the country. It is one that passed my committee, the Finance Committee, by a strong vote—not a bipartisan vote but a unanimous vote. That is the Children's Health Insurance Program, or the CHIP program. We passed it with a unanimous vote out of committee.

People say: Well, we need to find pay-fors for it. It is about \$8 billion to do what we did, which is a 5-year extension of the program, providing certainty and predictability to families who tonight are wondering what is going to happen to this program. Are my kids going to have the kind of quality healthcare they can access through the Children's Health Program, or the CHIP program?

There are some pay-fors out there that are, again, bipartisan. A big one, which would cover nearly half of that cost, is one where you simply ensure that the Medicaid Program has more integrity. So if a third-party payer is paying, the Medicaid Program doesn't pay for it. It is a bipartisan issue, and there is an initiative we looked at for this program and could have used.

I don't get this notion that we couldn't pass it because we couldn't find the pay-fors. The pay-fors were there. I don't get it that this was controversial, because it is not. I believe that on both sides of the aisle, we wanted to resolve the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Again, with all the other issues, I understand. It is tough when you have to get to 60 votes and get this passed in order to keep the government operating, which is not a situation we should be in, but we are in. I must tell you, I am very disappointed we were not able to deal with this one issue tonight that has not been controversial and that came out of the committee with a unanimous vote—not bipartisan but unanimous.

CHIP now helps 219,000 Ohio children get the health coverage they need and 9 million children nationwide. Ohio has the tenth largest program, and CHIP has been a leading cause in driving the insurance rate down for Ohio kids. In the case of my home State, we have seen our CHIP funding being questioned because the program was authorized until the end of September. Now it is no longer authorized. We are not sure exactly how much money we have left. We think we have enough to get into February in Ohio. Some States are worried about even getting into January.

Tonight, there was a short-term extension that, as I understand it, will take the program into February, but again, it doesn't provide that long-term certainty that families are looking for.

I must tell you that I am disappointed from what I hear about the

reasons, because I asked on both sides of the aisle, and one reason I got—again, this was leadership on both sides of the aisle—is that we can't do it unless we do other things with it. It is called CHIP—Children's Health Insurance Program—but it shouldn't be a political chip. It should be taken out of politics. It should be something that we deal with separately.

I will just tell you that using it as leverage for other programs is not the way I am going to look at it and not the way we should look at it. We should have passed it tonight. We should have passed it to help protect some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Funding should be a top priority, regardless of your partisan position and regardless of the political climate. It should be out of the political fray.

I urge my colleagues, when we come back after the first of the year, let's make that a priority. Let's bring it to the floor. Let's have a vote. Let's keep it bipartisan. Maybe, it could even be unanimous. Let's give those families in Ohio—the 219,000 kids who depend on it—and the millions of families around this country the peace of mind to know that we are extending this program.

Let's do that 5-year extension, that 5-year authorization we already passed in committee. Let's take it out of this political process and put it where it belongs, which is an issue that every single Member of this body should want to address for the kids they represent.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight on the tax reform and tax cut legislation. I do think it will provide the opportunity for everybody I represent to have a better future and a brighter future.

I appreciate the opportunity to talk on the Children's Health Insurance Program.

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the junior Senator from Louisiana be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills during today's session of the Senate.

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I yield back my time.

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. KENNEDY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATIONS REMAINING IN STATUS QUO

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the list at the desk of

nominations received during the 115th Congress, first session, remain in status quo, notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXXI.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 525, 526, 528, and 530.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Kenneth J. Braithwaite, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Norway; M. Lee McClenny, of Washington, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Paraguay; Brock D. Bierman, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development; and Christopher Ashley Ford, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Security and Non-Proliferation).

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Braithwaite, McClenny, Bierman, and Ford nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 311.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert P. Storch, of the District of Columbia, to

be Inspector General of the National Security Agency.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Storch nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 456 and 457.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Hester Maria Peirce, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission for a term expiring June 5, 2020; and Robert J. Jackson, Jr., of New York, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 5, 2019.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Peirce and Jackson nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 545, 546, and 576.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Timothy R.

Petty, of Indiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior; Linda Capuano, of Texas, to be Administrator of the Energy Information Administration; and John G. Vonglis, of New York, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Energy.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Petty, Capuano, and Vonglis nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 578, 503, and 577.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Irving Dennis, of Ohio, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Housing and Urban Development; Suzanne Israel Tufts, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; and Leonard Wolfson, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Dennis, Tufts, and Wolfson nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 299.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert Charrow, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Charrow nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: PN1286, PN1287, and PN1288.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Tadd M. Johnson, of Minnesota, to be a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2022; Lisa Johnson-Billy, of Oklahoma, to be a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring August 25, 2018; and Lisa Johnson-Billy, of Oklahoma, to be a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring August 25, 2024.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the nominations be confirmed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Johnson, Johnson-Billy, and Johnson-Billy nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

NOMINATIONS DISCHARGED

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Environment and Public Works Committee be discharged from consideration of and the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: PN1035, PN1036, PN1037, PN1038, and PN1172.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Kenneth E. Allen, of Kentucky, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2021; A.D. Frazier, of Georgia, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2022; Jeffrey Smith, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2022; James R. Thompson III, of Alabama, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2021; and Christopher Caldwell, of Arkansas, to be Federal Cochairperson, Delta Regional Authority.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order, and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Allen, Frazier, Smith, Thompson, and Caldwell nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 502, 554, 556, 559, and PN1196.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Katherine Brunett McGuire, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor; Kate S. O'Scannlain, of Maryland, to be Solicitor for the Department of Labor; Preston Rutledge, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor; Johnny Collett, of Kentucky, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Edu-

cation and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education; and Douglas Webster, of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Education.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the McGuire, O'Scannlain, Rutledge, Collett, and Webster nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: PN1109.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jon J. Rychalski, of Montana, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Rychalski nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

TRIBUTE TO HEATHER GOOZE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge

an extraordinary woman from my home State of Illinois.

Heather Gooze lives in Nevada now, but she grew up in the Chicago area. She is a survivor of the worst mass shooting in modern American history. On October 1, she was working as a bartender at the Route 91 Harvest Festival in Las Vegas. She was there when a gunman with his own private arsenal rained down gunfire from a high-rise hotel, murdering 58 innocent people and injuring more than 500 others.

Ms. Gooze testified at a recent Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on "bump stocks," the \$200 accessory that the Las Vegas gunman used to make his assault rifles fire almost as fast as a machine gun.

When she heard the first round of shots, Heather thought it might have been fireworks, but suddenly people were running in every direction. Some were shot; many were covered in blood.

Heather directed wounded and frightened people to an exit. With about 20 other people, she then pushed down a fence to make it easier for people to escape the gunfire.

She could have run to safety herself. Instead, she went back to the bar to try to help people who had been shot and lay wounded on the ground.

One young man had been shot in the head. Heather held a jean jacket to his wound to try to staunch the bleeding. When she dropped the jacket, she used her fingers to try to plug the hole in the young man's head. He died the next day.

She then saw three men trying to move another badly injured man using a metal ladder as a stretcher. Heather reached out to grab a corner of the ladder and help lift it. The young man on the ladder grabbed her hand, squeezed it lightly, and then let go—dead.

Heather looked around, saw other dead bodies lying alone, and decided that she would not leave that young man alone like that.

She stayed with his body for hours, until 3:30 in the morning.

When his cell phone rang, she answered. She told the young man's mother that her only child had died. The young man's girlfriend had escaped the killing field to the safety of a nearby hotel. Heather told her that young woman that the love of her life was gone, but Heather would stay with him and learn for the family where his body would be taken.

At the recent hearing, Heather said that horrific night in Las Vegas made her part of a growing, grieving "family" she had hoped never to join: the American family of survivors and victims of mass shootings.

She said that she has asked herself many times in the days after the shooting why she stayed and risked her life for young men she didn't know and for their grieving families. She said the only answer she could come up with was that she hoped that someone would do the same for her and not leave her alone in the midst of a massacre.

I think that is the same plea that many Americans have for this Congress. They understand that gun safety is a politically heated issue. They understand that there are constitutional and legal questions that are difficult to balance.

They want us to have the courage to take up that debate rationally, responsibly and respectfully.

On an average day, 93 Americans are killed with guns—93 people a day, every day. Over 30,000 Americans a year die from guns. Many more live in daily fear that they could be next.

I hope that we can agree to be more like Heather Gooze, to not abandon our fellow Americans to face that danger and fear of gun violence alone. Supporting Senator FEINSTEIN's bill to ban the sale of "bump stocks" would be a good place to start.

TRIBUTE TO ANGELA McQUEEN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the remarkable courage of a woman from my home State of Illinois.

Her name is Angela McQueen—"Angie"—to her friends and family.

Ms. McQueen teaches math and physical education at Mattoon High School in central Illinois.

In late September, she was in the high school cafeteria when she saw a student pull a semiautomatic handgun from his backpack and start spraying the cafeteria with gunfire.

Ms. McQueen and other teachers at the high school had recently been trained on what to do when faced with the threat of gun violence at school.

It is sad and distressing to think that teachers need such training today, but that is, sadly, the reality. Thank goodness Angie McQueen had that training.

The instant she saw the gun, she lunged and pushed the young man's hand towards the ceiling so he couldn't shoot others.

She said she had only one thought in her head as she acted, as she put it, "You're not going to do this to my kids."

Hundreds of students were in the cafeteria at the time. One student was shot and hospitalized briefly, and another student suffered minor injuries when he was apparently grazed by gunfire.

School and law enforcement officials say that Ms. McQueen's selfless actions likely saved students' lives.

One student who witnessed the incident told a reporter for a local newspaper, "Ms. McQueen is like Chuck Norris, basically. She's a hero."

Angela McQueen is the daughter of two retired teachers. In her biography on the school's website, she was asked to describe why she became a teacher. The first reason she gave: "I wanted to make the world a better place."

She has certainly done that.

Ms. McQueen is modest. She doesn't like being in the spotlight, but she recently allowed the city and families of

Mattoon to thank her publicly at a reception at the school.

Mattoon School superintendent Larry Lilly undoubtedly spoke for many when he said, "We are forever grateful to Angela for her courageous actions that saved the lives of our kids. She was a ray of light in our darkest hour."

"You're not going to do this to my kids." That was what Angela McQueen vowed before she risked her life to disarm a young man with a semiautomatic handgun.

I hope that all Members of Congress will take those words to heart as we debate gun safety and what we can do as a society to protect our children and all Americans from gun violence.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we are a Nation of immigrants. That should be an obvious point, but it bears repeating at a time when our President sees political advantage in trafficking in xenophobic scapegoating. Unless you are Native American, you come from a line of people who come from somewhere else. Indeed, that simple fact is an integral part of the American story.

We are also a nation that believes that anything is possible. Our ancestors and relatives journeyed here because, in America, where you come from does not determine what you can accomplish. In this great country, as long as you work hard and play by the rules, you can achieve your dreams. That itself is the American Dream.

No single group of people embodies these ideals more than our Nation's Dreamers. Dreamers grew up in this country; they were brought here as children. They seek only the opportunity to contribute to our Nation and to be legally recognized as the Americans that they are. Dreamers are our neighbors, our teachers, and our first responders.

Nearly a thousand Dreamers serve in our Armed Forces, risking their lives to defend the only country they have ever known as home. We cannot in good faith claim to care about the American Dream if we neglect to protect the very people who are living it.

Take, for example, Dr. Juan Conde, a DACA recipient and a resident of Vermont. Dr. Conde was born in Mexico and brought to the United States as a child by his mother. In 2007, his mother was tragically taken by cancer. Showing remarkable courage and determination for a young man, this tragedy inspired Dr. Conde to find a way to help cancer patients like his mother; yet he was unable to become an oncologist due to his immigration status. So instead, he decided to obtain a Ph.D. in cancer research from the University of Texas.

Dr. Conde wanted to treat cancer patients, not just study the disease. After receiving DACA status in 2012, he was empowered to pursue his medical degree. He is currently a medical student at University of Vermont's Lanier College of Medicine.

Dr. Conde hopes to spend his life in the United States treating cancer pa-

tients and helping to find a cure for the disease. My hope is that we can make that happen, not just for Dr. Conde but for every other Dreamer. There are almost 800,000 Dreamers like Dr. Conde, all of whom have just as much potential to make our communities and our country truly great. To deny them these opportunities because they were brought here as children is as senseless as it is cruel.

Yet that is the decision the president made. He could have worked with Congress to find a permanent solution for Dreamers while leaving DACA protections in place. Instead, he cast them aside. His administration has made absurd, nonfactual, and offensive arguments in support of that decision ever since. When Attorney General Sessions announced that DACA was being terminated, he argued that the program was an example of the Obama administration's repeated failure to enforce our immigration laws. He argued that such failure caused crime, violence, and even terrorism. During Senate Judiciary Committee hearings, I pressed both the Attorney General and his Department on this point, to name just one Dreamer who was involved in terrorist activity. Of course, they could not, but apparently, fear-mongering is more effective than acknowledging simple truths.

By definition, Dreamers are law-abiding. They seek nothing more than to contribute to our country. If the President refuses to stand with Dreamers, then Congress must. We have done it before in the Senate. Four years ago, 68 Senators, Democrats and Republicans, voted for comprehensive immigration reform legislation that I managed on the Senate floor. That legislation included key protections for Dreamers, including an expedited pathway to citizenship. It is time for the Senate to act again now and for the House to follow suit. The future of Dreamers and the fate of the American Dream itself lies in our hands.

PERU

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to speak briefly about the unfolding political crisis, which is also a crisis for justice, in Peru.

Peru transitioned to democracy in 2000, after two decades of internal armed conflict and authoritarian rule. The country has made important strides in rebuilding its democratic institutions, consolidating the rule of law, and combating impunity, but today, efforts by a majority in the Peruvian Congress to arbitrarily remove judges from the country's highest court, the Constitutional Tribunal, and to oust the attorney general for courageously doing his job, threaten to undermine those gains and reverse Peru's democratic progress.

As a former prosecutor and the senior Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am especially concerned about the attempt by the majority in

Peru's Congress to impeach Attorney General Pablo Sanchez in the midst of his office's investigation into allegations that the Presidential campaign of Keiko Fujimori received illegal contributions in 2011. The effort to remove Attorney General Sanchez strongly suggests a deliberate strategy to obstruct justice and to undermine the autonomy of the attorney general's office. This would represent a grave setback for hard-fought gains to reestablish an independent judiciary and the rule of law in Peru. It would have serious ramifications for U.S.-Peruvian relations.

Credible allegations of corruption must be thoroughly investigated, without prejudice to party or power, and with due process for the accused. I urge members of Peru's Congress to support those who are acting on behalf of the Peruvian people in the pursuit of truth and justice. Key to this is respect for the autonomy of the office of the attorney general and of the Constitutional Tribunal, institutions that are guarantors of human rights and the rule of law.

PRESS FREEDOM

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we are all too familiar with President Trump's "fake news" mantra, which he has repeatedly used to discredit unfavorable news reports and undermine the credibility of the media in our country.

This mantra and the accompanying threats to freedoms of speech and of the press have now spread far beyond our borders. Autocrats and dictators around the world are enthusiastically using the concept of fake news and the legitimacy granted to it by the President of the United States to further undermine and restrict press freedom and fact-based reporting on corruption, human rights, and other abuses in their own countries.

For example, in response to an Amnesty International report on thousands of military prison deaths in Syria, President Bashar al-Assad remarked, "You can forge anything these days, we are living in a fake news era." Similarly, in response to news reports on persecution of the Rohingya ethnic minority group in Myanmar, an officer in Myanmar's Rakhine state security ministry stated, "There is no such thing as Rohingya. It is fake news."

The list goes on and includes comments from autocratic leaders in the Philippines, Venezuela, Russia, China, and Turkey, among others, who have used the fake news mantra to legitimize harassment, arrests, and prosecutions of journalists.

Last week, the Committee to Protect Journalists, CPJ, released its annual census of imprisoned journalists worldwide, which has hit an historical high of 262. The total does not include the many more journalists who were imprisoned for a period of time during the year before being released prior to the December 1 census. A CPJ statement

published with the report noted that: "Far from isolating repressive countries for their authoritarian behavior, the United States, in particular, has cozied up to strongmen such as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Chinese President Xi Jinping. At the same time, President Donald Trump's nationalistic rhetoric, fixation on Islamic extremism, and insistence on labeling critical media 'fake news' serves to reinforce the framework of accusations and legal charges that allow such leaders to preside over the jailing of journalists."

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution has inspired people around the world for over 200 years. It was reaffirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and versions of it have been included in the constitutions of many countries; yet while the United States has long been a global leader for freedom of expression, the White House is now actively working to undermine press freedom. President Trump's reckless rhetoric has not only harmed our credibility and our reputation, it has emboldened foreign dictators who fear nothing more than for their misdeeds to be exposed by the media. The consequence is journalists threatened and imprisoned, journalists assassinated with impunity, publishers who are intimidated, and the ultimate casualty is the truth.

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, 2018 marks the 100-year anniversary of the influenza pandemic that killed an estimated 50 million people, including 670,000 Americans. I suspect most people assume that, given the remarkable advances in modern medicine since 1918, nothing so disastrous could happen again, but in fact, it could, and next time, it could be even worse. The spread of infectious diseases and drug resistance, and the accompanying threats to global security, are on the rise, and the international community is woefully underprepared to fight back.

The several large-scale infectious disease outbreaks of the last two decades, including SARS, H1N1, and Ebola, have revealed the extent to which individual countries and the international community at large need to dramatically improve their preparedness to respond to such potentially catastrophic health crises.

The stark reality is that the threat is increasing. An ever-growing, increasingly mobile global population will provide the breeding ground for the emergence and contagion of existing and new infectious diseases.

The potential threats from infectious disease outbreaks include not only catastrophic loss of life, but severe economic harm and social and political instability. The 2014-15 Ebola outbreak, for example, which began with the death of a 2-year-old boy in a remote Guinean village, ultimately killed

more than 11,000 people across six countries, left thousands of children orphaned, caused an estimated economic loss to those countries of nearly \$3 billion, and resulted in many people losing confidence in their country's public health system.

It is important to note that Ebola, which is spread through direct contact and terrified millions of people including in this country, is hardly the most infectious known disease. Several other disease agents, such as measles and influenza, can be spread through the air and can develop into epidemics or pandemics much more rapidly.

That is one of the reasons why many global health experts fear that an infectious disease outbreak far worse than Ebola will occur sometime in the next 20 years and that the number of outbreaks will become more frequent.

Despite improvements in access to safe water and sanitation, vaccine development, and other public health advances to combat infectious diseases, an enormous amount of work remains.

One of the most important lessons learned from the Ebola outbreak is that time is of the essence. The lack of a rapid, coordinated global response resulted in many preventable deaths. Disease surveillance systems were poor or nonexistent in the severely impacted countries, there was a lack of trained personnel to rapidly deploy, and no effective public communication system was in place to inform and update local communities.

An additional problem was the inability to quickly mobilize resources. Countries and NGOs around the globe lacked a reserve of available funds. The Congress took a step toward addressing this issue in the fiscal year 2017 State and foreign operations appropriations bill, which included a \$70 million emergency reserve fund to address infectious disease outbreaks around the globe. In the fiscal year 2018 Senate version of the State and foreign operations bill, Chairman GRAHAM and I included \$130 million for programs to prevent and respond to such emerging health threats.

However, as I have said before and I will say again, far more needs to be done to build the public health infrastructure to prevent and respond to disease pandemics. As the international community works to be more prepared for infectious disease outbreaks, the U.S. should continue to play a leading role in preparedness planning. Unfortunately, President Trump's fiscal year 2018 budget would cut funding for these very programs, including for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which played an indispensable role in responding to the Ebola and Zika outbreaks, as it has to many other international health crises.

It is time we invest and prepare for pandemics in a similar way as we invest and prepare for war, nuclear disasters, or other large-scale threats to global security. The potential consequences are no less serious. I urge

the White House to face up to this reality and dramatically increase funding for these programs at CDC, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and other Federal agencies that play a role in global health security.

TRIBUTE TO GARRISON NELSON

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to recognize the achievements and contributions of a renowned political scholar, remarkable educator, and a personal friend. This year, Garrison Nelson will conclude five decades of teaching at the University of Vermont, where he is recognized as a legend in the department of political science.

Garrison, the inaugural Elliott A. Brown Green and Gold Professor of Law, Politics, and Political Behavior, is known by some Members of this body, as well as legislators throughout the country who rely on him to offer political insight. Widely considered a leading expert on congressional history, Garrison has authored more than 150 articles and professional papers on national politics with a major focus on the U.S. Congress and elections in Vermont. His works have educated students worldwide and can be found in close to 500 libraries in the United States and 13 countries around the world.

An Irish native of Boston, Garrison has resided in the Green Mountain State for most of his adult life, adding much richness to the State's political landscape. I have known Garrison since he served as an aide in my office shortly after my first election to the Senate. Garrison is as revered as he is brilliant. His skill and affinity for the esoteric is evident in both his teaching style and his storytelling, perhaps most notably his magnum opus, "John William McCormack: A Political Biography." Works like this one have made significant contributions to our Nation's historical library, offering profiles and untold stories of the political icons of our time. In today's political environment, such citations of success and failure can offer us precious insight into improving our own oath to serve.

As Garrison departs the Old Mill at the University of Vermont at the end of this year, he will leave a legacy that has reached more than 13,000 students. With them and many others, he has shared his appreciation of and reverence for the American political system and the need for participation to ensure the success of our democracy. I am grateful for his commitment to inspire the next generation of political leaders.

In recognition of Garrison's timeless contributions, I ask unanimous consent that an article by Terri Hallenback, appearing in Vermont's own *Seven Days*, about Garrison's achievements be printed in the *RECORD*.

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

[From *Seven Days*, October 18, 2017]

FIFTY YEARS, 13,450 STUDENTS AND 5,000 INTERVIEWS: UVM'S GARRISON NELSON CALLS IT A CAREER

(By Terri Hallenback)

When former Vermont governor Howard Dean ran for president in 2004, national media turned to University of Vermont political science professor Garrison Nelson for insight.

"I think he is an arrogant, ill-tempered schmo who does not play well with others," Nelson told the *Houston Chronicle*.

Many of the same political reporters came back 12 years later, when Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) wanted the job. They called on Nelson to capture the politics and personality of the quirky democratic socialist who'd once been mayor of Burlington.

"Bernie's the last person you'd want to be stuck on a desert island with," Nelson told the *New Yorker* in 2015. "Two weeks of lectures about health care, and you'd look for a shark and dive in."

In his day job, the bearded professor with a booming, Boston-accented voice has spent nearly 50 years bringing dry political facts to life for thousands of students while churning out a steady flow of academic research.

To the broader public, though, Nelson is known as the man to whom journalists both local and national regularly turned for well-informed analysis—and no-holds-barred skewering—of Vermont politicians and their ambitions.

Now, after 13,450 students (including this reporter), 11 books and more than 5,000 media interviews (yes, he keeps track), UVM's most quoted professor is retiring. The 146 students in his two political science classes this semester will be his last.

Nelson is calling an end to a career that has made him one of UVM's most public figures. On campus and off, he has chafed and informed generations of students, politicians and voters. "With full classrooms and multiple book demands at age 75, the pace has become grueling," said Nelson, whose walk has slowed to a shuffle on the well-worn route between his Old Mill office and Lafayette Hall classroom.

Looking back, it's hard to believe that Nelson lasted a full year, let alone five decades, at UVM. He's poked at not just politicians, but university brass. In 1971, as a relatively new, untenured teacher, he protested the politically motivated ouster of a left-wing professor, Michael Parenti; 30 years later, then-tenured Nelson feuded publicly with his university bosses over pay and college leadership.

For a while, Nelson considered leaving UVM. From 1996 to 2002, he worked part-time at Boston area colleges and had designs on landing a full-time job at one of them. But he held on to his tenure and continued to teach in Burlington during that time. He's now one of the university's longest-serving professors.

As he completes his employment, Nelson said he has mellowed. He claims to admire the full slate of university leaders above him. The twice-divorced Nelson remarried this year. He literally beams over the positive reviews of his newly released book, a 910-page tome on the little-remembered 1960s-era U.S. House speaker John McCormack. Nelson refers to the book's publication as the "crowning moment" of his career.

At an official gathering last week to honor his upcoming retirement, Nelson told colleagues that a friend asked him why he wanted to retire now, when things are going so well. "My answer was, 'It won't get any better than this,'" he said.

In the classroom, Nelson is known for turning large numbers of students—including

apolitical ones—on to political history through the stories behind it. He's a natural raconteur, whether the topic is the rise of Woodrow Wilson, the Austin-Boston dominance of the U.S. House or his own Massachusetts roots. Nelson's single mom raised him and his younger half-sister in working-class Lynn after his Communist father left.

"Super paper. Star of the day," Nelson told one young woman as he handed back papers to the 39 students in his Electing the President class last week.

"More sources, Maddie. More sources next time," he told another, also loud enough to be heard by everyone in the room.

Former student Jade Harberg said she liked the way Nelson challenged students with candor and humor. "I appreciated teachers who were willing to shame their students to work harder," the 2013 UVM grad said.

Harberg, who now works for Nelson as a researcher in Washington, D.C., recalled that the professor sent her class an email listing the students who had turned their papers in early and those who had been late. He included a statistical analysis that concluded men were more likely to be tardy than women and told the class, "This is why women are ruling the world."

Nelson gets high marks on the website Rate My Professors. Former students graded him 4 out of 5 in quality, and 89 percent say they would take his course again. But the comments reflect a range of reactions to the professor's personality.

Some called him a "genius," "hilarious" and "extremely helpful." A typical dissenter, on the other hand, concluded: "Pompous, has a weird inferiority complex about not having gone to Harvard."

Clark Bensen, a 1974 UVM grad, said Nelson's intensity helped push him into political science from his math-economics major. "For me, he was a breath of fresh air, or more like a gale-force wind," Bensen said. Today, Bensen still uses the skills Nelson taught him to run Polidata, a Virginia-based firm that analyzes political data.

Nelson made an impression on his colleagues, too. Anthony "Jack" Gierzynski, chair of the UVM political science department, said that when he arrived at the university in 1992, he saw Nelson's students were enthralled by his storytelling.

"At first, I tried to imitate that," Gierzynski said, but he quickly found it didn't work for him. Noting the 2013 retirement of equally charismatic political science professor Frank Bryan, Gierzynski said Nelson is "the last of that breed."

Despite his outsized personality, Nelson has spent a considerable part of his professorial career toiling quietly on detailed research on esoteric subjects. He has produced thick volumes on the membership of congressional committees that may be valuable reference books—albeit not best sellers.

At least one student appreciated that. "The guy has an encyclopedic mind and has done granular research on New England politics," said journalist Scott MacKay, a 1974 grad who has long relied on Nelson's insights—and quotability—as a political reporter in Vermont and Rhode Island.

Nelson had wanted to write a book about McCormack since he met the former House speaker in 1968, just before he started working at UVM. Eleven publishers turned him down—McCormack was a key player in his time but a relatively obscure historical figure—before Bloomsbury Publishing finally offered him a deal. John William McCormack: A Political Biography came out in March.

Such work earns an author academic credibility, but Nelson is more likely to be remembered for his outspoken political commentary. Insisting it "was not a central feature of my UVM life," he explained, "I fell

into it because, apart from my buddy Frank Bryan, others at UVM were reluctant to do it.”

Nelson has been analyzing Vermont politics for print and television journalists since Democrat Phil Hoff sat in the governor’s office in the 1960s. He’s provided plenty of straight, factual observations but over time became known for a spicier variety of analysis.

He admits that he’s dished it out unevenly. Nelson thinks highly of Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), for whom he worked for two years, so Leahy has largely been spared his barbs. He has also generally spoken favorably of the political skills of former U.S. senator Jim Jeffords (I-Vt.) and former Republican governors Jim Douglas and Richard Snelling.

For Sanders, whose political career he’s followed since 1981, Nelson has both criticism and affection. “The difference between Bernie and most of the lefties is, Bernie wants to win,” Nelson said in the October 2015 New Yorker article. “Most lefties don’t want to win, because if you win, you sell out your purity.”

His analysis was acceptable to his daughter, Shyla Nelson Stewart, a Sanders devotee who seconded the senator’s nomination at the Democratic National Convention.

“The most important thing he said was, Bernie has been on the same agenda his entire career,” she said of her dad’s comments, “and that that agenda has caught up with the times.”

Nelson has been harder on Dean and Congressman Peter Welch (D-Vt.).

“I never understood why Howard was running for president other than the fact that Howard wanted to be president,” he said before class one day last month. “It was just Howard’s ego.” Dean did not respond to a message from Seven Days seeking his point of view.

Nelson is slightly less dismissive of Welch. Nelson said their feud started when he made a comment to a reporter during Welch’s 1988 campaign for the Democratic U.S. House nomination, saying Welch’s strategy of concentrating his campaign in southern Vermont was a mistake. “Peter took offense,” Nelson said. When Welch confronted him, Nelson said, he responded with choice words.

Welch insisted last week that he doesn’t remember the incident or Nelson’s specific comments, though he did say the professor was always critical.

“He showed no mercy,” Welch said. “He was extremely good at cutting folks down to a size that was smaller than they thought they deserved.”

Daughter Stewart provides some insight. “What my father has most railed against is anyone who has even the slightest sense of entitlement,” she said of Nelson, who often talks about growing up poor.

Nelson saw that attitude in Dean, who grew up on New York City’s Park Avenue.

“His born-again liberalism has caught a lot of us by surprise—it’s a case of ‘Howard, we hardly knew ye,’” Nelson told the Associated Press in 2003. “He’s really a classic Rockefeller Republican: a fiscal conservative and social liberal.”

His disapproval of Welch, a lawyer from Springfield, Mass., is more complicated. Nelson viewed Welch and his late wife, Joan Smith, as a couple in search of power—his in politics and hers at UVM, where she was dean of the College of Arts and Science and Nelson’s boss.

In a 2001 column, the late Seven Days columnist Peter Freyne wrote, “Nelson told Seven Days that Smith and her husband, former gubernatorial candidate Peter Welch, ‘wanted to be the Democratic Snellings, with Peter holding the governor’s office and Joan holding high office at the university’—a reference to the late Governor Richard Snelling and wife Barbara Snelling, who served as a UVM vice president for many years.”

Nelson does not let go of such opinions easily, nor does he like being on the receiving end of the kind of criticism he so readily doles out to others.

Nelson recalled comments Freyne made about him during Dean’s 2004 presidential campaign. “Peter bashed me in four separate columns,” Nelson said, alleging that Freyne was courting Dean’s campaign in hopes of landing a job.

In one of those columns, Freyne said, “Garrison despises Howard Dean, always has and always will. We suggest it’s all about ego—Nelson’s, not Dean’s.”

Asked why this still roiled him 13 years after Dean’s campaign ended and eight years after Freyne’s death, Nelson said, “I’m Irish, for Chrissakes; I don’t forget anything. Irish Alzheimer’s—you never forget a grudge.”

Nelson doesn’t get as much ink in the newspapers as he once did—which is his choice, he said, because answering questions from reporters takes away from his research time. He didn’t have a lot to say about

former governor Peter Shumlin and has been just as quiet on Gov. Phil Scott and President Donald Trump. But he makes no apologies for comments made over the years about politicians, students or his bosses.

“When you’re an outspoken person, you’re going to piss people off. I’ve pissed people off,” Nelson said. “But I’m still here—50 years.”

BUDGETARY REVISIONS

Mr. ENZI. Mr President, section 251 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, BBEDCA, establishes statutory limits on discretionary spending and allows for various adjustments to those limits, while sections 302 and 314(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 allow the chairman of the Budget Committee to establish and make revisions to allocations, aggregates, and levels consistent with those adjustments. The Senate is considering the House Amendment to H.R. 1370, the Further Additional Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018, which provides emergency funding for national security accounts.

This legislation includes language that increases security discretionary budget authority by \$4,686 million this year and designates it as emergency funding pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(1) of BBEDCA. CBO estimates that this budget authority will increase discretionary outlays by \$803 million in 2018.

As a result of the aforementioned designations, I am revising the allocation to the Committee on Appropriations by increasing the revised security budget authority limit by \$4,686 million and outlays by \$803 million this year. Further, I am increasing the budgetary aggregates for 2018 by those same amounts.

I ask unanimous consent that the accompanying tables, which provide details about the adjustment, be printed in the RECORD.

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

REVISION TO BUDGETARY AGGREGATES—(PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 311 AND 314(a) OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT OF 1974)

[\$ in millions]

	2018
Current Spending Aggregates:	
Budget Authority	3,080,461
Outlays	3,100,621
Adjustments:	
Budget Authority	4,686
Outlays	803
Revised Spending Aggregates:	
Budget Authority	3,085,147
Outlays	3,101,424

REVISION TO SPENDING ALLOCATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—(PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 302 AND 314(a) OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT OF 1974)

[\$ in millions]

	2018
Current Allocation:	
Revised Security Discretionary Budget Authority	549,057
Revised Nonsecurity Category Discretionary Budget Authority	552,266
General Purpose Outlays	1,187,547
Adjustments:	
Revised Security Discretionary Budget Authority	4,686
Revised Nonsecurity Category Discretionary Budget Authority	0
General Purpose Outlays	803
Revised Allocation:	
Revised Security Discretionary Budget Authority	553,743

REVISION TO SPENDING ALLOCATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—(PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 302 AND 314(a) OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT OF 1974)—Continued
(\$ in millions)

	2018				
Revised Nonsecurity Category Discretionary Budget Authority					552,266
General Purpose Outlays					1,188,350
	OCO	Program Integrity	Disaster Relief	Emergency	Total
Memorandum Detail of Adjustments Made Above:					
Revised Security Discretionary Budget Authority	0	0	0	4,686	4,686
Revised Nonsecurity Category Discretionary Budget Authority	0	0	0	0	0
General Purpose Outlays	0	0	0	803	803

TRIBUTE TO LUTHER STRANGE
Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, today I wish to honor my good friend and colleague from Alabama, Senator LUTHER STRANGE, prior to his departure from the U.S. Senate.

While LUTHER and I have worked closely together in the Senate, our friendship dates back nearly four decades. Over the years, I have had the privilege of not only getting to know LUTHER, but also getting to know his wife, Melissa, and his two sons, Luke and Keehn.

Even before LUTHER was appointed to the U.S. Senate, he and I worked alongside each other throughout much of our careers. When LUTHER was sworn in to fill Attorney General Sessions' seat, I was pleased to have him just down the hall from my office.

As soon as LUTHER was sworn into the Senate, he hit the ground running. His camaraderie, integrity, and great attitude did not go unnoticed. Another thing we all quickly observed about LUTHER in the Senate was his willingness to help in any situation. He was always the first to volunteer, whether the task be big or small. LUTHER is admired by Members on both sides of the aisle, which is rare in Washington. He has made a lot of friends in the Senate and has worked in a bipartisan fashion.

