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No. 45

House of Representatives

The House met at 4:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBSTER of Florida).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 15, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DANIEL WEBSTER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

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

We ask Your blessing upon our Nation. Bless the work of the Members of the people's House. May they toil diligently to bring about solutions to the pressing issues of these times.

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

During contentious days, may Your spirit of peace and comity descend upon all engaged, that the truth might be revealed and justice and good government for all be preserved.

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

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. DUNN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

HONORING GEORGE COCHRAN

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

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor George "Boogie" Cochran, Jr., who passed away peacefully at the age of 89 on March 1.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Cochran lived a life in full, one of family and of service.

As a 17-year-old Leon High School student, he enlisted in the Navy in 1944. He served bravely aboard Navy destroyers in the Pacific campaigns. He participated in America's nuclear weapons testing after the war, and in the action surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis.

In 1963, in recognition of his dedicated and courageous service in the Navy, Chief Cochran was awarded the first annual Commander Ernest Evans Memorial Award aboard the USS Johnston.

He loved his family, his country, and his community. He represents the best of America.

Boogie, you will be missed by many, and may you rest in peace.

OPPOSING THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, my constituents have been calling all weekend. They do not support the Republican health care bill, TrumpCare.

Over the weekend, we received 750 calls or emails. Ninety-three percent of those have contacted me to say that they are against TrumpCare, and here is why:

Higher costs for less care; \$2,400 annually for an average American family.

Millions kicked off health care. The Congressional Budget Office says 24 million. Some might say they are way off. So maybe it is 20 million. Maybe it is 30 million. Lots of Americans lose health care as a result of this plan.

An age tax. If you are age 50 to 65, fasten your seat belts; \$6,971 in increased costs for lesser health care.

And huge, huge tax breaks for millionaires. The 400 richest Americans would get an average \$7 million tax break.

This is not the right direction for this country. It is not the right direction for health care. We should reject it.

RECOGNIZING SHELBY TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN, POLICE OFFICERS

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

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight an act of bravery from police officers in an incident occurring just miles from my district office in Shelby Township, Michigan.

□ 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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In mid-February, Sergeant Troy Titchenell and Officer Paul Fox responded to a call that a boy had fallen through the ice on Iroquois Lake. Sergeant Titchenell, without concern for himself, first on the scene, immediately got a life ring from a local resident and walked onto the ice. Officer Fox then arrived and walked onto the ice to take the rope attached to the life ring.

While towing the young man to safety, the ice broke and Sergeant Titchenell was submerged in the water up to his chest. With Officer Fox pulling on the rope and Sergeant Titchenell supporting the boy in the water, both were able to rescue the young man. I believe they saved a life that day.

This incident exemplifies the risks police officers will take to protect all of us. Their daily acts of bravery must be recognized. I am proud to highlight the actions of these courageous officers, and I am grateful to recognize their service to our community.

IN SUPPORT OF THE GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in defense of one of our most magnificent natural wonders: the Great Lakes. They contain a fifth of the world's freshwater and are vitally important to the economy and the quality of life in my district.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which has received strong support from both sides of the aisle, works to clean up the Great Lakes, control invasive species, restore habitats, and reduce runoff. Yet we have heard that President Trump may virtually eliminate this critical program with an eye-popping irresponsible 97 percent cut to the budget; \$300 million in funding would be reduced to just \$10 million.

At the same time, his administration may gut EPA funds for climate science, clean air, and safe water.

Let me be clear. I am adamantly opposed to these cuts and will do everything in my power to stop them.

Tomorrow, on Great Lakes Day, the President is expected to release a budget proposal. I urge him to include robust funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the EPA programs and ensure we pass on a sustainable, healthy planet to our children.

IMPROVE THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Original Pizza in Broomfield, Colorado, has been in business since the 1990s. Now they are being sued.

The plaintiff claims they do not have ADA-accessible parking signage or proper insulation wrapped around the pipes under the restroom sink.

The claims waged against Original Pizza are mostly false. The sink is compliant, and the parking issue could be fixed with a better sign and a bit of paint. Not to mention, Original Pizza was never notified of the alleged violations by the plaintiff.

Now the plaintiff is demanding money to pay or a lawsuit will be filed. The same plaintiff has filed over 70 other lawsuits against businesses for alleged ADA violations.

Plaintiffs and attorneys hope companies will decide to settle rather than face an expensive court trial.

The ADA Education and Reform Act will require giving businesses notice and time to fix the alleged infraction before the lawsuit is filed. Notice and cure are a fair way to handle ADA violations.

And that is just the way it is.

CELEBRATING ADMIRAL LLOYD "JOE" VASEY'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

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

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to send my warmest aloha to Admiral Lloyd "Joe" Vasey on his belated 100th birthday celebration tonight in Honolulu.

After graduating from the United States Naval Academy in 1939, Admiral Vasey joined the submarine service and served under John S. McCain, Jr., father of United States Senator JOHN MCCAIN.

After the war and a long and distinguished service to our Nation, Admiral Vasey formed the CSIS Pacific Forum, with the goal of promoting peace in Asia Pacific. He is why we call the men and women of his time the Greatest Generation.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in honoring the admiral by working to help make his dream of a Pacific War Memorial at Pearl Harbor a reality.

In his words: "There is no recognition for well over 150,000 brave Americans who were lost in the Pacific War. We need to honor them, and their families need a place to mourn."

Admiral Vasey's patriotism, devotion to duty, and desire for peace should be an example for us all.

Happy birthday, Admiral Vasey, and may you continue to have fair winds and following seas.

DENNIS COUNIHAN SELECTED AS SAVANNAH'S ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE GRAND MARSHAL

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Dennis Counihan for being named

grand marshal of Savannah's 2017 St. Patrick's Day Parade. The annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Savannah has been a beloved local tradition and an important family affair since its beginning in 1824.

Welcoming visitors from all over the world to celebrate its Irish heritage, Savannah astonishingly hosts the third largest St. Patrick's Day Parade in the world and the second largest in the United States. As such, the position of grand marshal is not to be taken lightly. This year there were a record-setting six nominees vying for the position, but Mr. Counihan rose above the rest due to his experience and dedication to Savannah.

Mr. Counihan's love for his community is emphasized through his work with the Hollander Senior Living company, where he purchases old real estate to be redesigned as nursing homes.

It seems as if Mr. Counihan was destined to be grand marshal, considering his family's role in the parade over the years. His brother Brian is currently the parade chairman, and his father, Michael, served as the parade's grand marshal in 1988.

Mr. Counihan has been on the parade committee since 1980. He certainly knows the dedicated effort that goes into making this event special and successful.

Congratulations, Mr. Counihan, on this great honor. I look forward to seeing the new additions you will bring to the parade.

INVESTING IN AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advocate for a national infrastructure plan.

I represent the central coast of California, and this winter we got rain. We got a lot of rain. So much so that it caused millions in damage to the area, including the closure of the famous Highway 1 in Big Sur, with major mudslides in the south and the loss of the 315-foot Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge in Big Sur.

That damage has left 450 people isolated: kids can't get to school; families are separated; and employers and employees are suffering, including the loss of \$8 million in 1 month in the off-season.

But the effects of that damage extend beyond Big Sur to the surrounding towns, counties, and, actually, the entire State of California. People from all over the world come to Big Sur. They drive down from San Francisco. They drive up from Los Angeles. They patronize towns all along their way to Big Sur.

We understand why. It is the most beautiful place in the world. It is my home. And we want it to be open to all of you.

It is time that the Congress and our President help Americans by investing in our American infrastructure.

□ 1645

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING DACA

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to stress the importance of maintaining Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, commonly known as DACA.

DACA recipients were brought here to the United States as children, and in most cases America is the only home they have ever known. They want to contribute to our economy, to our society, and our country; and they will, unless we are foolish enough to stop them.

Taking any step against DACA would not only hurt DACA recipients, it would hurt the United States. Let's protect these promising youth and keep this program intact while we work out a humane path to citizenship.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

ARBUCKLE PROJECT MAINTENANCE COMPLEX AND DISTRICT OFFICE CONVEYANCE ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. When the House adjourned on Wednesday, March 8, 2017, there was a pending motion by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEBSTER) to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 132) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land and appurtenances of the Arbuckle Project, Oklahoma, to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEBSTER) has 16 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) has 19 minutes remaining.

Without objection, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BROWN) will control the time of the gentleman from California.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the

gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON) be allowed to manage the remainder of the time for the majority.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 132, sponsored by Congressman TOM COLE of Oklahoma, conveys two buildings and two acres of land of the federal Arbuckle Project to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District in Oklahoma. The district has operated and maintained the project for decades, and completed repayment of its capital costs for the project in 2012.

While non-controversial, legislation is necessary in order to facilitate this and other Bureau of Reclamation title transfers. Under current law, these buildings and land remain in federal ownership until legislation is enacted to transfer the title to the District. Mr. COLE's bill achieves this objective.

This title transfer is a win-win for the District and the federal government. The District will no longer be subject to certain federal paperwork requirements and the federal government will be relieved of all future liability and financial responsibilities associated with these facilities and land.

I urge adoption of the measure, which overwhelmingly passed the House on a bipartisan basis in the last Congress.

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

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 132 would allow a title transfer of two Federal buildings to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District in south central Oklahoma. These buildings are part of the Arbuckle Project, which is a water project authorized by Congress in 1962 to provide flood control, recreational opportunities, and municipal water supply.

Nearly all of the facilities within the Arbuckle Project were already transferred to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District in 2012 after the district finished repaying what it owed the Federal Government for construction. However, due to some overly narrow language in the legislation authorizing the Arbuckle Project, two buildings within the project have yet to be transferred.

Transferring the two remaining buildings will save taxpayer money that would otherwise be needed to operate and maintain the buildings and will also relieve the Federal Government of any potential future liability associated with the buildings. This is straightforward legislation that should be quickly passed.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBSTER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEBSTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 132.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

APPROVING THE LOCATION OF A MEMORIAL TO COMMEMORATE AND HONOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO SERVED ON ACTIVE DUTY IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION DESERT STORM OR OPERATION DESERT SHIELD

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the joint resolution (S.J. Res. 1) approving the location of a memorial to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

S.J. RES. 1

Whereas section 8908(b)(1) of title 40, United States Code, provides that the location of a commemorative work in Area I, as depicted on the map entitled "Commemorative Areas Washington, DC and Environs", numbered 869/86501 B, and dated June 24, 2003, shall be deemed to be authorized only if a recommendation for the location is approved by law not later than 150 calendar days after the date on which Congress is notified of the recommendation;

Whereas section 3093 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (40 U.S.C. 8903 note; Public Law 113-291) authorized the National Desert Storm Memorial Association to establish a memorial on Federal land in the District of Columbia, to honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield; and

Whereas the Secretary of the Interior has notified Congress of the determination of the Secretary of the Interior that the memorial should be located in Area I: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the location of a commemorative work to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield authorized by section 3093 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (40 U.S.C. 8903 note; Public Law 113-291), within Area I, as depicted on the map entitled "Commemorative Areas Washington, DC and Environs", numbered 869/86501 B, and dated June 24, 2003, is approved.

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

AUTHORIZING THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO AMEND THE DEFINITE PLAN REPORT FOR THE SEEDSKADEE PROJECT

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 648) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to amend the Definite Plan Report for the Seedskadee Project to enable the use of the active capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 648

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

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY TO MAKE ENTIRE ACTIVE CAPACITY OF FONTENELLE RESERVOIR AVAILABLE FOR USE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with the State of Wyoming, may amend the Definite Plan Report for the Seedskadee Project authorized under the first section of the Act of April 11, 1956 (commonly known as the “Colorado River Storage Project Act” (43 U.S.C. 620)) to provide for the study, design, planning, and construction activities that will enable the use of all active storage capacity (as may be defined or limited by legal, hydrologic, structural, engineering, economic, and environmental considerations) of Fontenelle Dam and Reservoir, including the placement of sufficient riprap on the upstream face of Fontenelle Dam to allow the active storage capacity of Fontenelle Reservoir to be used for those purposes for which the Seedskadee Project was authorized.

(b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior may enter into any contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or other agreement that is necessary to carry out subsection (a).

(2) STATE OF WYOMING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall enter into a cooperative agreement with the State of Wyoming to work in cooperation and collaboratively with the State of Wyoming for planning, design, related preconstruction activities, and construction of any modification of the Fontenelle Dam under subsection (a).