In addition to his work ethic and great attitude, LUTHER was able to accomplish an incredible amount legislatively in a short period of time. His successes include his work on the final National Defense Authorization Act conference negotiations, securing three littoral combat ships, his help in achieving the 51 votes needed to pass a once-in-a-generation tax reform package, and helping repeal Obamacare.

LUTHER's time in the Senate was cut too short. I would be remiss not to mention how much I, along with my Senate colleagues, have enjoyed his company.

I thank Senator STRANGE for his time and service both to Alabama and our Nation here in the Senate. I wish him all the best in his future endeavors, and I look forward to continuing our close friendship.

Thank you.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this week Congress sent the President a tax reform bill that will translate into real relief for American families.

I have spent a lot of time on the floor of the Senate talking about how this

bill will benefit these families in South Dakota and around the country.

Today I would like to take a few minutes to recognize the hard work of those Members and staff who made the legislative goal of tax reform a reality.

First, thank you to Senator Hatch for his leadership and members of the Finance Committee for a job well done. Numerous hearings, member meetings, and a lot of compromise helped us get this bill to the finish line.

As a result, the contributions and priorities of each member of the Finance Committee and, frankly, those of the entire conference are reflected in the final product.

Having once served as a staffer here myself, I would like to recognize the many staff members who contributed to this product.

Mark Warren, who serves as my tax counsel, has put in countless hours on this legislation.

It has not been unusual over the last several months to find him in his office when I arrive at work before 7 a.m. and still at his desk late into the evening. With decades of experience, including time spent at the House Ways and Means Committee and at the Treasury Department, I and other members of the committee and conference relied heavily on Mark's intricate knowledge of tax policy as we crafted this legislation.

He worked very hard to help me advance priorities in this legislation including provisions benefiting small businesses, farmers, and ranchers. Thanks in no small part to his efforts, we successfully delivered a tax reform bill that will work for them. Time spent at the office is time away from family. I am grateful to both him and his family for his efforts.

I would also like to thank my legislative director, Jessica McBride, and my staff director, Brendon Plack. Brendon is a native of Madison, SD, and has been with my office for over 12 years. Jessica is a native of Miller, SD, and has been with my office for 8 years. Their work, advice, and counsel were invaluable as we moved this bill across the finish line.

I would also like to recognize a few other staff members for their hard work: Jay Khosla, Mark Prater, Jeff Wrase, Nick Wyatt, Matt Hoffman, Tony Coughlan, Eric Oman, Jen Acuna, Marty Pippins, Alex Monie, Preston Rutledge, Bryan Hickman, Brendan Dunn, and Monica Popp.

I would also like to recognize Senator Toomey's tax staff member,

Randy Herdon, Senator Portman's tax staffer, Zach Rudisill, and Senator Scott's tax staffer, Shay Hawkins.

I know many of them over the last few months were running on very little sleep and perhaps missing important events at home with family and friends in order to be here at work. Nevertheless, they were patient, thoughtful, and tireless in their efforts because they knew the work was important and the impact would be significant.

We have all benefited from their wise counsel and have a better product for it.

Early next year, this legislation is going to have a real impact on people's lives across this country. Their hard work and contributions helped make it possible. They all worked incredibly hard and should be very proud of the work you have done on behalf of the American people.

I thank them for their service, and congratulations on a job well done.

CONFIRMATION OF JAMES C. HO

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I wish to voice my disappointment that Mr. James Ho was confirmed to serve as a judge on the Fifth Circuit.

While at the Department of Justice, Mr. Ho wrote a memo that the George W. Bush administration used to greenlight the CIA's use of torture. Furthermore, Mr. Ho's comments on campaign finance reveal a common thread among Trump judicial nominees that I find particularly disturbing.

Mr. Ho argued that some of the detainees held by the U.S. at Guantanamo were not protected under the Geneva Convention. The memo Mr. Ho wrote allowed the CIA to use interrogation techniques banned by the Geneva Convention that caused the death of a detainee. The interrogation techniques Mr. Ho claimed were legal were ineffective and their use hidden from lawmakers. As my colleague Senator MCCAIN said when he introduced an amendment to reaffirm our government's prohibition on torture in 2015, "Our enemies act without conscience. We must not."

I am also deeply concerned by Mr. Ho's radical views on money in politics. Mr. Ho has said, "For truly radical but effective reform, we must reverse course and abolish all restrictions on campaign finance." The overwhelming majority of Americans, both Republicans and Democrats, disagree strongly with Mr. Ho and believe that

unlimited, unattributable amounts in money in politics corrupts our political system. Our political finance systems has been flooded with secret, corporate money since the 5-4 ruling in *Citizens United*. Mr. Ho's opinion on campaign finance favors corporations and the wealthy who use money to yield influence and shape policy.

Unfortunately, Mr. Ho is not the only Trump judicial nominee who has espoused such extreme views. Every single nominee has come from a preapproved list created by the Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society. This intellectual hegemony will harm Americans seeking redress in the courts. Recently, three judicial nominees withdrew their names from consideration after the American public learned how inexperienced and unfit they were for a lifetime appointment. I encourage the Trump administration to submit mainstream nominees and to stop outsourcing our judicial system to rightwing think tanks.

SPECIAL COUNSEL MUELLER

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, today I wish to commend Robert Mueller's career as a public servant and to condemn partisan, political attacks on Mr. Mueller's reputation and American democratic systems.

A brief glance at Mr. Mueller's biography reflects his consistent commitment to serve the American people with honor and courage. As a young man, Mr. Mueller served with distinction in the Vietnam war. His list of commendations and military decorations, including a Bronze Star, two Navy Commendation Medals, the Purple Heart, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, are emblematic of his leadership and exemplary service.

Mr. Mueller not only fought courageously on the battlefield, but upon returning home and earning his law degree, he continued serving his country throughout his legal career. He cut his teeth working in U.S. attorney's offices in Boston and San Francisco for over a decade, and when he later served at the Department of Justice, Mr. Mueller was nominated by President George H. W. Bush to lead the criminal division, where he oversaw cases as diverse as the prosecution of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega and the Lockerbie bombing.

In 1995, Mr. Mueller's dedication to public service led him to leave a high-paying position at a private firm to join the DC U.S. attorney's office homicide division to hold violent offenders accountable for their crimes. Three years later, he became a U.S. attorney himself, serving in San Francisco and earning himself a reputation as a dogged and fair prosecutor committed to enforcing the rule of law.

In 2001, Mr. Mueller was nominated by a second Republican President, George W. Bush, as the Director of the FBI, a position to which he was confirmed unanimously by this body.

Whether navigating our response to the atrocities of 9/11, leading the Bureau's reform in its aftermath, or trailblazing the Bureau's role in combating cyber crimes, his tenure has been widely lauded. In fact, in 2011, as his 10-year term was set to end, we in the Senate voted 100 to 0 to extend his term until 2013.

In an era of increasing political and cultural tribalism, each time Mr. Mueller has been named or nominated for a new position, he has received bipartisan and unabashed praise—and rightly so.

Mr. Mueller, as an expert in law enforcement, could not be better suited for the task at hand: an investigation into Russia's interference in the U.S. elections. That Russia interfered in our elections is neither conjecture nor an attempt to rewrite the political outcomes of 2016. It is a fact that was true for the U.S. and many European allies in the last year and will remain a serious risk to the validity of our future elections if we do not take action. Mr. Mueller's investigation will serve as a necessary step to secure the ability of Americans to cast their vote in confidence for those who will represent them in Washington. Nothing could be more sacred or more American.

Serious, prudent, and thorough congressional oversight is always appropriate. Reckless, partisan attacks on the integrity of an honest public servant are not the same as congressional oversight. Attacks like these embolden our enemies, animate opponents of democracy, and inspire terrorists. These attacks are nothing short of unpatriotic.

I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stand up for the integrity of the process that Mr. Mueller is leading. Skepticism of the outcomes of his investigation triggered by dishonest smears on Mr. Mueller's reputation by Washington politicians would have lasting results and would compromise the ability of law enforcement to protect U.S. from our enemies, foreign and domestic.

SAFE SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak about "A Beautiful Here," a memoir by Linda Phillips that chronicles her struggle to overcome the extraordinary grief of losing her son, Nuci, to suicide following his long battle with depression.

Linda writes about an empathetic, caring, and happy child who grows increasingly distressed through adolescence. Nuci retreated from their close-knit family and, despite their efforts to support him through several periods of crisis and treatments, he succumbed to his disease.

Though the family was distraught and heartbroken by Nuci's death, Linda Phillips was also appalled at the lack of supports for individuals struggling with suicide and for families who have lost loved ones to depression.

At multiple points, Nuci failed to receive services or the compassionate support he needed. Indeed, after calling a crisis hotline while in college, Nuci was taken into custody by police and placed in handcuffs. Ultimately, the incident resulted in his expulsion. On another occasion, he was told to wait over a month for services when seeking support for his depression while in school.

Linda also saw other families pull their children from much-needed treatment programs because they could not afford the costly care. She saw firsthand that survivors of suicide are often relegated to the shadows, met by uncomfortable silence, or blamed for their loved ones' deaths.

Linda's personal account sheds light on this tragic and pervasive problem. Though Nuci Phillips took his own life 20 years ago, his story, sadly, remains just as relevant today.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention reports that nearly 36,000 American's die by suicide each year; that is one American every 15 minutes. According to the Center for Disease Control, CDC, suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 10 and 24 and results in approximately 4,600 lives lost each year.

In recent years, a shocking number of young people have attempted or ended their life through suicide as a result of bullying. Though not all instances of bullying lead to suicide, bully victims are between two to nine times more likely to consider suicide than nonvictims, according to studies by Yale University.

Nearly one in four students aged 12 to 18 are affected by bullying and harassment, according to recent data from the Department of Education. Another Department study estimates that 60,000 students in the U.S. do not attend school each day because they fear being bullied. Bullying and harassment are a significant problem in our schools.

These are issues that we can begin to address today by confronting bullying in our schools through strong antibullying policies. In far too many communities, whether in Pennsylvania or across the Nation, we are forced to deal with tragic consequences of bullying or harassment when these policies or organizations do not exist. Other resources include school counselors and crisis hotlines.

My bill, the Safe Schools Improvement Act, may not prevent all incidences of bullying, but it is an important step in the direction of tackling this problem and holding school districts accountable.

Depression and suicide, whether brought on by bullying or not, is a serious disease with potentially deadly results. More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease combined.

We must fight against this destructive illness by ensuring all children and young adults have access to affordable and effective mental health treatment and services, such as counseling, medication, and crisis intervention. I would like to thank Linda Phillips for sharing her story and helping to shine a light on this pervasive disease.

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHAEL CHARLES SHORT

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, as co-chair of the Air Force Caucus, I rise to pay tribute to Lt. Gen. Michael C. Short, who served this country faithfully for over 51 years, 35 years as an Air Force fighter pilot and another 16 years as an Air Force and joint senior mentor to leaders and future leaders of our military. Lieutenant General Short passed away on 27 October after a battle with cancer, and for those who knew him, it is the only battle he ever lost.

Born in Princeton, NJ, on 24 February 1944, Lieutenant General Short was the only child of Janet MacDonald Short and Charles Francis Short. He grew up in a military family and lived in New Jersey, North Carolina, Japan, Kentucky, Mississippi, and France. Lieutenant General Short's father, Charles, was a paratrooper and a member of the 82nd Airborne Division. When Lieutenant General Short was born, his father was stationed in England preparing for the D-Day invasion. On 6 June 1944, Charles Short jumped into occupied France as a member of the 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge and helped liberate Europe from Nazi Germany.

As most military children, Lieutenant General Short attended several schools growing up and excelled athletically and academically at every one. He attended high school in France, participating on his school's football, basketball and baseball teams, and graduating at the top of his class. Lieutenant General Short applied for and was accepted into the U.S. Air Force Academy, entering as a basic cadet on 26 June 1961.

In February 1965, then-Cadet First Class Short met the love of his life, Virginia Suhonen, a fourth-grade school teacher, in Manitou Springs, CO. Lieutenant General Short graduated the Air Force Academy on 6 June 1965 and married Jini on 14 August 1965, and together, they began an incredible journey of partnership and selfless service to each other and our Nation that lasted 52 years.

Their first of 23 assignments began at Webb Air Force Base in Texas, where he attended pilot training. Follow-on assignments included Arizona, South Vietnam, Florida, Minnesota, Colorado, Washington, Thailand, Philippines, the Pentagon, North Carolina, Nevada, Texas, Virginia, Germany, and Italy. Along the way, they grew their family, with Jini giving birth to a son,

Christopher, and daughter, Jennifer. They lovingly welcomed in their daughter-in-law Brooke and son-in-law Scott, and celebrated the birth of five grandchildren, Emily, Rachel, Sara, Jacob, and Katie. Of course, no family is complete without its pets and those who knew the Shorts will always remember Hobo, Bogie, and Muppet. Lieutenant General Short understood the importance of family and was a devoted son, husband, father, and grandfather. He was also an airmen's airman.

Lieutenant General Short exemplified what the Nation should demand of its military members and senior leaders. He was a master in the profession of arms, a master of employing the military tool of national power, and a master instructor to generations of officers who continue to follow him and keep his legacy alive in service to our Nation. Upon earning his silver wings, he began a flying career focused on fighter aviation. He amassed over 4,600 flying hours and flew the F-4C, F-4D, F-4E, RF-4C, F-102, F-106, A-7, F-117, A-10, F-15E, and F-16. He flew 276 combat missions over Vietnam in the F-4, flew and commanded combat missions during Desert Storm in the F-15E, and directed over 35,000 combat missions during Operation Allied Force over Yugoslavia.

In 1969, then-Captain Short, an F-4C pilot, was awarded the Silver Star for courageous action in Vietnam. General Short was enroute to a target in North Vietnam when he was diverted to support an F-105 pilot that was shot down, had ejected, and was in the water off the coast of North Vietnam. He was tasked to take out the antiaircraft artillery sites that had shot down the F-105 so they could bring in the rescue aircraft. Both he and his wingman were hit multiple times by antiaircraft artillery but were able to make it back to base safely after delivering all their rockets on target, knocking out the gun sites, and enabling the rescue of the downed F-105 pilot.

In 1986, then-Colonel Short was hand-picked to be the operations group commander of the 4450th Tactical Group at Nellis Air Force Base, which operated the highly classified F-117A stealth fighter. He soloed in the F-117A on 14 January 1986, Bandit 199, and commanded the group until 1988.

In 1995, Lieutenant General Short was the chief of staff to the commander of NATO's Allied Air Forces Southern Europe in Naples, Italy, during Operation Deliberate Force, NATO's first air campaign, that brought the war in Bosnian-Herzegovina to an end. The following year, as the director of operations for U.S. Air Forces in Europe, he was responsible for the deployment and sustainment of NATO forces and their equipment in Bosnia-Herzegovina during and after Operation Joint Endeavour. Gen George Joulwan, the then-Supreme Commander Europe, said, "He did the planning for the bombing of Bosnia in 1995 and then,

when we put the force into Bosnia, he was critical coordinating the air transport. He was impressive because he was not only professional but innovative—this was all new stuff."

In 1998, Lieutenant General Short returned to Naples, Italy, now as the commander NATO's Allied Air Forces Southern Europe, leading the 19-member NATO alliance and directing all air operations in southern Europe. It was during this time our Nation called on General Short's expertise in the employment of military power to try and achieve peace. Lieutenant General Short, who always left political discussions to others, was directed to travel with Richard Holbrooke to Belgrade, Serbia, to be part of negotiations with Federal Republic of Yugoslavia President Slobadan Milosevic. During the meeting, President Milosevic leaned forward and said to Lieutenant General Short, "So, you are the man who is going to bomb me." Lieutenant General Short replied, "Well, I hope that won't be the case. I have a plan to propose to your generals that will prevent your country from being bombed, but in essence, you're right. I have U-2s in one hand and B-52s in the other, and the choice is up to you." His statement broke the tension, and the discussions went on from there. The negotiations successfully postponed the war, but on 24 March 1999, Lieutenant General Short was directed to begin air operations against Yugoslavia. He successfully executed Operation Allied Force, a 78-day NATO bombing effort to stop the Serbian ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Kosovo.

Lieutenant General Short received a bachelor of science degree from the Air Force Academy, a master's degree in systems management from the University of Southern California, was a distinguished graduate of Air Command and Staff College and attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in Washington, DC. His decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal with one oakleaf cluster, the AF Distinguished Service Medal with one oakleaf cluster, the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross with one oakleaf cluster, and the Air Medal with fourteen oakleaf clusters. In 1999, he was presented the Air Force Association's highest honor to a military member in the field of national security, the H.H. Arnold Award for commanding the air campaign during Operation Allied Force.

Lieutenant General Short retired on 1 July 2000 and began 16 years of work as an Air Force and joint senior mentor focusing on the command and control of airpower. Lieutenant General Short was known and respected by servicemembers from all services in the United States, as well as our allies. He always gave clear, hard-hitting advice, passing on his knowledge of things he did right and things he did wrong. He traveled to the Republic of Korea, Qatar, and many other locations to advise, teach and train airmen

of all ranks in the art of “operational” level warfare. Long after the senior mentor ranks thinned, due to intense scrutiny and significant pay cuts, Lieutenant General Short stuck with the program because it was his passion.

Lieutenant General Short touched many lives as evidenced by comments written about him by those who knew and served with him:

“He was a father, a husband, a grandfather and what made it all work was his complete devotion to those he loved and commanded. It was an honor to serve alongside him.”

“High standards, demanding, but fair. You knew where the bar was and he challenged you to exceed it. He pushed me to limits I did not know I could reach.”

“He was a no-nonsense leader who let his Commanders command. He was also a hands-on mentor who touched thousands; admired by all and will be greatly missed.”

“A superb officer, great warrior and outstanding teacher.”

“A great leader . . . as the Air Boss for Operation Allied Force he provided clear guidance and support for me and the men and women in my deployed Wing . . . I consider it a high honor to have served under him in combat!”

“He really was the kind of leader that made you want to work for the organization and its goals. His name always comes up when we talk about the good men in those days.”

“General Mike Short was a great leader and Patriot. He was a mentor and more importantly a friend. Mike loved his Family and his Country . . . he will be missed.”

“He did a superb job in a very tough situation. With leadership and top cover like that, the U.S. Air Force is unstoppable.”

“I will miss your words as they were always on target and well understood. Rolling a nickel on the grass in your remembrance, sir.”

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Lt. Gen. Mike Short for his selfless service to this Nation, to his wife, Jini, and to his children, Chris and Jenn, and their families, for a lifetime of service to this Nation. Words cannot describe the extraordinary character of Lieutenant General Short, his accomplishments, or the lasting impact he will have on generations of service members. His personal accomplishments live on through the examples set by his son and daughter, two highly capable and highly respected Air Force senior officers. My prayers are with his family, and I pray the “Lord Guard and Guide the Men Who Fly.”

TRIBUTE TO ALBERT RATNER

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the 90th birthday of Albert Ratner on December 26, 2017. Albert has lived a life of faith and service. Whether as a loving father, life-long philanthropist, or a successful businessman at Forest City Realty Trust, Albert has worked tirelessly for his community.

Over his career, Albert has shown a particular passion for giving back to the Jewish community, improving our schools, and supporting innovation at the community level.

In Denver, Albert led the charge to transform the Stapleton Airport into a thriving community center with high-quality, affordable housing, green spaces, and new schools. Among those schools is Denver's Science and Technology High School, which has attracted many brilliant students over the last 13 years. Albert's work to revitalize downtown areas across the country have earned him numerous awards, including the National Building Museum Honor Award, the Urban Land Institute's J. C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development, and the Michigan State University's Distinguished Alumni Award.

Albert is the proud father of Deborah and Brian, who follow his lifelong values of service, community, and faith. He is also a loving husband to Audrey, his wife of 36 years, and before that, to his first wife, Faye, who tragically died in an automobile accident. On Albert's 90th birthday, we celebrate his accomplished life, one defined by good humor, compassion, family, and faith.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to recognize the upcoming 90th birthday of Albert Ratner on December 26. Albert has led a distinguished life that has touched and benefited countless people in Ohio and around the world.

I consider Albert a dear friend and a wise adviser, and Jane and I have enjoyed the friendship of him and his wife, Audrey, over the years. Whether it is a discussion over dinner or catching up during a Cavs game, we treasure our time with Albert and Audrey.

Albert grew up in Cleveland during the Great Depression, where his family, who were immigrants from Poland, turned a small company into a thriving business through hard work and dedication. Well known for his civic involvement in Cleveland and as a leader in the Jewish community, Albert is a life trustee of the Cleveland Jewish Community Federation and a member of the International Council of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. The Ratner family was instrumental in establishing the Cleveland Jewish Archives at the Western Reserve Historical Society in 1976.

Albert is currently engaged in a series of poverty-related initiatives in his hometown of Cleveland and throughout the State in partnership with the Governor and local leaders. Beyond his influence in Ohio, he has helped those in need across the country by supporting innovative educational initiatives that have given promising youth access to an education that has opened doors for each of them.

Albert is a loving husband and father. He has been married to Audrey for 36 years. His first wife, Faye, who he met in high school, was tragically killed in an automobile accident, after which he continued raising his daughter

Deborah and son Brian to follow in his footsteps as fully engaged members of their community. He has lived a life of kindness, cheerfulness, and compassion for all of our fellow citizens.

Albert's life has been guided by a love for his Jewish traditions. He often talks about the Jewish tradition of tikkun olam, to repair the world, and how even when the obligation seems too great, we must not desist from it. That is how he lives. He is truly a great American.

Happy birthday to Albert Ratner.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HYDRAULIC INSTITUTE

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Hydraulic Institute and pay tribute to the exceptional role that pump manufacturers have played in improving the delivery of water to American homes, American industry, and American agriculture over the past century. Today pump systems touch the lives of every American, and the Hydraulic Institute plays a central role in developing the policies and standards needed for safe, reliable, and efficient pump operations.

On April 18, 1917, the Nation's leading pump manufacturers met in the La Salle Hotel in Chicago for the purpose of forming a trade association that would “promote friendship and cooperation among manufacturers in improving overall pump performance.” Since this auspicious gathering of pump manufacturers, government agencies have relied on the Hydraulic Institute to provide the technical expertise required to set pump standards that reflect the evolving priorities of society.

In recent years, energy efficiency has emerged as a national priority, and the Hydraulic Institute has worked closely with the U.S. Department of Energy to improve the efficiency of pumping systems. These systems now account for over 20 percent of domestic electrical energy use and the standards, laboratory testing, and labeling advanced by the Hydraulic Institute will ultimately save consumers and businesses billions of dollars.

Pumping systems protect our communities from flooding and fires, deliver drinking water to our homes, irrigate our farms, and bring water and fuel to American manufacturers. The Hydraulic Institute works closely with Congress to ensure that the laws governing energy, water, and infrastructure reflect the prominence of pumping systems in the management of these essential resources. I would like to specifically applaud the Hydraulic Institute for bringing an important perspective to congressional deliberations on how to thoughtfully increase investment in our Nation's critical water infrastructure.

It is with sincere admiration that I stand today to acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the Hydraulic Institute and to wish this exceptional organization continued success in developing policies and advancing standards that improve the lives of every American.●

RECOGNIZING GLASGOW, MONTANA

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the distinct honor of recognizing the community of Glasgow for leading the way with their generosity during the holiday season. Earlier this month, members of the community successfully conducted their annual Block of Bucks program to help raise funds for local families to have warm clothing during the winter months.

This charitable effort brought together a broad collection of the community, including the Glasgow Soroptimists, student council leaders from Glasgow High School, members of the National Guard, the local Elks Club, a host of local businesses, and dozens of other volunteers. Through their focused actions, the community of Glasgow raised over \$30,000 to provide more than 300 hundred children with winter clothing. If you have ever experienced winter along the Hi-Line in northeast Montana, you will know how important it is to have the proper gear. The generosity of neighbors in towns like Glasgow is something that we can all appreciate.

It is a Montana hallmark for neighbors to identify a need and then gather the people and resources to meet that need at a local level. Going into Christmas, I would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to the folks in Glasgow for giving their time and talents to help others by adding warmth to the holiday season.●

TRIBUTE TO SUELLYN WRIGHT NOVAK

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, Suellen Wright Novak of Eagle River, AK, retired from the Air Force with the rank of colonel in 2003 after a distinguished 32-year career in the biomedical field. She was commander of three different medical squadrons, a clinical laboratory officer, and leader of the Air Force Blood Program worldwide. She returned home to begin a second career as a professional volunteer. At one time, she held 26 different volunteer positions.

Suellen's work with the Eagle River Presbyterian Church, the Chugiak/Eagle River Chamber of Commerce, and the American Heart Association cannot go unmentioned, nor can we ignore her work as a service officer for VFW Post 9785 or the Alaska State Veterans Advisory Council, but Suellen is best known for her work as the president and executive director of the Alaska Veterans Museum.

Suellen officially retired from this second career in October, handing the

reins over to Mike Waller. In early 2018, the Alaska Veterans Museum will host an event to commemorate her service in January. I want to take a few moments to express my appreciation to Suellen for her service to our Nation and to those who have served it.

Alaska takes great pride in its standing as the State which hosts more veterans per capita than any other. About 70,000 veterans call Alaska home. It is fitting that Alaska host a museum honoring the service and sacrifice of our veterans. Suellen is best known for taking the Alaska Veterans Museum from idea to reality. In 2005 she began collecting oral histories of veterans from all conflicts. She took on additional roles as researcher, display designer, fundraiser, grant writer, and membership chair. The museum was virtual at that point. It organized exhibits for the Anchorage Museum, the Alaska Native Heritage Center, and the Anchorage libraries, but didn't have a space of its own. It was Suellen's vision to move the museum from a virtual space to a physical space in downtown Anchorage. She raised funds and worked with realtors to secure a prime affordable location. And once that location was secured, Suellen recruited a handpicked team to get the museum open in just 11 days. The Alaska Veterans Museum opened on April 17, 2011.

Suellen staffed the museum during nearly all the hours it was open—except when she might be in an elementary school classroom presenting as a Continental soldier during the American Revolution or speaking about how those who fought for America's independence survived the battle or when she was coordinating "Fan Mail" to the troops. The Alaska Veterans Museum, I am told, sends more fan mail to troops than any other small organization in the United States. Suellen's impact in recognizing and supporting our veterans and Active-Duty servicemembers is remarkable.

One of the most remarkable examples of Suellen's determination involves her efforts to place a memorial in the village of Attu in memory of those who lost their lives during the Forgotten Battle of World War II. Suellen and the museum raised the necessary funds to create the replacement memorial but had no way of transporting it all the way out to Attu. Attu is the furthest of the U.S. Aleutian Islands, nearly 1,500 air miles from Anchorage.

Fortunately, the U.S. Coast Guard offered a flight for me to tour their Loran Station on Attu. I recognized the opportunity to offer assistance to Suellen and the museum. I can proudly claim that the new memorial was erected at the site where the former residents of Attu lived. Our mission was a success with the collaborative efforts of Suellen, the museum, and the Coast Guard.

I could go on and on about all that Suellen does, but the list would undoubtedly be incomplete. I think my

colleagues have by now gotten the idea that Suellen is our "Energizer Bunny" extraordinaire. So on behalf of a very grateful Senate, I express appreciation to Suellen for both of her careers: an exceptional Air Force career followed by a career of outstanding volunteer service to our community.●

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH DARNELL

● Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to say a few words about someone in Alaska who has been very important in my State. Joseph Darnell, who we know as Joe, is the Alaska Regional Solicitor for the Department of the Interior, in Anchorage, AL. He has been in that office since 1992, was made acting regional solicitor in 2010, and was appointed to his current position in 2013. He will be retiring from his job at the end of this year.

The Department of the Interior is Alaska's largest landlord, managing 61 percent of Alaska's lands. The way the Department of the Interior manages its lands and resources is critical for Alaska's economy and for the well-being of our citizens.

I know that I often talk about Federal overreach, and while it is true that, under certain administrations, Alaska has bared the brunt of much of that overreach, but it was people like Joe who made sure that rules and regulations were followed, that the people had a voice, and worked to see that good policy prevailed. A former staff member for the late great Senator Ted Stevens, Joe learned from the best.

During his tenure, Joe worked on numerous land management and land conveyance issues for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Refuge System, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service. Among the more notable was the land exchange between the United States and the Aleut Corporation, which resulted in the Aleut Corporation acquiring ownership of the closed Adak Naval Air Facility on Adak Island in the Aleutian Islands.

Joe was born in Seward and raised in Juneau, Kenai, and Fairbanks. According to his wife, Joan, they enjoy cross-country skiing, riding bicycles together, and spending time in their cabin outside of McCarthy. One of his great passions is small airplanes. After the first of the year, they will both be spending a lot of time in their Cessna 175, flying across the great State of Alaska, and watching their daughter Anna ski for the ski for the Nanooks at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Through his decades of dedication, Joe acquired and maintained a peerless understanding of how both national and Alaska-specific laws operate on our Federal public lands in Alaska. He has advised on and navigated a great many challenges for our State during his time in public service, and his knowledge and contribution will be dearly missed.

Best of luck to him and to his family and thanks for all he has done for all of us.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Cuccia, 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 nominations which were referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE ISSUANCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER DECLARING A NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE UNUSUAL AND EXTRAORDINARY THREAT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN POLICY, AND ECONOMY OF THE UNITED STATES POSED BY SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE AND CORRUPTION AROUND THE WORLD—PM 23

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report and papers; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, as amended (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued the enclosed Executive Order (the "order") declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States posed by serious human rights abuse and corruption around the world. In addition to taking action under IEEPA, the order implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (Public Law 114-328) (the "Act") and delegates certain of its authorities.

The order blocks the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to the order. It also blocks the property and interests in property of any foreign person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General:

(1) to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have directly or indirectly engaged in, serious human rights abuse;

(2) to be a current or former government official, or a person acting for or

on behalf of such an official, who is responsible for or complicit in, or has directly or indirectly engaged in:

(a) corruption, including the misappropriation of state assets, the expropriation of private assets for personal gain, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, or bribery; or

(b) the transfer or the facilitation of the transfer of the proceeds of corruption;

(3) to be or have been a leader or official of:

(a) an entity, including any government entity, that has engaged in, or whose members have engaged in, any of the activities described in (1), (2)(a), or (2)(b) above relating to the leader's or official's tenure; or

(b) an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order as a result of activities related to the leader's or the official's tenure; or

(4) to have attempted to engage in any of the activities described in (1), (2)(a), or (2)(b) above.

The order also blocks any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General:

(5) to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of:

(a) any activity described in (1), (2)(a), or (2)(b) above that is conducted by a foreign person;

(b) any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or

(c) any entity described in (3)(a) above where the activity is conducted by a foreign person;

(6) to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or

(7) to have attempted to engage in any of the activities described in (5) or (6) above.

In addition, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien listed in the Annex or determined to meet one or more of the criteria above.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including adopting rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and the Act, as may be necessary to implement the order and relevant provisions of the Act. I have delegated to the Secretary of State the authority to take such actions, including adopting rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and the Act, as may be necessary to implement the provisions of the order and the Act suspending entry into the United States of certain aliens. All executive departments and agencies are directed to

take all appropriate measures within their authority to implement the order.

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

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:10 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 bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1159. An act to provide for continuing cooperation between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Israel Space Agency, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4015. An act to improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and competition in the proxy advisory firm industry.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 12:34 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 1536. An act to designate a human trafficking prevention coordinator and to expand the scope of activities authorized under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's outreach and education program to include human trafficking prevention activities, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1. An act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 6 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 1393. An act to streamline the process by which active duty military, reservists, and veterans receive commercial driver's licenses.

S. 1532. An act to disqualify from operating a commercial motor vehicle for life an individual who uses a commercial motor vehicle in committing a felony involving human trafficking.

S. 1766. An act to reauthorize the SAFER Act of 2013, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4641. An act to authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to John L. Canley for acts of valor during the Vietnam War while a member of the Marine Corps.

H.R. 4667. An act making further supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, for disaster assistance for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and calendar year 2017 wildfires, and for other purposes.

The message further announced the House agreed to the following concurrent resolution, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 31. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Bob Dole.

The message also announced that the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1370) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 5 of the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission Act (Public Law 115-77), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission: Mr. HARRIS of Maryland; And from private life: Ms. Sylvia Quinton of Mardela Springs, Maryland and Dr. C. James Trotman of West Chester, Pennsylvania.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 8:41 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. UPTON) has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 1370. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the Acting president pro tempore (Mr. KENNEDY).