(B) REQUIREMENTS.—The cooperative agreement under subparagraph (A) shall, at a minimum, specify the responsibilities of the Secretary of the Interior and the State of Wyoming with respect to—

(i) completing the planning and final design of the modification of the Fontenelle Dam under subsection (a);

(ii) any environmental and cultural resource compliance activities required for the modification of the Fontenelle Dam under subsection (a) including compliance with—

(I) the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

(II) the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); and

(III) subdivision 2 of division A of subtitle III of title 54, United States Code; and

(iii) the construction of the modification of the Fontenelle Dam under subsection (a).

(c) FUNDING BY STATE OF WYOMING.—Pursuant to the Act of March 4, 1921 (41 Stat. 1404, chapter 161; 43 U.S.C. 395), and as a condition of providing any additional storage under subsection (a), the State of Wyoming shall provide to the Secretary of the Interior

funds for any work carried out under subsection (a).

(d) OTHER CONTRACTING AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior may enter into contracts with the State of Wyoming, on such terms and conditions as the Secretary of the Interior and the State of Wyoming may agree, for division of any additional active capacity made available under subsection (a).

(2) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—Unless otherwise agreed to by the Secretary of the Interior and the State of Wyoming, a contract entered into under paragraph (1) shall be subject to the terms and conditions of Bureau of Reclamation Contract No. 14-06-400-2474 and Bureau of Reclamation Contract No. 14-06-400-6193.

SEC. 2. SAVINGS PROVISIONS.

Unless expressly provided in this Act, nothing in this Act modifies, conflicts with, preempts, or otherwise affects—

(1) the Act of December 31, 1928 (43 U.S.C. 617 et seq.) (commonly known as the “Boulder Canyon Project Act”);

(2) the Colorado River Compact of 1922, as approved by the Presidential Proclamation of June 25, 1929 (46 Stat. 3000);

(3) the Act of July 19, 1940 (43 U.S.C. 618 et seq.) (commonly known as the “Boulder Canyon Project Adjustment Act”);

(4) the Treaty between the United States of America and Mexico relating to the utilization of waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande, and supplementary protocol signed November 14, 1944, signed at Washington February 3, 1944 (59 Stat. 1219);

(5) the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact as consented to by the Act of April 6, 1949 (63 Stat. 31);

(6) the Act of April 11, 1956 (commonly known as the “Colorado River Storage Project Act”) (43 U.S.C. 620 et seq.);

(7) the Colorado River Basin Project Act (Public Law 90-537; 82 Stat. 885); or

(8) any State of Wyoming or other State water law.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 648, sponsored by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. CHENEY), allows the State of Wyoming to increase the active storage capacity for the Fontenelle Dam and Reservoir located in southwest Wyoming. The bill allows the State to enter into agreements with the Federal Government to study, design, plan, and perform construction activities to accomplish this goal. Wyoming will pay for any and all costs associated with these activities.

This bill, which passed the House without objection in the last Congress

when it was sponsored by our former colleague Cynthia Lummis, simply empowers Wyoming to better utilize its Colorado River water allocation through improved water storage at no cost to the Federal Government. I urge my colleagues to support this common-sense bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 648 would increase the amount of water that can be stored in the Fontenelle Reservoir in Lincoln County, Wyoming, by allowing the active storage capacity of the reservoir to be used. This bill has been written in a balanced manner that respects existing laws, compacts, and treaties, and does not attempt to expand Wyoming's entitlement to Colorado River supplies at the expense of other Colorado River Basin States.

H.R. 648 is a straightforward, non-controversial piece of legislation that is identical to a bill that was unanimously passed by the Committee on Natural Resources last Congress. I support H.R. 648 and urge its adoption.

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

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. CHENEY).

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Colorado and my colleague from Maryland for their support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I introduced H.R. 648 so that we could begin the work necessary to increase the active storage capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir. As a headwater State, Wyoming takes care of its water, and we know that water is our most important natural resource. Water uses currently at this dam span the gamut from irrigation, domestic, industrial, municipal, fish and wildlife, and recreation. Power generation is a secondary purpose at the dam, and current uses also include industrial capacity for our trona miners, fertilizer producers, and fulfillment of a range of energy needs.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would simply authorize the Bureau of Reclamation to enter into a cooperative agreement with the State of Wyoming so that we could begin the process to study, design, and construct increased capacity for the reservoir. This is a process, Mr. Speaker, that has been held up previously by onerous NEPA requirements, and we need to move quickly so that we can begin to increase this capacity.

Currently the reservoir has 265,000 acre-feet to accommodate water as active capacity. This legislation would potentially add an additional 80,000 acre-feet of existing reservoir space. This bill would provide an affordable and efficient way to add more usable storage in the Colorado River Basin

and would accomplish these goals without contemplating the construction of a new dam. The bill has the support of the Wyoming Water Development Office and the Wyoming Water Development Commission, which develops our State's water resources for conservation, storage, distribution, recreation, and other public interests. Our Governor Matt Mead included this concept in the 2015 Wyoming water strategy.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will empower Wyoming to better utilize our water allocation and improve our water storage, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 648.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK ACT OF 2017

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 267) to redesignate the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 267

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 "Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.

The Act entitled "An Act to establish the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes" (Public Law 96-428) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) of the first section, by striking "the map entitled 'Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site Boundary Map', number 489/80,013B, and dated September 1992" and inserting "the map entitled 'Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Proposed Boundary Revision', numbered 489/128,786 and dated June 2015";

(2) by striking "Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site" each place it appears and inserting "Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park";

(3) by striking "national historic site" each place it appears and inserting "national historical park"; and

(4) by striking "historic site" each place it appears and inserting "historical park".

SEC. 3. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law (other than this Act), map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to "Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site" shall be deemed to be a reference to "Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 267, introduced by Congressman JOHN LEWIS, redesignates the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia as the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. It also authorizes the National Park Service to include the Prince Hall Masonic Temple in the historical park's boundaries. The Prince Hall Masonic Temple long served as the headquarters of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. This well-known civil rights organization was cofounded by Dr. King, who also served as its first president. Including the Prince Hall Masonic Temple within the unit's boundaries will allow the National Park Service to provide technical assistance to the building's owners with regard to repairs, renovations, and maintenance that will preserve its historic integrity.

Our Nation's historic sites and historical parks provide us with the unique opportunity to share the very spaces in which the generations before us lived and worked. At these sites, Americans are able to metaphorically walk in the footsteps of our Nation's Founders and of those who followed them and perfected their vision for our country. At this time of division in our country, it is important to be able to look back at leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., who promoted unity and the dignity of the human person.

Congressman LEWIS' bill before the House today will expand opportunities for Americans to learn about the legacy of Dr. King and other icons of the civil rights movement. I urge adoption of this legislation.

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

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 267 is an important and historically significant piece of legislation

that has broad bipartisan support. In fact, it passed the House on a voice vote just over a year ago. The bill accomplishes two primary goals: to designate the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in Atlanta, Georgia, as a national historical park; and to adjust the boundary of the park to include the Prince Hall Masonic Temple, the first headquarters of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Taken together, these actions will enhance the National Park Service's ability to tell and elevate the story of Dr. King.

The site, which is the final resting place of the great civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., continues to connect visitors with the historical and contemporary struggles for civil rights in this country.

□ 1700

These stories are as relevant today as they were half a century ago. By officially designating the area as a national historical park, this legislation will provide the site with the acknowledgement it so justly deserves.

Lastly, I want to thank Congressman LEWIS, who remains an important and iconic civil rights leader, for bringing this important bill forward.

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

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), my esteemed colleague.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado and the gentleman from Maryland for supporting this legislation.

I am a proud sponsor of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Act.

First, let me thank each and every member and the staff from the Natural Resources Committee for their hard work and support of this act.

Mr. Speaker, this nonpartisan bill will simply change these historic Atlanta places from being a site to a park. At no additional cost to taxpayers, this bill will create the first national historic park in the State of Georgia. This small change will significantly improve the way the National Park Service preserves, shares, and presents the history of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., site or park.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was our moral compass. He represented the best of America. His mission was to create the beloved community, a community at peace with itself and our neighbors. Throughout his life, Dr. King urged each and every one of us to recognize the dignity and worth of every human being.

Passing this simple piece of legislation will improve how this important history and legacy is shared with visitors from across our country and from around the world.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chair and ranking member for their support of this legislation.

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

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in proud support, and I join my colleague, Congressman LEWIS, in supporting H.R. 267 and its efforts to redesignate the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site as the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park.

For decades, large numbers of people have descended on this site to see the birthplace where the dreamer was moved by destiny into leadership of the modern civil rights movement. The site as it stands now, which also contains the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, has faced hardships over the years leading to budget cutbacks and a decrease in staff.

H.R. 267 would increase funding that would help preserve this American landmark and increase the size of the park so that future generations can continue to visit and enjoy.

Just like Dr. King never led a march without a plan, we shouldn't leave this critical piece of the civil rights movement without a plan for its future. We should continue to work to preserve the place where Dr. King was born, lived, worked, worshipped, and where he is buried.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of H.R. 267, the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Act of 2017.

The time has come to update the historic sites and monuments at the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site. This common sense legislation seeks to end the current restrictions that prevent the site from adopting the proposed "Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Proposed Boundary Revision" and reclassifying the landmark more appropriately as a "National Park."

Originally, this site established in 1980, encompassed the portions of Auburn Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia, the house in which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born, and the Ebenezer Baptist Church where Dr. King's family prayed. Public Law 96-428 memorialized these buildings with the intent to "protect and interpret for the benefit, inspiration and education of present and future generations the places where Martin Luther King, Jr. was born, where he lived, worked, and worshipped, and where he is buried."

Unfortunately, the MLK National Historic Site remains classified as a "National Site." The National Park Service defines areas with similar geography and size as national parks. The title "National Site" no longer fits with the current structure of this historic landmark. The current boundaries of site limit the National Park Service's ability to conserve important landmarks in Atlanta. The provisions outlined in this bill will allow the site to expand and in turn preserve the history of Dr. King's life for thousands of Americans to personally experience and ensure our nation never forgets his

dream. An extension of the current boundaries of the site would help greater serve the mission of the site.

Dr. King altered the course of American history. Our nation's citizens owe a debt to the sacrifices and tireless crusade led by this great man. Dr. King encouraged love and empathy for in the hearts of countless Americans. His contribution to humanity has been priceless.

We must never forget the sacrifices made by the heroes of the Civil Rights Movement. I stand with my esteemed colleague and civil rights champion, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, who proposed this legislation. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers. I again urge adoption of this important legislation.

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

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

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure that we may come to the floor today to celebrate and recognize the remarkable legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. King is characterized by modeling his life after Jesus Christ in order to live a life dedicated to the service of others, whether that be preaching the Gospel to his congregation at Ebenezer Baptist Church, or to the pursuit of justice and equality.

Mr. Speaker, my home state of Georgia has the great honor of preserving King's legacy at the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site. And today we have the opportunity under the leadership of my friend and fellow Georgian, JOHN LEWIS, to pass H.R. 267, the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Act, to re-designate the site as a National Historic Park.

I strongly believe that this site meets and exceeds the requirements for re-designation as a National Historic Park and fully support my friend in his effort. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank Congressman LEWIS for leading this legislation. As a cosponsor of this bill, a member of the Committee on Natural Resources, and as a fellow Georgian, I offer my strongest support and encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 267.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 267, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. TIPTON. 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.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

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

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 15, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 15, 2017, at 5:42 p.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 1362.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 132, by the yeas and nays;
H.R. 648, by the yeas and nays;
H.R. 267, de novo.

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

ARBUCKLE PROJECT MAINTENANCE COMPLEX AND DISTRICT OFFICE CONVEYANCE ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 132), to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land and appurtenances of the Ar buckle Project, Oklahoma, to the Ar buckle Master Conservancy District, 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 motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEBSTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 407, nays 1, not voting 21, as follows:

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

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

NOT VOTING—21

Blackburn	Higgins (NY)	Rush
Brown (MD)	Kelly (PA)	Russell
Ciilline	Loebback	Scott, David
Collins (NY)	Marino	Slaughter
Davis, Danny	McCauley	Titus
DesJarlais	Payne	Trott
Fudge	Rohrabacher	Welch

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1903

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.

RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

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

The form of the resolution is as follows:

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President shall immediately disclose his tax return information to Congress.

Mr. Speaker, it is worth expressing, once again.

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives, the President shall immediately disclose his tax return information to Congress and the American people.

I want to thank Mr. PASCRELL from the Ways and Means Committee for leading this issue in that committee and here on the floor, as well as ANNA ESHOO from the Energy and Commerce Committee, and more to come in the weeks to come.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York is recognized only to give notice.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, the form of the remainder of the resolution is as follows:

Whereas, in the United States' system of checks and balances, Congress has a responsibility to hold the executive branch of government to the highest standard of transparency to ensure the public interest is placed first;

Whereas, according to the Tax History Project, every President after Richard Nixon has disclosed their tax return information to the public;

Whereas, tax returns provide an important baseline disclosure because they contain highly instructive information including whether the candidate paid taxes, what they own, what they have borrowed and from whom, whether they have made any charitable donations, and whether they have taken advantage of tax loopholes;

Whereas, disclosure of the President's tax returns could help those investigating Russian influence in the 2016 election understand the President's financial ties to the Russian Federation and Russian citizens, including debts owed, and whether he shares any partnership interests, equity interests, joint ventures, or licensing agreements with Russia or Russians;

Whereas, it has been reported that President Trump's close senior advisers, including Carter Page, Paul Manafort, Roger Stone, and General Michael Flynn, have been under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their ties to the Russian Federation;

Whereas, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told Interfax, a Russian media outlet, on November 10, 2016, that "there were contacts" with Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, and it has been reported that members of President Trump's inner circle were in contact with senior Russian officials throughout the 2016 campaign;

Whereas, according to his 2016 candidate filing with the Federal Election Commission, the President has 564 financial positions in companies located in the United States and around the world;

Whereas, against the advice of ethics attorneys and the Office of Government Ethics, the President has refused to divest his ownership stake in his businesses;

Whereas, the Director of the non-partisan Office of Government Ethics said that the President's plan to transfer his business holdings to a trust managed by family members is "meaningless" and "does not meet the standards that . . . every President in the past four decades has met";

Whereas, the the Emoluments Clause was included in the U.S. Constitution for the express purpose of preventing federal officials from accepting any "present, Emolument, Office, or Title . . . from any King, Prince, or foreign state";

Whereas, the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C., has hired a "director of diplomatic sales" to generate high-priced business among foreign leaders and diplomatic delegations;

Whereas, the Trump International Hotel could receive up to \$60,000 from the Kuwaiti government for a party it held at the hotel on February 22, 2017;

Whereas, the President used a legally dubious tax maneuver in 1995 that could have allowed him to avoid paying federal taxes for 18 years;

Whereas, the public still does not have a thorough understanding of the influences and conflicts President Trump has due to his various foreign and domestic business interests;

Whereas, on January 30, 2017, President Trump publicly issued an executive order announcing that pipeline makers in the U.S. must use American-made steel in their projects;

Whereas, on March 3, 2017, President Trump quietly reversed himself, issuing an order allowing the steel for the Keystone pipeline to be imported from foreign countries;

Whereas, without direct knowledge on the conflicts this President has due to his business interests, he could be advancing policies that create an uneven playing field for working Americans;

Whereas, the public should be able to examine his business interests, relationships, and conflicts to ensure that all policies put forward by the Trump administration solely benefit the American public and not his corporate business partners;

Whereas, the most signed petition on the White House website calls for the release of the President's tax return information to verify compliance with the Emoluments Clause, with 1,082,000 signatures as of the date of this resolution;

Whereas, the Chairmen of the Ways and Means Committee, Joint Committee on Taxation, and Senate Finance Committee have the authority to request the President's tax returns under Section 6103 of the tax code;

Whereas, the Joint Committee on Taxation reviewed the tax returns of President Richard Nixon in 1974 and made the information public;

Whereas, the Ways and Means Committee used IRC 6103 authority in 2014 to make public the confidential tax information of 51 taxpayers;

Whereas, the American people have the right to know whether or not their President is operating under conflicts of interest related to international affairs, tax reform, government contracts, or otherwise;

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

One, immediately request the tax return information of Donald J. Trump for tax years 2006 through 2015 for review in closed executive session by the Committee on Ways and Means, as provided under Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, and vote to report the information therein to the full House of Representatives;

Two, support transparency in government and the longstanding tradition of Presidents and Presidential candidates disclosing their tax returns.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will now recognize the gentleman from New York to offer the resolution just noticed.

Does the gentleman offer the resolution?

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I offer my resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President shall immediately disclose his tax return information to Congress and the American people.

Whereas, in the United States' system of checks and balances, Congress has a responsibility to hold the Executive Branch of government to the highest standard of transparency to ensure the public interest is placed first;

Whereas, according to the Tax History Project, every President after Richard Nixon has disclosed their tax return information to the public;

Whereas, tax returns provide an important baseline disclosure because they contain highly instructive information including whether the candidate paid taxes, what they own, what they have borrowed and from whom, whether they have made any charitable donations, and whether they have taken advantage of tax loopholes;

Whereas, disclosure of the President's tax returns could help those investigating Russian influence in the 2016 election, understand the President's financial ties to the Russian Federation and Russian citizens, including debts owed, and whether he shares any partnership interests, equity interests, joint ventures or licensing agreements with Russia or Russians;

Whereas, it has been reported that President Trump's close senior advisers, including Carter Page, Paul Manafort, Roger Stone, and General Michael Flynn, have been under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their ties to the Russian Federation;

Whereas, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told *Interfax*, a Russian media outlet, on November 10, 2016 that "there were contacts" with Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, and it has been reported that members of President Trump's inner circle were in contact with senior Russian officials throughout the 2016 campaign;

Whereas, according to his 2016 candidate filing with the Federal Election Commission, the President has 564 financial positions in companies located in the United States and around the world;

Whereas, against the advice of ethics attorneys and the Office of Government Ethics, the President has refused to divest his ownership stake in his businesses;

Whereas, the director of the nonpartisan Office of Government Ethics said that the President's plan to transfer his business holdings to a trust managed by family mem-

bers is "meaningless" and "does not meet the standards that . . . every president in the past four decades has met";

Whereas, the Emoluments Clause was included in the U.S. Constitution for the express purpose of preventing federal officials from accepting any "present, Emolument, Office, or Title . . . from any King, Prince, or foreign state";

Whereas, the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C. has hired a "director of diplomatic sales" to generate high-priced business among foreign leaders and diplomatic delegations;

Whereas, the Trump International Hotel could receive up to \$60,000 from the Kuwaiti government for a party it held at the hotel on February 22, 2017;

Whereas, the President used a legally dubious tax maneuver in 1995 that could have allowed him to avoid paying federal taxes for 18 years;

Whereas the public still does not have a thorough understanding of the influences and conflicts President Trump has due to his various foreign and domestic business interests;

Whereas on January 30, 2017 President Trump publicly issued an executive order announcing that pipeline makers in the US must use American-made steel in their projects;

Whereas on March 3, 2017 President Trump quietly reversed himself, issuing an order allowing the steel for the Keystone Pipeline to be imported from foreign countries;

Whereas without direct knowledge on the conflicts this President has due to his business interests, he could be advancing policies that create an uneven playing field for working Americans;

Whereas the public should be able to examine his business interests, relationships, and conflicts to ensure that all policies put forward by the Trump Administration solely benefit the American public and not his corporate business partners;

Whereas, the most signed petition on the White House website calls for the release of the President's tax return information to verify compliance with the Emoluments Clause, with 1 million, 82 thousand signatures as of the date of this resolution;

Whereas, the Chairmen of the Ways and Means Committee, Joint Committee on Taxation, and Senate Finance Committee have the authority to request the President's tax returns under Section 6103 of the tax code;

Whereas, the Joint Committee on Taxation reviewed the tax returns of President Richard Nixon in 1974 and made the information public;

Whereas, the Ways and Means Committee used IRC 6103 authority in 2014 to make public the confidential tax information of 51 taxpayers;

Whereas, the American people have the right to know whether or not their President is operating under conflicts of interest related to international affairs, tax reform, government contracts, or otherwise: Now, therefore, be it:

Resolved, That the House of Representatives shall—

1. Immediately request the tax return information of Donald J. Trump for tax years 2006 through 2015 for review in closed executive session by the Committee on Ways and Means, as provided under Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, and vote to report the information therein to the full House of Representatives

2. Support transparency in government and the longstanding tradition of Presidents and Presidential candidates disclosing their tax returns.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from New York wish to

present argument on the parliamentary question whether the resolution presents a question of the privileges of the House?

Mr. CROWLEY. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I do.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York is recognized.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, under rule IX, clause 1, questions of the privileges of the House are "those affecting the rights of the House collectively, its safety, dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings."

I would argue there is nothing more of a threat to the integrity of the House of Representatives than ignoring our duty to provide a check and balance, as our Founders expected of us, of the executive branch.

To restore the dignity of the House, we must use our authority to request President Trump's tax returns and give the American people the transparency that they deserve.

The American people know full well the scope of the President's financial background, as related by television and the media; but they don't know the details.

Article I, section 9 of the Constitution includes a clause prohibiting foreign emoluments to the President. The Office of Government Ethics has warned us about the President's decision not to divest or set up a blind trust, and there is a need to fully understand the President's ties to Russia.

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing the President saying one thing, such as mandating the use of American-made steel on American pipelines, then quietly reversing himself to allow the use of foreign-made steel on the Keystone Pipeline, which is being built by a Canadian company.

The resolution I am offering can provide the transparency to help ease the concerns of Americans in every corner of our country. The Internal Revenue Code includes language laying out a path for the Ways and Means Committee to obtain the tax returns and review them in a respectful way. There is the precedent that I have stated earlier that provides for this to be used.

A growing number of Members and Senators from both parties have been saying we should have the President's tax returns. One of those is Congressman STEVE KNIGHT of California who announced to his constituents that the President's tax returns should be made public, so I look forward to his support of this resolution.

The House must demonstrate that its Members are listening to our constituents' concerns. The House must demonstrate that it cares about protecting the integrity of the House, of our government, of our Constitution, of our system of checks and balances. Let's shine a bright light on the President's conflicts together.

We, as the elected Representatives of our constituents and the broader American public, can judge whether his decisions are being made for himself,

his business, or for the greater good of the American people.

At the end of the day, if President Trump has nothing to hide, then he should be willing to do what every President since Richard Nixon has done, and that is, release his tax returns.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind the gentleman from New York that the question is on, and his remarks must be confined to, the question of privilege.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I think I have been toeing that line very closely.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A little bit over it.

Mr. CROWLEY. At the very least, even if he continues to hide behind the phony excuse of being under audit, he should release tax returns for 2016 as those are not under audit.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is not about partisanship. It is about America.

No, you are not listening to your constituents, my colleagues. It is about America, my colleagues. They want to see these tax returns.

The American people expect more from the promise than heckling back and forth. They expect their Representatives from both sides of the aisles to demand these tax returns.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend.

The gentleman from New York must keep his remarks confined to the question of the privileges of the House.

Mr. CROWLEY. I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker.

It is about America, Mr. Speaker.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. For what purpose does the gentleman from New Jersey seek recognition?

Does the gentleman wish to be heard on the question of privilege and on the question of privilege only?

Mr. PASCRELL. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That is the question before the House.

Mr. PASCRELL. I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY).

Mr. Speaker, Mr. CROWLEY cited the very source of what our proposal is, and that is, section 6103, and, particularly section 6103(f), of the Tax Code of the United States of America, which has been part of the Tax Code since 1924.

Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful part of the Tax Code. Take my word for it. And it has been a wonderful part of the Tax Code since 1924.

It is very clear the main argument against this proposal, this resolution, has been over the last several weeks that this is an administrative part of the Tax Code. I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is not simply arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. This has to do with all of us. This has to do with what we put in to our tax files when we submit them to the IRS.

There is real authority when you read this section, Mr. Speaker. I can

assure you I will not read it. That will be for another time. But I can assure you it is very specific and goes beyond administrative authority. We are talking about apparitional authority.

We are talking about that three different committees in the House and the Senate can call on anybody with due cause to have them submit their tax returns.

By the way, when you look at why section 6103 was put into the Tax Code in 1924, as a result of one of the greatest scandals in the 20th century, then you understand it was not just meant as an administrative situation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we believe that it is imperative for the public to know and understand how such tax reform that we are about to go into pretty soon will benefit the President of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's remarks must be confined to the question of privilege.

Mr. PASCRELL. I am talking right to the resolution, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's remarks must be confined to the question of whether the resolution presents a privilege of the House.

Mr. PASCRELL. Well, we are talking about the present President, our President of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is whether the resolution presents a question of privilege, and the gentleman must confine his remarks to that debate.

Mr. PASCRELL. We are talking about, as I said—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has not been recognized to discuss the value or merit of the resolution. The gentleman has been recognized only to argue whether it presents a privileged question to the House.

Mr. PASCRELL. I believe it is a privileged question and resolution that has been offered because it goes to the very integrity of the House of Representatives, and I am a part of the House of Representatives.

Now, our President had an infamous response—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's remarks must be confined to the question of privilege.

Mr. PASCRELL. He said, when an allegation that he had paid no taxes, he said—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair is prepared to rule.