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1159. An act to provide for continuing cooperation between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Israel Space Agency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 4015. An act to improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and competition in the proxy advisory firm industry; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2274. A bill to provide for the compensation of Federal employees affected by lapses in appropriations.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-3725. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office

of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Military Commissions" (RIN0790-AJ58) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3726. A communication from the President, Institute for Defense Analyses, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Report on Elements Contributing to Expenses Incurred by Contractors for Bid and Proposal; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3727. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a semiannual report entitled, "Acceptance of Contributions for Defense Programs, Projects, and Activities; Defense Cooperation Account" and a semiannual listing of personal property contributed by coalition partners; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3728. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, "Military Child Initiative Pilot Program Report of Activities, Fiscal Year 2017"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3729. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amended Interpretive Rule Under the Military Lending Act Limitations on Terms of Consumer Credit Extended to Service Members and Dependents" (RIN0790-ZA13) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 15, 2017; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3730. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13405 of June 16, 2006, with respect to Belarus; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3731. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, "Report to Congress on Federal Government Energy Management for Fiscal Year 2015"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3732. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Oklahoma Regulatory Program" ((30 CFR Part 936) (Docket ID OSM-2015-0006)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3733. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Wyoming Regulatory Program" ((30 CFR Part 950) (Docket ID OSM-2013-0002)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3734. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the status of construction and operations of the mixed oxide fuel fabrication facility (MOX facility) at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site in South Carolina; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3735. A communication from the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "National Water Quality Inven-

tory: Report to Congress"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3736. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Confidentiality Determinations for Hazardous Waste Export and Import Documents" (FRL No. 9971-49-OLEM) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3737. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Arizona: Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revisions" (FRL No. 9972-09-Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3738. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval of California Air Plan Revisions, Placer County and Ventura County Pollution Control Districts" (FRL No. 9971-76-Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3739. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval of Arizona Air Plan Revision; San Manuel, Arizona; Second 10-Year Sulfur Dioxide Maintenance Plan" (FRL No. 9972-03-Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3740. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Rhode Island; Infrastructure Requirement for the 2010 Sulfur Dioxide and 2010 Nitrogen Dioxide National Ambient Air Quality Standards" (FRL No. 9972-23-Region 1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3741. A communication from the Executive Analyst (Political), Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of General Counsel, Department of Health and Human Services, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3742. A communication from the Executive Analyst (Political), Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of General Counsel, Department of Health and Human Services, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3743. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Guidance Under Section 409A for Pre-2009 Section 457A Deferrals" (Notice 2017-75) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3744. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2017 Required

Amendments List” (Notice 2017-72) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3745. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Donations of Technology and Related Support Services to Enforce Intellectual Property Rights” (RIN1515-AE21) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 12, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3746. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Implementation of Statutory Amendments Requiring the Modification of the Definition of Hard Cider; Delayed Compliance Date of the Hard Cider Tax Class Labeling Statement Requirement” (RIN1513-AC31) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3747. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles that are controlled under Category I of the United States Munitions List to Ukraine in the amount of \$1,000,000 or more; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3748. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Australia Group; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3749. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (P.L. 107-243) and the Authorization for the Use of Force Against Iraq Resolution of 1991 (P.L. 102-1) for the August 9, 2017 - November 8, 2017 reporting period; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3750. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Report of the Attorney General to the Congress of the United States on the Administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended, for the six months ending June 30, 2017”; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3751. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy in the position of Director, Institute for Education Sciences, Department of Education, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3752. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3753. A communication from the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, transmitting, pursuant to law, the

Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Chairman’s Semiannual Report on Final Action Resulting from Audit Reports, Inspection Reports, and Evaluation Reports for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3754. A communication from the Acting Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission’s Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3755. A communication from the Chairman of the Board of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Inspector General’s Semiannual Report to Congress for the period from April 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3756. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting proposed legislation to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3757. A communication from the Acting Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission’s Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3758. A communication from the Chairman, U.S. Election Assistance Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission’s Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3759. A communication from the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission’s Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Semiannual Management Report for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3760. A communication from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board’s Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2017, including the Office of Inspector General’s Auditor’s Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3761. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Education Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3762. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters (Type Certificate Previously Held by Eurocopter France)” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2015-4031)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3763. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Helicopters” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0933)) received in the

Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3764. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0690)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3765. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0478)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3766. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0710)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3767. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0497)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3768. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0628)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3769. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0480)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3770. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-6429)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3771. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes” ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0526)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3772. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to

EC-3795. A communication from the Parallel Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Rockwell Collins, Inc. Traffic Surveillance System Processing Unit" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0659)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3796. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; IPECO Pilot and Co-Pilot Seats" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0490)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3797. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Embraer S.A. Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0697)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3798. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; 328 Support Services GmbH (Type Certificate Previously Held by AvCraft Aerospace GmbH; Fairchild Dornier GmbH; Dornier Luftfahrt GmbH) Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9568)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3799. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc Turboprop Engines" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0816)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3800. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; General Electric Company Turboprop Engines" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-1000)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3801. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Class E Airspace; Boothville, LA" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0649)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3802. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Class E Airspace; Rosebud, SD" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9545)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3803. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Class E Airspace; Cisco, TX" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0620)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3804. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Lemoore NAS, CA" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0219)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3805. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Bend, OR" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0391)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3806. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Alexander City, AL" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9549)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3807. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Class E Airspace; Hawthorne, NV" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0315)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3808. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Oskaloosa, IA" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0296)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3809. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace, for Stevens Point, WI" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0143)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3810. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Scottsboro, AL" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0557)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3811. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Class E Airspace; Debois, ME" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2015-2891)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3812. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Prineville, OR" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0616)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3813. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Seward, NE" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0354)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3814. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Fort Knox, KY, and Louisville, KY" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9499)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3815. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Pueblo, CO" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0666)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3816. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Multiple Restricted Areas; Vandenberg AFB, CA" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0985)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3817. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendment; Amdt. No. 3771" ((RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3818. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (45); Amdt. No. 3772" ((RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3819. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (84); Amdt. No. 3773" ((RIN2120-AA65) received in

the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3820. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (11); Amdt. No. 3774" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3821. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (171); Amdt. No. 3767" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3822. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (3); Amdt. No. 3768" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3823. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (110); Amdt. No. 3770" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3824. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (52); Amdt. No. 3769" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3825. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Part 95 Instrument Flight Rules; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 536" (RIN2120-AA63) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3826. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of the Outer Coastal Plain Viticultural Area" (RIN1513-AC32) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3827. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department

of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of the Petaluma Viticultural Area and Modification of the North Coast Viticultural Area" (RIN1513-AC19) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3828. A communication from the Regulations Officer, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform" (RIN2125-AF75) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3829. A communication from the Acting Chairman of the Office of Proceedings, Surface Transportation Board, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Expediting Rate Cases" (RIN2140-AB33) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3830. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Authorizing Permissive Use of the 'Next Generation' Broadcast Television Standard" (FCC 17-158) (GN Docket No. 16-142) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3831. A communication from the Impact Analyst, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Extra-Schedular Evaluations for Individual Disabilities" (RIN2900-AP48) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-145. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to direct the Department of Defense to relocate the United States Africa Command to Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston; to the Committee on Armed Services.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 41

Whereas, The Pentagon could realize significant savings by relocating the United States Africa Command from Germany to Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston; and

Whereas, When AFRICOM was created in 2007, the Department of Defense chose a temporary location in Stuttgart; it intended to select a permanent headquarters in Africa, but set this plan aside due to cost projections, security, and the sensitivities of African nations; and

Whereas, The Department of Defense conducted a study in 2012 that found maintaining AFRICOM headquarters stateside would cost \$60 million to \$70 million less per year, and now those savings would be even greater due to significant increases in Overseas Cost of Living Allowances rates; although relocation would involve expense, this expense could be recouped within two to six years; moreover, the relocation would repatriate about 1,400 direct jobs and create as many as

4,300 additional jobs for United States residents, and it would have an annual impact on the local economy ranging from \$400 million to \$500 million; and

Whereas, Should the defense department decide to relocate AFRICOM, Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston would be an ideal home for the headquarters; the base features strong joint service military value of active duty, reserve, and guard units from all five United States armed services, some of which presently conduct training and operational missions for AFRICOM; it is also equipped to handle large military aircraft, and the city boasts one of the nation's most vibrant ports, which handles 40 percent of all United States trade with Africa; moreover, the community is exceptionally supportive of the military, and the Greater Houston area has strong cultural, educational, medical, and diplomatic ties with Africa; and

Whereas, The Government Accountability Office has concluded that the relocation of AFRICOM to the United States would generate tremendous cost savings and economic benefits, and Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base offers advantages that would enhance the effectiveness of the headquarters; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to direct the Department of Defense to relocate the United States Africa Command to Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the secretary of the Department of Defense, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM-146. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to review federal regulation on the oil and gas industry in Texas; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 26

Whereas, the Texas Legislature recognizes that this period in our nation's history represents an opportunity for Texas to work with the leadership of the federal government to transcend partisan politics and correct misuses of federal regulatory power that have threatened the Texas oil and gas industry, the jobs it creates, and the economy of the state; and

Whereas, Texas oil and gas fields have provided a pathway toward American energy independence from foreign powers, have afforded financial security to hundreds of thousands of individuals in Texas, and have delivered safe and reliable energy to fuel our nation's economy; and

Whereas, during the past eight years, the federal government has promulgated regulations that jeopardize the productivity of the oil and gas fields of Texas; and

Whereas, new federal regulations have been proposed and implemented despite the protests of Texas and many other oil and gas producing states, resulting in overregulation that prioritizes minor environmental gains over major productive losses; and

Whereas, the State of Texas has joined many other oil and gas producing states to file more than 20 lawsuits against federal overreach; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the

executive branch and the Congress of the United States to work in conjunction with the State of Texas to identify federal regulations promulgated during the last eight years, especially those promulgated under the authority of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Department of the Interior, and the United States Department of Energy, and determine whether they should be revised, delegated to state agencies, or eliminated in order to ease the overly burdensome regulatory patchwork on the oil and gas industry in Texas; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM—147. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to increase appropriations from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to ensure that the nation's ship channels are maintained and safe, to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 37

Whereas, Seaport activities generate more than \$4 trillion in economic activity each year, representing more than a quarter of United States gross domestic product and yielding more than \$41 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue; and

Whereas, To support this critical component of international trade, the United States Congress established the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) on shippers in 1986 as a means of funding the maintenance and improvement of vital harbor infrastructure; and

Whereas, HMT revenues deposited into the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund now total about \$1.6 billion annually, but in recent years, Congress has appropriated less than half of those funds for the intended purpose, leading to a decline in dredging and maintenance by the United States Army Corps of Engineers; the consequence is an accumulation of sediment that leaves navigation channels narrower and shallower, and when silted channels constrain vessels from carrying full loads or force them to wait for high tide, the costs of imports and exports rise, as does the risk of vessel grounding and associated oil spills; the Corps of Engineers has estimated that the full depth and width of our coastal ports is available less than 35 percent of the time, costing the economy billions of dollars annually; and

Whereas, Each year, the HMT provides an amount sufficient to meet all of the nation's authorized harbor maintenance needs, but as a result of lagging appropriations, the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund had a balance of more than \$9 billion at the start of 2016; in Texas alone, less than 25 percent of the HMT revenue collected in the state has been appropriated for harbor maintenance; and

Whereas, Our nation's ports are vital to our economic prosperity and global competitiveness, and these funds, which were collected for the express purpose of the maintenance and improvement of the ports, should be put to work; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to increase appropriations from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to ensure that the nation's ship channels are appropriately maintained and safe; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to

the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM—148. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to direct the Bureau of Land Management to affirm the provisions of the Red River Boundary Compact and to acknowledge that the vegetation line on the south bank of the Red River forms the boundary between Oklahoma and Texas; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 30

Whereas, The Red River Boundary Compact of 2000 set the boundary between Texas and Oklahoma at the vegetation line on the south bank of the Red River, with the exception of the Texoma area, where the boundary is established pursuant to procedures outlined in the agreement; and

Whereas, In 2013, the United States Bureau of Land Management began developing a resource management plan for the use of land along a 116-mile stretch of the Red River; it claims that as many as 90,000 acres in Texas may actually be part of federal lands and would therefore be public land under a 1923 Supreme Court ruling; and

Whereas, Many Texas residents have held title to this land for generations, and they have been paying property taxes on the land while cultivating and maintaining it; the boundary between the states was settled in 2000 for legal jurisdiction, when the U.S. Congress ratified the compact, but now, confusion over the boundary threatens the value of this privately owned land and makes it difficult for property owners to make informed decisions concerning its disposition and their livelihoods; and

Whereas, Private property rights are the bedrock of a free society, and the actions of the Bureau of Land Management with regard to land covered by the Red River Boundary Compact are an egregious example of federal overreach; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to direct the Bureau of Land Management to affirm the provisions of the Red River Boundary Compact and to acknowledge that the vegetation line on the south bank of the Red River forms the boundary between Oklahoma and Texas; and, be it further.

Resolved, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, to the director of the United States Bureau of Land Management, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM—149. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to enact legislation to ensure that all veterans receive, in a timely manner, the level of medical care that they have earned and that they so richly deserve, to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 52

Whereas, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is charged with ensuring the health and well-being of the nation's veterans, but in recent years, its failure to adequately perform its mission has been the source of scandal; and

Whereas, in 2014, the United States Congress responded to unconscionable delays and denials of care at VA facilities by passing the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act, which allows access to private medical care providers for veterans who have been waiting more than 30 days for an appointment or who live more than 40 miles from a VA facility; this law is set to expire in 2017; and

Whereas, by expanding the reforms of the Veterans Choice Act, Congress can improve the VA system, broadening access to timely health care while offering greater choice and flexibility to every eligible veteran; experts have proposed allowing access to walk-in clinics without preauthorization or copayment, expanding VA pharmacy hours and telemedicine, and extending the Veterans Choice Card program to permit all qualified veterans to see the doctor of their choice; in addition, those who have studied the system carefully encourage best-practices peer review for VA facilities; and

Whereas, our nation's veterans have made enormous sacrifices to guarantee our freedoms, and although the nation can never fully repay its debt of gratitude, it can and should ensure timely access to the highest quality of medical care; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to enact legislation to ensure that all veterans receive in a timely manner the level of medical care that they have earned and that they so richly deserve; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM—150. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to pass a budget; to the Committee on the Budget.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 59

Whereas, For too long, Congress has proven itself fiscally irresponsible and has created a crushing national debt through improvident and imprudent spending; and

Whereas, The deleterious effect of this fiscal mismanagement on our economy and the strength of our nation is ongoing and the consequences of inaction are severe; and

Whereas, Setting a federal budget is an essential aspect of governing, and Congress must accept its responsibility to regularly pass a budget bill; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to pass a budget; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered into the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

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. SCHATZ:

S. 2260. A bill to establish and fund an Opioids and STOP Initiative to expand, intensify, and coordinate fundamental, translational, and clinical research of the National Institutes of Health with respect to opioid abuse, the understanding of pain, and the discovery and development of safer and more effective treatments and preventive interventions for pain; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. GRAHAM, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 2261. A bill to protect the administration of Federal elections against cybersecurity threats; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself, Mr. RUBIO, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 2262. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish in the Department of Homeland Security a board to coordinate and integrate departmental intelligence and activities and policy related to counterterrorism, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 2263. A bill to amend the Agricultural Act of 2014 to require base acres planted to fruits, vegetables, and wild rice to be considered planted to a covered commodity for purposes of any recalculation of base acres; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 2264. A bill to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to add Rhode Island to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2265. A bill to promote democracy and the rule of law in Nicaragua, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 2266. A bill to authorize the Office on Violence Against Women to improve the handling of crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by incorporating a trauma-informed approach into the initial response to and investigation of such crimes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. FRANKEN:

S. 2267. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, to prioritize certain pension claims in bankruptcy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BROWN, and Ms. HARRIS):

S. 2268. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to modify certain provisions relating to the capital financing of historically Black colleges and universities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 2269. A bill to reauthorize the Global Food Security Act of 2016 for 5 additional years; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 2270. A bill to make improvements to the account for the State response to the opioid abuse crisis to improve tribal health; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2271. A bill to reauthorize the Museum and Library Services Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. HARRIS (for herself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2272. A bill to amend the Revised Statutes to grant State attorneys general the ability to issue subpoenas to investigate suspected violations of State laws that are applicable to national banks; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2273. A bill to extend the period during which vessels that are shorter than 79 feet in length and fishing vessels are not required to have a permit for discharges incidental to the normal operation of the vessel; considered and passed.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. CARPER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. UDALL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. KAINE, Ms. WARREN, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2274. A bill to provide for the compensation of Federal employees affected by lapses in appropriations; read the first time.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S.J. Res. 51. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to limiting the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. Res. 364. A resolution congratulating the University of Central Missouri women's soccer team for winning the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II Women's Soccer Championship at Swope Soccer Village in Kansas City, Missouri; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. SASSE):

S. Res. 365. A resolution congratulating the University of Nebraska-Lincoln volleyball team for winning the 2017 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Volleyball Championship; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. HARRIS (for herself, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. BURR):

S. Res. 366. A resolution honoring the accomplishments of the 9 historically Black colleges and universities that celebrated their sesquicentennial anniversaries during the week of September 24 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 266

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Colorado

(Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 266, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Anwar Sadat in recognition of his heroic achievements and courageous contributions to peace in the Middle East.

S. 793

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 793, a bill to prohibit sale of shark fins, and for other purposes.

S. 872

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 872, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make permanent the extension of the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program and the increased payments under the Medicare low-volume hospital program.

S. 946

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 946, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire additional Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists to provide treatment court services to justice-involved veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 980

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 980, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for payments for certain rural health clinic and Federally qualified health center services furnished to hospice patients under the Medicare program.

S. 1697

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1697, a bill to condition assistance to the West Bank and Gaza on steps by the Palestinian Authority to end violence and terrorism against Israeli citizens and United States Citizens.

S. 1706

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1706, a bill to prevent human health threats posed by the consumption of equines raised in the United States.

S. 1719

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1719, a bill to eliminate duties on imports of recreational performance outerwear, to establish the Sustainable Textile and Apparel Research Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 1873

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1873, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out

a program to establish peer specialists in patient aligned care teams at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2051

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2051, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to modernize the physician self-referral prohibitions to promote care coordination in the merit-based incentive payment system and to facilitate physician practice participation in alternative payment models under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 2065

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2065, a bill to establish a demonstration program to provide integrated care for Medicare beneficiaries with end-stage renal disease, and for other purposes.

S. 2088

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2088, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the issuance of the Gold Star Installation Access Card to the surviving spouse, dependent children, and other next of kin of a member of the Armed Forces who dies while serving on certain active or reserve duty, to ensure that a remarried surviving spouse with dependent children of the deceased member remains eligible for installation benefits to which the surviving spouse was previously eligible, and for other purposes.

S. 2105

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2105, a bill to modify the presumption of service connection for veterans who were exposed to herbicide agents while serving in the Armed Forces in Thailand during the Vietnam era, and for other purposes.

S. 2135

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2135, a bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

S. 2159

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2159, a bill to require covered harassment and covered discrimination awareness and prevention training for Members, officers, employees, interns, fellows, and detailees of Congress within 30 days of employment and annually thereafter, to require a biennial climate survey of Congress, to

amend the enforcement process under the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights for covered harassment and covered discrimination complaints, and for other purposes.

S. 2203

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 2203, a bill to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration.

S. 2236

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2236, a bill to require covered discrimination and covered harassment awareness and prevention training for Members, officers, employees, interns, fellows, and detailees of Congress within 30 days of employment and annually thereafter, to require a biennial climate survey of Congress, to amend the enforcement process under the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights for covered discrimination and covered harassment complaints, and for other purposes.

S. 2250

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2250, a bill to ensure due process protections of individuals in the United States against unlawful detention based solely on a protected characteristic.

S. 2259

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2259, a bill to establish certain duties for pharmacies to ensure provision of Food and Drug Administration-approved contraception, medication related to contraception, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 139

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 139, a resolution condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

S. RES. 363

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 363, a resolution expressing profound concern about the growing political, humanitarian, and economic crisis in Venezuela and the widespread human rights abuses perpetrated by the Government of Venezuela.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 2264. A bill to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to add Rhode Island to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Rhode Island Fishermen's Fairness Act along with my colleague, Senator WHITEHOUSE. I am also pleased that my colleagues, Representatives JAMES LANGEVIN and DAVID CICILLINE, will be introducing a companion measure in the House of Representatives.

Our legislation will give Rhode Island voice and voting representation on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), which manages some of the most important fish stocks for our State's commercial fishing industry—chief among them squid. Indeed, the National Marine Fisheries Service reported that Rhode Island led Atlantic States in the harvest of squid in 2016, bringing in 22.5 million pounds and helping make Point Judith, Rhode Island one of the most productive and valuable commercial fishing ports in the United States. For years now, Rhode Island's landings of stocks managed by the MAFMC have outpaced the landings of those managed by the New England Fishery Management Council, where Rhode Island is represented. Moreover, Rhode Island has a larger stake in the Mid-Atlantic fishery than many of the States that currently hold seats on the MAFMC.

Because so much is at stake for our State in every decision the MAFMC makes, our bill would expand the MAFMC by two seats in Order to ensure that Rhode Island will have the minimum number of seats guaranteed to other States on the council. It will allow Rhode Island to continue to have representation on the New England Fishery Management Council, where it still has significant interests. This proposal is not unprecedented. In fact, it is modeled on a provision of the 1996 Sustainable Fisheries Act that added North Carolina to the MAFMC in 1996 while allowing it to retain its membership on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Mr. President, this is a commonsense proposal and one that my colleagues and I will be working to advance either on its own or as part of the reauthorization the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 2270. A bill to make improvements to the account for the State response to the opioid abuse crisis to improve tribal health; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DAINES. 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. 2270

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 “Mitigating the Methamphetamine Epidemic and Promoting Tribal Health Act” or the “Mitigating METH Act”.

SEC. 2. ACCOUNT FOR THE STATE RESPONSE TO THE OPIOID ABUSE CRISIS.

Section 1003 of the 21st Century Cures Act (42 U.S.C. 290ee-3 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—
(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting “and Tribal” after “State”;

(B) in paragraph (2)(A)(ii), by striking “\$500,000,000” and inserting “\$525,000,000”; and

(C) in paragraph (3)(B), by inserting “and Tribal” after “State”;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the paragraph heading, by striking “STATE RESPONSE TO THE OPIOID” and inserting “STATE AND TRIBAL RESPONSE TO THE OPIOID”;

(ii) in the first sentence, by inserting “and Indian tribes and Tribal organizations (as the terms ‘Indian tribes’ and ‘tribal organizations’ are defined in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act)” after “grants to States”; and

(iii) in the second sentence, by inserting “and Tribes” after “States” each place that such term appears;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(I) by inserting “, Tribe, or Tribal organization” after “to a State”;

(II) by inserting “or Tribal” after “by the State”; and

(III) by inserting “or by a Tribe or Tribal organization” after “et seq.”;

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “and Tribal” after “State”;

(iii) in subparagraph (E), by inserting “or Tribe” after “as the State”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) OTHER SUBSTANCES.—A State or Indian tribe may use grants awarded under this section for prevention and treatment of the use of other substances such as methamphetamine, if the use of such other substances is determined by the State or tribe to have a substantial public health impact on the State or tribe.”; and

(3) in subsection (d), by inserting “, Tribe, or tribal organization” after “A State”.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2271. A bill to reauthorize the Museum and Library Services Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by Senators COLLINS, COCHRAN, GILLIBRAND, and MURKOWSKI in introducing legislation to renew the law that expands the reach of libraries and museums and enables them to better serve their communities. These vital institutions educate, inform, engage, and connect people from all walks of life.

In 1996, Congress passed the Museum and Library Services Act, establishing

the Institute of Museum and Library Services, IMLS, to house our Nation’s library and museum programs together for the first time. My predecessor, the late Senator Claiborne Pell, a great champion for expanding educational and cultural opportunities to all communities, was instrumental in passage of this law. The Senate Committee report for this bill noted the “great potential in an Institute that is focused on the combined roles that libraries and museums play in our community life, in support of research, learning, and entertainment, and in support of American culture and history.”

Over the last 21 years we have seen IMLS, with a relatively modest Federal investment, build the capacity to support and expand access to library and museum services at the State and local levels. IMLS has been the source of major Federal support for nearly 120,000 libraries, including public, academic, research, special, and tribal libraries, and 35,000 museums, including art, history, science and technology, children’s, historical societies, tribal, planetariums, botanic gardens, and zoos. We have seen access to libraries and museums increase, and these institutions continue to evolve as community hubs, advancing the growth and vitality of the areas they serve.

In Rhode Island, IMLS funding for the grants to States program under the Library Services and Technology Act, LSTA, has supported improved online resources; literacy initiatives, including a summer reading program; and the provision of talking books to residents with visual impairments and disabilities. Providence Public Library was awarded a recent grant to provide underserved teens with learning opportunities, leading to digital credentials, academic credit, exposure to work, and entry into education and career pathways. IMLS has also supported and elevated the work of Rhode Island museums. For instance, the Tomaquag Museum in Exeter was one of ten recipients nationally to be recognized with a 2016 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The Providence Children’s Museum and the Preservation Society of Newport County also received grants to support their work in recent years.

I have been proud to continue the work of Senator Pell in supporting robust funding for libraries and museums and authoring the last two renewals of the Museum and Library Services Act. I have seen firsthand the impact libraries and museums have had on our communities in Rhode Island and the residents and visitors they serve, making our State stronger because of the services and experiences that these institutions provide.

The museum and library communities have provided invaluable input in helping us craft this bipartisan legislation. I would especially like to thank the Rhode Island library community for hosting me at libraries across the state and convening a

roundtable discussion last year to delve deeper into the programs libraries are providing and ways to improve how they serve their communities.

In response to the input and insight offered by the library and museum communities, the bill we are introducing today, the Museum and Library Services Act of 2017, strengthens the use of data-driven tools to measure the impact and maximize the effectiveness of library and museum services and better tailor local services to address and meet community needs. The legislation provides for technical support and assistance to improve data collection. It also enhances IMLS’s collaborative efforts with an expanded number of Federal agencies in order to fully leverage the benefits libraries and museums provide to Americans.

This legislation also amends LSTA to highlight the role of libraries as community hubs, equipped to provide services and programming in such areas as literacy, education, lifelong learning, workforce development, economic and business development, digital literacy skills, critical thinking, financial literacy skills, and new and emerging technology. The bill provides greater emphasis on recruiting and training the next generation of library and information science professionals from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. Additionally, it focuses leadership grant funds on activities that serve a range of library types and geographically diverse areas; have evaluation, analysis, and dissemination components; and involve, impact, or have future applicability in libraries. And, in the aftermath of this past year’s devastating hurricanes and wildfires, the bill clarifies that grant funds can be used to help libraries get resources back online as communities face the challenge of recovering from a disaster.

The Museum and Library Services Act of 2017 also builds on the over 40-year legacy of Federal support for improving and expanding access to museum services. It addresses the critical need for professional development and recruiting and preparing the next generation of museum professionals, emphasizing diversity so that museums better reflect the communities they serve. The legislation also highlights the educational role of museums and the diverse ways that museums engage their communities, and it encourages partnerships with other agencies, professional networks, and community-based organizations to expand and enhance access to museum services.

The Museum and Library Services Act of 2017 will continue our tradition of supporting our communities through their museums and libraries, while looking ahead and providing flexibility for these vital institutions to respond to changing demands and missions. Our bill has the support of the American Library Association and the American Alliance of Museums and many of their affiliated associations. I thank my colleagues for supporting this endeavor

and look forward to more joining us as we work together to urge swift action to adopt this important legislation.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator REED, in introducing the Museum and Library Services Act of 2017. This bill would reauthorize the core programs administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which support libraries and museums in Maine and across the country. This bill includes important updates to improve the abilities of libraries and museums to meet the needs of local communities.

The Museum and Library Services Act represents a commitment to supporting libraries and museums that enrich our communities. Libraries provide not only a wonderful learning tool, full of books, public documents, and internet access, but also are community hubs where citizens can meet to share and explore ideas. Likewise, great museums do more than accumulate artifacts—they tell stories. The programs reauthorized in this bill would help libraries and museums across Maine and the United States better serve the public by helping with research, planning, and programming.

The Museum and Library Services Act would make important improvements to IMLS's ability to collaborate with states and communities. It would reauthorize the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), the only federal program that helps public libraries meet their community's needs, enhance their services through technology, reach underserved and rural populations, and recruit new professionals to the library field. Ensuring that federal resources reach our rural communities is particularly important to me, and I am pleased that this bill highlights support for rural and tribal areas.

Every state in our country receives its share of the LSTA, which leverages the federal investment with a state and local funding match. In Maine, the LSTA has helped libraries lend books and other materials by mail to reach residents in communities that do not have libraries nearby or who are homebound. It has helped Maine libraries serve individuals with disabilities through access to book recordings and special media players, including braille and audio downloads. It has helped my state improve online access to magazines, newspapers, and reference books, and spurred innovative collaborations with schools statewide.

The bill would also reauthorize the Museum Services Act, providing support for museums to collaborate with schools, libraries, and colleges and universities, and to encourage new technologies to extend the reach of programs and museum collections. As with the LSTA, museums are incentivized to leverage other sources of support to match the federal investment.

This reauthorization underscores the role that libraries and museums play in

community revitalization. Libraries are important information centers for workforce development, health information, and digital and financial literacy. Museums are also vital community partners that work to connect our communities to the cultural, historical, natural, and scientific pieces of our heritage.

From providing job search resources and free internet access to exposing children and families to enriching literary and educational experiences, libraries and museums serve vital roles in our communities. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2273. A bill to extend the period during which vessels that are shorter than 79 feet in length and fishing vessels are not required to have a permit for discharges incidental to the normal operation of the vessel; considered and passed.

S. 2273

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF MORATORIUM.

Section 2(a) of Public Law 110-299 (33 U.S.C. 1342 note) is amended by striking "December 18, 2017" and inserting "January 19, 2018".

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 364—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL MISSOURI WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM FOR WINNING THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION II WOMEN'S SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP AT SWOPE SOCCER VILLAGE IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. BLUNT) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 364

Whereas, on December 2, 2017, the University of Central Missouri won the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II Women's Soccer Championship at Swope Soccer Village in Kansas City, Missouri, which was the first national championship in the history of the University of Central Missouri women's soccer program;

Whereas the University of Central Missouri women's soccer team completed an undefeated season with a record of 26 wins and no losses or ties, setting a new Division II record for wins in a season;

Whereas the University of Central Missouri women's soccer team tied a Division II single-season record with 21 shutouts;

Whereas the University of Central Missouri women's soccer team finished the season as the top-ranked team in the United Soccer Coaches Top 25 Division II postseason poll;

Whereas 5 of the University of Central Missouri Jennies, Ana Dilkes, Jada Scott, Kayla Hamner, Baylie Edwards, and Abby Rhodes, were named to the Division II Conference Commissioners Association All-America Soccer Teams; and

Whereas the University of Central Missouri is a leader in promoting soccer and the values of teamwork, commitment, and excellence: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the University of Central Missouri women's soccer team for winning a national title for the first time in the history of the University of Central Missouri women's soccer program while maintaining an undefeated season; and

(2) encourages the University of Central Missouri to continue promoting the values of teamwork, commitment, and excellence through the soccer and other athletic programs of the University of Central Missouri.

SENATE RESOLUTION 365—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN VOLLEYBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2017 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. SASSE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 365

Whereas, on December 16, 2017, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cornhuskers won the 2017 National Collegiate Athletic Association (referred to in this preamble as the "NCAA") Division I Volleyball Championship in Kansas City, Missouri in an overwhelming victory over the University of Florida by a score of 25 to 22, 25 to 17, 18 to 25, and 25 to 16;

Whereas the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has won 5 NCAA volleyball championships;

Whereas the Cornhuskers ended their championship season with a 19-match winning streak and finished the year with a record of 32 wins and 4 losses;

Whereas each member of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln volleyball team, including Annika Albrecht, Hunter Atherton, Hayley Densberger, Mikaela Foecke, Allie Havers, Briana Holman, Kelly Hunter, Kenzie Maloney, Chesney McClellan, Sami Slaughter, Lauren Stivrins, Jazz Sweet, Anezka Szabo, and Sydney Townsend, contributed to that outstanding victory;

Whereas head coach John Cook, assistant coach Tyler Hildebrand, assistant coach Kayla Banwarth, volunteer assistant coach Ryan Coomes, director of operations Lindsay Peterson, video coordinator Kelly O'Connor, and graduate managers Joe Klein, John Henry, and Bre Mackie, guided that outstanding group of women to a national championship;

Whereas Mikaela Foecke and Kelly Hunter were named the co-Most Outstanding Players of the 2017 NCAA Championship;

Whereas Kelly Hunter was named the Big Ten Setter of the Year, becoming the first Nebraska player ever to earn that award;

Whereas Annika Albrecht, Mikaela Foecke, and Kelly Hunter were recognized as All-Americans by the American Volleyball Coaches Association, and Briana Holman received an honorable mention; and

Whereas an NCAA Tournament record-breaking crowd of 18,516 volleyball fans attended the championship game, reflecting the tremendous spirit and dedication of Nebraska fans supporting the Cornhuskers as the team won the national championship: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the University of Nebraska-Lincoln volleyball team as the winner of the 2017 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Volleyball Championship;

(2) commends the University of Nebraska players, coaches, and staff for their hard work and dedication;

(3) recognizes the students, alumni, and loyal fans that supported the Cornhuskers on their journey to win another Division I Championship; and

(4) 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 Nebraska;

(B) the athletic director of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and

(C) the head coach of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln volleyball team.

SENATE RESOLUTION 366—HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 9 HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES THAT CELEBRATED THEIR SESQUICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARIES DURING THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 24 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

Ms. HARRIS (for herself, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. BURR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 366

Whereas, in 1867, 9 historically Black colleges and universities were established in 4 Southern States, Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, and North Carolina, as well as in the District of Columbia, which constituted the largest number of historically Black Colleges and Universities founded in any single year before or after that date;

Whereas the 9 historically Black colleges and universities that celebrated their sesquicentennial anniversaries during the week of September 24 through September 30, 2017, trace their foundations to rather modest beginnings but, in the course of a century and a half, have established records of significant achievement and legacies of devotion to academic excellence;

Whereas the 9 institutions celebrating their sesquicentennial anniversaries include—

(1) Alabama State University in Marion, Alabama;

(2) Barber-Scotia College in Concord, North Carolina;

(3) Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, North Carolina;

(4) Howard University in Washington, District of Columbia;

(5) Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina;

(6) Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia;

(7) Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland;

(8) St. Augustine's University in Raleigh, North Carolina; and

(9) Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama;

Whereas Alabama State University was incorporated on July 17, 1867, as Lincoln Normal School in Marion, Alabama, by 9 freed slaves to educate Black children;

Whereas Lincoln Normal School—

(1) was founded with \$500, which was used to purchase the land and lay the foundation;

(2) in 1928, was converted from a junior college to a 4-year college; and

(3) in 1969, was formally granted a name change by the Alabama State Board of Education and became Alabama State University;

Whereas notable figures of the civil rights era attended and graduated from Alabama State University, including the Reverend Ralph David Abernathy, attorney Fred Gray, and the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth;

Whereas Barber-Scotia College—

(1) in 1867, was founded as Scotia Seminary in Concord, North Carolina, by the Reverend Luke Dorland; and

(2) in 1870, was chartered to educate newly freed female slaves;

Whereas Scotia Seminary—

(1) was the first historically Black institution of higher education for females established in the United States;

(2) in 1916, was renamed as Scotia Women's College; and

(3) in 1930, merged with Barber Memorial College to become Barber-Scotia Junior College for women;

Whereas Barber-Scotia College became a 4-year college for women in 1946 and a coeducational institution in 1954;

Whereas one of the distinguished graduates of Barber-Scotia College was Mary McCleod Bethune, the founder of Bethune-Cookman College;

Whereas Fayetteville State University was formed as the Howard School on November 29, 1867, by 7 African-American men who paid \$136 for 2 lots on Gillespie Street in Fayetteville, North Carolina;

Whereas the Howard School was formally renamed Fayetteville State University in 1969;

Whereas Fayetteville State University holds the distinction of being the second oldest public school in North Carolina;

Whereas Howard University—

(1) was chartered by Congress on March 2, 1867, in Washington, District of Columbia;

(2) stands today as the most comprehensive historically Black college and university in the United States, in terms of undergraduate and graduate programs of study;

(3) has produced numerous Rhodes scholars, Truman scholars, Fulbright scholars, and Picking fellows and a Marshall scholar during the history of the university; and

(4) has graduated some of the most accomplished African-Americans in history, including Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States Thurgood Marshall, author Toni Morrison, and former United States Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young;

Whereas 5 current Members of Congress are graduates of Howard University;

Whereas Johnson C. Smith University was established on April 7, 1867, as the Biddle Memorial Institute by Reverend S.C. Alexander and Reverend W.L. Miller in Charlotte, North Carolina;

Whereas the first football game with African-American players was played at Biddle University in 1892, a game that today is called the "Commemorative Classic";

Whereas Johnson C. Smith University—

(1) is the first historically Black college and university in the South to offer professional courses in education; and

(2) has produced numerous politicians, including Eva Clayton, the first African-American to represent North Carolina in the House of Representatives since the 19th century;

Whereas Morehouse College—

(1) in 1867, was founded by the Reverend William Jefferson White in Augusta, Georgia;

(2) in 1879, was moved from Augusta, Georgia, to its current location in Atlanta, Georgia;

(3) is the largest college for men in the United States, enrolling more than 2,000 students;

(4) is 1 of only 2 historically Black colleges and universities to produce a Rhodes scholar; and

(5) has graduated a number of African-American luminaries, including the Mayor of Atlanta, Georgia, Maynard Jackson, film director Spike Lee, and the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.;

Whereas 2 current Members of Congress are graduates of Morehouse College;

Whereas Morgan State University was founded in Baltimore, Maryland, as the Centenary Biblical Institute in 1867 to train former slaves and freedmen for the Methodist ministry;

Whereas, the Centenary Biblical Institute—

(1) in 1874, became coeducational;

(2) in 1890, changed its name to Morgan College in honor of one of its board members; and

(3) in 1939, was purchased by the State of Maryland to provide more academic opportunities for black students and was renamed Morgan State College;

Whereas Morgan State College—

(1) distinguished itself as a liberal arts college;

(2) in 1975, was granted university status; and

(3) has been designated as the preeminent public research university in Maryland, as well as a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation;

Whereas, in 2004, the Morgan State Choir was named "The Nation's Best College Choir" by Reader's Digest and has performed for audiences on 4 continents;

Whereas Morgan State University—

(1) has graduated a great number of prominent African-American leaders in politics, law, entertainment, and science; and

(2) has a list of alumni that includes Congressmen Parren J. Mitchell and Kweisi Mfume, Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals of Maryland Robert M. Bell, novelist Zora Neale Hurston, and Pulitzer-Prize winner James Alan McPherson;

Whereas St. Augustine's University was founded in 1867 as the St. Augustine's Normal School by prominent Episcopal clergy for the education of freed slaves in Raleigh, North Carolina;

Whereas St. Agnes Hospital and Training School for Nurses, the first school of nursing for African-American students in the state of North Carolina—

(1) was established by St. Augustine's Normal School in 1895; and

(2) was the only hospital in North Carolina that served African-Americans until 1960;

Whereas St. Augustine's University was the first historically Black college and university to own an on-campus commercial radio and television station; and

Whereas Talladega College—

(1) was founded by 3 former slaves in Talladega, Alabama, in 1867;

(2) is the oldest, private historically Black college and university in the State of Alabama;

(3) was the first institution in the State of Alabama to admit qualified persons of any race or ethnicity; and

(4) has produced several African-American "firsts", including—

(A) Wynona Lipman, the first African-American woman elected to the Senate of the State of New Jersey; and

(B) the Reverend Dr. Paul Smith, the first African-American minister at the First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, New York; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the accomplishments of—

(A) the 9 historically Black colleges and universities that celebrated their sesquicentennial anniversaries during the week of

September 24 through September 30, 2017; and

(B) historically Black colleges and universities in general;

(2) celebrates the 150th anniversary of those 9 institutions;

(3) encourages Congress and the people of the United States to recognize the beneficial impact historically Black colleges and universities have had on the United States; and

(4) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate make available 5 enrolled copies of this resolution to the Office of the President or Chancellor of each of those 9 historically Black colleges and universities.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1864. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. SCHUMER)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 195, to amend title 44, United States Code, to restrict the distribution of free printed copies of the Federal Register to Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the United States, and for other purposes.