The gentleman from New York seeks to offer a resolution as a question of the privileges of the House under rule IX.

As the Chair ruled on February 27, 2017, and March 7, 2017, the resolution directs the Committee on Ways and Means to meet and consider an item of business under the procedures set forth in 26 U.S.C. 6103, and, therefore, does not qualify as a question of the privileges of the House.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I appeal the ruling of the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is, Shall the decision of the

Chair stand as the judgment of the House?

MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. McCarthy moves that the appeal be laid on the table.

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

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

Mr. CROWLEY. 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 to table will be followed by a 5-minute vote on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 267, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 223, nays 183, answered “present” 1, not voting 22, as follows:

[Roll No. 161]

YEAS—223

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

Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart

Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
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

NAYS—183

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

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Sanford

NOT VOTING—22

Blackburn
Brown (MD)
Cicilline
Collins (NY)
Davis, Danny
DesJarlais
Fudge
Higgins (NY)

Kelly (PA)
Loebsock
Marino
McCauley
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano

Rush
Russell
Slaughter
Titus
Trott
Wagner
Welch

□ 1947

So the motion to table was agreed to.
The result of the vote was announced
as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on
the table.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NA-
TIONAL HISTORICAL PARK ACT
OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ARRINGTON). The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 267) to redesignate the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PRO-
VIDING FOR THE EXPENSES OF
CERTAIN COMMITTEES OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN
THE 115TH CONGRESS

Mr. HARPER from the Committee on House Administration, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-38) on the resolution (H. Res. 173) providing for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PROVIDING FOR APPOINTMENT OF
MEMBERS OF BOARD OF DIREC-
TORS OF OFFICE OF COMPLI-
ANCE

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on House Administration be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1228) to provide for the appointment of members of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance to replace members whose terms expire during 2017, and for other purposes, 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 Mississippi?

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1228

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

SECTION 1. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF OFFICE
OF COMPLIANCE.

(a) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.—

(1) MEMBERS REPLACING MEMBERS WHOSE TERMS EXPIRE IN MARCH 2017.—Notwithstanding the first sentence of section 301(e) of the Congressional Accountability Act of

1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381(e)), of the members of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance who are appointed to replace the 3 members whose terms expire in March 2017—
(A) one shall have a term of office of 3 years; and

(B) 2 shall have a term of office of 4 years, as designated at the time of appointment by the persons specified in section 301(b) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 1381(b)).

(2) MEMBERS REPLACING MEMBERS WHOSE TERMS EXPIRE IN MAY 2017.—In accordance with the first sentence of section 301(e) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381(e)), the members of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance who are appointed to replace the 2 members whose terms expire in May 2017 shall each have a term of office of 5 years.

(b) SERVICE OF CURRENT MEMBERS.—Notwithstanding the second sentence of section 301(e) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381(e)) or section 3 of the Office of Compliance Administrative and Technical Corrections Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-6; 2 U.S.C. 1381 note)—

(1) an individual serving as a member of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance whose term expires in March 2017 may be reappointed to serve one additional term at the length designated under paragraph (1) of subsection (a), but may not be reappointed to any additional terms after that additional term expires; and

(2) an individual serving as a member of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance whose term expires in May 2017 may be reappointed to serve one additional term at the length referred to in paragraph (2) of subsection (a), but may not be reappointed to any additional terms after that additional term expires.

(c) PERMITTING MEMBERS TO SERVE UNTIL APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSORS.—Section 301(e) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) PERMITTING SERVICE UNTIL APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR.—A member of the Board may serve after the expiration of that member's term until a successor has taken office.”.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. HARPER

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Add at the end the following new subsection:

(d) AUTHORITY OF CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP IN MAKING APPOINTMENTS.—Section 301(b) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381(b)) is amended by striking the period at the end of the second sentence and inserting the following: “, who are authorized to take such steps as they consider appropriate to ensure the timely appointment of the members of the Board consistent with the requirements of this section.”.

Mr. HARPER (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading of the amendment.

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

There was no objection.

The amendment was agreed to.

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.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1259, VA ACCOUNTABILITY FIRST ACT OF 2017; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1367, IMPROVING AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO HIRE AND RETAIN PHYSICIANS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1181, VETERANS 2ND AMENDMENT PROTECTION ACT

Mr. BUCK from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-39) on the resolution (H. Res. 198) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1259) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1367) to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1181) to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the conditions under which certain persons may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

NATIONAL K9 VETERANS DAY

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, this week, we recognized National K9 Veterans Day. It was on March 13, 1942, that the U.S. Army K9 Corps was officially formed, although dogs have had a role in our military ever since our country's founding. We not only honor military dogs, but also police dogs, customs dogs, border patrol dogs, and other working dogs that work to protect our communities.

These dogs provide an incredible service to our brave men and women overseas. They are responsible for saving lives and preventing injuries, sometimes at their own expense.

Many of our servicemembers form very strong bonds with these loyal companions. That is why I authored the Military Working Dog Military Retirement Act and was proud to see it pass with overwhelming bipartisan support last Congress. This new law guarantees that service dogs are returned and retired to the United States after serving overseas. Previously, military members were often forced to spend their own money to bring these animals home.

Mr. Speaker, let us remember and honor these four-legged heroes. They are a valuable component of protecting Americans through their courage and their loyalty.

NOAA FUNDING

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the mission of NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, now under attack by the Trump administration.

An assault on NOAA, Mr. Speaker, is an assault on science. NOAA is a data-driven organization with proven research in the public interest. NOAA defends our coasts from the surges we have seen from Sandy, Irene, and other storms. NOAA's satellites keep watch day and night, providing up-to-the-second data to farmers, forecasters, and fishermen.

Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the Trump administration's denial of climate damage, but I do not understand it. Defunding NOAA, as the President's budget purportedly does, does not make our climate problems simply go away. The mission of NOAA isn't just about our environment. American businesses rely on its data every day to give them an economic advantage. After all, there is a reason NOAA is in the Department of Commerce to begin with.

TRIBUTE TO FORMER CONGRESSMAN JOHN WOLD

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

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend and former Member of this House, John Wold, of Casper, Wyoming, who passed away on February 19. Congressman Wold was a member of the Greatest Generation serving as a naval engineer during World War II. He also served Wyoming in our State legislature and as our Member of Congress. He was a leader and pioneer in the energy field, and he made numerous contributions, along with his incomparable wife, Jane, to our civic life and as a philanthropist.

I knew John my whole life. The friendship between our families goes back even farther. John was the oldest living former Member of Congress, and I was honored to receive his advice and counsel over the years.

I will never forget attending his 100th birthday this past summer in Casper and seeing the joy it brought him to be surrounded by so many of his wonderful children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

We will miss him, but the impact Congressman Wold had on our State and our Nation and the legacy of leadership and honor he leaves behind will continue to be an inspiration for generations to come.

SOUTH SUDAN

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

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, last month, the U.N. declared a famine in parts of South Sudan. As I rise today, more than 100,000 men, women, and children there are facing immediate starvation. Arguably, this was an avoidable crisis.

Internal conflicts have worsened the dire living conditions for the people of South Sudan, and the government of the Republic of South Sudan must live up to its promise and ensure access to the most vulnerable communities by humanitarian organizations. According to recent estimates, without immediate action, an additional 5.5 million people living in South Sudan will experience famine.

Although we haven't yet seen the President's budget, it is reported that there is a 37 percent decrease in foreign aid. This could include severe cuts to humanitarian funding.

In this regard, I introduced H. Res. 187 in support of the efforts by USAID and other providers of humanitarian assistance in the international community. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bipartisan resolution, and, by doing so, begin an end to this crisis.

CONGRATULATING THERESA BRYANT

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Theresa Bryant, who is West Forsyth High School's 2016-2017 Teacher of the Year.

This first-generation college graduate, Kiwanis member, and Key Club adviser has worked at West Forsyth in Clemmons since 2000, where she teaches sophomore English and Shakespeare as an elective.

Theresa's proudest moment in the field of education is her role in the creation of the Shakespeare elective class. After an educational opportunity at the Globe Theatre in London, she worked with a colleague to create an intensive curriculum covering eight plays. The class has brought the words of the Bard to more than 4,000 students at West Forsyth, as well as four other schools in the district.

Theresa is known for her dedication to her students and making her lessons relevant to their different learning styles so everyone can understand the material.

We are lucky to have a teacher of her caliber serving students in North Carolina's Fifth District.

□ 2000

SOMEBODY ELSE'S BABIES

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, in every chapter from the story of America's success, we find countless examples of the contributions made by immigrants. In fact, it begins in our prologue: we are a nation founded by immigrants.

Yet, over the weekend, a Member of this House, Mr. KING of Iowa, said: "We can't restore our civilization with somebody else's babies."

There is nothing to restore. We are the greatest country in the world. But, worse, by disparaging the value of somebody else's babies, Mr. KING argues for an America void of people of color or who worship differently than he does. That is not who we are.

Behind me are a few small examples of somebody else's babies: people who immigrated to America or whose families immigrated to America, practicing many different faiths, coming from many different countries.

They include the daughter of Chinese immigrants who became one of America's most celebrated and best-selling authors, Amy Tan; the son of a Syrian migrant, Steve Jobs, who founded Apple; and the son of a Kenyan student, who recently finished two terms as the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama.

These are not somebody else's babies. These are immigrants and the children of immigrants, and they are our babies.

I was born and baptized in Sac City, Iowa, located in Mr. KING's district. It is where I learned from Exodus 22:21, "You must not mistreat or oppress foreigners in any way. Remember, you yourselves were once foreigners." And from the Iowans I know, they were raised to accept and love the same way.

I hope my colleagues join me in denouncing bigoted, hateful, and divisive rhetoric, and let's celebrate the beautiful diversity that has always made our Nation shine: these beautiful "somebody else's babies" who are America's babies.

FREEING UP RESTRICTIVE FUEL MILEAGE STANDARDS

(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 to applaud the President's decision to halt new EPA fuel mileage restrictions on the auto industry, also known as CAFE standards.

Speaking to auto industry workers in Detroit today, President Trump promised to reexamine stringent fuel efficiency rules that were hurried into place in the final days of the previous administration.

After committing to a review in 2018, the Obama administration changed course just before leaving office and decided to keep the requirements in place for model year vehicles 2022–2025. According to reviews by independent economists and engineers, these requirements would add at least an aver-

age of \$3,800 in costs per vehicle, even after supposed fuel savings were considered.

Even more, this vastly limits consumer choice, whether someone wants to buy a minivan to move their family or soccer team around, a farmer or contractor that needs a three-quarter-ton pickup to do his or her job, or maybe somebody that would just like to buy a sporty car.

Even worse, it is entirely unclear whether existing technology even allows the 60 percent jump from the 2016 requirement of 34.1 miles per gallon to reach the almost 55-mile-per-gallon requirement in only seven model years to 2025 without sacrificing safety and, yet again, eviscerating consumer choice.

The President's decision to fully review these requirements will result in lower vehicle costs, allow safer vehicles, and boost our U.S. economy by supporting domestic manufacturing.

THE TRUTH MUST BE TOLD

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me join my colleagues, first of all, and say that this country is made up of somebody else's babies; and I am very proud to be an American who sees the great talent of these babies who have become great leaders, such as teachers, scientists, doctors, lawyers, and members who do public service. Thank you to somebody else's babies.

Let me also congratulate the district court in Hawaii, which has just rendered a decision to block the President's Muslim ban again. Thank you for that wise and deliberative decision.

I rise today in particular to really ask and wonder where we are in this country that a President of the United States can, first, tweet out that a former President committed a criminal felony: wiretapping.

In the last 48 hours, there is mish-mash of information coming from the press secretary or the director of communications and the President: Oh, maybe it was not wiretapping by the President of the United States formally, but it is generally wiretapping.

Mr. President, let me be very clear: the words of the Commander in Chief are known to carry great weight. It is the American people that have to trust and believe and be commanded and led.

I am saddened by the state that we are in right now. I am saddened that there is one position one day and another position another day. As a senior member of the Judiciary Committee, we cannot tolerate that kind of mismatched conversation. The truth must be told. The American people must know it, Members of Congress must know it. I believe committees should be investigating if there was a wiretap or not and if there was an action by the former President. If not, tell the truth.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK). The Chair would remind

Members to direct their remarks to the Chair.

HONORING TRINITY UNITED METHODIST ON ITS 200TH YEAR

(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, this year, the Trinity United Methodist Church in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, marks its 200th year as a house of worship.

Founded in April of 1817, the church congregation began with just seven people. Schoolmaster and Methodist layman James McGee led the first meeting. Over the years, Trinity's congregation has steadily grown, and today it boasts 200 members. The current church was built in 1875, and in 1962, an educational building was added on.