SA 1865. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. GRASSLEY) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2070, to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, to reauthorize the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program, and to promote initiatives that will reduce the risk of injury and death relating to the wandering characteristics of some children with autism.

SA 1866. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Ms. WARREN) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 336, recognizing the seriousness of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome and expressing support for the designation of the month of September 2018 as "Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Awareness Month".

SA 1867. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Ms. WARREN) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 336, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1864. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. SCHUMER)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 195, to amend title 44, United States Code, to restrict the distribution of free printed copies of the Federal Register to Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the United States, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

TITLE II—KEVIN AND AVONTE'S LAW OF 2017

SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the "Kevin and Avonte's Law of 2017".

Subtitle A—Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program Reauthorization

SEC. 211. SHORT TITLE.

This subtitle may be cited as the "Missing Americans Alert Program Act of 2017".

SEC. 212. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE MISSING ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE PATIENT ALERT PROGRAM.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621) is amended—

(1) in the section header, by striking "ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE PATIENT" and inserting "AMERICANS";

(2) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

"(a) GRANT PROGRAM TO REDUCE INJURY AND DEATH OF MISSING AMERICANS WITH DEMENTIA AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.—Subject to the availability of appropriations to carry out this section, the Attorney General, through the Bureau of Justice Assistance and in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services—

"(1) shall award competitive grants to health care agencies, State and local law enforcement agencies, or public safety agencies and nonprofit organizations to assist such entities in planning, designing, establishing, or operating locally based, proactive programs to prevent wandering and locate missing individuals with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, or developmental disabilities, such as autism, who, due to their condition, wander from safe environments, including programs that—

"(A) provide prevention and response information, including online training resources, and referrals to families or guardians of such individuals who, due to their condition, wander from a safe environment;

"(B) provide education and training, including online training resources, to first responders, school personnel, clinicians, and the public in order to—

"(i) increase the safety and reduce the incidence of wandering of persons, who, due to their dementia or developmental disabilities, may wander from safe environments;

"(ii) facilitate the rescue and recovery of individuals who, due to their dementia or developmental disabilities, wander from safe environments; and

"(iii) recognize and respond to and appropriately interact with endangered missing individuals with dementia or developmental disabilities who, due to their condition, wander from safe environments;

"(C) provide prevention and response training and emergency protocols for school administrators, staff, and families or guardians of individuals with dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, or developmental disabilities, such as autism, to help reduce the risk of wandering by such individuals; and

"(D) develop, operate, or enhance a notification or communications systems for alerts, advisories, or dissemination of other information for the recovery of missing individuals with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, or with developmental disabilities, such as autism; and

"(2) shall award grants to health care agencies, State and local law enforcement agencies, or public safety agencies to assist such agencies in designing, establishing, and operating locative tracking technology programs for individuals with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, or children with developmental disabilities, such as autism, who have wandered from safe environments.";

(3) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting "competitive" after "to receive a";

(B) by inserting "agency or" before "organization" each place it appears; and

(C) by adding at the end the following: "The Attorney General shall periodically solicit applications for grants under this section by publishing a request for applications in the Federal Register and by posting such a request on the website of the Department of Justice.";

(4) by striking subsections (c) and (d) and inserting the following:

"(c) PREFERENCE.—In awarding grants under subsection (a)(1), the Attorney General shall give preference to law enforcement or public safety agencies that partner with nonprofit organizations that appropriately use person-centered plans minimizing restrictive interventions and that have a direct link to individuals, and families of individuals, with

forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, or developmental disabilities, such as autism.

"(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022.

"(e) GRANT ACCOUNTABILITY.—All grants awarded by the Attorney General under this section shall be subject to the following accountability provisions:

"(1) AUDIT REQUIREMENT.—

"(A) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term 'unresolved audit finding' means a finding in the final audit report of the Inspector General of the Department of Justice that the audited grantee has utilized grant funds for an unauthorized expenditure or otherwise unallowable cost that is not closed or resolved within 12 months from the date when the final audit report is issued.

"(B) AUDITS.—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this subsection, and in each fiscal year thereafter, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall conduct audits of recipients of grants under this section to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of funds by grantees. The Inspector General shall determine the appropriate number of grantees to be audited each year.

"(C) MANDATORY EXCLUSION.—A recipient of grant funds under this section that is found to have an unresolved audit finding shall not be eligible to receive grant funds under this section during the first 2 fiscal years beginning after the end of the 12-month period described in subparagraph (A).

"(D) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this section, the Attorney General shall give priority to eligible applicants that did not have an unresolved audit finding during the 3 fiscal years before submitting an application for a grant under this section.

"(E) REIMBURSEMENT.—If an entity is awarded grant funds under this section during the 2-fiscal-year period during which the entity is barred from receiving grants under subparagraph (C), the Attorney General shall—

"(i) deposit an amount equal to the amount of the grant funds that were improperly awarded to the grantee into the General Fund of the Treasury; and

"(ii) seek to recoup the costs of the repayment to the fund from the grant recipient that was erroneously awarded grant funds.

"(2) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS.—

"(A) DEFINITION OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—For purposes of this paragraph and the grant programs under this section, the term 'nonprofit organization' means an organization that is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

"(B) PROHIBITION.—The Attorney General may not award a grant under this section to a nonprofit organization that holds money in offshore accounts for the purpose of avoiding paying the tax described in section 511(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

"(C) DISCLOSURE.—Each nonprofit organization that is awarded a grant under this section and uses the procedures prescribed in regulations to create a rebuttable presumption of reasonableness for the compensation of its officers, directors, trustees, and key employees, shall disclose to the Attorney General, in the application for the grant, the process for determining such compensation, including the independent persons involved

in reviewing and approving such compensation, the comparability data used, and contemporaneous substantiation of the deliberation and decision. Upon request, the Attorney General shall make the information disclosed under this subparagraph available for public inspection.

“(3) CONFERENCE EXPENDITURES.—

“(A) LIMITATION.—No amounts made available to the Department of Justice under this section may be used by the Attorney General, or by any individual or entity awarded discretionary funds through a cooperative agreement under this section, to host or support any expenditure for conferences that uses more than \$20,000 in funds made available by the Department of Justice, unless the head of the relevant agency or department, provides prior written authorization that the funds may be expended to host the conference.

“(B) WRITTEN APPROVAL.—Written approval under subparagraph (A) shall include a written estimate of all costs associated with the conference, including the cost of all food, beverages, audio-visual equipment, honoraria for speakers, and entertainment.

“(C) REPORT.—The Deputy Attorney General shall submit an annual report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives on all conference expenditures approved under this paragraph.

“(4) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Attorney General shall submit, to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, an annual certification—

“(A) indicating whether—

“(i) all audits issued by the Office of the Inspector General under paragraph (1) have been completed and reviewed by the appropriate Assistant Attorney General or Director;

“(ii) all mandatory exclusions required under paragraph (1)(C) have been issued; and

“(iii) all reimbursements required under paragraph (1)(E) have been made; and

“(B) that includes a list of any grant recipients excluded under paragraph (1) from the previous year.

“(f) PREVENTING DUPLICATIVE GRANTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Before the Attorney General awards a grant to an applicant under this section, the Attorney General shall compare potential grant awards with other grants awarded by the Attorney General to determine if grant awards are or have been awarded for a similar purpose.

“(2) REPORT.—If the Attorney General awards grants to the same applicant for a similar purpose the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

“(A) a list of all such grants awarded, including the total dollar amount of any such grants awarded; and

“(B) the reason the Attorney General awarded multiple grants to the same applicant for a similar purpose.”.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act and every year thereafter, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report on the Missing Americans Alert Program, as amended by subsection (a), which shall address—

(1) the number of individuals who benefited from the Missing Americans Alert Program, including information such as the number of individuals with reduced unsafe wandering, the number of people who were trained through the program, and the estimated number of people who were impacted by the program;

(2) the number of State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies that applied for funding under the Missing Americans Alert Program;

(3) the number of State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies that received funding under the Missing Americans Alert Program, including—

(A) the number of State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies that used such funding for training; and

(B) the number of State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies that used such funding for designing, establishing, or operating locative tracking technology;

(4) the companies, including the location (city and State) of the headquarters and local offices of each company, for which their locative tracking technology was used by State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies;

(5) the nonprofit organizations, including the location (city and State) of the headquarters and local offices of each organization, that State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies partnered with and the result of each partnership;

(6) the number of missing children with autism or another developmental disability with wandering tendencies or adults with Alzheimer's being served by the program who went missing and the result of the search for each such individual; and

(7) any recommendations for improving the Missing Americans Alert Program.

(c) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 is amended by striking the item relating to section 240001 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 240001. Missing Americans Alert Program.”.

Subtitle B—Education and Outreach

SEC. 231. ACTIVITIES BY THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN.

Section 404(b)(1)(H) of the Missing Children's Assistance Act (34 U.S.C. 11293(b)(1)(H)) is amended by inserting “, including cases involving children with developmental disabilities such as autism” before the semicolon.

Subtitle C—Privacy Protections

SEC. 241. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) CHILD.—The term “child” means an individual who is less than 18 years of age.

(2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian tribe” has the meaning given that term in section 4(e) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304(e)).

(3) LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.—The term “law enforcement agency” means an agency of a State, unit of local government, or Indian tribe that is authorized by law or by a government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law.

(4) NON-INVASIVE AND NON-PERMANENT.—The term “non-invasive and non-permanent” means, with regard to any technology or device, that the procedure to install the technology or device does not create an external or internal marker or implant a device, such as a microchip, or other trackable items.

(5) STATE.—The term “State” means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia,

the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(6) UNIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The term “unit of local government” means a county, municipality, town, township, village, parish, borough, or other unit of general government below the State level.

SEC. 242. STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR USE OF NON-INVASIVE AND NON-PERMANENT TRACKING DEVICES.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and leading research, advocacy, self-advocacy, and service organizations, shall establish standards and best practices relating to the use of non-invasive and non-permanent tracking technology, where a guardian or parent has determined that a non-invasive and non-permanent tracking device is the least restrictive alternative, to locate individuals as described in subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this title.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In establishing the standards and best practices required under paragraph (1), the Attorney General shall—

(A) determine—

(i) the criteria used to determine which individuals would benefit from the use of a tracking device;

(ii) the criteria used to determine who should have direct access to the tracking system; and

(iii) which non-invasive and non-permanent types of tracking devices can be used in compliance with the standards and best practices; and

(B) establish standards and best practices the Attorney General determines are necessary to the administration of a tracking system, including procedures to—

(i) safeguard the privacy of the data used by the tracking device such that—

(I) access to the data is restricted to law enforcement and health agencies determined necessary by the Attorney General; and

(II) collection, use, and retention of the data is solely for the purpose of preventing injury to or death of the individual wearing the tracking device;

(ii) establish criteria to determine whether use of the tracking device is the least restrictive alternative in order to prevent risk of injury or death before issuing the tracking device, including the previous consideration of less restrictive alternatives;

(iii) provide training for law enforcement agencies to recognize signs of abuse during interactions with applicants for tracking devices;

(iv) protect the civil rights and liberties of the individuals who use tracking devices, including their rights under the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

(v) establish a complaint and investigation process to address—

(I) incidents of noncompliance by recipients of grants under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this title, with the best practices established by the Attorney General or other applicable law; and

(II) use of a tracking device over the objection of an individual; and

(vi) determine the role that State agencies should have in the administration of a tracking system.

(3) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The standards and best practices established pursuant to paragraph (1) shall take effect 90 days after publication of such standards and practices by the Attorney General.

(b) **REQUIRED COMPLIANCE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Each entity that receives a grant under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this title, shall comply with any standards and best practices relating to the use of tracking devices established by the Attorney General in accordance with subsection (a).

(2) **DETERMINATION OF COMPLIANCE.**—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall determine whether an entity that receives a grant under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this title, acts in compliance with the standards and best practices described in paragraph (1).

(c) **APPLICABILITY OF STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES.**—The standards and best practices established by the Attorney General under subsection (a) shall apply only to the grant programs authorized under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this title.

(d) **LIMITATIONS ON PROGRAM.**—

(1) **DATA STORAGE.**—Any tracking data provided by tracking devices issued under this program may not be used by a Federal entity to create a database.

(2) **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.**—Nothing in this title may be construed to require that a parent or guardian use a tracking device to monitor the location of a child or adult under that parent or guardian's supervision if the parent or guardian does not believe that the use of such device is necessary or in the interest of the child or adult under supervision.

SA 1865. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. GRASSLEY) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2070, to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, to reauthorize the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program, and to promote initiatives that will reduce the risk of injury and death relating to the wandering characteristics of some children with autism; as follows:

On page 8, line 11, strike “part” and insert “section”.

On page 8, line 18, strike “part” and insert “section”.

On page 15, between lines 9 and 10, insert the following:

(4) **NON-INVASIVE AND NON-PERMANENT.**—The term “non-invasive and non-permanent” means, with regard to any technology or device, that the procedure to install the technology or device does not create an external or internal marker or implant a device, such as a microchip, or other trackable items.

On page 15, line 10, strike “(4)” and insert “(5)”.

On page 15, line 15, strike “(5)” and insert “(6)”.

On page 15, strike lines 20 through 25.

On page 17, beginning on line 20, strike “injury or death to the individual” and insert “injury to or death of the individual”.

On page 19, line 24, strike “requirement” and insert “standards and best practices”.

SA 1866. Mr. McCONNELL (for Ms. WARREN) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 336, recognizing

the seriousness of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome and expressing support for the designation of the month of September 2018 as “Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Awareness Month”; as follows:

On page 4, line 5, insert “and” after the semicolon.

On page 4, strike lines 6 through 7.

On page 4, line 8, strike “(D)” and insert “(C)”.

On page 4, line 15, strike “are afflicted with PCOS;” and insert “have PCOS; and”.

On page 4, strike lines 16 through 19.

On page 4, line 20, strike “(6)” and insert “(5)”.

SA 1867. Mr. McCONNELL (for Ms. WARREN) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 336, recognizing the seriousness of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome and expressing support for the designation of the month of September 2018 as “Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Awareness Month”; as follows:

In the seventh whereas clause of the preamble, strike “which” and insert “and”.

In the thirteenth whereas clause of the preamble, strike “up to 80 percent of” and insert “many”.

In the fifteenth whereas clause of the preamble, strike the semicolon at the end and insert “, which does not include the costs associated with treatment of comorbidities;”.

Strike the sixteenth whereas clause of the preamble.

MEASURES DISCHARGED, THE CALENDAR, AND MEASURES RECEIVED FROM THE HOUSE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Energy and Natural Resources Committee be discharged from further consideration of the following bills: S. 1438 and H.R. 1927; and that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of those bills and the following bills en bloc: Calendar No. 49, S. 35; Calendar No. 54, S. 432; Calendar No. 55, S. 466; Calendar No. 62, H.R. 267; Calendar No. 64, H.R. 560; Calendar No. 72, H.R. 699; Calendar No. 88, H.R. 863; Calendar No. 125, S. 167; Calendar No. 148, H.R. 381; Calendar No. 170, H.R. 954; H.R. 1242, received from the House; H.R. 1306, received from the House; and H.R. 2611, received from the House.

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

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that, where applicable, the committee-reported amendments be agreed to, and the bills, as amended, if amended, be considered read a third time.

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

GATEWAY ARCH NATIONAL PARK DESIGNATION ACT

The bill (S. 1438) to redesignate the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in the State of Missouri as the “Gateway Arch National Park,” was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

ESTABLISHING WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS NETWORK

The bill (H.R. 1927) to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the African American Civil Rights Network, and for other purposes, was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY BOUNDARY EXPANSION ACT

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill (S. 35) to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **CEMETERY.**—The term “Cemetery” means the Black Hills National Cemetery in Sturgis, South Dakota.

(2) **FEDERAL LAND.**—The term “Federal land” means the approximately 200 acres of Bureau of Land Management land adjacent to the Cemetery, generally depicted as “Proposed National Cemetery Expansion” on the map entitled “Proposed Expansion of Black Hills National Cemetery—South Dakota” and dated June 16, 2016.

(3) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 3. TRANSFER AND WITHDRAWAL OF BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT LAND FOR CEMETERY USE.

(a) **CONDUCT OF DUE DILIGENCE ACTIVITIES BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Before the transfer of administrative jurisdiction and withdrawal of the Federal land under subsections (b) and (c), respectively, and subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall complete any appropriate environmental, cultural resource, and other due diligence activities on the Federal land that would enable the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to confirm that the Federal land is suitable for cemetery purposes.

(2) **NOTICE; REQUIRED COORDINATION.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) before conducting any due diligence activities under paragraph (1), notify the Secretary of the activities to be conducted;

(B) as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines to be necessary in the conduct of the due diligence activities under paragraph (1), coordinate the activities with the Secretary; and

(C) if the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines, on completion of the due diligence activities under paragraph (1), that the Federal land is suitable for cemetery purposes, submit written notice of the determination to the Secretary.

(b) **TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION.**—

(1) **TRANSFER.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—On receipt by the Secretary of written notice of a determination that the Federal land is suitable for cemetery purposes under subsection (a)(2)(C), except as provided in subparagraph (B), and subject to valid existing

rights, administrative jurisdiction over the Federal land is transferred from the Secretary to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for use as a national cemetery in accordance with chapter 24 of title 38, United States Code.

(B) **EXCLUSION.**—The transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Federal land under subparagraph (A) shall not include the land located within 100 feet of the center of the Centennial Trail, as generally depicted on the map entitled “Proposed Expansion of Black Hills National Cemetery—South Dakota” and dated June 16, 2016.

(2) **LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register a notice containing a legal description of the Federal land.

(B) **EFFECT.**—A legal description published under subparagraph (A) shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary may correct any clerical and typographical errors in the legal description.

(C) **AVAILABILITY.**—Copies of the legal description published under subparagraph (A) shall be available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of—

- (i) the Bureau of Land Management; and
- (ii) the National Cemetery Administration.

(D) **COSTS.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall reimburse the Secretary for the costs incurred by the Secretary in carrying out this paragraph, including the costs of any surveys and other reasonable costs.

(c) **WITHDRAWAL.**—On receipt by the Secretary of written notice of a determination that the Federal land is suitable for cemetery purposes under subsection (a)(2)(C) and subject to valid existing rights, the Federal land—

(1) is withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including the mining laws, the mineral leasing laws, and the geothermal leasing laws; and

(2) shall be treated as property as defined under section 102(9) of title 40, United States Code.

(d) **BOUNDARY MODIFICATION.**—The boundary of the Cemetery is modified to include the Federal land.

(e) **MODIFICATION OF PUBLIC LAND ORDER.**—Public Land Order 2112, dated June 6, 1960 (25 Fed. Reg. 5243), is modified to exclude the Federal land.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

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

CERROS DEL NORTE CONSERVATION ACT

The bill (S. 432) to designate the Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio Wilderness Areas in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

CLARIFYING THE DESCRIPTION OF CERTAIN FEDERAL LAND UNDER THE NORTHERN ARIZONA LAND EXCHANGE AND VERDE RIVER BASIN PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 2005

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill (S. 466) to clarify the description of certain Federal land under the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005 to include additional land in Kaibab National Forest, was ordered to be en-

grossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK ACT OF 2017

The bill (H.R. 267) to redesignate the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes, was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

AMENDING THE DELAWARE WATER GAP NATIONAL RECREATION AREA IMPROVEMENT ACT

The bill (H.R. 560) to amend the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Improvement Act to provide access to certain vehicles serving residents of municipalities adjacent to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, and for other purposes, was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

MOUNT HOOD COOPER SPUR LAND EXCHANGE CLARIFICATION ACT

The bill (H.R. 699) to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to modify provisions relating to certain land exchanges in the Mt. Hood Wilderness in the State of Oregon, was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

TO FACILITATE THE ADDITION OF PARK ADMINISTRATION AT THE COLTSVILLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

The bill (H.R. 863) to facilitate the addition of park administration at the Coltsville National Historical Park, and for other purposes, was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL TO FALLEN EDUCATORS ACT

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill (S. 167) to designate a National Memorial to Fallen Educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment, as follows:

(The part of the bill intended to be deleted is shown in boldface brackets and the part of the bill intended to be inserted is shown in italics.)

S. 167

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 “National Memorial to Fallen Educators Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

[Congress finds that—

[(1) from 1764 to the date of enactment of this Act, more than 119 educators from 36

States have lost their lives in the United States while performing professional duties;

[(2) the United States lacks a national memorial dedicated to fallen educators; and

[(3) a memorial to fallen educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas—

[(A) was dedicated on June 12, 2014; and

[(B) will honor educators who have lost their lives in the line of professional service.

[SEC. 3. DESIGNATION.]

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The memorial to fallen educators located at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas, is designated as the “National Memorial to Fallen Educators”.

(b) **EFFECT OF DESIGNATION.**—The national memorial designated by this section is not a unit of the National Park System and the designation of the National Memorial to Fallen Educators shall not require or permit Federal funds to be expended for any purpose related to that national memorial.

The committee-reported amendment was agreed to.

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

DESIGNATING A MOUNTAIN IN THE JOHN MUIR WILDERNESS OF THE SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST AS “SKY POINT”

The bill (H.R. 381) to designate a mountain in the John Muir Wilderness of the Sierra National Forest as “Sky Point,” was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

REMOVING THE USE RESTRICTIONS ON CERTAIN LAND TRANSFERRED TO ROCKINGHAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA

The bill (H.R. 954) to remove the use restrictions on certain land transferred to Rockingham County, Virginia, and for other purposes, was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

ESTABLISHING THE 400 YEARS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY COMMISSION

The bill (H.R. 1242) to establish the 400 Years of African-American History Commission, and for other purposes, was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

PROVIDING FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN FEDERAL LAND IN THE STATE OF OREGON

The bill (H.R. 1306) to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land in the State of Oregon, and for other purposes, was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

TO MODIFY THE BOUNDARY OF THE LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The bill (H.R. 2611) to modify the boundary of the Little Rock Central

High School National Historic Site, and for other purposes, was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the bills.

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

The bill (S. 1438) was passed, as follows:

S. 1438

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 “Gateway Arch National Park Designation Act”.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF GATEWAY ARCH NATIONAL PARK.

(a) REDESIGNATION.—The Jefferson National Expansion Memorial established under the Act of May 17, 1954 (16 U.S.C. 450j et seq.), shall be known and designated as the “Gateway Arch National Park”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial shall be considered to be a reference to the “Gateway Arch National Park”.

The bill (H.R. 1927) was passed.

The bill (S. 35) was passed.

The bill (S. 432) was passed, as follows:

S. 432

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 “Cerro del Norte Conservation Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) MAP.—The term “map” means the map entitled “Rio Grande del Norte National Monument Proposed Wilderness Areas” and dated July 28, 2015.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(3) WILDERNESS AREA.—The term “wilderness area” means a wilderness area designated by section 3(a).

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF CERRO DEL YUTA AND RIO SAN ANTONIO WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument are designated as wilderness and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) CERRO DEL YUTA WILDERNESS.—Certain land administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Taos County, New Mexico, comprising approximately 13,420 acres as generally depicted on the map, which shall be known as the “Cerro del Yuta Wilderness”.

(2) RIO SAN ANTONIO WILDERNESS.—Certain land administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, comprising approximately 8,120 acres, as generally depicted on the map, which shall be known as the “Rio San Antonio Wilderness”.

(b) MANAGEMENT OF WILDERNESS AREAS.—Subject to valid existing rights, the wilderness areas shall be administered in accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.) and this Act, except that with respect to the wilderness areas designated by this Act—

(1) any reference to the effective date of the Wilderness Act shall be considered to be a reference to the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) any reference in the Wilderness Act to the Secretary of Agriculture shall be considered to be a reference to the Secretary.

(c) INCORPORATION OF ACQUIRED LAND AND INTERESTS IN LAND.—Any land or interest in land within the boundary of the wilderness areas that is acquired by the United States shall—

(1) become part of the wilderness area in which the land is located; and

(2) be managed in accordance with—

(A) the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.);

(B) this Act; and

(C) any other applicable laws.

(d) GRAZING.—Grazing of livestock in the wilderness areas, where established before the date of enactment of this Act, shall be administered in accordance with—

(1) section 4(d)(4) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(4)); and

(2) the guidelines set forth in appendix A of the Report of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs to accompany H.R. 2570 of the 101st Congress (H. Rept. 101-405).

(e) BUFFER ZONES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act creates a protective perimeter or buffer zone around the wilderness areas.

(2) ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE WILDERNESS AREAS.—The fact that an activity or use on land outside a wilderness area can be seen or heard within the wilderness area shall not preclude the activity or use outside the boundary of the wilderness area.

(f) RELEASE OF WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS.—Congress finds that, for purposes of section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1782(c)), the public land within the San Antonio Wilderness Study Area not designated as wilderness by this section—

(1) has been adequately studied for wilderness designation;

(2) is no longer subject to section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1782(c)); and

(3) shall be managed in accordance with this Act.

(g) MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall file the map and legal descriptions of the wilderness areas with—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

(2) FORCE OF LAW.—The map and legal descriptions filed under paragraph (1) shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary may correct errors in the legal description and map.

(3) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The map and legal descriptions filed under paragraph (1) shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the Bureau of Land Management.

(h) NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM.—The wilderness areas shall be administered as components of the National Landscape Conservation System.

(i) FISH AND WILDLIFE.—Nothing in this Act affects the jurisdiction of the State of New Mexico with respect to fish and wildlife located on public land in the State.

(j) WITHDRAWALS.—Subject to valid existing rights, any Federal land within the wilderness areas designated by subsection (a), including any land or interest in land that is acquired by the United States after the date of enactment of this Act, is withdrawn from—

(1) entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws;

(2) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and

(3) operation of the mineral leasing, mineral materials, and geothermal leasing laws.

(k) TREATY RIGHTS.—Nothing in this Act enlarges, diminishes, or otherwise modifies any treaty rights.

The bill (S. 466) was passed, as follows:

S. 466

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

SECTION 1. CLARIFICATION RELATING TO A CERTAIN LAND DESCRIPTION UNDER THE NORTHERN ARIZONA LAND EXCHANGE AND VERDE RIVER BASIN PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 2005.

Section 104(a)(5) of the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-110; 119 Stat. 2356) is amended by inserting before the period at the end “, which, notwithstanding section 102(a)(4)(B), includes the N¹/₂, NE¹/₄, SW¹/₄, SW¹/₄, the N¹/₂, N¹/₂, SE¹/₄, SW¹/₄, and the N¹/₂, N¹/₂, SW¹/₄, SE¹/₄, sec. 34, T. 22 N., R. 2 E., Gila and Salt River Meridian, Coconino County, comprising approximately 25 acres”.

The bill (H.R. 267) was passed.

The bill (H.R. 560) was passed.

The bill (H.R. 699) was passed.

The bill (H.R. 863) was passed.

The bill (S. 167) was passed, as follows:

S. 167

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 “National Memorial to Fallen Educators Act”.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The memorial to fallen educators located at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas, is designated as the “National Memorial to Fallen Educators”.

(b) EFFECT OF DESIGNATION.—The national memorial designated by this section is not a unit of the National Park System and the designation of the National Memorial to Fallen Educators shall not require or permit Federal funds to be expended for any purpose related to that national memorial.

The bill (H.R. 381) was passed.

The bill (H.R. 954) was passed.

The bill (H.R. 1242) was passed.

The bill (H.R. 1306) was passed.

The bill (H.R. 2611) was passed.

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

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

DIESEL EMISSIONS REDUCTION ACT OF 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 219, S. 1447.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1447) to reauthorize the diesel emissions reduction program, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion 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 bill (S. 1447) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1447

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 “Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF DIESEL EMISSIONS REDUCTION PROGRAM.

Section 797(a) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16137(a)) is amended by striking “2016” and inserting “2022”.

SEC. 3. RECOGNIZING DIFFERENCES IN DIESEL VEHICLE, ENGINE, EQUIPMENT, AND FLEET USE.

(a) NATIONAL GRANT, REBATE, AND LOAN PROGRAMS.—Section 792(c)(4)(D) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16132(c)(4)(D)) is amended by inserting “, recognizing differences in typical vehicle, engine, equipment, and fleet use throughout the United States” before the semicolon.

(b) STATE GRANT, REBATE, AND LOAN PROGRAMS.—Section 793(b)(1) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16133(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking “; and” and inserting a semicolon; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(D) the recognition, for purposes of implementing this section, of differences in typical vehicle, engine, equipment, and fleet use throughout the United States, including expected useful life; and”.

SEC. 4. REALLOCATION OF UNUSED STATE FUNDS.

Section 793(c)(2)(C) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16133(c)(2)(C)) is amended beginning in the matter preceding clause (i) by striking “to each remaining” and all that follows through “this paragraph” in clause (ii) and inserting “to carry out section 792”.

STRENGTHENING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY SECURE MAIL INITIATIVE ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 241, S. 1208.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1208) to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide for an option under the Secure Mail Initiative under which a person to whom a document is sent under that initiative may elect to have the United States Postal Service use the Hold for Pickup service or the Signature Confirmation service in delivering the document, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with amendments, as follows:

(The parts of the bill intended to be stricken are shown in boldface back-

ets and the parts of the bill intended to be inserted are shown in italics.)

S. 1208

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 “Strengthening the Department of Homeland Security Secure Mail Initiative Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the terms “Hold for Pickup service” and “Signature Confirmation service” [means] mean the services described in sections [508.7.2.1] 507.3.0 and 503.8.1.1.a, respectively, of the Domestic Mail Manual (or any successor services);

(2) the term “Immigration Examinations Fee Account” means the account established under section 286(m) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1356(m));

(3) the term “Postal Service” means the United States Postal Service; and

(4) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Homeland Security.

SEC. 3. OFFERING HOLD FOR PICKUP AND SIGNATURE CONFIRMATION SERVICES UNDER THE SECURE MAIL INITIATIVE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall provide for an option under the Secure Mail Initiative (or any successor program) under which a person to whom a document is sent under that initiative may elect, except as provided in subsection (e), to have the Postal Service use the Hold for Pickup service or the Signature Confirmation service in delivering the document.

(b) FEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in accordance with section 286(m) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1356(m)), shall require the payment of a fee from a person electing a service under subsection (a), which shall be set at a level that ensures recovery of—

(A) the full costs of providing all such services; and

(B) any additional costs associated with the administration of the fees collected.

(2) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—Of the fees collected under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(A) deposit as offsetting receipts into the Immigration Examinations Fee Account the portion representing—

(i) the cost to the Secretary of providing the services under subsection (a); and

(ii) any additional costs associated with the administration of the fees collected; and

(B) transfer to the Postal Service the portion representing the cost to the Postal Service of providing the services under subsection (a).

(c) REGULATIONS.—The Postal Service may promulgate regulations that—

(1) subject to paragraph (2), minimize the cost of providing the services under subsection (a); and

(2) do not require the Postal Service to incur additional expenses that are not recoverable under subsection (b).

(d) NOTICE OF CHANGES.—The Postal Service shall notify the Secretary of any changes to the Hold for Pickup service or the Signature Confirmation service.

(e) USE OF PRIVATE CARRIER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary determines that a private carrier that offers substantially similar services to the Hold for Pickup and Signature Confirmation services would provide better service and value than the Postal Service provides under subsection (a), the Secretary may, in accordance with paragraph (2) of this subsection—

(A) discontinue use of the services of the Postal Service under subsection (a); and

(B) enter into a contract with the private carrier under which a person to whom a document is sent under the Secure Mail Initiative (or any successor program) may elect to have the private carrier use one of the substantially similar services in delivering the document.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary may not exercise the authority under paragraph (1) unless the Secretary—

(A) determines, and notifies the Postal Service, that the private carrier offers services that are substantially similar to the Hold for Pickup and Signature Confirmation services;

(B) provides for an option under the Secure Mail Initiative (or any successor program) under which a person to whom a document is sent under that initiative may elect a service under paragraph (1)(B);

(C) requires the payment of a fee from a person electing a service under paragraph (1)(B), which shall be set at a level that ensures recovery of—

(i) the full cost of contracting with the private carrier to provide all such services; and

(ii) any additional costs associated with the administration of the fees collected; and

(D) deposits the fees collected under subparagraph (C) as offsetting receipts into the Immigration Examinations Fees Account.

SEC. 4. REPORT.

Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

(1) the implementation of the requirements under section 3;

(2) the fee imposed under subsection (b) or (e)(2)(C), as applicable, of section 3; and

(3) the number of times during the previous year that a person used a service under subsection (a) or (e)(1)(B) of section 3.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendments be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendments were agreed to.

The bill (S. 1208), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1208

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 “Strengthening the Department of Homeland Security Secure Mail Initiative Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the terms “Hold for Pickup service” and “Signature Confirmation service” mean the services described in sections 507.3.0 and 503.8.1.1.a, respectively, of the Domestic Mail Manual (or any successor services);

(2) the term “Immigration Examinations Fee Account” means the account established under section 286(m) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1356(m));

(3) the term “Postal Service” means the United States Postal Service; and

(4) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Homeland Security.

SEC. 3. OFFERING HOLD FOR PICKUP AND SIGNATURE CONFIRMATION SERVICES UNDER THE SECURE MAIL INITIATIVE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall provide for an option under the Secure Mail Initiative (or any successor program) under which a person to whom a document is sent under that initiative may elect, except as provided in subsection (e), to have the Postal Service use the Hold for Pickup service or the Signature Confirmation service in delivering the document.

(b) FEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in accordance with section 286(m) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1356(m)), shall require the payment of a fee from a person electing a service under subsection (a), which shall be set at a level that ensures recovery of—

(A) the full costs of providing all such services; and

(B) any additional costs associated with the administration of the fees collected.

(2) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—Of the fees collected under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(A) deposit as offsetting receipts into the Immigration Examinations Fee Account the portion representing—

(i) the cost to the Secretary of providing the services under subsection (a); and

(ii) any additional costs associated with the administration of the fees collected; and

(B) transfer to the Postal Service the portion representing the cost to the Postal Service of providing the services under subsection (a).

(c) REGULATIONS.—The Postal Service may promulgate regulations that—

(1) subject to paragraph (2), minimize the cost of providing the services under subsection (a); and

(2) do not require the Postal Service to incur additional expenses that are not recoverable under subsection (b).

(d) NOTICE OF CHANGES.—The Postal Service shall notify the Secretary of any changes to the Hold for Pickup service or the Signature Confirmation service.

(e) USE OF PRIVATE CARRIER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary determines that a private carrier that offers substantially similar services to the Hold for Pickup and Signature Confirmation services would provide better service and value than the Postal Service provides under subsection (a), the Secretary may, in accordance with paragraph (2) of this subsection—

(A) discontinue use of the services of the Postal Service under subsection (a); and

(B) enter into a contract with the private carrier under which a person to whom a document is sent under the Secure Mail Initiative (or any successor program) may elect to have the private carrier use one of the substantially similar services in delivering the document.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary may not exercise the authority under paragraph (1) unless the Secretary—

(A) determines, and notifies the Postal Service, that the private carrier offers services that are substantially similar to the Hold for Pickup and Signature Confirmation services;

(B) provides for an option under the Secure Mail Initiative (or any successor program) under which a person to whom a document is sent under that initiative may elect a service under paragraph (1)(B);

(C) requires the payment of a fee from a person electing a service under paragraph (1)(B), which shall be set at a level that ensures recovery of—

(i) the full cost of contracting with the private carrier to provide all such services; and

(ii) any additional costs associated with the administration of the fees collected; and

(D) deposits the fees collected under subparagraph (C) as offsetting receipts into the Immigration Examinations Fees Account.

SEC. 4. REPORT.

Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

(1) the implementation of the requirements under section 3;

(2) the fee imposed under subsection (b) or (e)(2)(C), as applicable, of section 3; and

(3) the number of times during the previous year that a person used a service under subsection (a) or (e)(1)(B) of section 3.

FEDERAL REGISTER PRINTING SAVINGS ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 261, H.R. 195.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 195) to amend title 44, United States Code, to restrict the distribution of free printed copies of the Federal Register to Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the United States, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Grassley amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 1864) was agreed to.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Amendments.")

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

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 195), as amended, was passed.

KEVIN AND AVONTE'S LAW OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 270, S. 2070.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2070) to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, to reauthorize the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program, and to promote initiatives that will reduce the risk of injury and death relating to the wandering characteristics of some children with autism.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment, as follows:

(The part of the bill intended to be inserted is printed in italics.)

S. 2070

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 "Kevin and Avonte's Law of 2017".

TITLE I—MISSING ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE PATIENT ALERT PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the "Missing Americans Alert Program Act of 2017".

SEC. 102. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE MISSING ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE PATIENT ALERT PROGRAM.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621) is amended—

(1) in the section header, by striking "ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE PATIENT" and inserting "AMERICANS";

(2) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

"(a) GRANT PROGRAM TO REDUCE INJURY AND DEATH OF MISSING AMERICANS WITH DEMENTIA AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.—Subject to the availability of appropriations to carry out this section, the Attorney General, through the Bureau of Justice Assistance and in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services—

"(1) shall award competitive grants to health care agencies, State and local law enforcement agencies, or public safety agencies and nonprofit organizations to assist such entities in planning, designing, establishing, or operating locally based, proactive programs to prevent wandering and locate missing individuals with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, or developmental disabilities, such as autism, who, due to their condition, wander from safe environments, including programs that—

"(A) provide prevention and response information, including online training resources, and referrals to families or guardians of such individuals who, due to their condition, wander from a safe environment;

"(B) provide education and training, including online training resources, to first responders, school personnel, clinicians, and the public in order to—

"(i) increase the safety and reduce the incidence of wandering of persons, who, due to their dementia or developmental disabilities, may wander from safe environments;

"(ii) facilitate the rescue and recovery of individuals who, due to their dementia or developmental disabilities, wander from safe environments; and

"(iii) recognize and respond to and appropriately interact with endangered missing individuals with dementia or developmental disabilities who, due to their condition, wander from safe environments;

"(C) provide prevention and response training and emergency protocols for school administrators, staff, and families or guardians of individuals with dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, or developmental disabilities, such as autism, to help reduce the risk of wandering by such individuals; and

"(D) develop, operate, or enhance a notification or communications systems for alerts, advisories, or dissemination of other information for the recovery of missing individuals with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, or with developmental disabilities, such as autism; and

"(2) shall award grants to health care agencies, State and local law enforcement agencies, or public safety agencies to assist such agencies in designing, establishing, and

operating locative tracking technology programs for individuals with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, or children with developmental disabilities, such as autism, who have wandered from safe environments.”;

(3) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting “competitive” after “to receive a”;

(B) by inserting “agency or” before “organization” each place it appears; and

(C) by adding at the end the following: “The Attorney General shall periodically solicit applications for grants under this section by publishing a request for applications in the Federal Register and by posting such a request on the website of the Department of Justice.”; and

(4) by striking subsections (c) and (d) and inserting the following:

“(C) PREFERENCE.—In awarding grants under subsection (a)(1), the Attorney General shall give preference to law enforcement or public safety agencies that partner with nonprofit organizations that appropriately use person-centered plans minimizing restrictive interventions and that have a direct link to individuals, and families of individuals, with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, or developmental disabilities, such as autism.

“(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022.

“(e) GRANT ACCOUNTABILITY.—All grants awarded by the Attorney General under this section shall be subject to the following accountability provisions:

“(1) AUDIT REQUIREMENT.—

“(A) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term ‘unresolved audit finding’ means a finding in the final audit report of the Inspector General of the Department of Justice that the audited grantee has utilized grant funds for an unauthorized expenditure or otherwise unallowable cost that is not closed or resolved within 12 months from the date when the final audit report is issued.

“(B) AUDITS.—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this subsection, and in each fiscal year thereafter, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall conduct audits of recipients of grants under this section to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of funds by grantees. The Inspector General shall determine the appropriate number of grantees to be audited each year.

“(C) MANDATORY EXCLUSION.—A recipient of grant funds under this section that is found to have an unresolved audit finding shall not be eligible to receive grant funds under this section during the first 2 fiscal years beginning after the end of the 12-month period described in subparagraph (A).

“(D) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this section, the Attorney General shall give priority to eligible applicants that did not have an unresolved audit finding during the 3 fiscal years before submitting an application for a grant under this section.

“(E) REIMBURSEMENT.—If an entity is awarded grant funds under this section during the 2-fiscal-year period during which the entity is barred from receiving grants under subparagraph (C), the Attorney General shall—

“(i) deposit an amount equal to the amount of the grant funds that were improperly awarded to the grantee into the General Fund of the Treasury; and

“(ii) seek to recoup the costs of the repayment to the fund from the grant recipient that was erroneously awarded grant funds.

“(2) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS.—

“(A) DEFINITION OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—For purposes of this paragraph and the grant programs under this part, the term ‘nonprofit organization’ means an organization that is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

“(B) PROHIBITION.—The Attorney General may not award a grant under this part to a nonprofit organization that holds money in offshore accounts for the purpose of avoiding paying the tax described in section 511(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

“(C) DISCLOSURE.—Each nonprofit organization that is awarded a grant under this section and uses the procedures prescribed in regulations to create a rebuttable presumption of reasonableness for the compensation of its officers, directors, trustees, and key employees, shall disclose to the Attorney General, in the application for the grant, the process for determining such compensation, including the independent persons involved in reviewing and approving such compensation, the comparability data used, and contemporaneous substantiation of the deliberation and decision. Upon request, the Attorney General shall make the information disclosed under this subparagraph available for public inspection.

“(3) CONFERENCE EXPENDITURES.—

“(A) LIMITATION.—No amounts made available to the Department of Justice under this section may be used by the Attorney General, or by any individual or entity awarded discretionary funds through a cooperative agreement under this section, to host or support any expenditure for conferences that uses more than \$20,000 in funds made available by the Department of Justice, unless the head of the relevant agency or department, provides prior written authorization that the funds may be expended to host the conference.

“(B) WRITTEN APPROVAL.—Written approval under subparagraph (A) shall include a written estimate of all costs associated with the conference, including the cost of all food, beverages, audio-visual equipment, honoraria for speakers, and entertainment.

“(C) REPORT.—The Deputy Attorney General shall submit an annual report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives on all conference expenditures approved under this paragraph.

“(4) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Attorney General shall submit, to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, an annual certification—

“(A) indicating whether—

“(i) all audits issued by the Office of the Inspector General under paragraph (1) have been completed and reviewed by the appropriate Assistant Attorney General or Director;

“(ii) all mandatory exclusions required under paragraph (1)(C) have been issued; and

“(iii) all reimbursements required under paragraph (1)(E) have been made; and

“(B) that includes a list of any grant recipients excluded under paragraph (1) from the previous year.

“(f) PREVENTING DUPLICATIVE GRANTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Before the Attorney General awards a grant to an applicant under this section, the Attorney General shall compare potential grant awards with other grants awarded by the Attorney General to determine if grant awards are or have been awarded for a similar purpose.

“(2) REPORT.—If the Attorney General awards grants to the same applicant for a similar purpose the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

“(A) a list of all such grants awarded, including the total dollar amount of any such grants awarded; and

“(B) the reason the Attorney General awarded multiple grants to the same applicant for a similar purpose.”.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act and every year thereafter, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report on the Missing Americans Alert Program, as amended by subsection (a), which shall address—

(1) the number of individuals who benefited from the Missing Americans Alert Program, including information such as the number of individuals with reduced unsafe wandering, the number of people who were trained through the program, and the estimated number of people who were impacted by the program;

(2) the number of State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies that applied for funding under the Missing Americans Alert Program;

(3) the number of State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies that received funding under the Missing Americans Alert Program, including—

(A) the number of State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies that used such funding for training; and

(B) the number of State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies that used such funding for designing, establishing, or operating locative tracking technology;

(4) the companies, including the location (city and State) of the headquarters and local offices of each company, for which their locative tracking technology was used by State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies;

(5) the nonprofit organizations, including the location (city and State) of the headquarters and local offices of each organization, that State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies partnered with and the result of each partnership;

(6) the number of missing children with autism or another developmental disability with wandering tendencies or adults with Alzheimer's being served by the program who went missing and the result of the search for each such individual; and

(7) any recommendations for improving the Missing Americans Alert Program.

(c) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 is amended by striking the item relating to section 240001 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 240001. Missing Americans Alert Program.”.

TITLE II—EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

SEC. 201. ACTIVITIES BY THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN.

Section 404(b)(1)(H) of the Missing Children's Assistance Act (34 U.S.C. 11293(b)(1)(H)) is amended by inserting “, including cases involving children with developmental disabilities such as autism” before the semicolon.

TITLE III—PRIVACY PROTECTIONS**SEC. 301. DEFINITIONS.**

In this title:

(1) **CHILD.**—The term “child” means an individual who is less than 18 years of age.

(2) **INDIAN TRIBE.**—The term “Indian tribe” has the meaning given that term in section 4(e) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304(e)).

(3) **LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.**—The term “law enforcement agency” means an agency of a State, unit of local government, or Indian tribe that is authorized by law or by a government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law.

(4) **STATE.**—The term “State” means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(5) **UNIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.**—The term “unit of local government” means a county, municipality, town, township, village, parish, borough, or other unit of general government below the State level.

(6) **NON-INVASIVE AND NON-PERMANENT.**—The term “non-invasive and non-permanent” means, with regard to any technology or device, that the procedure to install the technology or device does not create an external or internal marker or implant a device, such as a microchip, or other trackable items.

SEC. 302. STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR USE OF NON-INVASIVE AND NON-PERMANENT TRACKING DEVICES.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and leading research, advocacy, self-advocacy, and service organizations, shall establish standards and best practices relating to the use of non-invasive and non-permanent tracking technology, where a guardian or parent has determined that a non-invasive and non-permanent tracking device is the least restrictive alternative, to locate individuals as described in subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this Act.

(2) **REQUIREMENTS.**—In establishing the standards and best practices required under paragraph (1), the Attorney General shall—

(A) determine—

(i) the criteria used to determine which individuals would benefit from the use of a tracking device;

(ii) the criteria used to determine who should have direct access to the tracking system; and

(iii) which non-invasive and non-permanent types of tracking devices can be used in compliance with the standards and best practices; and

(B) establish standards and best practices the Attorney General determines are necessary to the administration of a tracking system, including procedures to—

(i) safeguard the privacy of the data used by the tracking device such that—

(I) access to the data is restricted to law enforcement and health agencies determined necessary by the Attorney General; and

(II) collection, use, and retention of the data is solely for the purpose of preventing injury or death to the individual wearing the tracking device;

(ii) establish criteria to determine whether use of the tracking device is the least restrictive alternative in order to prevent risk of injury or death before issuing the tracking device, including the previous consideration of less restrictive alternatives;

(iii) provide training for law enforcement agencies to recognize signs of abuse during interactions with applicants for tracking devices;

(iv) protect the civil rights and liberties of the individuals who use tracking devices, including their rights under the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

(v) establish a complaint and investigation process to address—

(I) incidents of noncompliance by recipients of grants under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this Act, with the best practices established by the Attorney General or other applicable law; and

(II) use of a tracking device over the objection of an individual; and

(vi) determine the role that State agencies should have in the administration of a tracking system.

(3) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The standards and best practices established pursuant to paragraph (1) shall take effect 90 days after publication of such standards and practices by the Attorney General.

(b) **REQUIRED COMPLIANCE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Each entity that receives a grant under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this Act, shall comply with any standards and best practices relating to the use of tracking devices established by the Attorney General in accordance with subsection (a).

(2) **DETERMINATION OF COMPLIANCE.**—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall determine whether an entity that receives a grant under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this Act, acts in compliance with the requirement described in paragraph (1).

(c) **APPLICABILITY OF STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES.**—The standards and best practices established by the Attorney General under subsection (a) shall apply only to the grant programs authorized under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this Act.

(d) **LIMITATIONS ON PROGRAM.**—

(1) **DATA STORAGE.**—Any tracking data provided by tracking devices issued under this program may not be used by a Federal entity to create a database.

(2) **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.**—Nothing in this Act may be construed to require that a parent or guardian use a tracking device to monitor the location of a child or adult under that parent or guardian's supervision if the parent or guardian does not believe that the use of such device is necessary or in the interest of the child or adult under supervision.

TITLE IV—OFFSET BY RESTRICTING DISTRIBUTION OF FREE PRINTED COPIES OF FEDERAL REGISTER**SEC. 401. SHORT TITLE.**

This title may be cited as the “Federal Register Printing Savings Act of 2017”.

SEC. 402. RESTRICTIONS ON DISTRIBUTION OF FREE PRINTED COPIES OF FEDERAL REGISTER TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

(a) **RESTRICTIONS.**—Section 1506 of title 44, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “The Administrative Committee” and inserting “(a) COMPOSITION; DUTIES.—The Administrative Committee”;

(2) in subsection (a)(4), by striking “the number of copies” and inserting “subject to subsection (b), the number of copies”; and

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

“(b) **RESTRICTIONS ON DISTRIBUTION OF FREE PRINTED COPIES TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE UNITED STATES.**—

“(1) **PROHIBITING SUBSCRIPTION TO PRINTED COPIES WITHOUT REQUEST.**—Under the regulations prescribed to carry out subsection (a)(4), the Director of the Government Publishing Office may not provide a printed copy of the Federal Register without charge to any Member of Congress or any other office of the United States during a year unless—

“(A) the Member or office requests a printed copy of a specific issue of the Federal Register; or

“(B) during that year or during the previous year, the Member or office requested a subscription to printed copies of the Federal Register for that year, as described in paragraph (2).

“(2) **ADMINISTRATION OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.**—The regulations prescribed to carry out subsection (a)(4) shall include—

“(A) provisions regarding notifications to offices of Members of Congress and other offices of the United States of the restrictions of paragraph (1);

“(B) provisions describing the process by which Members and other offices may request a specific issue of the Federal Register for purposes of paragraph (1)(A); and

“(C) provisions describing the process by which Members and other offices may request a subscription to the Federal Register for purposes of paragraph (1)(B), except that such regulations shall limit the period for such a subscription to not longer than 1 year.”.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment be agreed to, the Grassley amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, and the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

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

The committee-reported amendment was agreed to.

The amendment (No. 1865) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To make technical corrections)

On page 8, line 11, strike “part” and insert “section”.

On page 8, line 18, strike “part” and insert “section”.

On page 15, between lines 9 and 10, insert the following:

(4) **NON-INVASIVE AND NON-PERMANENT.**—The term “non-invasive and non-permanent” means, with regard to any technology or device, that the procedure to install the technology or device does not create an external or internal marker or implant a device, such as a microchip, or other trackable items.

On page 15, line 10, strike “(4)” and insert “(5)”.

On page 15, line 15, strike “(5)” and insert “(6)”.

On page 15, strike lines 20 through 25.

On page 17, beginning on line 20, strike “injury or death to the individual” and insert “injury to or death of the individual”.

On page 19, line 24, strike “requirement” and insert “standards and best practices”.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

The bill (S. 2070), as amended, was passed, as follows:

S. 2070

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 “Kevin and Avonte’s Law of 2017”.

TITLE I—MISSING ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE PATIENT ALERT PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “Missing Americans Alert Program Act of 2017”.

SEC. 102. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE MISSING ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE PATIENT ALERT PROGRAM.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621) is amended—

(1) in the section header, by striking “ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE PATIENT” and inserting “AMERICANS”;

(2) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

“(a) GRANT PROGRAM TO REDUCE INJURY AND DEATH OF MISSING AMERICANS WITH DEMENTIA AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.—Subject to the availability of appropriations to carry out this section, the Attorney General, through the Bureau of Justice Assistance and in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services—

“(1) shall award competitive grants to health care agencies, State and local law enforcement agencies, or public safety agencies and nonprofit organizations to assist such entities in planning, designing, establishing, or operating locally based, proactive programs to prevent wandering and locate missing individuals with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer’s Disease, or developmental disabilities, such as autism, who, due to their condition, wander from safe environments, including programs that—

“(A) provide prevention and response information, including online training resources, and referrals to families or guardians of such individuals who, due to their condition, wander from a safe environment;

“(B) provide education and training, including online training resources, to first responders, school personnel, clinicians, and the public in order to—

“(i) increase the safety and reduce the incidence of wandering of persons, who, due to their dementia or developmental disabilities, may wander from safe environments;

“(ii) facilitate the rescue and recovery of individuals who, due to their dementia or developmental disabilities, wander from safe environments; and

“(iii) recognize and respond to and appropriately interact with endangered missing individuals with dementia or developmental disabilities who, due to their condition, wander from safe environments;

“(C) provide prevention and response training and emergency protocols for school administrators, staff, and families or guardians of individuals with dementia, such as Alzheimer’s Disease, or developmental disabilities, such as autism, to help reduce the risk of wandering by such individuals; and

“(D) develop, operate, or enhance a notification or communications systems for alerts, advisories, or dissemination of other information for the recovery of missing individuals with forms of dementia, such as Alz-

heimer’s Disease, or with developmental disabilities, such as autism; and

“(2) shall award grants to health care agencies, State and local law enforcement agencies, or public safety agencies to assist such agencies in designing, establishing, and operating locative tracking technology programs for individuals with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer’s Disease, or children with developmental disabilities, such as autism, who have wandered from safe environments.”;

(3) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting “competitive” after “to receive a”;

(B) by inserting “agency or” before “organization” each place it appears; and

(C) by adding at the end the following: “The Attorney General shall periodically solicit applications for grants under this section by publishing a request for applications in the Federal Register and by posting such a request on the website of the Department of Justice.”; and

(4) by striking subsections (c) and (d) and inserting the following:

“(c) PREFERENCE.—In awarding grants under subsection (a)(1), the Attorney General shall give preference to law enforcement or public safety agencies that partner with nonprofit organizations that appropriately use person-centered plans minimizing restrictive interventions and that have a direct link to individuals, and families of individuals, with forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer’s Disease, or developmental disabilities, such as autism.

“(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022.

“(e) GRANT ACCOUNTABILITY.—All grants awarded by the Attorney General under this section shall be subject to the following accountability provisions:

“(1) AUDIT REQUIREMENT.—

“(A) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term ‘unresolved audit finding’ means a finding in the final audit report of the Inspector General of the Department of Justice that the audited grantee has utilized grant funds for an unauthorized expenditure or otherwise unallowable cost that is not closed or resolved within 12 months from the date when the final audit report is issued.

“(B) AUDITS.—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this subsection, and in each fiscal year thereafter, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall conduct audits of recipients of grants under this section to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of funds by grantees. The Inspector General shall determine the appropriate number of grantees to be audited each year.

“(C) MANDATORY EXCLUSION.—A recipient of grant funds under this section that is found to have an unresolved audit finding shall not be eligible to receive grant funds under this section during the first 2 fiscal years beginning after the end of the 12-month period described in subparagraph (A).

“(D) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this section, the Attorney General shall give priority to eligible applicants that did not have an unresolved audit finding during the 3 fiscal years before submitting an application for a grant under this section.

“(E) REIMBURSEMENT.—If an entity is awarded grant funds under this section during the 2-fiscal-year period during which the entity is barred from receiving grants under subparagraph (C), the Attorney General shall—

“(i) deposit an amount equal to the amount of the grant funds that were improperly awarded to the grantee into the General Fund of the Treasury; and

“(ii) seek to recoup the costs of the repayment to the fund from the grant recipient that was erroneously awarded grant funds.

“(2) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS.—

“(A) DEFINITION OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—For purposes of this paragraph and the grant programs under this section, the term ‘nonprofit organization’ means an organization that is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

“(B) PROHIBITION.—The Attorney General may not award a grant under this section to a nonprofit organization that holds money in offshore accounts for the purpose of avoiding paying the tax described in section 511(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

“(C) DISCLOSURE.—Each nonprofit organization that is awarded a grant under this section and uses the procedures prescribed in regulations to create a rebuttable presumption of reasonableness for the compensation of its officers, directors, trustees, and key employees, shall disclose to the Attorney General, in the application for the grant, the process for determining such compensation, including the independent persons involved in reviewing and approving such compensation, the comparability data used, and contemporaneous substantiation of the deliberation and decision. Upon request, the Attorney General shall make the information disclosed under this subparagraph available for public inspection.

“(3) CONFERENCE EXPENDITURES.—

“(A) LIMITATION.—No amounts made available to the Department of Justice under this section may be used by the Attorney General, or by any individual or entity awarded discretionary funds through a cooperative agreement under this section, to host or support any expenditure for conferences that uses more than \$20,000 in funds made available by the Department of Justice, unless the head of the relevant agency or department, provides prior written authorization that the funds may be expended to host the conference.

“(B) WRITTEN APPROVAL.—Written approval under subparagraph (A) shall include a written estimate of all costs associated with the conference, including the cost of all food, beverages, audio-visual equipment, honoraria for speakers, and entertainment.

“(C) REPORT.—The Deputy Attorney General shall submit an annual report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives on all conference expenditures approved under this paragraph.

“(4) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Attorney General shall submit, to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, an annual certification—

“(A) indicating whether—

“(i) all audits issued by the Office of the Inspector General under paragraph (1) have been completed and reviewed by the appropriate Assistant Attorney General or Director;

“(ii) all mandatory exclusions required under paragraph (1)(C) have been issued; and

“(iii) all reimbursements required under paragraph (1)(E) have been made; and

“(B) that includes a list of any grant recipients excluded under paragraph (1) from the previous year.

“(f) PREVENTING DUPLICATIVE GRANTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Before the Attorney General awards a grant to an applicant under this section, the Attorney General

shall compare potential grant awards with other grants awarded by the Attorney General to determine if grant awards are or have been awarded for a similar purpose.

“(2) REPORT.—If the Attorney General awards grants to the same applicant for a similar purpose the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

“(A) a list of all such grants awarded, including the total dollar amount of any such grants awarded; and

“(B) the reason the Attorney General awarded multiple grants to the same applicant for a similar purpose.”.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act and every year thereafter, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report on the Missing Americans Alert Program, as amended by subsection (a), which shall address—

(1) the number of individuals who benefitted from the Missing Americans Alert Program, including information such as the number of individuals with reduced unsafe wandering, the number of people who were trained through the program, and the estimated number of people who were impacted by the program;

(2) the number of State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies that applied for funding under the Missing Americans Alert Program;

(3) the number of State, local, and tribal local law enforcement or public safety agencies that received funding under the Missing Americans Alert Program, including—

(A) the number of State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies that used such funding for training; and

(B) the number of State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies that used such funding for designing, establishing, or operating locative tracking technology;

(4) the companies, including the location (city and State) of the headquarters and local offices of each company, for which their locative tracking technology was used by State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies;

(5) the nonprofit organizations, including the location (city and State) of the headquarters and local offices of each organization, that State, local, and tribal law enforcement or public safety agencies partnered with and the result of each partnership;

(6) the number of missing children with autism or another developmental disability with wandering tendencies or adults with Alzheimer's being served by the program who went missing and the result of the search for each such individual; and

(7) any recommendations for improving the Missing Americans Alert Program.

(c) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 is amended by striking the item relating to section 240001 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 240001. Missing Americans Alert Program.”.

TITLE II—EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

SEC. 201. ACTIVITIES BY THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN.

Section 404(b)(1)(H) of the Missing Children's Assistance Act (34 U.S.C. 11293(b)(1)(H)) is amended by inserting “, in-

cluding cases involving children with developmental disabilities such as autism” before the semicolon.

TITLE III—PRIVACY PROTECTIONS

SEC. 301. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) CHILD.—The term “child” means an individual who is less than 18 years of age.

(2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian tribe” has the meaning given that term in section 4(e) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304(e)).

(3) LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.—The term “law enforcement agency” means an agency of a State, unit of local government, or Indian tribe that is authorized by law or by a government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law.

(4) NON-INVASIVE AND NON-PERMANENT.—The term “non-invasive and non-permanent” means, with regard to any technology or device, that the procedure to install the technology or device does not create an external or internal marker or implant a device, such as a microchip, or other trackable items.

(5) STATE.—The term “State” means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(6) UNIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The term “unit of local government” means a county, municipality, town, township, village, parish, borough, or other unit of general government below the State level.

SEC. 302. STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR USE OF NON-INVASIVE AND NON-PERMANENT TRACKING DEVICES.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and leading research, advocacy, self-advocacy, and service organizations, shall establish standards and best practices relating to the use of non-invasive and non-permanent tracking technology, where a guardian or parent has determined that a non-invasive and non-permanent tracking device is the least restrictive alternative, to locate individuals as described in subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this Act.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In establishing the standards and best practices required under paragraph (1), the Attorney General shall—

(A) determine—

(i) the criteria used to determine which individuals would benefit from the use of a tracking device;

(ii) the criteria used to determine who should have direct access to the tracking system; and

(iii) which non-invasive and non-permanent types of tracking devices can be used in compliance with the standards and best practices; and

(B) establish standards and best practices the Attorney General determines are necessary to the administration of a tracking system, including procedures to—

(i) safeguard the privacy of the data used by the tracking device such that—

(I) access to the data is restricted to law enforcement and health agencies determined necessary by the Attorney General; and

(II) collection, use, and retention of the data is solely for the purpose of preventing injury to or death of the individual wearing the tracking device;

(ii) establish criteria to determine whether use of the tracking device is the least restrictive alternative in order to prevent risk

of injury or death before issuing the tracking device, including the previous consideration of less restrictive alternatives;

(iii) provide training for law enforcement agencies to recognize signs of abuse during interactions with applicants for tracking devices;

(iv) protect the civil rights and liberties of the individuals who use tracking devices, including their rights under the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

(v) establish a complaint and investigation process to address—

(I) incidents of noncompliance by recipients of grants under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this Act, with the best practices established by the Attorney General or other applicable law; and

(II) use of a tracking device over the objection of an individual; and

(vi) determine the role that State agencies should have in the administration of a tracking system.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The standards and best practices established pursuant to paragraph (1) shall take effect 90 days after publication of such standards and practices by the Attorney General.

(b) REQUIRED COMPLIANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each entity that receives a grant under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this Act, shall comply with any standards and best practices relating to the use of tracking devices established by the Attorney General in accordance with subsection (a).

(2) DETERMINATION OF COMPLIANCE.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall determine whether an entity that receives a grant under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this Act, acts in compliance with the standards and best practices described in paragraph (1).

(c) APPLICABILITY OF STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES.—The standards and best practices established by the Attorney General under subsection (a) shall apply only to the grant programs authorized under subsection (a)(2) of section 240001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12621), as added by this Act.

(d) LIMITATIONS ON PROGRAM.—

(1) DATA STORAGE.—Any tracking data provided by tracking devices issued under this program may not be used by a Federal entity to create a database.

(2) VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.—Nothing in this Act may be construed to require that a parent or guardian use a tracking device to monitor the location of a child or adult under that parent or guardian's supervision if the parent or guardian does not believe that the use of such device is necessary or in the interest of the child or adult under supervision.

TITLE IV—OFFSET BY RESTRICTING DISTRIBUTION OF FREE PRINTED COPIES OF FEDERAL REGISTER

SEC. 401. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “Federal Register Printing Savings Act of 2017”.

SEC. 402. RESTRICTIONS ON DISTRIBUTION OF FREE PRINTED COPIES OF FEDERAL REGISTER TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

(a) RESTRICTIONS.—Section 1506 of title 44, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “The Administrative Committee” and inserting “(a) COMPOSITION; DUTIES.—The Administrative Committee”;

(2) in subsection (a)(4), by striking “the number of copies” and inserting “subject to subsection (b), the number of copies”; and

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

“(b) RESTRICTIONS ON DISTRIBUTION OF FREE PRINTED COPIES TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE UNITED STATES.—

“(1) PROHIBITING SUBSCRIPTION TO PRINTED COPIES WITHOUT REQUEST.—Under the regulations prescribed to carry out subsection (a)(4), the Director of the Government Publishing Office may not provide a printed copy of the Federal Register without charge to any Member of Congress or any other office of the United States during a year unless—

“(A) the Member or office requests a printed copy of a specific issue of the Federal Register; or

“(B) during that year or during the previous year, the Member or office requested a subscription to printed copies of the Federal Register for that year, as described in paragraph (2).

“(2) ADMINISTRATION OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.—The regulations prescribed to carry out subsection (a)(4) shall include—

“(A) provisions regarding notifications to offices of Members of Congress and other offices of the United States of the restrictions of paragraph (1);

“(B) provisions describing the process by which Members and other offices may request a specific issue of the Federal Register for purposes of paragraph (1)(A); and

“(C) provisions describing the process by which Members and other offices may request a subscription to the Federal Register for purposes of paragraph (1)(B), except that such regulations shall limit the period for such a subscription to not longer than 1 year.”.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

CONDEMNING THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN'S STATE-SPONSORED PERSECUTION OF ITS BAHAI MINORITY AND ITS CONTINUED VIOLATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 281, S. Res. 139.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 139) condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment and an amendment to the preamble, as follows:

(The part of the resolution intended to be deleted is shown in boldface brackets and the part of the resolution

intended to be inserted is shown in italics.)

(The part of the preamble intended to be deleted is shown in boldface brackets and the part of the preamble intended to be inserted is shown in italics.)