The church plays an important role in the Bellefonte community and it organizes several programs throughout the year, including a free community lunch, a New Year's Day dinner, free public concerts, and a toy drive before Christmas for children in need.

Mr. Speaker, for the last 200 years, Trinity United Methodist Church has opened its doors for people to hear the Word of the Lord, but a church is much more than a building. It brings a love of God into the community and into the hearts of those who fill the seats each Sunday.

God bless Trinity United Methodist Church on the momentous occasion of its bicentennial.

BULLY BUSTERS

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

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of a group of 11- and 12-year-old girls from my district who have noticed an unsettling trend in modern politics and who are absolutely determined to do something about it. They see bullying from leaders who are supposed to be their role models. They witness fear, intimidation, and vitriol being thrown at religious minorities, LGBTQ people, women, immigrants, communities of color. And, yes, I am also somebody else's baby.

In the face of this hate, these girls have decided to take action by forming the D.C. Bully Busters. These change-making girls, not even old enough to vote yet, but certainly old enough to make their voices heard, have vowed to stand up against the bullying they are seeing in American politics.

Mr. Speaker, if grade-schoolers can say that bullying, intimidation, and silently standing by are cowardly tactics that have no place in politics, then the adults who represent them must be courageous enough to do the same thing.

On Friday, I will be proudly signing the D.C. Bully Busters pledge, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me so that we can let everyone know at every level that bullying is never acceptable.

COMMONSENSE VA REFORM

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

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a cosponsor of H.R. 1259, the VA Accountability First Act.

This important piece of legislation targets vulnerabilities within the VA employment structure that prevent bad actors from being fired or demoted. This commonsense reform gives the Secretary of the VA the flexibility to dismiss or demote employees who are guilty of on-the-job inebriation, drug diversion, and sexual assault, just to name a few. Our veterans deserve quality care. They have earned quality care.

As chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, it is my highest priority in making sure that our Department of Veterans Affairs is working for the men and women who have worn the cloth of our Nation and made the sacrifices that keep us free: our veterans.

This bill moves the needle in the right direction, and I commend Chairman ROE for introducing it.

HEALTHCARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. FERGUSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying that, for the last 25 years, I practiced dentistry in Georgia's Third District and I experienced a healthcare system that was broken and in desperate need of repair to reduce costs and increase access to care.

After the Affordable Care Act was signed into law, I saw my patients, my friends, my neighbors forced away from doctors who had treated them for their entire lives. Instead of decreasing costs, patients saw their costs skyrocket and their access to care limited.

As a medical practitioner, I want what is best for my patients. Those are the people that I am fighting for: my neighbors and constituents who saw their premiums skyrocket, their quality and access to care limited or determined by a government bureaucrat. I committed to them that I would repeal ObamaCare and undo the damage that it has done to our healthcare system.

The legislation we are currently considering in the House, the American Health Care Act, is just the beginning of keeping that promise.

This is not a choice between a broken healthcare system that existed before

ObamaCare. It is a new direction that reflects an understanding of what works and what does not work. The legislation will enact many reforms that directly impact Americans by lowering costs and improving access to care.

Tonight, my colleagues and I are going to share with you in great detail what that legislation does. We have all been very open in our opposition to the Affordable Care Act, but it is also important that we share with our constituents what we stand for and what we are working to do to reform this broken system.

We stand for patient-centered health care that meets the needs of our constituents in an affordable way. We stand for market-driven healthcare solutions and an industry that prioritizes personal freedom over government mandates. We stand for the biggest entitlement reform in a generation to ensure that we protect our most vulnerable populations.

This is just a short list of the goals we are working towards, and I am excited to be joined by a number of my colleagues tonight to help me explain more to the American people what is happening with our healthcare system.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON). He served in the George W. Bush administration. He has worked with the FDIC, and he has been a public servant in Lubbock, Texas, at Texas Tech University. He serves on the House Agriculture Committee, the Budget Committee, and the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, the facts are indisputable: President Obama's attempt to plan our healthcare economy from Washington, D.C., has failed.

I have spent nearly 2 years crisscrossing 29 counties in west Texas, and I can report from the many stories from my constituents that no single law or policy has been more reviled, more destructive, or more intrusive than ObamaCare. It is absolutely crushing our small businesses and Main Street Americans everywhere.

The American Health Care Act repeals ObamaCare and is a step in the right direction to freeing the American people from the scourge of government-controlled health care.

For the first time since the passage of ObamaCare, according to the Congressional Budget Office's report recently, the American Health Care Act will lower premiums over time by 10 percent, a far cry from the skyrocketing premiums we have seen over the last several years since the passage of the Affordable Care Act.

The report goes on to say that the American Health Care Act will reduce the deficit by \$337 billion and make the biggest entitlement reform in generations, saving taxpayers well over \$800 billion.

This bill strikes at the heart of ObamaCare by repealing its mandates, eliminating its taxes, and gutting its regulations.

Make no mistake, this legislation is not perfect. I will continue to fight for more conservative and more fiscally responsible policy outcomes like work requirements for able-bodied adults. But when the dust settles and the debate is over, we cannot allow perfect policy aspirations to be the enemy of good, conservative results. The alternative, Mr. Speaker, is simply unacceptable.

□ 2015

My constituents sent me to Washington to tackle the tough issues and solve the big problems. Well, we have got one, and it is called ObamaCare. I committed a long time ago that if I ever had the chance, I would repeal ObamaCare, and I plan on keeping my promise, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas touched on some very important issues. One that he talked about was the process here, that this is just the beginning of a long journey that we must take to rebuild our American healthcare system.

This has been an open legislative process. More than 8 months ago, even before I was a Member of this great House, the Republican caucus here released A Better Way agenda, which detailed a consensus vision for patient-centered healthcare reform. Our bill, the American Health Care Act, is built on that framework.

These ideas are not new. They are not unvetted. They are a product of many conversations, debates, and work. Unlike the drafting of ObamaCare, we want our constituents to know what is in this legislation before we pass it. That is why every American can go to readthebill.gov and look at this legislation for themselves. In fact, I encourage anyone who hasn't taken time to look at this legislation yet to go to readthebill.gov and read more about the American Health Care Act.

At no point in this process have I felt closed out of it. As a matter of fact, as a freshman, I can tell you that I have had my voice heard, I have been asked for input, and I have seen many of the ideas that I have spoken about be included in this bill.

This bill has not been crafted behind closed doors. It has not been kept in the shadows. As a matter of fact, it has been just the opposite. As a freshman Member sitting in conference, leadership has been very straightforward about the intentions of the bill, the basic framework of the bill, and I am excited to see that, as this process has gone through regular order, we have seen many amendments added to it, and we are continuing that process.

Regular order means that we have done something very unique here. We haven't just taken a bill and passed it and then get to read what is in it. We have taken a bill, and we have taken it through the committee process. Our colleagues on the Committee on Energy and Commerce and Committee on

Ways and Means have worked through some many long nights debating amendments in an open process.

Tomorrow the House Committee on the Budget will take up this business. I am a member on that committee, and I am looking forward to the process of going through the debate tomorrow. I am sure that it will be long, and I am sure many amendments will be debated; but I am excited about the opportunity that we have to move a piece of legislation forward, make it better, make it more conservative, but, most importantly, make sure that Americans have great health care, access to that health care at an affordable price.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON).

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the American Health Care Act.

ObamaCare has failed, and we need to replace it. It has made health care inaccessible for many of the Americans it was created to help. Our premiums have skyrocketed, small business growth has been stunted as it can't expand due to health care regulations, and employees have seen their hours cut. Individuals are forced to purchase healthcare coverage they do not want.

Over the past 2 years, I have met with many Nebraskans in my district. I keep hearing about the broken promises of ObamaCare and the tight stranglehold this law has created for the American people. I have heard from a young mother who had to pay for the whole bill of the delivery of her child. The ACA plan she was on had a \$12,000 deductible, and that plan didn't help her one cent.

Another citizen from Omaha, Jeanine, was happy with her healthcare insurance for decades. Five years ago, she was paying \$323 a month and was satisfied with the coverage she had. Four years ago, she was told by her insurance company that she would have to pay more because she would need additional coverage, like maternity coverage, even though she was past that stage in her life. Two years ago, that insurance plan of Jeanine's jumped to \$690 a month—double.

However, her health insurance company had another policy under ACA which she could switch to. She did so for \$150 a month with a \$550 credit. At least, she had that plan until her insurance company dropped that ACA policy and sent Jeanine searching for another policy. Now Jeanine is on an ACA policy that covers her primary doctor but not her dentist or her pharmacy. All Jeanine wants is a healthcare plan that fits her needs. She does not want the Federal Government telling her what coverage she must purchase.

Imagine for just a second that you have been happy for decades with a product you use, and one day the government comes in and tells you that you don't know what is best for you. They force you to pay more, and in return you get something that doesn't work. ACA is like the government tell-

ing you that you need to buy an expensive, fast, shiny sports car with all the bells and whistles, when all you wanted was a less expensive economy car to get you around town. But later you find out that that fancy sports car is actually a lemon.

That is exactly what happened to Jeanine and countless other Americans when ObamaCare forced them to coverage they did not want or need. This is more than a failed system. It is wrong to the core, and this is what the American Health Care Act is designed to fix.

The American Health Care Act is a step in the right direction, and we are fulfilling our promises to repair the problems that ACA has left us. This legislation repeals major flaws of ObamaCare, such as employer and individual mandates, letting individuals choose what coverage is best for them. Under this bill, health savings accounts will be expanded and will give tax credits for those who buy their own insurance to give them parity with those who get employer-provided coverage tax free. These are things that I campaigned on and promised to fight for, and they are in the bill.

The bill also gives States more control over their healthcare policies, allowing for patient-centered health care and getting the Federal bureaucrats out of the discussion. The American Health Care Act, instead, allows for individuals to choose the health insurance plans based on their needs and budget, allowing for Americans to have greater access and to find a health plan that is right for them. The CBO shows that it is going to lower those premiums by 10 percent. Now, Nebraska had a 51 percent increase last year, Mr. Speaker. This plan is going to lower premiums by 10 percent.

The American Health Care Act will reduce the deficit and cut taxes. According to Monday's CBO score, this bill will reduce the Federal deficit by \$337 billion and lower taxes by \$883 billion. That is good for America.

Finally, the American Health Care Act does this and yet preserves affordable insurance for those with pre-existing conditions and maintains a safety net for those who cannot pay premiums. These are things that I also promised to fight for, and they are in the bill.

I look forward to working with my fellow House Members on both sides of the aisle to deliver the best law for the American people. We are going to be debating this bill for the next few weeks, and we are going to make it better.

I am proud that this Congress and the Republican leadership have made a commitment to passing this legislation in an open and transparent process. This is a good first step toward fixing the mess of the ACA.

Before we vote on this, I encourage my colleagues and the American people to carefully read the bill so they can find out what is in it. Unlike

ObamaCare, we don't have to pass this to find out what is in it. We know now.

This is a great step forward, a patient-centered, doctor-supported healthcare system that gives power back to the States and gets the bureaucrat out of our healthcare decisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this.

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON) for his remarks.

He touched on something that is very important, and that is the driving down of cost and how this is accomplished. Truly, when the patient is in control of their health care, they are also in control of the cost. We are fighting for consumer choice in a patient-driven healthcare system. We understand, and I certainly understand, that patients and doctors need to be at the center of the healthcare conversation, not bureaucrats and not insurance clerks.

Our plan includes provisions to expand choice and give consumers more control over their healthcare dollars. The American Health Care Act significantly increases the amount individuals and families can contribute to their personal health savings accounts each year, allowing them to save more to pay for future healthcare expenses and the flexibility to use their healthcare dollars as they choose.

It also allows them to spend those healthcare dollars where they think that it will best benefit their families. It allows them to have the most intimate conversations with their healthcare providers and make sure that they are making the right decisions and using their dollars wisely. If the first question always is "does my insurance company pay for it?" you are always going to get the most expensive answer. However, if the patient has contributed to this process, the patient then will be able to make some informed decisions through good conversations with their doctors, and they can better manage their own health care.

We are fighting for a system that puts patients first and allows Georgians in the Third District and all across this Nation to make their own healthcare decisions. That starts with a conversation between the doctor and the patient.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD). He is a former three-term sheriff from Florida, representing the greater Jacksonville area.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to speak of fairness, to speak of equity, to speak of parity for America's hardworking taxpayers. I want to talk about bringing parity between Americans who get their insurance coverage through their employer and those who are forced to purchase theirs on the individual market.