S. RES. 139

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2016, Congress declared that it deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Baha'i community and would hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Baha'i Faith;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2016 Annual Report states—

(1) “The Baha'i community, the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran, long has been subject to particularly severe religious freedom violations. The government views Baha'is, who number at least 300,000, as ‘heretics’ and consequently they face repression on the grounds of apostasy.”;

(2) “Since 1979, authorities have killed or executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders, and more than 10,000 have been dismissed from government and university jobs.”; and

(3) “Over the past 10 years, approximately 850 Baha'is have been arbitrarily arrested.”;

Whereas the Department of State 2015 International Religious Freedom Report states—

(1) religious minorities in Iran “continued to face societal discrimination, especially the Bahai community, which reported continuing problems at different levels of society, including personal harassment.”;

(2) the Government of Iran “continued to prohibit Bahais from officially assembling or maintaining administrative institutions, actively closed such institutions, harassed Bahais, and disregarded their property rights.”;

(3) in Iran, “Bahai blood may be spilled with impunity, and Bahai families are not entitled to restitution” and “Bahais cannot receive compensation for injury or crimes committed against them and cannot inherit property.”;

(4) the Government of Iran “requires universities to exclude Bahais from access to higher education or expel them if their religious affiliation becomes known.”; and

(5) in Iran, “Bahais are banned from government employment” and “[t]here were reports of non-Bahais being pressured to refuse employment to Bahais or dismissing Bahais from their private sector jobs.”;

Whereas, on June 8, 2016, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief issued a joint statement condemning the “wave of incitement of hatred of the Baha'i community reflected in speeches made by religious, judiciary and political officials in the Islamic Republic of Iran”;

Whereas, on September 6, 2016, the United Nations Secretary-General issued a report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/71/374), which stated that “human rights violations have continued at an alarming rate”;

Whereas, on December 17, 2016, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/70/179), which “[e]xpresse[d] serious concern about ongoing severe limitations and restrictions on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief and restrictions on the establishment of places of worship, as well as attacks against places of worship and burial, as well as other

human rights violations, including but not limited to harassment, persecution and incitement to hatred that lead to violence against persons belonging to recognized and unrecognized religious minorities, including Christians, Jews, Sufi Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Zoroastrians and members of the Baha'i Faith and their defenders”;

Whereas since May 2008, the Government of Iran has imprisoned the 7 members of the former ad hoc leadership group of the Baha'i community in Iran, known as the Yaran-i-Iran, or “friends of Iran”—Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm—and these individuals were convicted of charges including “spying for Israel, insulting religious sanctities, propaganda against the regime and spreading corruption on earth” and sentenced to 20-year prison terms, the longest sentences given to any prisoner of conscience in Iran at that time, now reportedly reduced to **10 years** *10 years, and Mrs. Sabet and Mrs. Kamalabadi were released in September 2017 and October 2017, respectively, upon the completion of their sentences*;

Whereas beginning in May 2011, officials of the Government of Iran in 4 cities conducted sweeping raids on the homes of dozens of individuals associated with the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education (referred to in this Resolution as “BIHE”) and arrested and detained several educators associated with BIHE, with 16 BIHE educators ultimately sentenced to 4- or 5-year prison terms, 7 of whom remain in prison;

Whereas scores of Baha'i cemeteries have been attacked, and in 2014, Revolutionary Guards began excavating a Baha'i cemetery in Shiraz, which is the site of 950 graves, and built a cultural and sport center on the cemetery site;

Whereas the Baha'i International Community reported that there has been a recent surge in anti-Baha'i hate propaganda in Iranian state-sponsored media outlets, noting that—

(1) in 2010 and 2011, approximately 22 anti-Baha'i articles were appearing every month;

(2) in 2014, the number of anti-Baha'i articles rose to approximately 400 per month; and

(3) by 2016, the number of anti-Baha'i articles rose to approximately 1,500 per month;

Whereas there are currently 90 Baha'is in prison in Iran;

Whereas the Government of Iran is party to the International Covenants on Human Rights and is in violation of its obligations under such Covenants;

Whereas section 105 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8514) authorizes the President to impose sanctions on individuals “responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, the commission of serious human rights abuses against citizens of Iran or their family members on or after June 12, 2009”;

Whereas the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-158) amends and expands the authorities established under the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-195) to sanction Iranian human rights abusers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights;

(2) calls on the Government of Iran to immediately release the **7** 5 imprisoned

Baha'i leaders, the 7 imprisoned Baha'i educators, and all other prisoners held solely on account of their religion;

(3) calls on the President and the Secretary of State, in cooperation with responsible nations, to immediately condemn the Government of Iran's continued violation of human rights and demand the immediate release of prisoners held solely on account of their religion; and

(4) urges the President and the Secretary of State to utilize available authorities to impose sanctions on officials of the Government of Iran and other individuals directly responsible for serious human rights abuses, including abuses against the Baha'i community of Iran.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment to the resolution be agreed to, the resolution, as amended, be agreed to, the committee-reported amendment to the preamble be agreed to, the preamble, as amended, 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 committee-reported amendment was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 139), as amended, was agreed to.

The committee-reported amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 139

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2016, Congress declared that it deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Baha'i community and would hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Baha'i Faith;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2016 Annual Report states—

(1) "The Baha'i community, the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran, long has been subject to particularly severe religious freedom violations. The government views Baha'is, who number at least 300,000, as 'heretics' and consequently they face repression on the grounds of apostasy.";

(2) "Since 1979, authorities have killed or executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders, and more than 10,000 have been dismissed from government and university jobs."; and

(3) "Over the past 10 years, approximately 850 Baha'is have been arbitrarily arrested.";

Whereas the Department of State 2015 International Religious Freedom Report states—

(1) religious minorities in Iran "continued to face societal discrimination, especially the Bahai community, which reported continuing problems at different levels of society, including personal harassment.";

(2) the Government of Iran "continued to prohibit Bahais from officially assembling or maintaining administrative institutions, actively closed such institutions, harassed Bahais, and disregarded their property rights.";

(3) in Iran, "Bahai blood may be spilled with impunity, and Bahai families are not entitled to restitution" and "Bahais cannot receive compensation for injury or crimes committed against them and cannot inherit property.";

(4) the Government of Iran "requires universities to exclude Bahais from access to higher education or expel them if their religious affiliation becomes known."; and

(5) in Iran, "Bahais are banned from government employment" and "[t]here were reports of non-Bahais being pressured to refuse employment to Bahais or dismissing Bahais from their private sector jobs.";

Whereas, on June 8, 2016, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief issued a joint statement condemning the "wave of incitement of hatred of the Baha'i community reflected in speeches made by religious, judiciary and political officials in the Islamic Republic of Iran";

Whereas, on September 6, 2016, the United Nations Secretary-General issued a report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/71/374), which stated that "human rights violations have continued at an alarming rate";

Whereas, on December 17, 2016, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/70/179), which "[e]xpressed[d] serious concern about ongoing severe limitations and restrictions on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief and restrictions on the establishment of places of worship, as well as attacks against places of worship and burial, as well as other human rights violations, including but not limited to harassment, persecution and incitement to hatred that lead to violence against persons belonging to recognized and unrecognized religious minorities, including Christians, Jews, Sufi Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Zoroastrians and members of the Baha'i Faith and their defenders";

Whereas since May 2008, the Government of Iran has imprisoned the 7 members of the former ad hoc leadership group of the Baha'i community in Iran, known as the Yaran-i-Iran, or "friends of Iran"—Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naemi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm—and these individuals were convicted of charges including "spying for Israel, insulting religious sanctities, propaganda against the regime and spreading corruption on earth" and sentenced to 20-year prison terms, the longest sentences given to any prisoner of conscience in Iran at that time, now reportedly reduced to 10 years, and Mrs. Sabet and Mrs. Kamalabadi were released in September 2017 and October 2017, respectively, upon the completion of their sentences;

Whereas beginning in May 2011, officials of the Government of Iran in 4 cities conducted sweeping raids on the homes of dozens of individuals associated with the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education (referred to in this Resolution as "BIHE") and arrested and detained several educators associated with BIHE, with 16 BIHE educators ultimately sentenced to 4- or 5-year prison terms, 7 of whom remain in prison;

Whereas scores of Baha'i cemeteries have been attacked, and in 2014, Revolutionary Guards began excavating a Baha'i cemetery in Shiraz, which is the site of 950 graves, and built a cultural and sport center on the cemetery site;

Whereas the Baha'i International Community reported that there has been a recent surge in anti-Baha'i hate propaganda in Iranian state-sponsored media outlets, noting that—

(1) in 2010 and 2011, approximately 22 anti-Baha'i articles were appearing every month;

(2) in 2014, the number of anti-Baha'i articles rose to approximately 400 per month; and

(3) by 2016, the number of anti-Baha'i articles rose to approximately 1,500 per month;

Whereas there are currently 90 Baha'is in prison in Iran;

Whereas the Government of Iran is party to the International Covenants on Human Rights and is in violation of its obligations under such Covenants;

Whereas section 105 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8514) authorizes the President to impose sanctions on individuals "responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, the commission of serious human rights abuses against citizens of Iran or their family members on or after June 12, 2009"; and

Whereas the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-158) amends and expands the authorities established under the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-195) to sanction Iranian human rights abusers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights;

(2) calls on the Government of Iran to immediately release the 5 imprisoned Baha'i leaders, the 7 imprisoned Baha'i educators, and all other prisoners held solely on account of their religion;

(3) calls on the President and the Secretary of State, in cooperation with responsible nations, to immediately condemn the Government of Iran's continued violation of human rights and demand the immediate release of prisoners held solely on account of their religion; and

(4) urges the President and the Secretary of State to utilize available authorities to impose sanctions on officials of the Government of Iran and other individuals directly responsible for serious human rights abuses, including abuses against the Baha'i community of Iran.

CEILING FAN ENERGY CONSERVATION HARMONIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of S. 2030 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title. The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2030) to deem the compliance date for amended energy conservation standards for ceiling fan light kits to be January 21, 2020, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 2030) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2030

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 “Ceiling Fan Energy Conservation Harmonization Act”.

SEC. 2. COMPLIANCE DATE FOR AMENDED ENERGY CONSERVATION STANDARDS FOR CEILING FAN LIGHT KITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The compliance date for the amended energy conservation standards established for ceiling fan light kits in the final rule entitled “Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Ceiling Fan Light Kits” (81 Fed. Reg. 580 (January 6, 2016)) is deemed to be January 21, 2020.

(b) CONFORMING CHANGES.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Energy shall make such technical and conforming changes to any regulation, guidance document, or procedure as may be necessary to implement subsection (a).

EXTENDING THE PERIOD DURING WHICH VESSELS THAT ARE SHORTER THAN 79 FEET IN LENGTH AND FISHING VESSELS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO HAVE A PERMIT FOR DISCHARGES INCIDENTAL TO THE NORMAL OPERATION OF THE VESSEL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2273, introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2273) to extend the period during which vessels that are shorter than 79 feet in length and fishing vessels are not required to have a permit for discharges incidental to the normal operation of the vessel.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 2273) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2273

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF MORATORIUM.

Section 2(a) of Public Law 110-299 (33 U.S.C. 1342 note) is amended by striking “December 18, 2017” and inserting “January 19, 2018”.

RECOGNIZING THE SERIOUSNESS OF POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 336 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 336) recognizing the seriousness of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome and expressing support for the designation of the month of September 2018 as “Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Awareness Month.”

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the amendment to the resolution, which is at the desk, be agreed to, the resolution, as amended, be agreed to, the amendment to the preamble, which is at the desk, be agreed to, the preamble, as amended, 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 amendment (No. 1866) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the resolving clause)

On page 4, line 5, insert “and” after the semicolon.

On page 4, strike lines 6 through 7.

On page 4, line 8, strike “(D)” and insert “(C)”.

On page 4, line 15, strike “are afflicted with PCOS;” and insert “have PCOS; and”.

On page 4, strike lines 16 through 19.

On page 4, line 20, strike “(6)” and insert “(5)”.

The resolution (S. Res. 336), as amended, was agreed to.

The amendment (No. 1867) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the preamble)

In the seventh whereas clause of the preamble, strike “which” and insert “and”.

In the thirteenth whereas clause of the preamble, strike “up to 80 percent of” and insert “many”.

In the fifteenth whereas clause of the preamble, strike the semicolon at the end and insert “, which does not include the costs associated with treatment of comorbidities;”.

Strike the sixteenth whereas clause of the preamble.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 336

Whereas Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (referred to in this preamble as “PCOS”) is a common health problem among women and girls involving a hormonal imbalance;

Whereas there is no universal definition of PCOS, but researchers estimate that between 5,000,000 and 10,000,000 women in the United States are affected by PCOS;

Whereas PCOS can affect women from the onset of puberty and throughout the remainder of their lives;

Whereas the symptoms of PCOS include infertility, irregular or absent menstrual periods, acne, weight gain, thinning scalp hair, excessive facial and body hair growth, numerous small ovarian cysts, pelvic pain, and mental health problems;

Whereas women with PCOS have higher rates of psychosocial disorders, including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and eating disorders, and are at greater risk for suicide;

Whereas adolescents with PCOS often are not diagnosed;

Whereas PCOS causes metabolic dysfunction and insulin resistance, and can lead to type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, ob-

structive sleep apnea, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, and endometrial cancer at a young adult age;

Whereas PCOS is the most common cause of female infertility;

Whereas PCOS in pregnancy is associated with increased risk of gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, pregnancy-induced hypertension, preterm delivery, cesarean delivery, miscarriage, and fetal and infant death;

Whereas women with PCOS are at increased risk of developing high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke, heart disease—the leading cause of death among women—and have a 4 to 7 times higher risk of experiencing a heart attack compared to women of the same age who do not have PCOS;

Whereas women with PCOS have a more than 50 percent chance of developing type 2 diabetes or prediabetes before the age of 40;

Whereas women with PCOS may be at a higher risk for breast cancer and ovarian cancer, and have a 3 times higher risk for developing endometrial cancer, compared to women who do not have PCOS;

Whereas many women in the United States with PCOS are overweight or have obesity;

Whereas an estimated 50 percent of women with PCOS are undiagnosed, and many remain undiagnosed until they experience fertility difficulties or develop type 2 diabetes or other cardiometabolic disorders;

Whereas the costs involved with the diagnosis and management of PCOS to the healthcare system of the United States is over \$4,300,000,000 per year during the reproductive years of patients, which does not include the costs associated with treatment of comorbidities;

Whereas the cause of PCOS is unknown, but researchers have found strong links to significant insulin resistance, which affects up to 70 percent of women with PCOS, and genetic predisposition; and

Whereas there is no known cure for PCOS: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the seriousness of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (referred to in this resolving clause as “PCOS”);

(2) supports the goals of PCOS Awareness Month—

(A) to increase awareness of, and education about, PCOS among the general public, women, girls, and healthcare professionals;

(B) to improve diagnosis and treatment of PCOS; and

(C) to improve the quality of life and outcomes for women and girls with PCOS;

(3) recognizes the need for further research, improved treatment and care options, and a cure for PCOS;

(4) acknowledges the struggles affecting all women and girls residing within the United States who have PCOS; and

(5) encourages States, territories, and localities to support the goals of PCOS Awareness Month.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL MISSOURI WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM FOR WINNING THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION II WOMEN'S SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate 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) congratulating the University of Central Missouri women's soccer team for winning the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II Women's Soccer Championship at Swope Soccer Village in Kansas City, Missouri.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 364) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NATIONAL CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 327 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 327) designating the week of November 5 through 12, 2017, as "National Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Awareness Week."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today we are adopting S. Res. 327, the National Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Awareness Week resolution. In 2015 I sponsored a similar resolution, National Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Awareness Month, which was inspired by the story and memory of Amanda Hansen. Ms. Hansen was a 16-year-old, living in West Seneca, NY, when she tragically lost her life to carbon monoxide poisoning while attending a sleepover at a friend's home. Her heart-breaking story focused attention on this issue and spurred action to prevent future deaths from exposure to this deadly gas. As a long supporter of this resolution, I believe that every home across our great Nation should have carbon monoxide alarms installed that can detect and prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, a silent and odorless killer. By bringing awareness to carbon monoxide poisoning and reminding our fellow Americans to diligently check their home-detection systems, Americans can take the necessary actions to ensure the safety of their loved ones.

I again send my deepest condolences to the Hansen family for their loss and to the many American families who have suffered from the passing of their

loved ones due to carbon monoxide poisoning.

With the help of Amanda's spirit, I will continue to fight for congressional action to help prevent future tragedies. Today I stand proud to be a Member of a body that unanimously supports the adoption of National Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Awareness Week.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 327) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of November 9, 2017, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

EPS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 518.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 518) to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to exclude power supply circuits, drivers, and devices designed to be connected to, and power, light-emitting diodes or organic light-emitting diodes providing illumination from energy conservation standards for external power supplies, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There being no further debate, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 518) was passed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

INTERDICT ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2142, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2142) to improve the ability of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to interdict fentanyl, other synthetic opioids, and other narcotics and psychoactive substances that are illegally imported into the United States, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read three times and passed and the motion 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 bill (H.R. 2142) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

LAW ENFORCEMENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2228 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2228) to provide support for law enforcement agency efforts to protect the mental health and well-being of law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion 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 bill (H.R. 2228) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CONNECTED GOVERNMENT ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2331, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2331) to require a new or updated Federal website that is intended for use by the public to be mobile friendly, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 2331) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION, AFG, AND SAFER PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4661, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4661) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 4661) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2274

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2274) to provide for the compensation of Federal employees affected by lapses in appropriations.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces, on behalf of the majority Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 106-398, as amended by Public Law 108-7, and in consultation with the chairmen of the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the Senate Committee on Finance, the reappointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the United States-China Economic Security Review Commission: James M. Talent of Missouri, for a term expiring December 31, 2019.

The Chair announces, on behalf of the Democratic leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 106-398, as amended by Public Law 108-7, and in consultation with the chairmen of the Senate Committee on Armed Services

and the Senate Committee on Finance, the reappointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the United States-China Economic Security Review Commission: the Honorable Carte P. Goodwin of West Virginia, for a term beginning January 1, 2018 and expiring December 31, 2019.

ORDERS FOR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2017, THROUGH WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2018

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn, to then reconvene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted, on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Saturday, December 23, at 11 a.m.; Wednesday, December 27, at 10 a.m.; Friday, December 29, at 11:30 a.m.; and Tuesday, January 2, at 4 p.m. For the information of all Senators, when the Senate adjourns on Tuesday, January 2, 2018, it will next convene at 12 noon on January 3, pursuant to the Constitution. Further, 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, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, until 5 p.m.; finally, that following morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the Rood nomination, under the previous order.

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

ORDER VITIATED—S. 1447

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order with respect to S. 1447 be vitiated.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2017, AT 11 A.M.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 10:02 p.m., adjourned until Saturday, December 23, 2017, at 11 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

WILLIAM F. JUNG, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA, VICE ANNE C. CONWAY, RETIRED.

JILL AIKO Otake, OF HAWAII, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF HAWAII, VICE SUSAN OKI MOLLWAY, RETIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WILLIAM M. MCSWAIN, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT

OF PENNSYLVANIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE ZANE DAVID MEMEGER, RESIGNED.

BILLY J. WILLIAMS, OF OREGON, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE S. AMANDA MARSHALL, RESIGNED

DISCHARGED NOMINATIONS

The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works was discharged from further consideration of the following nominations by unanimous consent and the nominations were confirmed:

KENNETH E. ALLEN, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2021.

A. D. FRAZIER, OF GEORGIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2022.

JEFFREY SMITH, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2022.

JAMES R. THOMPSON III, OF ALABAMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2021.

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE FEDERAL COCHAIRPERSON, DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 21, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ROBERT CHARROW, OF MARYLAND, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

ROBERT P. STORCH, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY.

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

HESTER MARIA PEIRCE, OF OHIO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 5, 2020.

ROBERT J. JACKSON, JR., OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 5, 2019.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

KATHERINE BRUNETT MCGUIRE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

SUZANNE ISRAEL TUFTS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

KENNETH J. BRAITHWAITE, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY.

M. LEE MCLENNY, OF WASHINGTON, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY.

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BROCK D. BIERMAN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY FORD, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND NON-PROLIFERATION).

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

TIMOTHY R. PETTY, OF INDIANA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

LINDA CAPUANO, OF TEXAS, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

KATE S. O'SCANNLAIN, OF MARYLAND, TO BE SOLICITOR FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.

PRESTON RUTLEDGE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JOHNNY COLLETT, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

JOHN G. VONGLIS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

LEONARD WOLFSON, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

IRVING DENNIS, OF OHIO, TO BE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DOUGLAS WEBSTER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

JON J. RYCHALSKI, OF MONTANA, TO BE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

MORRIS K. UDALL AND STEWART L. UDALL FOUNDATION

TADD M. JOHNSON, OF MINNESOTA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MORRIS K. UDALL AND STEWART L. UDALL FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2022.

LISA JOHNSON-BILLY, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MORRIS K. UDALL AND STEWART L. UDALL FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING AUGUST 25, 2018.

LISA JOHNSON-BILLY, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MORRIS K. UDALL AND STEWART L. UDALL FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING AUGUST 25, 2024.

DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE FEDERAL COCHAIRPERSON, DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY.

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

KENNETH E. ALLEN, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2021.

A. D. FRAZIER, OF GEORGIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2022.

JEFFREY SMITH, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2022.

JAMES R. THOMPSON III, OF ALABAMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2021.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

NAFTA

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, twenty-three years ago, the North American Free Trade Agreement revolutionized trade and investment between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. We share thousands of miles of border with Canada and Mexico. They are our neighbors and our natural partners in trade and security. This partnership has been shaped by NAFTA.

I am a strong supporter of free trade. America's strength is closely connected to its economic well-being. When we break down trade barriers, American trade and American jobs increase. Trade is the lifeblood of my great home state of Texas. Last year in Texas almost one million jobs were supported by trade.

Texas has been the top exporting state in the U.S. for 14 consecutive years. The overwhelming majority of Texas exporters are not big corporations: 93 percent of Texas exporters are small- and medium-sized businesses. In my district in Houston, over half of the economy depends on trade. Houston has one of the largest ports in the world and is the oil and gas capital of the world. And guess where we Texans export the most—Mexico and Canada. Our NAFTA partners. But, Texas is just one of the many states that rely on NAFTA to fuel its economy. Study after study has shown that increased trade leads to increased jobs for Americans. More jobs mean more wealth for the average American citizen.

NAFTA supports 14 million U.S. jobs. Thanks to NAFTA, trade between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada has tripled. Nearly every industry is affected in one way or another by NAFTA. The U.S. economy needs a strong NAFTA. But free trade agreements like NAFTA do more than just grow our economy. Trade is one of our best tools of foreign policy. We have seen the connection between free trade and freedom, opportunity, and prosperity again and again. When we signed NAFTA, Mexico was a developing country. Its economy was one of the most closed in the world.

Now, thanks in part to NAFTA, Mexico has an open economy valued at \$2.2 trillion. This growth has made Mexico a more stable neighbor. This increased trade between our three countries has also deepened our ties with Mexico and Canada, allowing us to work together on many critical issues.

Today, we cooperate with the Mexican government on issues of border security, immigration, and the fight against organized crime and drug trafficking. Our southern border security depends on our joint efforts with Mexico. Cooperation with Canada also improved due to NAFTA. Our forces train and work together to defend North America. We fight side by side against national security threats like ISIS and partner as NATO members. These are some

of the most critical issues to our national security and to the security of our world.

That brings me to the reason we are all here today; to address the renegotiation of this critical free trade agreement. A lot has changed in 23 years. The internet has transformed the way companies do business. Reforms in Mexico have created new opportunities for U.S. businesses. The renegotiation presents an opportunity to update the agreement in areas like energy, e-commerce, customs and trade facilitation, and many others to strengthen and promote trade. While there is a lot of opportunity to strengthen the agreement, there is also the risk of hurting U.S. businesses and workers.

Hundreds of thousands of jobs across North America could be at risk if we pull out of NAFTA, or if we weaken the agreement. We could also do damage to our partnerships with Mexico and Canada that have made North America so strong. There has been harsh criticism of NAFTA for decades. But we must separate the rhetoric from the facts. The fact is that NAFTA has benefited all three of our countries.

So, I encourage the administration to strengthen and modernize NAFTA. There is always room for improvement. We have a rare opportunity here to rewrite the rules of North American trade. But we must take this opportunity to rewrite them for the better. It is important to the U.S. economy and national security that throughout the renegotiations the administration focuses on reaching an agreement that promotes free trade.

We are sending a message to our current and future trading partners through this renegotiation. The U.S. should send a strong signal of our support for free trade. A strong U.S. economy depends on a strong framework for free trade. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses how the administration can strengthen NAFTA.

HONORING BENJAMIN DUNCAN

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Benjamin Duncan. Benjamin 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 1376, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Benjamin has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Benjamin 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, Benjamin has served as the Senior Patrol Leader, become a Brotherhood Member of the Order of the Arrow, and earned the rank

of Fire Builder in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say. Benjamin has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Benjamin designed and completed 15 wooden benches for an outdoor worship area for the Antioch Community Church in Kansas City, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Benjamin Duncan for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1,
TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Republican tax bill and to the misguided priorities that the GOP has brought to policymaking this Congress.

There was a time when it was taken for granted that Congress would wait for Congress' independent scorekeeper to evaluate the impact of any legislation on the deficit or the budget before passing any laws. People knew that the deficit mattered to the government's ability to provide for our children and grandchildren, and to the economy their ability to provide for themselves. Republicans, especially, professed to know that the deficit mattered.

It was especially unthinkable that Congress would pass important legislation, like tax reform, without waiting for a cost estimate of the bill. As recently as March, my colleague Rep. BRADY said that economic growth from any tax reform package would need to be "not economic growth judged by us, but by the Independent Joint Committee on Taxation."

The GOP should care about the deficit. We haven't been able to reauthorize CHIP funding since it expired months ago, because Republicans won't support health insurance for children without funding offsets. If only they had the same concerns when it comes to tax cuts for their donors and for President Trump.

Republicans will start to care about the deficit again when Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, or other programs for the low-income are debated by Congress. Just like CHIP, these programs cost far less than the more than \$1.5 trillion that this tax cut will cost, but they might be too expensive for the GOP.

There was also a time not too long ago when Republicans, as much as Democrats, legislated for the common good, or at least their conception of it. It's clear that those times are past.

• 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.

HONORING THE LIFE OF GILBERTO
F. OLIVA, SR.

HON. MATT GAETZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the life of the premium cigar patriarch, Mr. Gilberto Oliva, founder of Oliva Cigar Co. Gilberto passed away peacefully in a hospital in South Miami on Saturday, December 16, 2017, surrounded by his family and close friends.

As a young tobacco farmer in Cuba, Gilberto built his endeavors on the blueprint of the American Dream. As an early adult, he moved from his family farm to pursue tobacco trading. The growing conflict under the Cuban dictatorship forced Mr. Oliva to flee to Nicaragua where he became a pioneer in tobacco cultivation.

While Nicaragua was his home, Gilberto's business grew all over the world, including Honduras, Mexico and the Philippines. His product quickly became known around the world for its quality. In 1995, he established his own brand of cigar, and in 2006, he launched the Oliva Serie V, which Cigar Aficionado Magazine named Cigar of the Year in 2014.

In early 2016, Mr. Oliva was honored by the Asociación Nicaragüense de Tabacaleros, the Nicaraguan Tobacco Association, with a lifetime achievement award. Yet for all his many successes, he never forgot his roots. He yearned for a free Cuba, and he instilled in his children a respect for personal responsibility and hard work.

Gilberto is succeeded by his wife Carmen, his five children—including my former colleague and friend, Florida House Representative Jose Oliva—and his fourteen grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I want to recognize the life of Gilberto F. Oliva. He was a great man, a world leader in the field of cigar manufacturing, and the patriarch of a wonderful family.

JIM CRITCHLEY'S RETIREMENT

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize and celebrate Fire Chief, Jim Critchley, on his retirement from the Tucson Fire Department.

Fire Chief Critchley began his Emergency Service career in 1982 with an EMT class. He worked in a few private agencies as an instructor, firefighter, EMT and security guard. He joined the Tucson Fire Department in 1988 and was promoted through the ranks first as a Paramedic, Captain, Training Captain, Operations Battalion Chief, Training Chief, Operations Deputy Chief, Assistant Chief of Training and Emergency Management and then, in 2011, became the Fire Chief.

Since 1992, Mr. Critchley has been an active representative on the State Fire Training Association and the Arizona Fire Chiefs Association. He served on the Western Fire Chiefs

Association board as State Director, Vice President and President from 2003 through 2012. He also served on the International Association of Fire Chiefs board until 2014.

Fire Chief Critchley received a MBA from the University of Arizona, a Bachelor's degree in Fire Service Management from the Arizona State University, and an AAS in Fire Science from Pima Community College. In 2008, he was selected as Chief Fire Officer of the Year by the Arizona Fire Chiefs Association. Most recently in September 2017, Jim was inducted into the Arizona Fire Service Hall of Fame. Jim is married and has three children. We would like to thank Fire Chief Jim Critchley for his service and dedication to the city of Tucson and the state of Arizona.

HONORING JACEN HAEFNER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Jacen Haefner. Jacen 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 264, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Jacen has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Jacen 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, Jacen has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Jacen Haefner 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 THE NORTH
CAROLINA A&T FOOTBALL TEAM
FOR THEIR HISTORIC SEASON
AND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
WIN**

HON. TED BUDD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the undefeated MEAC and 2017 Celebration Bowl Champions. I'm speaking of course of the North Carolina A&T Aggie football team.

Last week, as time expired in the Celebration Bowl, the Aggies made their nation proud with a last second touchdown to secure their second Celebration Bowl victory in just three years. And with that win, the Aggies became the first MEAC team to go undefeated as they won their second HBCU national title under head coach Rod Broadway.

Mr. Speaker, 'A Champion Has Risen' indeed, and that champion, is the A&T Aggie Football Team.

Congratulations to the esteemed Dr. Harold Martin, Sr., to Coach Broadway and his team, and also to the offensive and defensive MVP's

of the game, Marquell Cartwright and Mac McCain for their performances.

I am honored to represent this historic and honored institution in Washington, and they have made me, their community, and most importantly, the 'Aggie nation' proud with their win.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in honoring North Carolina A&T for their historic season and national championship win.

SAUDI TEXTBOOKS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is time to hold the Saudis accountable for playing the role of both arsonists and firefighters when it comes to terror. Saudi Arabia is a crucial ally in counterterrorism. Yet at the same time, their educational curriculum promotes hatred and violence towards other religions. This is the very rhetoric that breeds terrorism.

For nearly 15 years, Saudi Arabia has pledged to remove all extremist content from their school textbooks. Yet to this day textbooks include material that, for example, encourages "fighting" any infidel who refuses to submit to the supremacy of Islam. Another example comes from a textbook on Islamic culture that teaches that "Christianity in its current state is an invalid, perverted religion." A high school textbook on monotheism further calls all "infidels," as "enemies of Islam and its adherents."

And this is just a taste of the extremist content in Saudi textbooks. A tenth-grade textbook claims that Zionism spreads "drugs and sexually transmitted diseases . . . in many Islamic countries." Even more, a middle school textbook glorifies jihad, instructing students that those fighting jihad "should be given transportation, weapons, food and anything else they may need to continue their jihad." Content in Saudi textbooks is so extreme that ISIS used official Saudi textbooks for its schools in 2015 until they could publish their own materials.

The problem is compounded when we realize that these textbooks are not just used in the Kingdom. Saudi educational materials are exported throughout the world. This kind of indoctrination at home and abroad runs counter to Saudi Arabia's efforts in counterterrorism and our crucial cooperation with Saudi Arabia in the fight against terrorism. Saudi Arabia cannot be allowed to continue promoting textbooks that include language that is intolerant, furthers conspiracy theories, and encourages violence towards others.

That's why Representative KEATING and I, as Ranking Member and Chair of the Terrorism Subcommittee, have introduced H.R. 4549, the Saudi Educational Transparency and Reform Act. This bill will require the State Department to conduct an annual review of Saudi Arabia's textbooks. This review will show if Riyadh is fully implementing its repeated commitments to removing extremist content. It will also help the U.S. decide if we should continue issuing a waiver for Saudi Arabia as a country of particular concern for its religious freedom pursuant to the International Religious Freedom Act. Terrorism has

long threatened both our own country and Saudi Arabia. The fight to combat this threat demands that we work to eliminate all sources of radicalization and incitement. A complete revision of Saudi Arabia's textbooks is a critical piece of this mission.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING KEVIN LYNCH

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend, Kevin Lynch, who, following a five-year battle with cancer, passed away this past week.

Kevin was a great Hoosier, a public servant, a tremendous leader, and a tireless advocate in advancing southeastern Indiana. He served as Dearborn County Commissioner and as the president of the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments.

Kevin was a giant Reds fan and a loyal friend with a positive spirit, quick with a smile and an encouraging word.

Kevin served Lawrenceburg and Dearborn County with pride, but his most important priority was his family. He was the loving husband to Mary Jo (Joey) for 27 years and the proud father of Michael. My thoughts and prayers are with the entire Lynch family and all those who knew Kevin.

Congratulations to my good friend Kevin on a tremendous life well-lived.

Godspeed.

HONORING CADE OSMONSON

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Cade Osmonson. Cade 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 96, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Cade has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Cade 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, Cade has served as his troop's Senior Patrol Leader. Cade has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Cade refurbished a church in McFall, Missouri, replacing the roof of the portico, repainting the doors and windows, and power washing the outside of the church.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Cade Osmonson for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES B. RENACCI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 702, and NAY on Roll Call No. 703.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, on Monday I missed three votes. I wish to state for the record how I would have voted had I been present: Roll Call No. 685—NO, Roll Call No. 686—YES, Roll Call No. 687—YES.

HONORING LEVI PARNACOTT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Levi Parnacott. Levi 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 1376, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Levi has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Levi 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, Levi has served as the Senior Patrol Leader, become a Brotherhood Member of the Order of the Arrow, and earned the rank of Fire Builder in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say. Levi has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Levi installed an entry door into the garage of Immacolata Manor in Liberty, Missouri, and also refinished the entry room by hanging new drywall, mudding, taping, sanding and then painting the room.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Levi Parnacott for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TRIBUTE TO HILDA EISEN

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Hilda Eisen, who passed away last month in California at the age of 100. Hilda owned and operated Norco Ranch for many years and she will be deeply missed.

Prior to immigrating to the United States, Hilda was born and raised in the Polish village

of Izbica-Kujawska. During the Nazi occupation of Poland, Hilda was imprisoned in a ghetto before escaping to hide with Jewish Partisans in the forest. Tragically, Hilda's entire family was killed during the war. Her classmate and future husband, Harry, survived the Auschwitz concentration camp before reconnecting with Hilda. Together, they moved to America in 1948 where they would invest their savings to buy 100 chickens and start a business in California.

In the early days of the family business, Harry would ride around town on his bicycle selling eggs. In a short amount of time, the business outgrew its facility and the Eisens purchased a five-acre ranch in Norco, California to build a chicken farm. Over the years, the business would be known as Norco Ranch and grow into a major supplier of eggs to regional supermarket chains. The business had nearly 400 employees before it was sold to Land-O-Lakes in 2000. In 2012, Harry passed away at the age of 95. Before Harry's passing, the Eisens became involved with the Lodzer Organization of Southern California, a group of Holocaust survivors that supported Jewish charities locally and in Israel.

I had the distinct privilege of knowing Hilda for many years and I will deeply miss her. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the entire Eisen family, including her three daughters: Ruth Eisen, Mary Cramer, and Frances Miller. Although Hilda may be gone, her selfless dedication to our nation and the human spirit will long be remembered.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from the Chamber on Monday, December 18. Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote 685 and "yea" on rollcall votes 686 and 687.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARK POCAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, during my medical recovery, I missed the following Roll Call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted:

November 28, 2017: Yea on Roll Call No. 638; No on Roll Call No. 639.

November 29, 2017: No on Roll Call No. 640; No on Roll Call No. 641.

November 30, 2017: Yea on Roll Call No. 642; No on Roll Call No. 643; No on Roll Call No. 644; No on Roll Call No. 645; Yea on Roll Call No. 646; Yea on Roll Call No. 647; No on Roll Call No. 648; and Yea on Roll Call No. 649.