Currently, over 150 million Americans who have employer-sponsored health insurance enjoy a tax benefit to

purchase that health insurance. However, Americans who purchase their insurance in the individual marketplace, like farmers, small-business owners, plumbers, and mechanics, do not have a similar kind of benefit. Mr. Speaker, simply put, this is just unfair.

However, the American Health Care Plan helps fix this inequity by offering a portable tax credit to help these Americans purchase the health insurance they choose. These credits are also age-adjusted so older Americans who have higher healthcare costs will also see a larger credit to assist them in purchasing that insurance.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, many individuals and families in Florida's Fourth Congressional District will benefit from this reform and for the first time will be on a more level playing field in purchasing their health insurance. We are fighting for basic fairness. No American, no small-business man or woman, no farmer, plumber, or mechanic should be disadvantaged because of where they work or where they are forced to purchase their insurance.

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Florida touched on something that is very important, and that is fairness in the marketplace. I can tell you, as a small-business owner, I did not receive the same favorable tax treatment as the major corporations did under the Affordable Care Act. Once this bill took effect, I had to move into the individual market. I had to begin buying health insurance with post-tax dollars, and I was unable to afford the coverage not only for my family, but for the people that I had the pleasure of working with every single day in my business.

What Mr. RUTHERFORD talked about is leveling the playing field, and that is something that we need to do. It will increase innovation. It increases jobs. It increases success. It is so frustrating for Americans as they begin to build their small businesses and they begin to grow, and every single time that they take a step forward, the government takes more and more out of their pocket. Now we have a healthcare system that continues to rob them of their success.

Make no mistake; the healthcare system that we had prior to the Affordable Care Act was certainly not successful and not headed in the right way, but we have made it worse with this. What we have done is we have not only disenfranchised many small businesses and people who are growing their businesses and finding success, but we have also, quite candidly, done a poor job of maintaining our safety net. What we are fighting for is to increase affordable health care for all Americans, and this has meant listening to a lot of the feedback from our families and our constituents back home.

What we need to recognize is that, under our plan, dependents can continue to stay on their parents' insurance until age 26 and they are fully on

their feet, if that is the right thing for their families to do. Americans told us that they like this flexibility, and we have listened to them.

Our plan will also ensure that those who have preexisting conditions can't be charged more for the health coverage they need. It also includes incentives, not mandates, to encourage Americans to have continuous coverage. This is good for the marketplace, and it will keep costs down for all Americans. Our portable tax credits will also increase access to coverage by assisting lower income individuals to purchase the health insurance that they need.

What is more, the American Health Care Act includes a Patient and State Stability Fund to help States expand the number of vulnerable patients who have access to health care. We know that States know how to best meet the unique needs of their citizens, and this is going to give them the flexibility to do that. Therefore, as these funds are flexible, they allow things like cutting out-of-pocket expenses for patients, promoting access to preventive services, or increasing available options in the marketplace—all things that are needed.

□ 2030

These reforms will help drive down costs and increase access to care. This is good news for patients who are worried about affordable coverage. Unlike ObamaCare, though, it means that their coverage provides them with meaningful access to care.

It does you no good to have an insurance plan that you cannot afford to use. Time and time again, I have patients, I have small-business owners, I have constituents from all over Georgia's Third District that come to me and say: Just because I have this new insurance plan doesn't mean that my family is getting better care.

One such example was a gentleman that came into my district office just this past week. Three years ago, his health insurance for his family with four children was about \$900, and he had a \$3,000 family deductible. Last year, his premium had risen to \$1,700 a month. And this year, he laid in front of me on my desk in the district office a bill for his health insurance that was \$2,400 a month, and a \$7,000 deductible. He is a small-business owner with nine employees. It is absolutely crushing his family expenses, and that is not fair.

What we have done is we have created an environment where we have tried unsuccessfully to expand access; and in doing so, we have risen costs on men and women across this Nation that are trying to do their best to move into the middle class. We have seen it destroy family finances. We have seen it create a situation where many families now pay more for their health insurance than they do for their own homes.

Mr. Speaker, in my case, that is the exact same thing. My insurance pay-

ment is more than my house payment, and that simply doesn't seem right.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Ms. TENNEY). She has proven to be a great Member of Congress. I have enjoyed working with her thoroughly. Ms. TENNEY has some very revealing remarks going forward.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. FERGUSON), my esteemed colleague.

I rise today to recognize the New Yorkers who have been hit especially hard by the policies of the previous administration and ObamaCare's so-called reforms to our healthcare system. Patients have been hurt, doctors have been burdened, and families and taxpayers are being crushed by this terrible law, and its thousands of pages of onerous regulations.

Our most vulnerable citizens—seniors, the hardworking middle class, and veterans—are in worse shape now in upstate New York than they were before. In New York State and across the 22nd District, patients are being denied high-quality care that they deserve and need.

With higher costs, less accessible and affordable care, and mountains of red tape, this law has proven to be everything but a Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Now, some deductibles are higher than a house payment, and premiums across the Nation have increased on average by 25 percent. Our families didn't sign up for this.

Patients have had their plans canceled and their doctors are deemed out of network. They have fewer and worse choices than before. All the while, costs have skyrocketed with premiums and deductibles jumping by double digits and triple digits in some cases.

This failed law has hurt our economy, small-business owners, and family farms while driving hundreds of thousands of jobs out of our communities. Small businesses are being crushed by ObamaCare and have either stopped hiring or dropped insurance coverage for their employees. The CBO estimated that ObamaCare will result in the loss of at least 2 million jobs. In fact, the number one complaint of small-business owners in my district throughout the last 6 years has been ObamaCare, and 70 percent of the new jobs are created by the small businesses in our community.

One small-business owner, in fact, told me that she had to lay off nearly a dozen employees just to keep up with the cost of ObamaCare. Just think of looking at 12 families and saying: You have now lost the primary caregiver in your family just to keep up with ObamaCare mandates.

Another family that I met with told me they had their insurance lost after being canceled three times, and now their options are either limited or unaffordable.

Another independent, self-insured man with three children told me that he had an insurance plan, but he had no

health care, with a \$12,000 annual deductible.

This is unfair and it is unsustainable for small-business owners, particularly those in the independent market.

Hardworking middle class families in New York are being burdened with nearly the highest taxes in the Nation. New York is one of only four States that passes the State 50 percent share Medicaid burden onto the local taxpayers. Twenty-five percent of the State's obligation to cover Medicaid costs are forced onto struggling local governments already suffocating under unfunded mandates from the State. This has caused property and sales taxes to increase year after year, crushing the pocketbooks of even the most vulnerable taxpayers.

In New York State, local taxpayers throughout our 63 counties will be forced to pay over \$7.5 billion annually in this local share to support New York's Medicaid program. New York's Medicaid program is the largest in the Nation. In fiscal year 2018, the cost will be over \$65 billion—over 42 percent of New York's \$152 billion proposed State budget. That is nearly the cost of the entire State of Florida's State budget.

Already, taxpayers in upstate and central New York are burdened with some of the highest combined property and sales tax in the country. Every penny that goes for this failing scheme is a penny less for our schools, our roads, care for our seniors, care for people with special needs, and actually the truly needy in our communities.

There is a better way that won't leave anyone behind. It is vitally important that we begin to repeal ObamaCare so we can provide relief for people across the country and the State.

I am currently reviewing the American Health Care Act, a reform initiative proposed to alleviate the pressures ObamaCare has put on patients, providers, and taxpayers. The proposals in the American Health Care Act will lower premiums by 10 percent, reduce taxes by \$883 billion, and reduce the Federal deficit dollars by \$337 billion. All are a significant step in the right direction.

However, I will continue to listen to constituents in the 22nd District as the House carefully considers this legislation before we vote on it and any future bills to improve and restore our healthcare system for all.

Current and future taxpayers must not be saddled with further debt and taxes to pay for lower quality and less access to care. Any new initiative must enshrine the freedom to choose a plan tailored to each person and each family. Any new initiative must include a competitive marketplace which provides better and broader options for families across all economic sectors. Any new initiative must protect seniors and the truly needy in our society, because we do have an obligation and a desire to help them.

But the status quo is unacceptable. ObamaCare is inefficient, ineffective,

and tramples our precious liberties. We, as their duly elected representatives, should do all in our power to patient-centered, cost-conscious, high-quality system of health care in this country. I will continue to fight for everyone in our communities.

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from New York for her very candid remarks. As you can see, she touched on many important issues—the unfairness of the system that we have now, but also the importance of protecting our Medicaid safety net.

What we have seen under the Affordable Care Act is that we have seen our safety nets eroded. We are diverting resources away from the people that need them the most—the poor, the elderly, the blind, the disabled, children, and pregnant women—and we are pushing those resources to able-bodied men and women who do have the ability to work.

It is important to recognize that our legislation is probably the largest entitlement reform program in a generation. Our legislation puts Medicaid back on a budget for the first time in history. It provides enhanced flexibility to the States to allow them to design effective and financially sound programs to meet their population's unique needs.

Our plan also ensures that Medicaid prioritizes care for the most vulnerable, who it was originally intended for. We must do this because there are so many Americans, unfortunately, that have to depend on this safety net for their health care.

I understand this. In my hometown, in my dental practice, I treated patients who relied on Medicaid for their healthcare coverage. It was an honor to take care of them and to have very real discussions about their healthcare needs. I understand this vulnerable population because they were a vital part of my practice, and it was truly my pleasure to take care of them. I understand the unique circumstances that cause many of these individuals to be on Medicaid and to need this valuable safety net.

But we have to have an honest conversation about that. We have to be able to provide that safety net. And as we put more and more able-bodied men and women without children on that safety net, it is diverting resources away from those that need it the most. That is not right and that is not the American way. We are fighting to protect and strengthen this Nation's healthcare safety net.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL). Dr. Marshall knows firsthand about health care. He was a practicing OB/GYN, a board chairman of a hospital, and he has served our Nation in the United States Army.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with people like my colleague, Dr. DREW FERGUSON, from Georgia.

I am so proud to stand tonight with the President of the United States. I know that tonight Mr. Trump is speaking loudly on behalf of our healthcare bill. Mr. Trump is ready to take the fight on with us who feel like we need to move this health care forward.

I am not sure how many of you grew up without power steering in your vehicles, but if you know anything about the lack of power steering—and I think back to the tractors I drove growing up, and that tractor, you could not turn that wheel until you started the tractor moving—or if you had a Ford truck or a Dodge truck or a Chevy truck and it didn't have power steering, you couldn't turn that truck until it started moving.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to get this bill moving. We have to move health care forward. I am so tired of the rhetoric of repeal and replace. I am telling you, my constituents sent me here to fix health care. Forget the political rhetoric. I am ready to fix health care. I am ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with Republicans, with Democrats, with people down the aisle, across the aisle, and with our President to get this healthcare bill passed.

Unfortunately, ObamaCare has failed. When this first came about, I was so excited. I was hoping that this would be a healthcare bill that would work. But, unfortunately, it is true that this healthcare bill is dying very quickly.

One-third of counties across this country no longer have a provider to take care of the exchange. My own State of Kansas is down to one provider. Today, even more insurance companies are bailing. This bill is dying. Doing nothing is simply not an option, Mr. Speaker.

□ 2045

As I visited with thousands of patients over the last several years and thousands of my constituents, they said there are several things that they thought were important that we save from this healthcare bill, the Affordable Care Act, and I think we have done just that:

Number one, we have protected the preexisting issue conditions;

Number two, we are letting children stay on their parents' health insurance until age 26;

Number three, we are ensuring that women are not charged more for health insurance just because they are a woman; and

Number four, we protected the doughnut hole and kept it closed for Medicare.

So I think we have saved the best things of the Affordable Care Act.

So what have we removed? Mr. Speaker, we removed almost \$1 trillion of taxes. This is the most significant entitlement reform in our generation, the most significant entitlement reform since the 1960s started Medicaid.

What can we expect out of this bill?

We expect premiums to decrease by 10 percent.

We expect to start reprioritizing Medicaid moneys. I want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that we prioritize Medicaid moneys for those who need it the most: those with disabilities, children, and the elderly. And I want to make sure these people are at the front of the Medicaid line rather than at the end of the line.

This country cannot afford to give Medicaid to able-bodied Americans. We need to prioritize the dollars that we have for those that need it the most.

Mr. Speaker, we spent \$580 billion last year on Medicaid. We are on our way to spending \$1 trillion on Medicaid if we don't do something soon. This country cannot afford to spend \$1 trillion on Medicaid.

Mr. Speaker, these are only the first steps of bending the cost curve downward for health care. We have to do more than just this bill. There are going to be more steps.