December 1, 2017: Yea on Roll Call No. 650; No on Roll Call No. 651; Yea on Roll Call No. 652.

December 4, 2017: No on Roll Call No. 653; Yea on Roll Call No. 654.

December 5, 2017: Yea on Roll Call No. 655; Yea on Roll Call No. 656; Yea on Roll Call No. 657.

December 6, 2017: No on Roll Call No. 658; No on Roll Call No. 659; No on Roll Call No. 660; Yea on Roll Call No. 661; Yea on Roll Call No. 662; No on Roll Call No. 663; and Yea on Roll Call No. 664.

December 7, 2017: No on Roll Call No. 665; No on Roll Call No. 666; Yea on Roll Call No. 667; Yea on Roll Call No. 668; Yea on Roll Call No. 669; No on Roll Call No. 670; and Yea on Roll Call No. 671.

December 11, 2017: Yea on Roll Call No. 672; Yea on Roll Call No. 673.

December 12, 2017: Yea on Roll Call No. 674; No on Roll Call No. 675.

HONORING JOEL PRIEST

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Joel Priest. Joel 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 495, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Joel has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Joel 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, Joel has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Joel Priest 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 THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HYDRAULIC INSTITUTE

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, almost every member of Congress says a need in their district is more good jobs. Good business people that provide good jobs are not recognized enough. That is why I rise today to recognize the 100th Anniversary of the Hydraulic Institute and pay tribute to the exceptional role that pump manufacturers have played in improving the delivery of water to American homes, American industry and American agriculture over the past century. Today, pump systems touch the lives of every American and the Hydraulic Institute has a central role in developing the policies and standards needed for safe, reliable and efficient pump operations.

On April 18, 1917, the nation's leading pump manufacturers met in the La Salle Hotel in Chicago for the purpose of forming a trade association that would "promote friendship and cooperation among manufacturers in improving overall pump performance." The Hydraulic Institute provides the technical expertise required to set pump standards that reflect the evolving priorities of society.

In recent years, energy efficiency has emerged as a national priority and the Hydraulic Institute has worked closely with the United States Department of Energy to improve the efficiency of pumping systems. These systems now account for over 20 percent of domestic electrical energy use and the standards, laboratory testing and labelling advanced by the Hydraulic Institute will ultimately save consumers and businesses billions of dollars.

Pumping systems protect our communities from flooding and fires, deliver drinking water to our homes, irrigate our farms and bring water and fuel to American manufacturers.

As the Co-Chair of the Congressional Clean Water Caucus, I am keenly aware of the role that pump manufacturers play in providing safe, clean, affordable water to our citizens. It is my honor to stand today to acknowledge the 100th Anniversary of the Hydraulic Institute and to wish their continued success in advancing standards that improve the lives of every American.

TAX BILL

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I would like to include into the RECORD the following article:

TAX BILL WOULD TRIGGER CUTS TO VITAL PROGRAMS

[Nov. 14, 2017]

The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (SPAYGO) created a budgetary enforcement regime to offset net deficit increases that would otherwise result from new laws affecting direct spending or revenues. SPAYGO in essence keeps a running tab of the deficit effects of all such laws, including laws enacted through the budget reconciliation process. If, at the end of a session of Congress, the SPAYGO scorecard shows a net debit for the upcoming year, numerous direct spending programs will get hit with an across-the-board cut to "pay for" that debit.

The Republican tax bill released last week would increase deficits by \$1.5 trillion over ten years. If Congress does not enact offsetting budgetary savings or provide some other remedy, enactment of this bill will trigger massive automatic program cuts every year for the next ten years. The tax bill's deficit effects would trigger SPAYGO cuts that would lead to outright elimination of many programs and still would not be enough to offset the tax bill's costs in full.

Damaging SPAYGO cuts resulting from the tax bill would include:

A 4 percent reduction in Medicare payments. Over ten years, this would add up to hundreds of billions of dollars. (SPAYGO caps the Medicare cut at 4 percent.)

A doubling of loan origination fees for federal student loans, making college more expensive for millions of students.

Elimination of funding for programs subject to uncapped SPAYGO across-the-board reductions. Some of the largest programs that would be zeroed out include:

Social Services Block Grants, which are flexible grants to states. They support a variety of initiatives serving low-income and vulnerable individuals such as adult protective services, special services to persons with disabilities, adoption services, case management, health-related services, transportation support, foster care, substance abuse serv-

ices, home-delivered meals, independent and transitional living, and employment-related services.

Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants, which help states assist individuals with physical or mental impairments in developing new work skills and finding employment.

Commodity Credit Corporation farm price supports, which help stabilize and support farmer's incomes.

Crime Victims Fund, which provides compensation to victims of crime and supports victims' services.

Prevention and Public Health Fund, which expands investments in programs to improve health, primarily through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Trade Adjustment Assistance, which helps workers who have lost their jobs due to trade-related circumstances, such as an increase in imports.

HONORING CHAUNCEY LEE WAGNER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Chauncey Lee Wagner. Chance 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 1096, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Chance has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Chance 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, Chance has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Chauncey Lee Wagner for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TRIBUTE TO A WORDSMITH

HON. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an integral part of my communications team, Renn Osborne. Renn proved to be a valuable asset and a dedicated team player who helped articulate the mission of the Homeland Security Committee and our Members. He first served as an intern in the Committee's press office, then as a Press Assistant, and finally rising to the position of Deputy Press Secretary.

Renn effortlessly juggled print media requests with the daily challenges of the Committee's fast-paced press office. His sound judgment, quick action, and strong political acumen helped shape the Committee's message development. Renn was crucial in communicating the Committee's actions to help protect the American people.

His abilities were on display at the 53rd United States-Mexico Interparliamentary Group Meeting in Mexico City this past summer. The meeting transpired at a pivotal time, and Renn's efforts were key in communicating the close historic, economic, and cultural bonds that have been forged as a result of the U.S.-Mexico relationship over the past 192 years.

I am pleased that Renn has continued his public service on Capitol Hill as the speechwriter for Senator ROB PORTMAN. I look forward to seeing him continue to grow and develop as a wordsmith and as a communicator who is happy to serve his fellow citizens.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1,
TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the hard work of those who made the Conference Report possible.

Thank you to the expert drafters at the House and Senate offices of legislative counsel who worked together on the Conference report after having worked for so many months with the House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee on the underlying bills: Henry Christrup, Scott Probst, Fiona Heckscher, and House Legislative Counsel Wade Ballou; and Mark McGunagle, Allison Otto, Vince Gaianni and former Senate Legislative Counsel Jim Fransen.

Thank you also to the hardworking team of JCT economists, lawyers, and accountants, who support all aspects of our work on tax legislation:

Nick Bull, Jim Cilke, Tim Dowd, Chris Giosa, Lucas Goodman, Rob Harvey, Tom Holtmann, Paul Landefeld, Joe LeCates, Kathleen Mackie, Jamie McGuire, Pam Moomau, Rachel Moore, Jake Mortenson, Chris Overend, Brandon Pecoraro, Zach Richards, Heidi Schramm, David Splinter, Lori Stuntz, Brent Trigg, Jeff Arbeit, Nita Asher, Lillian Aston, Paul Chen, Gordon Clay, Adam Gropper, Andrew Grossman, Nick Gutmann, Viva Hammer, Heather Harman, Harold Hirsch, Deirdre James, Sally Kwak, David Lenter, Bert Lue, Tricia McDermott, Paul McLaughlin, Veena Murthy, Cecily Rock, Kristine Roth, Karl Russo, Natalie Tucker, and Kashi Way.

And a special thank you to JCT chief of staff Tom Barthold for his excellent leadership of this outstanding team.

HONORING JOHN GIBSON

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize John Gibson. John 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 96, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

John has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years John 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, John has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. John organized and led a blood drive at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Gallatin, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending John Gibson for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING MAYOR SUZETTE
COOKE

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and congratulate Suzette Cooke, the Mayor of the City of Kent, on her retirement. The citizens of Kent will miss her commitment, unstoppable work ethic, and passion.

For many decades prior to serving as Mayor, Suzette Cooke was a devoted public servant. She was the Executive Director of the Renton and Kent Chambers of Commerce, the Economic Development Manager for the City of Burien, the Recreation Supervisor for Seattle Parks, and Director of the Kent Senior Center. She also served three terms in the Washington State House of Representatives, where she chaired the Committee on Children and Family Services.

Under her leadership as Mayor, Kent has grown from a small, farming town, to a sizable city boasting a population of 125,000. Mayor Cooke has created a welcoming environment for people from a range of different backgrounds in a city that has become one of the most diverse in the country.

In addition to Suzette Cooke's duties as Mayor, she has remained an active volunteer and has served with organizations that help better the community she loves. Impressively, she has chaired the Kent Firemen's Relief and Pension Fund Board, the King County Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee, and the South County Area Transportation Board. She has also been a member of the King County's Regional Transit Task Force and the King County Board of Health.

On top of her professional and civic engagements, Mayor Cooke has also found the time to remain an avid recreationist and has summited eight of Washington State's tallest mountains. It seems clear that, for her, no challenge is insurmountable.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I recognize Mayor Suzette Cooke on her retirement. It has been a privilege to work with dedicated leaders like Mayor Cooke. I thank her for her service to her community and wish her all the best in retirement.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF
ARTHUR RADFORD BAKER, JR.

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate a distinguished public servant, and one of the "dedicated men and women of law enforcement." Mr. Arthur Radford Baker, Jr., will retire from the Federal Bureau of Investigation on December 31 of this year, after 30 years of service.

During his tenure at the FBI, Art has served in various capacities. He has led colleagues as a supervisor on counterintelligence and espionage matters out of the Baltimore Field Office, using sophisticated investigative techniques straight out of Hollywood spy thrillers. He has investigated organized crime, including La Cosa Nostra and Asian and Russian syndicates, out of the Detroit Field Office. Art even attained the highest marksmanship award the Bureau has to offer, qualifying for his name to be enshrined on a wall at Quantico as part of the FBI's elite "Possible Club." In large part, though, it has been Art's service to our country as a Congressional detailee that stands out as one his fondest memories, including many legislative successes to which he contributed that are now memorialized and framed as "redlines" of passed laws.

Art served faithfully for nearly 3 years as a detailee from the FBI to the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations. During his tenure, Art was a consistently reliable and capable staffer and legal counsel, and a great colleague. He was particularly beloved by our departed colleague and friend, the gentleman from North Carolina, Congressman Howard Coble.

In his work at the Judiciary Committee, Art staffed Chairman Lamar Smith and Subcommittee Chairman Coble for a multitude of assignments, including issues that spanned a spectrum of pressing matters, including Patriot Act hearings and legislation on child exploitation and trafficking. Art was a dedicated, crucial staffer upon whom Members could rely.

After returning to the FBI, Art served with distinction in the Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA). His service in OCA spanned a transitional era in American history, including the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the espionage leaks of Robert Hanssen, and the resulting reformulation of the FBI. Through it all, Art was a vital cog in our nation's premier law enforcement agency, and a steadfast friend to the Judiciary Committee. It is often said in Washington that legislating is the "art" of the possible. How appropriate that we say that today.

Throughout his career, Art Baker has been a loyal public servant. For years, my staff has relied on his insight, his wise counsel, and his consistent ability to make us laugh. Many marvel at his various skills and interests, earning him a legitimate moniker as a "Renaissance Man." We expect that the forthcoming stage of his life in retirement will not be any less varied or adventurous.

I salute Art for his many years of distinguished service.

HONORING ROBERT PARTRIDGE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Robert Partridge. Robert 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 1096, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Robert has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Robert 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, Robert has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Robert Partridge for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

ENDING SECRECY ABOUT WORK-
PLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT
ACT**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Ending Secrecy About Workplace Sexual Harassment Act.

We are experiencing a national moment of reckoning. Millions of people who have been victims of sexual misconduct in the workplace are telling their stories and initiating a movement to create real change. We have an obligation to listen to all those who have come forward and recognize that many are still suffering in silence. And we also have an obligation to take action to make things better going forward.

The Ending Secrecy About Workplace Sexual Harassment Act will help lift the shroud of secrecy surrounding these cases that have concealed them for years or even decades by requiring companies to annually report all out-of-court settlements involving claims of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and assault to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

When employers don't have to disclose these internal settlements and there is no public record about abuse, it can cause great harm to victims, other employees, and even the public at large. More complete data and a transparency requirement will help identify institutional problems that should elicit further investigation by EEOC. This bill also has the potential to spark a change in the workplace, inspiring corporate leaders to focus on prevention if they know that complete secrecy is no longer an option regardless of how a claim is addressed and resolved. With total secrecy, companies have absolutely no incentive to focus on preventing sexual misconduct if they know they will never be held accountable.

In 2015, there were nearly 30,000 reports filed with the EEOC involving sexual harass-

ment. That is one-third of the total harassment reports filed that year alone. If companies had to report all of their private settlements, that number would likely increase. The EEOC can also use these reports to take action, if appropriate, and go after violators.

I believe this is an important first step toward increasing accountability in the private sector to ensure a safer, fairer workplace for everyone. I thank my colleagues, Representatives KHANNA, NORTON, CUMMINGS, DAVID SCOTT, SHEA-PORTER, RASKIN, CONNOLLY, SUOZZI, KUSTER, MOORE, DINGELL, and PAL-LONE for joining me as original cosponsors on this legislation, and hope that more members will support as well.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES B. RENACCI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 697; YEA on Roll Call No. 698; YEA on Roll Call No. 699; YEA on Roll Call No. 700; and NAY on Roll Call No. 701.

HONORING SERGEANT BRITTE'S
CAREER OF SERVICE**HON. DOUG COLLINS**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Sergeant Joseph Britte, Jr. After protecting our neighbors for more than 20 years, Sergeant Britte will be retiring from the Gainesville Police Department.

On a leap of faith, Sergeant Britte and his family moved from their home in Providence, Rhode Island to Gainesville in 1996. Upon arrival, he joined the Gainesville Police Department and began a job of public service that has characterized his life.

As a law enforcement official, Sergeant Britte has demonstrated a servant's heart and professional excellence. He dedicated countless hours to training and eventually earned a Bachelor's and Master's degree in organizational leadership and criminal justice.

When he wasn't on duty, Sergeant Britte still took an interest in the wellbeing of those around him. He mentored local students and taught self-defense classes all across Hall County.

Mr. Speaker, my staff and I have had the privilege of getting to know this man over the years. We believe that Hall County residents looking for examples of leadership and empathy should look no farther than our friend, Joe Britte.

I thank this officer for his service to Gainesville and congratulate him on the adventures that lie ahead.

COMMENDING NORTH JERSEY
MAYORS**HON. JOSH GOTTHEIMER**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the mayors of North Jersey, who convened last weekend for my Fifth District Mayors Summit. I'm proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with these local leaders to help save residents' property tax dollars, improve our schools, and get police and firefighters the tools and resources they need to protect our communities from crime and terror.

I am humbled every day to have the opportunity to work with our mayors. This past weekend, I watched first-hand as they put party aside and worked across the aisle to help claw back federal tax dollars in their towns—an urgent need, now more than ever, given the tax hike we are facing.

In North Jersey, we are paying far too much in taxes, and not getting enough in return. My District pays some of the highest taxes in the nation; yet, we only get 33 cents back for every dollar that we send to Washington. Compare that to "Moocher States," like Mississippi, which gets \$4.38 on the dollar. These states are giving themselves relief and sticking New Jersey with the bill.

The Tax Hike Bill passed yesterday is only going make matters worse—gutting our State and Local Tax deductions, increasing our taxes, and lowering our property values. We must continue working hard at the local level to blunt the impact of this harmful legislation and stop New Jersey from becoming America's piggy bank.

In New Jersey, we must be vigilant about clawing back as many federal tax dollars as possible to boost our return on investment for roads and bridges, for firefighters and law enforcement, and the resources they need to help fight crime and lone wolf and homegrown terror. Working closely with my office, and my Director of Return on Investment, these mayors have already seen record successes this year to support our cops, firefighters, and towns. For example, in Paramus, the police department will be hiring five new post-9/11 veterans as police officers, thanks to a \$1.875 million federal COPS grant. Harrington Park also brought back nearly \$213,000 in AFG grants to help protect firefighters and our families. These are dollars that would be going to Alabama and Mississippi if we didn't fight to claw them back here. Our bipartisan work together is about fighting for North Jersey and helping our residents reduce their property tax burden.

I'm leaving no stone unturned and hope that by shining a light on these public servants, our mayors can build on their success and save more money for their towns and taxpayers. Getting this done is all about problem solving, and reaching across the aisle to do what's right for our communities. These are not Democratic or Republican issues; they are about what's best for New Jersey.

This holiday season, I am thankful for the twenty-one mayors and leaders who attended our summit, rolled up their sleeves, and put in the weekend hours to help their towns. Countless other mayors, councilmen, and councilwomen across the District have also worked

around the clock. Currently, as we head into the new year, I rededicate myself to being their partner in making towns and communities even safer, more prosperous, and more affordable.

Alpine Mayor Paul Tomasko
Bergenfield Mayor Norman Schmelz
Dumont Councilman Carl Manna
Emerson Mayor Lou Lamatina
Fair Lawn Councilwoman Lisa Swain
Franklin Lakes Mayor Frank Bivona
Glen Rock Mayor Bruce Packer
Hackensack Mayor John LaBrosse
Harrington Park Mayor Paul Hoeschler
Mahwah Mayor Bill Laforet
Montvale Mayor Mike Ghassali
Oakland Mayor Linda Schwager
Paramus Mayor Rich LaBarbiera
Park Ridge Mayor Keith Misciagna
Ramsey Mayor Deirdre Dillon
River Edge Councilman Thomas Papaleo
Rochelle Park Committeeman Michael Warren
Teaneck Mayor Mohammed Hameeduddin
Westwood Mayor John Birkner
Wyckoff Mayor Rudy Boonstra
Wyckoff Administrator Bob Shannon

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF WALTER HOWLETT, JR.

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life and legacy of the late Walter Howlett, Jr. Walter was a beloved member of the Birmingham community, investing not only in the city's business development but in community development as well.

Walter was born to Walter Howlett, Sr. and Laura Richardson Howlett, the second of seven children. Walter grew up understanding the importance of a good education. His parents often stressed that a quality education was the key to improving one's lot in life.

A proud graduate of A.H. Parker High School in Birmingham, Walter took his parents' advice to heart, holding dreams of attaining a business degree. But those dreams were put on hold when he was drafted into the United States Army shortly after finishing high school.

After serving for a year in the military, Walter returned home and completed his college education. Attending both Jefferson State Community College and the University of Alabama in Birmingham, Walter attained a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and went on to earn his Certified Public Accountant license.

As his parents had said, Walter's education would indeed impact his lot in life. Soon after graduation he became a beloved protégé of civil rights activist, A.G. Gaston. Mr. Gaston created the first black bank and the first African American funeral homes along with countless other firsts for the black community.

It was his endearment and admiration for Mr. Gaston that helped to spur a more than 30-year career with the Gaston Corp., devoting countless hours to the development of some of Birmingham's most affluent and successful black-owned businesses. In 2003,

Walter was appointed CEO of the A.G. Gaston Construction Co.

In spite of all his success in business, Walter still considered his family and faith to be his highest priorities, specifically his four children: Mondra Howlett, Cadeshia Howlett Samuel, Tameka Howlett, and Damien Howlett, and his wife, Deborah Howlett.

The Howletts' love story began in 2012. Shortly after the loss of his mother, friends and family say the meeting was a true blessing in Walter's life, and that she put a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face. Two years later, in September of 2014, the couple exchanged vows. Mrs. Howlett says her life's greatest joy was the time they had together. Walter was an active member of Bethel Baptist Church in Collegeville, participating in various areas of ministry from the choir to serving as an usher. Walter lived by the motto, "find a need and fill it," a lesson learned by Mr. Gaston. He believed service to one's community was not an obligation but a privilege. In the course of his life Walter served on numerous boards including the United Way of Central Birmingham, the Boy Scouts of America, and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. He considered it a great joy to give back to the community he said gave him so much.

In his passing Walter leaves behind four siblings including: Birdie Lee Howlett, Patricia Howlett Peterson, James Lee Howlett, and Fredia Gail Howlett, his other siblings Willie Maud Jenkins and Jay Jerome Howlett are both deceased.

On a personal note, Walter was a cherished mentor and a dear friend. He was a dedicated servant-leader who knew the importance of "each one, teach one." Walter believed in mentoring young people and I was grateful that he was so supportive of my candidacy and always offered his wise counsel. His commitment to excellence and passion for business and entrepreneurship will live on through the many lives he touched.

On behalf of the 7th Congressional District, the State of Alabama, and this nation, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the life of Walter Howlett, Jr. We pay tribute to his distinguished career and contributions for the betterment of the State of Alabama, and extend deep appreciation for his exemplary service to the community of Birmingham, Alabama.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHARLES BURRELL

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the contributions of an extraordinary Denverite, Charles Burrell, who on November 28th was inducted into the Colorado Music Hall of Fame.

I've known Charlie my whole life. His distinguished career included playing in the Al Rose Trio founded by my uncle, Al Rose, together with Lee Arrelano. It was the first racially integrated jazz group in Colorado, and in the 1950s and '60s, they played at some of Denver's best-known destinations for music. When my uncle died unexpectedly at a relatively early age, Charlie volunteered to be my "honorary uncle," a role he has embraced.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1920 and raised in Detroit, Charles Burrell studied music at Cass-Technical High School, then one of the most prestigious music schools in the nation. Although a dedicated student of classical music, Charlie and his friends embraced jazz and practiced it whenever possible. At seventeen, he was even asked to join the Lionel Hampton Big Band, affording him the opportunity to travel the country with some of the jazz greats of the time.

Charlie attended the New England Conservatory of Music and then joined the Navy, where he was selected to join the first-ever all-Black Navy band, which was used in recruiting to help encourage African-American enlistment. After an honorable discharge, he attended Wayne State University with an eye toward teaching music in the public schools, and eventually made his way to Denver to do just that in 1949.

A chance meeting with John VanBuskirk, the lead bass player with the Denver Symphony Orchestra, led to an audition, and Charlie became the first person of color in the nation to be hired by a major orchestra.

Charlie is equally comfortable in an orchestra or a jazz band. He was known to finish a performance at the DSO and then wrap up his evening playing jazz at the Rossonian Hotel in the Five Points neighborhood.

In 1959, Charlie became the first person of color to join the San Francisco Symphony, fulfilling a childhood dream. He played under conductor Pierre Monteux until 1965.

Always a generous man, Charlie has been an inspiration and mentor to many, including his niece, the two-time Grammy award-winning vocalist Dianne Reeves, and his cousin the renowned pianist George Duke.

At ninety-seven, Charlie has proved that age is just a number, frequently playing live bass on KUVU, Denver's preeminent jazz station.

Charles Burrell has been called the Jackie Robinson of classical music for his ability, class, and poise, helping forge change in American institutions that weren't always inclined to widen their circles.

It is my honor today to add to the accolades of this accomplished trailblazer.

IN HONOR OF BOB AND DONNA FRYER'S 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Bob and Donna Fryer on their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

This significant benchmark is a symbol of their commitment to each other and to their family. I am happy to join their friends and family in extending my best to them on this special occasion.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Bob and Donna on the celebration of their 50th Wedding Anniversary. I wish them the best today and for many more blessed years to come.

TRIBUTE TO A TOP-TIER
COMMUNICATOR

HON. MICHAEL T. McCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today out of gratitude to recognize the professional achievements and service of my friend, Susan Phalen. Formerly the Communications Director for the House Homeland Security Committee, Susan now holds the title of Director of External Affairs at FEMA.

Susan's role as Communications Director transcended beyond her leadership in strategy and messaging. Susan's positive demeanor, PR-savvy mindset, and determination made her presence not only a valued component in my day-to-day but a real delight. She served as a spokesperson, confidant and trusted senior advisor whose counsel I always held in the highest regard.

Her expertise in media relations helped to elevate Committee Member and press interaction by hosting "meet and greets" and "pen and pads" to facilitate dialogue and solidify relationships. Susan's talents were most notably on display in her work assisting on CODEL trips abroad. Her interpersonal skills and proficiency in public diplomacy shone throughout trips to Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. She led over one hundred TV interviews during her tenure and oversaw the roll out of nine major Committee reports.

Susan's ability to think outside the box set her apart in developing messages for both domestic and international audiences in the national security space. She had a unique way of seeing things and consistently aimed to address a bigger picture in the anticipation of later trends. This is a skill she acquired from her impressive background in handling crisis communication scenarios in pressure-filled war zones.

Before joining my Committee three years ago, Susan was the Communications Director of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and spent more than 15 years as a high-profile communications specialist working in various national security and foreign policy posts with the U.S. State Department among others. She was deployed on nine different tours to Baghdad's dangerous "Green Zone" before spending time in Afghanistan as Director of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs for the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

It is not surprising that with this type of background, Susan took on the responsibility as Director of Communications for my Committee with ease and great effectiveness. She left a legacy that has already proven steadfast among her former colleagues and myself. Susan's quick wit, vivacious spirit, and ability to see humor in all things is missed profoundly.

Today, I am honored to be able to put the spotlight on her. While her time at our Committee was only a snapshot into the incredible career she continues to build, her friendship and counsel remain constant. She has already proven to be a steady hand at FEMA during the recent hurricanes, and I am excited to see what she will accomplish next.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1,
TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to reiterate the importance of dynamic scoring as part of the tax legislative process.

Ever since 1996, when the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation began to investigate how best to apply macroeconomic analysis to tax legislation, Congressional scorekeepers have continued to hone their expertise and produce ever more sophisticated analyses of various tax reforms. All of this hard work culminated in 2015 when macroeconomic analysis, commonly known as "dynamic scoring," was formally adopted in the House of Representatives for the purposes of official cost estimates for major legislation.

Ever since the formal adoption of dynamic scoring, first in the House and later in the Senate, the goal has been to produce pro-growth tax reform that was informed by the dynamic scoring process. Although a dynamic estimate was not used for official scoring purposes with respect to H.R. 1 due to constraints in the reconciliation process, macroeconomic analysis will be critical to major legislative efforts in the years ahead. It is important that members of Congress be informed by non-partisan analysis about whether legislation under consideration would shrink or grow the economy as well as how that change in growth would affect the nation's finances and, most importantly, the American people.

IN HONOR OF CINDY KNIGHT
BEING NAMED SENIOR OF THE
YEAR BY THE SENIOR CENTER
OF JACKSON HOLE

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Cindy Knight for being named Senior of the Year by the Senior Center of Jackson Hole. This outstanding accomplishment is a sign of her hard work, leadership, and commitment to the town and people of Jackson.

Throughout her life, Cindy has been committed to helping those in her community, and her passion for promoting literacy is no exception. Being named Senior of the Year is a testament to her leadership and commitment to our community. I am grateful for all that she does to support the people of Jackson and our great state.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Cindy for earning the Senior of the Year Award. She and her family deserve to be extremely proud of this accomplishment.

JUDGE JOHN J. TOOMEY

HON. LEE M. ZELDIN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Judge John J. Toomey of St. James, New York. As a soldier in Vietnam, he earned two Bronze Stars and was decorated for valor. Upon returning to the U.S., he graduated from Stony Brook University in 1972 and Hamline University Law School in 1976.

John worked as an Assistant Town Attorney for the Town of Smithtown between 1976 and 1979. He served as a member of the Tenth Judicial Grievance Committee from 1995 until 2002, when he was elected to the District Court bench. In 2010, he was chosen to be the first Presiding Judge of the newly formed Suffolk County Veteran's Court. He considers this to be the highlight of his judicial career. Judge Toomey was elected to the Suffolk County Court in 2011 and is an Acting Surrogate and Acting Supreme Court Justice.

He has earned many awards and recognitions, including the 2008 Judge of the Year award from the Suffolk County Bar Association, the 2014 Peter Sweisgood Award from the Lawyers helping Lawyers Committee of the Suffolk County Bar Association, and he has also been named Man of the Year by the Suffolk County Court Officers' Association.

In addition to his service in the military and on the bench, Judge Toomey has also been an active volunteer with the Saint James Fire Department.

Our country owes a debt of gratitude to Judge Toomey for his decades of selfless service.

TRIBUTE TO DARYL BUSCH

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

MR. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to former Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, who passed away in California on Sunday, December 3, 2017. Daryl served the residents of Perris, California, as their mayor from 1999 to 2016, and he will be deeply missed.

Daryl was born on January 31, 1941 in St. Louis, Missouri. The family later moved to the small town of Greenville, Illinois, and while still a teenager, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy where he served three years as a shipboard radar operator on the USS Picking and USS Bryce Canyon. After leaving the service, Daryl and his family re-located to California where he worked as a banker. A promotion to bank manager brought the Busch family to Perris in 1975. Following his career in finance, Mr. Busch owned and operated Amigos Tres Restaurant on D Street before beginning his service in public office.

Daryl was elected to and served six terms as mayor of Perris. During that time he made a tremendous impact on the community, including overseeing the development of projects like the Drop Zone aquatics center, the Big League Dreams sports complex, Mercado Park and Mercado Apartments, the

Monument Ranch neighborhood and Ethanac corridor upgrades. As mayor, Daryl was also instrumental in connecting Perris to the region through the establishment of the Metrolink train service at the city's new multi-modal transportation hub.

I have had the distinct privilege of knowing Daryl for many years, I was proud to call him my friend and I will deeply miss him. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the Busch family, including his wife, Kay, and son, Barry, his friends, and colleagues. Although Daryl may be gone, the many life-changing contributions he made in Riverside County will have a lasting impact for generations to come.

IN HONOR OF CHIEF PETTY OFFICER JIM MARSHALL FOR RECEIVING A 2017 SPIRIT OF HOPE AWARD

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Chief Petty Officer Jim Marshall on receiving a 2017 Spirit of Hope Award.

The Spirit of Hope Award recognizes six people or organizations across the country every year for their contributions to improving the lives of servicemembers and their families. Jim's selection for this award is a reflection of his dedication and many contributions to our great country and community.

Jim has spearheaded various events for servicemembers and their families, from Navy Balls to toy drives. He also has played an important role in strengthening the relationship between members of all branches of the military, especially the Navy, and our community. His outstanding patriotism and service to our community warrants his recognition as the first Wyomingite to receive this award.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Chief Petty Officer Jim Marshall and thank him for his incredible service to our country and state.

HONORING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF FANELLO INDUSTRIES IN LAVONIA

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my friends at Fanello Industries in Lavonia on their 20-year anniversary.

Established in 1998, this company has supported businesses across various industries by providing them with stamped metal blanks and other assemblies that play a major role in production.

When the company's founder, Vince Fanello, first opened his business in northeast Georgia, he understood that he was making a major commitment. Like many other companies, Fanello Industries began small and grew over time as a result of determination and diligence.

By the time the company reached its fifth year, it expanded to include multiple assembly lines and utilized 100,000 square feet of space to house its tools and employees.

Oftentimes, we forget the leap of faith that many people take when starting a business. For most business owners, passing the one-year milestone without succumbing to the defeats that come with a running business is a major accomplishment.

Many small business owners, like Mr. Fanello, are providing jobs that don't require a 4-year degree to people. When I met with Mr. Fanello, he stressed the need for welders in his industry and highlighted his efforts in reaching out to the state prison system to provide work to recently released inmates so that they can build the skills needed for welding.

My friends at Fanello Industries can look back at what they've built with pride—remembering that they persevered throughout their 20-year operation. I congratulate them and look forward to their continued success.

RECOGNIZING KEISER UNIVERSITY

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Keiser University for their accomplishments and their example for how a private university should operate and serve their community. For 40 years, Keiser University has equipped thousands of students to achieve success in our ever-changing economy. It is through institutions like Keiser that students across America and around the world have access to a variety of educational choices ranging from associate to doctoral degree programs.

An overwhelming sixty-six percent of Keiser graduates complete their degrees in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). With unwavering persistence, I continue to support STEM, and am very pleased to celebrate the impressive milestone of this educational institution. In the past 10 years, Keiser University produced more than 33,800 graduates with associate degrees in a wide variety of in-demand working fields. With access to skilled workers on the decline, it is imperative that Congress works together with states to better prepare our workforce of tomorrow. I am pleased to witness Keiser's success, and wish them many more years of prosperity.

I applaud Keiser's faculty, staff, and students for their achievements and for their ongoing commitment to equipping our next generation to be leaders and achieve their dreams.

IN HONOR OF AL AND PENNY TWOMEY FOR RECEIVING THE 2017 WYOMING CARES VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Al and Penny

Twomey on being selected for the 2017 Wyoming CARES Volunteer of the Year Award. This outstanding accomplishment is a sign of their commitment to our community and to our great state.

Wyoming CARES is a statewide non-profit with the goal of helping Wyoming residents who may find it necessary to seek temporary assistance and often have trouble receiving it. Al and Penny have been supporting and participating in the organization for over 20 years. They have become particularly involved in its largest annual fundraiser, the Ride with the Winds Bike Tour, for which Penny rode the 50-mile trail this year. I thank them for their dedication and many contributions to the program and to helping the people of our great state.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Al and Penny Twomey. They deserve to be extremely proud of this accomplishment.

THE FAILURE TO PASS THE DREAM ACT

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, the president's anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies have jeopardized the future of immigrant parents and their children all across America.

This tragedy is most immediately true for Dreamers impacted by the President's ending the DACA program.

While Congress can act to protect Dreamers, Speaker RYAN and the Republican leadership have ignored the wishes of the majority of Americans and turned a deaf ear to this crisis by sending us home without voting to protect our nation's Dreamers.

Those who voted for the spending bill without the passage of the Dream Act, have in effect voted for the deportation of Dreamers.

Republicans who say it is okay to wait until next year to protect Dreamers are misleading the American people.

The fact is that since the President eliminated the DACA program in September, more than 13,000 Dreamers have already lost their work permits and deportation protections. And the fact is that an additional 122 Dreamers are losing their DACA protections every day.

They are students and professionals such as doctors, nurses, teachers, scientists and social workers. They are members of our military and parents who play a critical role in the wellbeing and future of our American society. Dreamers strengthen our economy, protect our country and enhance the quality of life in our communities and across our nation.

It is unconscionable that Speaker RYAN and the Republican leadership refused to bring the Dream Act for a vote before we recessed for the holidays.

It is impossible to understand how in good conscience the Republicans could go home to celebrate their religious beliefs and ideals knowing their lack of action is not only shattering the security and unity of families but creating a traumatized generation of children. How is that loving your neighbor as yourself?

School teachers in my district tell me many of their students are so consumed with fear of

losing their parents they are exhibiting signs of PTSD and depression.

During this holy season, instead of celebrating the gifts of their faith, immigrant parents are having to develop emergency plans so their children will know what to do if their parents are taken away and don't make it home one night.

As a mother, I can't imagine the physical and emotional toll it takes to try and reassure your children while at the same time having to tell them they may not see you again or that they may have to leave their friends and their home for a country they do not know or remember.

Congress has the power to stop this terror by passing the Dream Act but the Republican leadership once again lacked the courage to take a stand and have a vote.

Protecting our Dreamers is the moral and right thing to do and it is in the best interests of our nation.

Tragically, instead of living up to our American values and giving Dreamers the gift of hope for a better and more secure future, Republicans have left them and their family with a lump of coal laced with fear and uncertainty.

Mr. Speaker, you and your leadership should be ashamed of yourselves.

HONORING SAM PACK AND HIS CHARITABLE WORKS ACROSS NORTH TEXAS

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Sam Pack of Carrollton, Texas for his tremendous and continuous work to better his community throughout his life.

Sam Pack's presence in North Texas is hard to miss. His commitment to community service and public involvement has touched the lives of many in the 24th District and across the State of Texas. Mr. Pack's personal involvement in the community is apparent in the numerous awards he has received including being named the Metrocrest Chamber of Commerce's "Citizen of the Year" as well as being recognized as a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary International.

Mr. Pack's charitable donations and work are known well throughout North Texas, ranging from donations to diabetes research facilities to establishing a museum in his community. Mr. Pack is a dedicated supporter of Metrocrest Services and Kidd's Kids, to name a few of the many philanthropic organizations he supports throughout North Texas. Metrocrest Services provides critical services to those coping with crisis situations, those who need help stabilizing their lives, or require other forms of support. Kidd's Kids provides tremendous support to children and their families who are dealing with life altering conditions. Mr. Pack has also created the Sam Pack Cares program, which works to provide assistance to those who serve our nation in various ways.

For nearly forty years, the Sam Pack Auto Group has worked hand-in-hand with communities, businesses, and individuals across North Texas to provide outstanding service

and support to customers. Mr. Pack's commitment to excellence and dedication to customer service has resulted in the Sam Pack Auto Group receiving countless awards and recognitions for their efforts. Most notably among these recognitions is TIME Magazine's "Quality Dealer of the Year", Ford Motor Company's "Salute to Dealers Award", and the Texas Automobile Dealers Association's "Legends Award" which, to date, has been awarded to less than twenty outstanding auto dealers within the State of Texas. Since Mr. Pack first opened a dealership in 1980, he has provided vital support to those in need, and in the 36 years since that first dealership opened, Mr. Pack has continuously proven that he is an ardent supporter of his community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my fellow colleagues join me in thanking Mr. Sam Pack for his many years of dedicated service and charitable works. I wish him continued success and congratulations as the Sam Pack Auto Group opens the Sam Pack Five Star Chevrolet Dealership in Carrollton, Texas.

HISTORY IS MADE IN DAYTON, OHIO

HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate two pieces of history from Dayton, Ohio.

Firstly, last week marked the 22nd anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords. The Dayton Peace Accords brought an end to years of bloodshed and created a framework for lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I served as mayor of Dayton during those Accords and witnessed firsthand American diplomacy bring adversaries to the negotiating table.

Recently, however, I fear the peace found in Dayton is threatened. Now is a critical time for the region. I wrote this week to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson encouraging him to host a Dayton Peace Accords II. The United States has an obligation to lead and support the peace we helped create in 1995.

The second piece of history I proudly recognize today is the anniversary of flight. This Sunday marked Wright Brothers Day, the 114th anniversary of the Wright Brothers' invention of flight.

The Wright Brothers did the bulk of their research in Dayton, Ohio, eventually leading to their creation of flight. Dayton continues to maintain the Wright Brothers' spirit of innovation.

IN HONOR OF JOHN TROHKIMOINEN FOR RECEIVING CALIFORNIA CASUALTY'S NATIONAL AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to John Trohkimoinen on receiving California Cas-

ualty's National Award for Teaching Excellence. This outstanding accomplishment is a sign of his hard work, leadership, and commitment to his students.

For the past thirty years, John has dedicated his time to ensuring that Natrona County High students build a strong educational foundation that will benefit them long after they leave his classroom. As just one of thirty-eight educators to receive this award, his commitment to education and the impact he has on those around him is apparent. I thank him for his contributions to Wyoming education and to Natrona County High School.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to John Trohkimoinen for earning the National Award for Teaching Excellence. He and his family deserve to be extremely proud of this accomplishment.

HONORING DR. ROBERT GUNN

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate my friend, Dr. Robert Gunn, for being awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Award for Faculty for his work on American Horologies. Literature, Timekeeping, and the Production of Space in Early Western North America.

Though it will be above my level of comprehension, given Dr. Gunn's past work and the success it has achieved, I am confident that this will be an important addition to the study of North America and the indigenous cultures of the American West.

Dr. Gunn's work at the University of Texas at El Paso has helped to distinguish UTEP and the larger El Paso-Juarez community. It has helped to deepen and expand our insight of the people of North America, and it has contributed to a richer understanding of America and the American West.

I am extraordinarily fortunate to represent Dr. Gunn in Congress and to have the opportunity to congratulate him for this high achievement. Even better, I have the pleasure of calling him a friend and personally bearing witness to his kindness, wit, wisdom and the inspiration he takes from, and love he gives to, his beautiful children, Frances and Henry, and his wife Jonna, incredibly accomplished in her own right as the Director of the English Education Program at UTEP.

We are lucky to have Dr. Gunn in El Paso, lucky to count him and his family as friends, lucky that he has contributed his outsized talent and drive to a better understanding of who we are.

Congratulations Robert.

CELEBRATING THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE TOWN OF AMHERST, NEW YORK

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished history of the Town of Amherst, New York upon

the occasion of the town's Bicentennial in 2018. Throughout the next year, Amherst will reflect on and celebrate its 200th anniversary.

On April 10, 1818, the Town of Amherst was officially created from part of the town of Buffalo, later known as the City of Buffalo. As the largest town in Erie County, New York, Amherst has a total area of 53.28 square miles. Amherst encompasses municipalities such as the Village of Williamsville, and the hamlets of Eggertsville, Getzville, Snyder, Swormville and East Amherst.

In the nineteenth century Amherst was a prosperous farming community with seven grist mills, several saw mills, a tannery and boot and shoe factory and two forges with commercial activity centered in Williamsville. Amherst draws on its history in its modern development, with structures such as the Williamsville Water Mill complex finding new purpose today.

From its beginnings as a primarily farming community, Amherst transformed into an urban area in the twentieth century with the creation of new subdivisions. Landmarks such as the University of Buffalo Campus North Campus and Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital made Amherst their home.

Today, Amherst is comprised of approximately 125,000 residents. Those who live in Amherst enjoy a four rink recreational facility that attracts national and international ice tournaments, a state of the art senior center, three libraries, and a State Park within its borders.

The Town of Amherst will proudly mark its 200th Anniversary with a series of events throughout its Bicentennial Year, beginning on January 1, 2018 with a 200th Birthday Party. The celebrations continue with a gigantic Parade, historic walking tours, slogan contest, Interclub Service Club Luncheon and gala Bicentennial Ball.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few moments to recognize the Town of Amherst's rich history and enduring contributions as we celebrate its Bicentennial. Congratulations to the Town of Amherst and its residents on this exciting and noteworthy milestone.

HIGHLIGHTING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A YOUTH GROUP IN NORTH- EAST PORTLAND

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to highlight the achievement of a group of young people in Northeast Portland.

In 2014, fourteen 6th grade girls at Beverly Cleary School formed the Grant Park chapter of Jane Goodall's "Roots and Shoots" youth service organization. Their goal was to raise funds for orphaned chimpanzees at Goodall's Tchimpounga Rehabilitation Center in Africa.

The girls' idea was to produce a vegetarian cookbook with sales benefiting the chimpanzee sanctuary. They wrote letters to chefs across the country asking for recipes and then spent most Friday evenings together cooking the food and taking notes. They also created artwork and bios for the chefs to go along with each recipe. Three years later, these young women are in 9th grade and the cookbook, called "Saving Pan," is done.

A first printing of 400 copies of Saving Pan was sold out in a week and raised \$4,000 for the Sanctuary. For meeting their goals and making a difference, congratulations to Brooke Abbruzzese, Talia Baskin, Lily Buckenmeyer, Martha Bulkeley, McKenzie Caldicott, Ruby Cooper-Karl, Emma Francioch, Willa Gagnon, Maeve Larco, Matisse Nash, Maya Rashid, Charlotte Stoeger, Hanna Stokes and McKenzie Tell.

HONORING MARY COBB-HILL

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable life of Mary Alice Cobb-Hill, a singer, and pianist, and impresario of the negro spiritual, who passed away on December 9, 2017.

Ms. Hill was born in Oakland, California on March 16, 1945 to Mary Magdalene and Roosevelt Cobb. Her parents instilled in her from an early age a love of music, and in particular the spiritual and gospel music which was a staple of their family worship services. Mary's mother was a teacher, and she imbued the music with a strong understanding of the history behind it, especially the experiences of the black struggles for freedom from slavery.

Mary attended Golden Gate Academy in Oakland, and later studied at Merritt and Laney Colleges, along with the Pacific Union. She also took private music lessons in classical opera singing.

Mary made the preservation of the Negro spiritual her lifelong passion. Throughout her life, she spent more than 50 years singing and performing in this historical tradition. She also worked to advance the tradition by writing three original musicals, Flowers from Heaven, Dis Train, and The Seven Exaltations of Simeon of Cyrene.

In addition to her work as a performer and writer, Ms. Hill also dedicated her life to teaching others about the history and technique of the Negro spiritual. She founded and served as the creative director for the Voices of Legacy, a community choir that performs in churches, schools, and community events, and was selected to perform at the inauguration of then mayor Dianne Feinstein in San Francisco. Through her work as an educator, Ms. Hill has trained scores of new performers and fostered a love of the Negro spiritual tradition in new generations.

Through her tireless efforts, Ms. Hill endeavored to use the Negro spiritual tradition to maintain a link between those whose experience and yearning for freedom initially created the music, and modern generations who can learn from that struggle to continue the push for true equality. I am grateful to her for her dedication to promoting African American culture and history, and keeping alive the stories and traditions of our ancestors.

Ms. Hill is survived by her husband, Carl, and her daughters Maranatha and Gabrielle, as well as her grandchildren Duane, Josiah, and Nicole. She is also survived by her brothers Paul & Michael, her sisters Gloria Jean, and Sharon, and their families.

Today, on behalf of California's 13th Congressional District, it is my honor to commend

the life and achievements of Ms. Mary Alice Cobb-Hill. I offer my sincere gratitude for her continued commitment to promote the arts and arts education, and for the profound legacy she has left in our East Bay community. I also offer my condolences to Ms. Cobb-Hill's family and friends as they cope with this immeasurable loss and join together to celebrate her life.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF ROBERT "BOB" WILMERS

HON. KEITH J. ROTHFUS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, today, we remember the life of Robert "Bob" Wilmers, a visionary, successful business man, loving father and husband, who passed away this past Saturday.

In 1983, he became Chairman and CEO of M&T Bank and held those positions until his recent passing. Under his leadership, M&T grew from \$2 Billion to \$120 Billion in assets in 35 years. He saw the bank's reach grow from Buffalo to Maryland and the D.C. area, as well as Pennsylvania. Through it all, he never lost touch with his customers.

Bob's annual letters to shareholders were legendary and he was critical of over regulation that hurt regional banks.

His even handed, steady analysis will be missed. In addition to his successful career, Bob shared a deep commitment to the city of Buffalo, New York through his charitable giving and service to the community.

He was fiercely loyal to his work and bettering the community, an example we can all learn from. I extend my condolences to his family and friends. He leaves a large void that will be felt for years to come.

CONGRATULATING KAREN BALLARD ON HER RETIREMENT FROM THE GRAPEVINE POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Karen Ballard on her numerous years of service and dedication to the Grapevine Police Department in Grapevine, Texas. Karen retires this year after serving for fourteen years with the City of Grapevine, and accumulating over thirty-one years of dedicated service in emergency communications for the State of Texas.

Karen's admirable career first began when she joined the Arlington Police Department as a dispatcher in 1986. After serving for over seventeen years in the City of Arlington, Texas, Karen began her tenure with the City of Grapevine in 2003.

Throughout her career, Karen has served as a Dispatcher, Communications Coordinator, Coordinator Training Assistant, and a Communications Supervisor. Since joining the Grapevine Police Department, Karen has honorably served her community and has built a reputation as an outstanding Dispatcher and Communications Supervisor.

Karen's dedication as a public servant is apparent in her pursuit of continued education and trainings to help provide a better service to her community. In total, Karen has completed 4,227 training hours since beginning her career in emergency communications.

Karen's contributions to the emergency operations in the City of Grapevine have helped to ensure the Police, Fire, and EMS services have the best information available when they are needed. The importance of quick and accurate information can never be overstated in life-or-death situations. Karen's dedication and service have been a vital part of keeping our first responders effective, and more importantly, keeping them safe. Her legacy will leave a lasting mark on the City of Grapevine and the city's emergency services for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to recognize the notable efforts Karen has contributed to the City of Grapevine. I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing Karen Ballard and her many years of service and wishing her the best in her retirement.

HOW THE REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN HURTS MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the proposal put forward by my Republican colleagues that is misleadingly titled the "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act." I voted against the GOP Tax Scam when it was brought up in the House of Representatives a few weeks ago, and I did again this week when Republicans bypassed "regular order" to pass a partisan, highway robbery and power grab bill that will give massive tax cuts to corporations experiencing record profits and explode our national debt, while pulling the rug out from beneath the American Working Class and Middle Class.

As the elected representatives of the American people, Congress should be passing legislation that helps every American, not serving as a rubber-stamp for tax cuts advanced by a President who bankrupted four companies, his high-flying billionaire cabinet, and his wealthy corporate donors demanding a big Christmas bonus for the one-percent. Yet that is precisely what the Republicans in Congress have done.

Let's be clear: this bill will not "stimulate the economy" or "create more jobs"—in fact, more than 30 distinguished economists have invalidated these claims. This bill will not help middle-class Americans today and it will not help future generations of Americans tomorrow—in fact, these claims have also been

proved false by the analysis of nonpartisan tax experts and government entities. Maryland's middle class, seniors, students, working families, and everyone else who is not a gigantic corporation, one of the richest of the rich in this country, or anyone without their own lobbyist will be made worse-off under this proposal. Our children and grandchildren will be footing the bill for this irresponsible and reckless corporate giveaway for decades to come.

Both the House and Senate tax bills are bad deals for my constituents, Marylanders, and ninety-nine-percent of Americans. There were virtually no hearings and no Democratic input in the process, while special interest lobbyists inserted absurd provisions (such as eliminating the deductions for state and local taxes and medical expenses, and opening-up oil drilling in Alaska).

A recent analysis from the Joint Committee on Taxation found that many Americans, including many of my constituents, will receive a substantial tax hike under the Republican plan. Also, according to both the non-partisan Joint Committee on Taxation and the Congressional Budget Office, by 2027, those earning \$40,000 to \$50,000 would pay a combined \$5.3 billion more in taxes, while the group earning \$1 million or more would get a \$5.8 billion tax cut. Apparently the Republican version of the new American Dream is to raise taxes on the Middle Class while showering millionaires with tax breaks.

Congressional Republicans are also dismissing concerns over the debt, reversing years of deficit-hawk rhetoric so fast they are walking around with neck braces from the ideological whiplash. Suddenly the GOP is calling trillions of dollars of debt "a drop in the bucket"—which will of course, be true, only until Republicans decide that we need deep painful cuts to Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security to pay for the magnificent tax cuts they have already bestowed upon the nation's wealthiest one-percent.

If this legislation is such a boon for America's small businesses, why are the small businesses in my state so upset about the plan? Maryland's small businesses may be in favor of long-overdue tax reform, but this is not it. They wanted public hearings, where provisions like pass-through businesses could have been openly discussed and debated. Instead, we're looking at a bill which pretends to provide for small business but most pass-through income goes to the top one-percent of American earners. This is hardly helping America's Middle Class as the Republican leadership claims, but it certainly helps the GOP's gilded Donor Class.

My constituents are not fools and they are not suckers. They are not holding buckets waiting for the Koch Brothers' private jet maintenance exemptions to magically "trickle down" and benefit them. No credible research has demonstrated that corporate tax breaks will create millions of new American jobs. In

fact, documented history shows that just the opposite occurs. Foreign corporations are probably cheering along the GOP Tax Scam, knowing that America is only days away from creating millions of new jobs overseas. Trickle-down economics is a fraud. The only kind of economics that works for Americans is bubble-up economics where we invest in infrastructure, health care and education—we invest in the Middle Class and prosperity bubbles up everywhere.

Furthermore, I often hear from my overseas constituents, who have their own profound concerns about our tax system. As someone who has lived abroad, I appreciate their concerns. Americans abroad are being treated unfairly—taxed first by their local tax authority, and again by the United States. No other countries tax their citizens abroad, with the exceptions of North Korea and Eritrea. Yet Congressional Republicans have chosen to ignore the nine million voices of red, white and blue American citizens seeking help and relief. The GOP is callously ignoring our citizens overseas, refusing to help millions of constituents abroad who desperately want and deserve expat tax reform.

Congress should act immediately, so that U.S. citizens living abroad are not forced to choose between two terrible outcomes: draining their life savings to pay their taxes or renouncing their citizenship to escape this outrageous double taxation. There has been some important progress in this regard though. I'm pleased that my colleague from North Carolina, Representative GEORGE HOLDING, readily acknowledged the problem of expat taxation during the House Floor debate on H.R. 1, but frankly, it is shocking that the House Ways and Means Committee failed entirely to provide any tax reform relief whatsoever to millions of Americans living abroad.

My constituents did not send me to Congress to vote for a bill which adds more than \$1 trillion to our national debt; sends American jobs overseas; eliminates tax assistance provisions for the sick, seniors, college students, teachers, families with special needs children, working families, and middle-class families; and puts more into the pockets of people like President Trump.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is a hoax. Republicans boast that this bill provides "tax cuts for everybody," but millions of Americans will see their taxes increased under this proposal. Don't just take my word for it, check out the latest analysis from the official revenue referee of Congress, the Joint Committee on Taxation.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, this tax bill is a bad deal for Maryland, and indeed, nearly every American whose last name isn't Trump or Koch or Mercer or Adelson. I am proud to have taken a stand for Marylanders and America's Middle Class by voting against the GOP Tax Scam.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 1370, Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act (the legislative vehicle for the “Further Additional Continuing Appropriations Act”).

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S8187–S8281

Measures Introduced: Fifteen bills and four resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2260–2274, S.J. Res. 51, and S. Res. 364–366. **Pages S8259–60**

Measures Passed:

Congratulating the University of Nebraska-Lincoln volleyball team: Senate agreed to S. Res. 365, congratulating the University of Nebraska-Lincoln volleyball team for winning the 2017 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Volleyball Championship. **Pages S8263–64**

Gateway Arch National Park Designation Act: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources was discharged from further consideration of S. 1438, to redesignate the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in the State of Missouri as the “Gateway Arch National Park”, and the bill was then passed. **Page S8267**

African American Civil Rights Network Act: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1927, to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the African American Civil Rights Network, and the bill was then passed. **Page S8267**

Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act: Senate passed S. 35, to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S8267–68**

Cerros del Norte Conservation Act: Senate passed S. 432, to designate the Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio Wilderness Areas in the State of New Mexico. **Pages S8267–68**

Kaibab National Forest: Senate passed S. 466, to clarify the description of certain Federal land under the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005 to include additional land in the Kaibab National Forest. **Pages S8267–68**

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Act: Senate passed H.R. 267, to redesignate the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia. **Pages S8267–68**

The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Improvement Act: Senate passed H.R. 560, to amend the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Improvement Act to provide access to certain vehicles serving residents of municipalities adjacent to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. **Pages S8267–68**

Mount Hood Cooper Spur Land Exchange Clarification Act: Senate passed H.R. 699, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to modify provisions relating to certain land exchanges in the Mt. Hood Wilderness in the State of Oregon. **Pages S8267–68**

Coltsville National Historical Park: Senate passed H.R. 863, to facilitate the addition of park administration at the Coltsville National Historical Park. **Pages S8267–68**

National Memorial to Fallen Educators Act: Senate passed S. 167, to designate a National Memorial to Fallen Educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas, after agreeing to the committee amendment. **Pages S8267–68**

John Muir Wilderness of the Sierra National Forest: Senate passed H.R. 381, to designate a mountain in the John Muir Wilderness of the Sierra National Forest as “Sky Point”. **Pages S8267–68**

Rockingham County, Virginia land transferred: Senate passed H.R. 954, to remove the use restrictions on certain land transferred to Rockingham County, Virginia. **Pages S8267–68**

400 Years of African American History Commission Act: Senate passed H.R. 1242, to establish the 400 Years of African American History Commission. **Pages S8267–68**

Western Oregon Tribal Fairness Act: Senate passed H.R. 1306, to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land in the State of Oregon. **Pages S8267–68**

Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Boundary Modification Act: Senate passed H.R. 2611, to modify the boundary of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site. **Pages S8267–69**

Diesel Emissions Reduction Act: Senate passed S. 1447, to reauthorize the diesel emissions reduction program. **Pages S8269–70**

Subsequently, passage of the bill was vitiated.

Page S8280

Strengthening the Department of Homeland Security Secure Mail Initiative Act: Senate passed S. 1208, to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide for an option under the Secure Mail Initiative under which a person to whom a document is sent under that initiative may elect to have the United States Postal Service use the Hold for Pickup service or the Signature Confirmation service in delivering the document, after agreeing to the committee amendments. **Pages S8270–71**

Federal Register Printing Savings Act: Senate passed H.R. 195, to amend title 44, United States Code, to restrict the distribution of free printed copies of the Federal Register to Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the United States, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S8271**

McConnell (for Grassley) Amendment No. 1864, to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, to reauthorize the Missing Alzheimer’s Disease Patient Alert Program, and to promote initiatives that will reduce the risk of injury and death relating to the wandering characteristics of some children with autism. **Page S8271**

Kevin and Avonte’s Law: Senate passed S. 2070, to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, to reauthorize the Missing

Alzheimer’s Disease Patient Alert Program, and to promote initiatives that will reduce the risk of injury and death relating to the wandering characteristics of some children with autism, after agreeing to the committee amendment, and the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S8271–76**

McConnell (for Grassley) Amendment No. 1865, to make technical corrections. **Page S8273**

Condemning the Government of Iran: Senate agreed to S. Res. 139, condemning the Government of Iran’s state-sponsored persecution of its Baha’i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights, after agreeing to the committee amendment. **Pages S8276–77**

Ceiling Fan Energy Conservation Harmonization Act: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources was discharged from further consideration of S. 2030, to deem the compliance date for amended energy conservation standards for ceiling light kits to be January 21, 2020, and the bill was then passed. **Pages S8277–78**

Length of fishing vessels: Senate passed S. 2273, to extend the period during which vessels that are shorter than 79 feet in length and fishing vessels are not required to have a permit for discharges incidental to the normal operation of the vessel. **Page S8278**

Page S8278

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Awareness Month: Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 336, recognizing the seriousness of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome and expressing support for the designation of the month of September 2018 as “Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Awareness Month”, and the resolution was then agreed to, after agreeing to the following amendments proposed thereto: **Page S8278**

McConnell (for Warren) Amendment No. 1866, to amend the resolving clause. **Page S8278**

McConnell (for Warren) Amendment No. 1867, to amend the preamble. **Page S8278**

Congratulating the University of Central Missouri women’s soccer team: Senate agreed to S. Res. 364, congratulating the University of Central Missouri women’s soccer team for winning the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II Women’s Soccer Championship at Swope Soccer Village in Kansas City, Missouri. **Pages S8278–79**

National Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Awareness Week: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 327, designating the week of November 5 through 12, 2017, as “National Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Awareness Week”, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S8279**

EPS Improvement Act: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 518, to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to exclude power supply circuits, drivers, and devices designed to be connected to, and power, light-emitting diodes or organic light-emitting diodes providing illumination from energy conservation standards for external power supplies, and the bill was then passed.

Page S8279

INTERDICT Act: Senate passed H.R. 2142, to improve the ability of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to interdict fentanyl, other synthetic opioids, and other narcotics and psychoactive substances that are illegally imported into the United States.

Page S8279

Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2228, to provide support for law enforcement agency efforts to protect the mental health and well-being of law enforcement officers, and the bill was then passed.

Page S8279

Connected Government Act: Senate passed H.R. 2331, to require a new or updated Federal website that is intended for use by the public to be mobile friendly.

Page S8279

United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act: Senate passed H.R. 4661, to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program.

Page S8280

House Messages:

Further Additional Continuing Appropriations Act: By 66 yeas to 32 nays (Vote No. 325), Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 1370, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign. (A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, having achieved 60 affirmatives votes, be agreed to.)

Pages S8235–36

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 91 yeas to 8 nays (Vote No. 324), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to waive all applicable sections of the Congressional

Budget Act of 1974 and applicable budget resolution for the purpose of the House message to accompany the bill. Subsequently, the point of order that the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill was in violation of section 306 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 was not sustained, and the point of order fails.

Page S8235

Appointments:

United States-China Economic Security Review Commission: The Chair announced, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 106–398, as amended by Public Law 108–7, and in consultation with the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the Senate Committee on Finance, the re-appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the United States-China Economic Security Review Commission: James M. Talent of Missouri, for a term expiring December 31, 2019.

Page S8280

United States-China Economic Security Review Commission: The Chair announced, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 106–398, as amended by Public Law 108–7, and in consultation with the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the Senate Committee on Finance, the re-appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the United States-China Economic Security Review Commission: The Honorable Carte P. Goodwin of West Virginia for a term beginning January 1, 2018 and expiring December 31, 2019.

Page S8280

Pro Forma Sessions—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the Senate adjourn, to then convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Saturday, December 23, 2017 at 11 a.m.; Wednesday, December 27, 2017 at 10 a.m.; Friday, December 29, 2017 at 11:30 a.m.; Tuesday, January 2, 2018 at 4 p.m.; and that when the Senate adjourns on Tuesday, January 2, 2018, it next convene at 12 noon, on Wednesday, January 3, 2018, pursuant to the Constitution.

Page S8280

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the issuance of an Executive Order declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States posed by serious human rights abuse and corruption around

the world; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. (PM–23)

Page S8253

Nominations Status Quo—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the list at the desk of nominations received during the 115th Congress, 1st session, remain in status quo, notwithstanding the provisions of Rule XXXI.

Page S8241

Rood Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at 5 p.m., on Wednesday, January 3, 2018, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of John C. Rood, of Arizona, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, under the order of Wednesday, December 20, 2017.

Page S8280

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

Robert Charrow, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Robert P. Storch, of the District of Columbia, to be Inspector General of the National Security Agency.

Hester Maria Peirce, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission for a term expiring June 5, 2020.

Robert J. Jackson, Jr., of New York, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 5, 2019.

Suzanne Israel Tufts, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Katherine Brunett McGuire, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

Kenneth E. Allen, of Kentucky, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2021.

A.D. Frazier, of Georgia, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2022.

Jeffrey Smith, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2022.

James R. Thompson III, of Alabama, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2021.

Kate S. O'Scannlain, of Maryland, to be Solicitor for the Department of Labor.

Brock D. Bierman, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

Preston Rutledge, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

Jon J. Rychalski, of Montana, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Christopher Caldwell, of Arkansas, to be Federal Cochairperson, Delta Regional Authority.

Kenneth J. Braithwaite, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Norway.

Leonard Wolfson, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Irving Dennis, of Ohio, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

M. Lee McClenney, of Washington, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor to be Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay.

Douglas Webster, of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Education.

Christopher Ashley Ford, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Security and Non-Proliferation).

Timothy R. Petty, of Indiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

John G. Vonglis, of New York, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Energy.

Linda Capuano, of Texas, to be Administrator of the Energy Information Administration.

Johnny Collett, of Kentucky, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

Tadd M. Johnson, of Minnesota, to be a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2022.

Lisa Johnson-Billy, of Oklahoma, to be a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring August 25, 2018.

Lisa Johnson-Billy, of Oklahoma, to be a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring August 25, 2024.

Pages S8241–43, S8280–81

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

William F. Jung, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

Jill Alko Otake, of Hawaii, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii.

William M. McSwain, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania for the term of four years.

Billy J. Williams, of Oregon, to be United States Attorney for the District of Oregon for the term of four years.

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Messages from the House:

Pages S8253–54

Measures Referred:	Page S8254
Measures Read the First Time:	Page S8254
Executive Communications:	Pages S8254–58
Petitions and Memorials:	Pages S8258–59
Additional Cosponsors:	Pages S8260–61
Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:	Pages S8261–63
Additional Statements:	Pages S8251–53
Amendments Submitted:	Pages S8265–67

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—325) **Pages S8235–36**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10:01 a.m. and adjourned at 10:02 p.m., until 11 a.m. on Saturday, December 23, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S8280.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 28 public bills, H.R. 4706–4733; and 2 resolutions, H. Res. 671–672 were introduced. **Pages H10418–19**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H10421**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H. Res. 670, providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R.1370) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4667) making further supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, for disaster assistance for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and calendar year 2017 wildfires, and for other purposes; and providing for proceedings during the period from December 22, 2017, through January 7, 2018 (H. Rept. 115–477);

H.R. 3168, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide continued access to specialized Medicare Advantage plans for special needs individuals, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–478, Part 1);

H.R. 3726, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to create alternative sanctions for technical noncompliance with the Stark rule under Medicare, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–479, Part 1);

H.R. 3727, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to include additional telehealth services for purposes of MA organization bids, and for other

purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–480, Part 1);

H.R. 3729, to amend titles XI and XVIII of the Social Security Act to facilitate provider and supplier cost reporting of ambulance services under the Medicare program, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–481, Part 1); and

Committee on Ethics. In the Matter Regarding the Arrests of Members of the House During a Protest Outside the United States Capitol on December 6, 2017 (H. Rept. 115–482). **Page H10418**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by a yea-and-nay vote of 225 yeas to 187 nays with one answering "present", Roll No. 707. **Pages H10347, H10361**

Recess: The House recessed at 9:09 a.m. and reconvened at 12:21 p.m. **Page H10348**

Suspensions—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures. Consideration began Tuesday, December 19th.

Jobs for Our Heroes Act: S. 1393, to streamline the process by which active duty military, reservists, and veterans receive commercial driver's licenses, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 418 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 706; and **Pages H10360–61**

No Human Trafficking on Our Roads Act: S. 1532, to disqualify from operating a commercial motor vehicle for life an individual who uses a commercial motor vehicle in committing a felony involving human trafficking, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 393 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 710.

Pages H10404–05

Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Member on the part of the House to the United States Capitol Preservation Commission: Representative Harris. And from private life: Ms. Sylvia Quinton of Mardela Springs, Maryland, and Dr. C. James Trotman of West Chester, Pennsylvania. **Page H10361**

Authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Bob Dole: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and agree to S. Con. Res. 31, authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Bob Dole. **Pages H10361–62**

Authorizing the President to award the Medal of Honor to John L. Canley for acts of valor during the Vietnam War while a member of the Marine Corps: The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.R. 4641, to authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to John L. Canley for acts of valor during the Vietnam War while a member of the Marine Corps. **Page H10362**

Suspension: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure:

Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act of 2017: S. 1766, to reauthorize the SAFER Act of 2013. **Pages H10362–64, H10405**

Question of Consideration: The Chair announced that the bill (H.R. 4667) making further supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, for disaster assistance for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and calendar year 2017 wildfires, contained an emergency designation pursuant to section 4(g)(1) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010. Subsequently, the House agreed to consider H.R. 4667 by voice vote. **Page H10364**

Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017: The House agreed to the motion to concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 1370, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, with an amendment consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–52, by a yea-and-nay vote of 231 yeas to 188 nays, Roll No. 708. **Pages H10349–60, H10394–H10403**

H. Res. 670, the rule providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1370) and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4667) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 228 yeas

to 188 noes, Roll No. 705, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 232 yeas to 188 nays, Roll No. 704. **Pages H10359–60**

Further Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements, 2017: The House passed H.R. 4667, making further supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, for disaster assistance for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and calendar year 2017 wildfires, by a yea-and-nay vote of 251 yeas to 169 nays, Roll No. 709. **Pages H10364–94, H10403–04**

Pursuant to the Rule, the amendments printed in H. Rept. 115–477 shall be considered as adopted. **Page H10364**

H. Res. 670, the rule providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1370) and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4667) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 228 yeas to 188 noes, Roll No. 705, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 232 yeas to 188 nays, Roll No. 704. **Pages H10359–60**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. tomorrow, December 22nd. **Page H10405**

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress of a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States posed by serious human rights abuse and corruption around the world—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on the Judiciary and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 115–83). **Page H10405**

Senate Referrals: S. Con. Res. 31 was held at the desk. S. 117 was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources. S. 501 was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources. **Page H10416**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H10348.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Six yea-and-nay votes and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H10359, H10359–60, H10360, H10361, H10403, H10403–04, and H10404–05. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Committee Meetings

MAKING FURTHER SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2018, FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR HURRICANES HARVEY, IRMA, AND MARIA, AND CALENDAR YEAR 2017 WILDFIRES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES; SENATE AMENDMENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 4667, making further supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, for disaster assistance for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and calendar year 2017 wildfires, and for other purposes; and concluded a hearing on the Senate amendment to H.R. 1370, the “Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017” [Further Continuing Resolution]. The Committee granted, by record vote of 8–4, a rule providing for the consideration of the Senate amendment to H.R. 1370. The rule makes in order a motion offered by the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendment with an amendment consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–52. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the motion. The rule provides that the Senate amendment and the motion shall be considered as read. The rule provides one hour of debate on the motion equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. In section 2, the rule provides for consideration of H.R. 4667 under a closed rule. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule provides that the amendments printed in the Rules Committee report shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides that clause 2(e) of rule XXI shall not apply during consideration of the bill. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. In section 3, the rule provides that on any legislative day of the first session of the 115th Congress after December 21, 2017: the Journal of

the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment. In section 4, the rule provides that on any legislative day of the second session of the 115th Congress before January 8, 2018: the Speaker may dispense with organizational and legislative business; the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved if applicable; and the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment. In section 5, the rule provides that the Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by sections 3 and 4. In section 6, the rule provides that each day during the period addressed by sections 3 and 4 of the resolution shall not constitute calendar days for the purposes of section 7 of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1546). In section 7, the rule provides that each day during the period addressed by sections 3 and 4 of the resolution shall not constitute a legislative day for the purposes of clause 7 of rule XIII (resolutions of inquiry). Testimony was heard from Representatives Pelosi, Hoyer, Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico, Polis, and Weber of Texas.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, p. D1350)

S. 1266, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with nonprofit organizations to investigate medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Signed on December 20, 2017. (Public Law 115–95)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

11 a.m., Saturday, December 23

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 p.m., Friday, December 22

Senate Chamber

Program for Saturday: Senate will meet in a pro forma session.

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 2 p.m.

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