I have complete faith in Dr. Tom Price, our new HHS Secretary, that he will be deregulating health care, which is the most regulated business in the country right now. Give Dr. Price 60, 90 days to deregulate medicine and start encouraging competition, and we will start bending this cost curve downward.

We need to empower free markets. We need to empower States to have more local control. We are expanding healthcare savings accounts, but there are many more things we need to do. This is just the start of healthcare reform.

This is the first chapter of a new book on healthcare reform. There are many more chapters to go. I cannot wait to improve health care, to improve quality and start driving the cost curve downward.

Mr. Speaker, thank you so much for allowing me the time to stand shoulder to shoulder with our President, as well as with Dr. DREW FERGUSON, who is representing the State of Georgia so proudly. I am so proud to be called his freshman colleague.

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Dr. MARSHALL for his strong remarks and pointing out and highlighting several important things.

You know, one of the biggest things that we are fighting for as part of repealing ObamaCare is that we are fighting for our personal freedom. Right now, Americans have the "choice" of purchasing a government-mandated, one-size-fits-all product or paying a government-mandated penalty. In almost a third of all U.S. counties, and many in my home State of Georgia, consumers don't even have the choice between insurances to purchase. This is not a choice.

With the passage of the American Health Care Act, no longer will the Federal Government mandate that Americans purchase a product that they don't want, because we believe that individuals should have the freedom to make their own choices. We understand the unique dignity of every

human being. This dignity calls for self-determination and personal freedom, and we are fighting for that freedom. It is important.

I want to thank all of my colleagues who have joined me tonight to share with our constituents more about what we are fighting for.

First off, our legislation promotes personal freedom by eliminating the individual and employer mandates. Purchasing decisions should be left up to the consumer, not the Federal Government. Under our plan, no American is mandated to purchase a product that he or she does not want and cannot afford.

As I have shared, I have personal experience with how important the conversation between the patient and their doctor is. By almost doubling the cap on how much individuals can contribute to their personal health savings accounts each year and expanding where those dollars can be used, our plan puts patients back at the center of the conversation with their doctor, and they remove all of the government bureaucrats from the middle of that conversation.

Health care is personal. It should belong to the patient and their healthcare provider—and no one else. That is where the most important decisions are made.

We are also working to strengthen our safety net to ensure that our vulnerable populations have continued access to health care. Our plan returns power to the States with the biggest entitlement reform in a generation. Our legislation also protects Americans with preexisting conditions, ensuring that no one is unable to purchase insurance because of an illness.

ObamaCare is a complex tangle of regulations and Federal overreach. With every day that passes, Americans and businesses feel the growing weight of a healthcare system that is failing. But it is also irresponsible to return to a broken healthcare system that brought us ObamaCare.

Tomorrow, we will take the next step in the open legislative process as my colleagues and I on the Budget Committee do our part to send the American Health Care Act to the floor of the House for a vote. I am excited to take this step, but I want to be clear that this is only one part of repeal and reform. We are doing all that we can, and we are going to continue to push for conservative solutions with this bill. But it is not the final vote that we will take. There are many steps to go.

While it will take time and patience, I made a promise to repeal the Affordable Care Act and improve our healthcare system for all Americans. I am committed to this difficult road of building this healthcare system that puts patients first. The American people deserve the hard work and political will it will take to do this the right way.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have been joined by my colleagues tonight

and glad to hear their comments, and I know that you have been as well. I want to point out that my colleagues have done an outstanding job tonight, and I believe that they have made some very, very salient points, and articulated reasons why we must step forward and do all that we can to reform our American healthcare system.

We have to control the cost. We have to do the things necessary to put patients back in control. And, Mr. Speaker, I have confidence that this body, along with our President and our colleagues in the Senate, can do that.

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

ROAD TRIP CAMARADERIE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ARRINGTON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, it is great to be here tonight. I just traveled with my good friend, close colleague, and fellow Texan—and your fellow Texan—WILL HURD, who started with me in San Antonio, Texas, yesterday at 7 a.m., San Antonio time, where we, because of the inclement weather on the East Coast and because of his canceled flight and the possibility that mine might also be canceled, decided to rent a car in San Antonio and drive it here to Washington, D.C., in time for votes this evening that started at 6:30 eastern standard time.

That road trip in a Chevy Impala, rented in San Antonio, took us from San Antonio to Austin, to San Marcos, to Dallas, to Waco, to Texarkana, and then into Little Rock in Arkansas, over into Tennessee—cities including Memphis, Nashville, and Johnson City—and then through Virginia, 36 hours total, 31 of them either driving or at a pit stop fueling up on gas or grabbing a sandwich.

Mr. Speaker, there were really two reasons to do this. One was to make sure that we could get to work and not allow the weather delays or flight cancellations to stop us from doing the jobs that we were elected to do on behalf of the people that we represent, but the other reason was for a Democrat and a Republican to get together, get to know each other, understand the issues before this Congress from each other's perspective, and see if we couldn't find some common ground.

In addition, because each of us so deeply believes in transparency and accountability, we allowed the people that we represent to join us on that trip. We live-streamed the entire journey on Facebook Live, with thousands of people from all over this country submitting their questions, their comments, their suggestions, their advice, their guidance, including where to get the best doughnut at midnight in Memphis, Tennessee—which turns out to be Gibson's Donuts—where Mr. HURD from Texas and I had a chance to meet some

of the folks who make those doughnuts and some of the folks who eat them. It was one of the best parts of the trip.

Mr. Speaker, I am just so grateful that there is an opportunity, despite the deep divisions between our two parties at times and despite the imperative to raise money, to campaign, to spend time away from each other, understandably, with our families or listening to our constituents back in our home districts. Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful that we had a chance to spend some time together getting to know each other, getting to talk about the issues that are important to the people we represent and to this country at large.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield to my friend from Texas (Mr. HURD), the gentleman who represents the 23rd Congressional District.

Mr. HURD. I would like to thank the Speaker, and I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

One of my favorite quotes is from Teddy Roosevelt. He says: "Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat."

The gentleman from Texas and I had a great 31 hours—I guess, 36 hours, 31 of it being in a vehicle. It was fun, and it was like going on a road trip with my buddy having a good time, but it was more impactful for that.

Actually, I think I am going through separation anxiety. I want to know what Sarah is doing right now, or Carol. They were with us late last night in those last 3 hours of our trip when we were tired and hungry and ready to go to sleep. But these are folks that we didn't know—and I didn't even know what part of the country they were in—that kept us going, and it was because of their excitement about what we were doing that kept us going.

□ 2100

We talked many times about how this was an opportunity. In the press, in the media, we focus on the things that divide us, not the things that unite us; and it was a great opportunity to show that there is a lot between Republicans and Democrats that brings us together. It was great. We didn't always agree, and we show that we could disagree without being disagreeable.

My heart was warmed. At the beginning of the trip, some of the responses to our trip were mean-spirited. By the end of it, I think people understood and recognized what we were trying to do, and they valued that.

I hope that this trip—and the response that the American people across these great States—showed, as an example to our colleagues, that bipartisanship is a real thing; that people care and want to see folks working together and to stop retreating to their tired corners and instead try to talk about what we need to do to do the work of the American people.

I got to learn a lot about the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE), a person I would like to be able to call my friend, a battle buddy now, having spent so much time in a Chevy Impala with him. I still question why he positions himself so close to the steering wheel when he drives, but I think that is one of the things that another trip may have to help figure out.

Really, to all of those who watched, listened, shared, enjoyed, and made comments, thank you. Thank you because this was a truly wonderful experience and it made the entire trip worth it.

We made it on time. We actually got here early, which we weren't expecting, and that is because of my good friend from the great State of Texas' (Mr. O'ROURKE) discipline and tenacity going from point A to point B. We were able to do our job today, and we just want to say thank you to those who helped us do that.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, our journey began after picking up the car at the rental lot at 5:00 a.m. with a breakfast at Mi Tierra cafe in San Antonio where we were presented by the staff there with this pinata, which became our mascot along the way. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that you and our colleagues tonight have a chance to see this.

Perhaps, on the more whimsical side, there was some discussion amongst my friend from Texas (Mr. HURD) and those who joined us on the journey virtually through the Livestream about trying to encourage more Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle in a way that would allow them to take time with each other, to get to know each other, to listen to each other and, yes, to talk about serious policy issues, but also to find out a little bit about who they are, where they came from, what excites them about their service, their families, the communities that they represent. And that allows for what I hope will be a more close, productive, and effective working relationship on behalf of the people we serve.

Despite the obvious talent, Mr. Speaker, in this Chamber, Members that I have had the pleasure to get to know over the last 4 years that I have been here who hail from all parts of the country, from all backgrounds, who are among the best and brightest in their communities, who are here to do the right thing, to deliver for their constituents and to put this country first. It is interesting that, despite that, we haven't been able to get many of the big things accomplished for this country. We can think about things like comprehensive immigration reform or comprehensive tax reform, for that matter, or educational and healthcare reforms that are going to impact every single family and every single one of the communities that we represent.

I think part of the reason is that we need to reform the institution itself. And those reforms could take the form of comprehensive campaign finance reform or ending gerrymandering of dis-

tricts and having a national congressional redistricting committee that is nonpartisan that draws those lines on rational, logical bases. Or we could have term limits for Members of Congress so that you can't serve in what turns out to be perpetuity for the political life of a community and have some faith in the talent and the leadership that is produced in that community that we all represent.

Those are things that are going to be tough to do, let's admit it. Some of them require amendments to our Constitution.

Where we could start, Mr. Speaker, is just spending some time with each other, taking a road trip, playing a game of basketball, going out on a run, having a cup of coffee, having lunch together. As my friend from Texas (Mr. HURD) says that too often we are in our own corners. And on our side, maybe that is in meetings about how to message those good things that we want to do for the American public or outside of this Chamber and away from our official responsibilities raising the resources in order to get reelected or to get our colleagues from the same party reelected.

Those are understandable and, yes, I think, necessary things to do, but sometimes we do them to the exclusion of what is even more important and necessary and, that is, getting to know each other, being able to work with each other, and solving the problems and capitalizing on the opportunities that face this country.

For whatever it is worth, 36 hours later, I feel like I have the opportunity to do that with my friend from Texas. What I would like him to do, if he would, is to share with us and with you, Mr. Speaker, some of those issues that we talked about and some of the takeaways or the conclusions or the things that we shared and learned.

I am going to tell you, at the outset, to set your expectations, we didn't solve all of these problems. And we didn't even come necessarily to common agreement on all of the big issues, but we definitely heard each other's perspective. In some cases, we definitely moved a little bit in the positions that we started with. And I will say that I learned a lot.

I learned a lot about Mr. HURD, his background, his perspective, getting to talk to his dad, his sister, and his brother who all called in while we were traveling across the country. But I learned about those things that shape his views on the issues that he and I both care about and why, in some cases, he sees a different means to getting to the same goal that I want to get to and that the people I represent want to get to.

There were a number of issues that we tackled and discussed.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) to share some of those

issues we discussed with you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'Rourke) and I have spent the last 2 years working on a number of projects together. We have worked on the bilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico. We have worked on border security together. We have worked on trade. We have worked on support to veterans and those in our military. In the last 36 hours, I learned that there is a broader set of issues that we can work together.

He got me to a point where I recognize that something like a hiring freeze may not be the most efficient way. I think one of the folks that were watching the live feeds over the last 36 hours said: Let's use a scalpel rather than a sledgehammer. I think that is pretty good advice.

He recognized that having the ability to get someone out of the government who is not performing to the level that we need them to perform needs to be done in an efficient and quick manner. This is one example of how, in our positions, we realized we agreed on more than we probably thought from the outset.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'Rourke) prides himself and has been really a champion of veterans in the great State of Texas as well as the rest of the country. The only time I saw him get a more passionate look or a bigger smile on his face was when he was talking about doughnuts or his wife, actually. Seeing him talk to his lovely wife and his children and see his face light up was really amazing and heartwarming.

So I hope that our colleagues learn that what we found out in the last 36 hours is that working together is not a dirty phrase. Bipartisanship is not a dirty word; that people are going to actually reward you for thinking and reaching beyond your perceived limits. That is one of my takeaways from the last 36 hours.

So if you all live in the State of New York, instead of taking a plane back, rent a car—Dollar Rent A Car has some pretty good Chevy Impalas—and drive back to New York City together and talk about these conversations. If you take a train, sit next to each other and have that conversation. Include the folks that are sitting in the chairs around you, if you feel so inclined. These are the first steps we can do in order to take on these big issues and these big challenges.

When the 435 people in the House of Representatives raised their hand and got sworn in and the 100 Members of the Senate raised their hands and got sworn in, they took on this task of coming to this august body in order to do big things to help this country. I don't doubt that the 535 people who make up this Congress believe that this is truly the greatest Nation in the world, and they want to do everything they can to advance its cause.

So we have to, if we are going to solve these big problems, we have to do it together, plain and simple. The American people want us to do it together. And I think we got a taste of that over the last 36 hours, and it is something that will stick with me, and it is something that I am looking forward to working with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'Rourke) from the great city of El Paso in the next days and weeks.

One of the things that I learned from the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'Rourke) was he is very good at thanking people. He is very good at thanking his team. He is very good at thanking people that have helped us, and I want to thank our teams.

The folks that make up the gentleman's staff and my team, they stayed up longer than we did. They had to deal probably with more pressures than we did. Rachel Holland in my office, Nancy Pack, Stoney Burke, Matthew Haskins, these are some members of my team. Callie Strock, I know, in her new position, worked really hard to get things done. Chris Malen is one of the new members of my team. Austin Agrella did so much. They were excited to be a part of this. Eliezer Flores is someone who was so excited, and I think the first person who we saw when we got back. These were the people who enabled us to take away these lessons over the last 36 hours.

To those who watched, shared, asked a question, who responded or answered a question for us because the feed was going too fast, thank you. Thank you for an amazing experience. I am looking forward to the next trip. Hopefully there is one before the Congress Cannonball Run of 2018.

I think that it is incumbent upon the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'Rourke) and I to be a team again and see if there are others who can beat us in a race from San Antonio, Texas, to Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to hold this Special Order session. This is my first time participating in a Special Order session, but I think it was justified for such a special occasion that means so much to me.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'Rourke) for his firm grasp on the steering wheel, his willingness to go and do things that hadn't been done before, and for his friendship.

Mr. O'Rourke. Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by joining the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Hurd) in thanking the teams that made this possible in our office, led by David Wysong, my chief of staff; John Meza, who manned the communications; Samantha Stiles, chief of logistics, also known as our scheduler; Cynthia Cano, our district director back in El Paso; and everyone who works with them.

As my friend says, I also want to thank the tens of thousands of people who participated in this over the course of the last 36 hours. Some folks

tuned in and they had to tune out because they had to go to work, take care of a kid, get some sleep, or they were just bored by what we were doing. But they understood the premise was that we were not able or, in the gentleman from Texas' (Mr. Hurd) case, his flight was canceled into Washington, D.C., because of the weather—I feared that mine might as well be—and that we rented a car and that we had to be in Washington, D.C., after leaving San Antonio at 7:00 a.m., by 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday in order to be there and vote and represent the interest of our constituency. If we are to be honest with each other, it was touch and go for a little while. We ran into a two-hour pileup just south of Waco when we were still in Texas.

My friend from Texas (Mr. Hurd) has a penchant for getting to know a town and wanting to spend some time in a coffee shop talking to the owner about the art of making coffee and the philosophy that accompanies that. It is a fascinating conversation to be sure, but it added precious minutes that I and many of our viewers felt we could not spare.

□ 2015

Yet, working together, balancing my friend's natural curiosity and interests in the communities in which we were traveling, and my desperation to get to Washington, D.C., in time to cast our votes, we were able to arrive in 36 hours. Thirty-six hours total travel time we were able to arrive with almost 30 minutes to spare, which if you consider the context, the amount of hours, the 1,600-plus miles traveled, that is a remarkable feat.

Look, I don't want to take too much from this, but I think we might be able to find some encouragement that two Members working their way across the largest State in the lower 48, and then through Arkansas, Tennessee, and Virginia, were able together to make decisions necessary to ensure that we were able to get to our destination in time, get our job done, and represent those people that we serve.

That, for some reason, Mr. Speaker, was interesting to people. We had thousands watching us, newspapers following, broadcast stations carrying the feed from our car.

Why?

Because—and it shouldn't be this way—this is such an unusual event for a Republican and Democrat, not to file a bill together—that happens fairly often and I am grateful for that—but to sit down and enjoy each other's company, learn from each other, and take on the challenge of driving these 1,600 miles together.

I did not know my friend from Texas as well as I do now, 36 hours later, and I didn't know how this was going to turn out.

Were we going to be able to stand each other's company? Were we going to be able to take each other's driving? Were we going to be able to make the

compromises necessary to decide where to eat, when to stop, when to sleep, and how to get there?

Imperfectly, yet satisfactorily, we were able to do that, ultimately get here on time.

We both thought as we finished votes this evening—because we got here in time to cast those votes and went back to our office to thank our staffs. As we were doing that, we thought that we owe it to each other, to our colleagues with whom we work, all 435 of us, to say that both of us want to do everything we can to build on this experience, to share it with you, to thank those from the constituencies that we represent and from across the United States who shared that journey with us, who ensured that we had our seatbelts on, that my eyes were on the road, that we were able to get some sleep in Nashville.

I want to thank everyone who had a part in this, and I just want to thank this Chamber and those who sent me here for this very high honor of being able to serve. It was really an amazing experience, and I am going to use it to the best of my ability to serve my constituents to the best of my ability, and make common cause with as many of my colleagues that are here in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I yield again to my friend from Texas.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I want to just thank a couple more people. I would like to thank my girlfriend, Lynlie Wallace, for being supportive of many of my shenanigans. She supports me in these efforts, and I am grateful for that.

I would like to thank Tyler Lowe, Jon Arnold, and my district staff. If it wasn't for them, we never would have kicked off at 0700 from Mi Tierra Restaurant. They got us on the right path. So it truly has been a good time.

I think the gentleman from Texas and I are ready for some shuteye. I do not know how many times a Special Order has been done between a Republican and a Democrat. We will have to ask the Parliamentarian after this, but hopefully this is the first of many.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank my friend from Texas for joining me tonight on the floor of the House for his words, and for taking the chance in driving across much of the country with me to get here and making sure that we could fulfill our responsibilities; and not just the immediate responsibility of getting here in time to vote, which we were able to do, but our responsibility to find a way to work with each other across party lines and address the important issues before this country that are going to be critical for this country's future success and the well-being of those that we represent.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think it is any accident that the Speaker pro tempore tonight is also from Texas. I think this is a good moment for our State. I think this is a good moment for this Con-

gress. I think this is a chance to strengthen the institution, and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve here.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. MARINO (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of inclement weather.

Mr. PAYNE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of medical condition.

Mr. RUSH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today through March 24 on account of death in the family.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 21 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 16, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

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. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 1309. A bill to streamline the office and term of the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-37). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. HARPER: Committee on House Administration. House Resolution 173. Resolution providing for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress (Rept. 115-38). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. BUCK: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 198. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1259) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1367) to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1181) to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the conditions under which certain persons may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes (Rept. 115-39). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. TIPTON (for himself, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. COLE, Mr. CÁRDENAS,

and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico):

H.R. 1528. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 in order to fulfill the Federal mandate to provide higher educational opportunities for Native American Indians; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SANFORD (for himself and Mr. MEADOWS):

H.R. 1529. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of the Treasury from using extraordinary measures to prevent the Government from reaching the statutory debt limit, or using extraordinary measures once such limit has been reached, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ISSA (for himself, Mr. WALKER,

Mr. ROYCE of California, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. PITTINGER, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. BABIN, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. POLIS, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. ROSS, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. ABRAHAM, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. HURD, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. BEYER, and Mr. JORDAN):

H.R. 1530. A bill to amend securities, commodities, and banking laws to make the information reported to financial regulatory agencies electronically searchable, to enable RegTech applications, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. BEYER, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. KEATING, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCRELL, and Mr. POCAN):

H.R. 1531. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the use of funds in the Hazardous Substance Superfund for the purposes for which they were collected, to ensure adequate resources for the cleanup of hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Energy and Commerce, and the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BYRNE (for himself, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Mr. ROGERS of Alabama):

H.R. 1532. A bill to reaffirm that certain land has been taken into trust for the benefit of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York:

H.R. 1533. A bill to provide for further comprehensive research at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke on unruptured intracranial aneurysms; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. DINGELL:

H.R. 1534. A bill to establish a program that provides dislocated workers with a subsidy or coupon that may be applied towards obtaining broadband Internet access service,

and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. ESTY (for herself and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut):

H.R. 1535. A bill to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of the Farmington River and Salmon Brook in the State of Connecticut as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK:

H.R. 1536. A bill to prioritize the payment of pay and allowances to members of the Armed Forces and Federal law enforcement officers in the event the debt ceiling is reached or there is a funding gap; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Armed Services, and 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. GARRETT (for himself and Mr. JORDAN):

H.R. 1537. A bill to restore Second Amendment rights in the District of Columbia; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. GRIFFITH (for himself, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. MULLIN, and Mrs. HARTZLER):

H.R. 1538. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to minimize infringement on the exercise and enjoyment of property rights in issuing hydropower licenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GUTHRIE (for himself and Ms. MATSUI):

H.R. 1539. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis, and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HILL (for himself and Mr. PITTEGER):

H.R. 1540. A bill to help individuals receiving disability insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act obtain rehabilitative services and return to the workforce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas:

H.R. 1541. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire certain property related to the Fort Scott National Historic Site in Fort Scott, Kansas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio (for himself, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mrs. WALORSKI, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. KIND, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. PASCRELL):

H.R. 1542. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to cover physician services delivered by podiatric physicians to ensure access by Medicaid beneficiaries to appropriate quality foot and ankle care, to amend title XVIII of such Act to modify the requirements for diabetic shoes to be included under Medicare, 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. KELLY of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. KIND):

H.R. 1543. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to expand tax credit education and training for small businesses that engage in research and development, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Small Business, 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. KINZINGER (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. PETERS, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. GALLAGHER, and Mr. WELCH):

H.R. 1544. A bill to amend the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 to make 2,500 visas available for the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire (for herself, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. BERGMAN, and Ms. BROWNLEY of California):

H.R. 1545. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disclose certain patient information to State controlled substance monitoring programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. LOEBSACK:

H.R. 1546. A bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish a methodology for the collection by the Commission of mobile service coverage data; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. MCSALLY (for herself, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. BIGGS, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. O'HALLERAN, and Mr. GALLEGOS):

H.R. 1547. A bill to provide for the unencumbering of title to non-Federal land owned by the city of Tucson, Arizona, for purposes of economic development by conveyance of the Federal reversionary interest to the City; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. O'ROURKE:

H.R. 1548. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to require all political committees to notify the Federal Election Commission within 48 hours of receiving cumulative contributions of \$1,000 or more from any contributor during a calendar year, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. PERLMUTTER:

H.R. 1549. A bill to authorize certain private rights of action under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977 for violations that damage certain businesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. REICHERT (for himself, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. KIND, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RENACCI, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. LANCE, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. DEFazio, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. POCAN, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SWALWELL of Cali-

fornia, Ms. DELAUNO, Ms. SHEA-POR-TER, Mr. KING of New York, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. BOST, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KILMER, Mr. COLE, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. FREELING-HUYSEN, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. GOOD-LATTE, Ms. ESTY, and Mrs. WALORSKI):

H.R. 1550. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase and make permanent the exclusion for benefits provided to volunteer firefighters and emergency medical responders; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. RICE of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. GOWDY, and Mr. FERGUSON):

H.R. 1551. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ROSS:

H.R. 1552. A bill to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality towards the labor relations of Federal Government contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio:

H.R. 1553. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to all United States nationals who voluntarily joined the Canadian and British armed forces and their supporting entities during World War Two, in recognition of their dedicated service; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, 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. WALBERG (for himself, Mrs. DINGELL, and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia):

H.R. 1554. A bill to include information concerning a patient's opioid addiction in certain medical records; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. WALBERG (for himself, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, and Mr. CÁRDENAS):

H.R. 1555. A bill to restore the integrity of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BANKS of Indiana (for himself and Mr. JONES):

H.J. Res. 89. A joint resolution to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against al-Qaeda, the Taliban, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, successor organizations, and associated forces; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. GOODLATTE (for himself, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BRAT, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. TAYLOR, and Mr. WITTMAN):

H. Con. Res. 33. Concurrent resolution designating the George C. Marshall Museum and

George C. Marshall Research Library in Lexington, Virginia, as the National George C. Marshall Museum and Library; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. HOLDING (for himself, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. NUNES, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mr. KIND, Mr. KILMER, Mr. COOPER, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. ROSLEHTINEN, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, and Ms. SPEIER):

H. Res. 199. A resolution recognizing the self determination of Gibraltar to determine its status as a British Overseas Territory; to the Committee on Foreign 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. TIPTON:

H.R. 1528.

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 the power of Congress to provide 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).

By Mr. SANFORD:

H.R. 1529.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. ISSA:

H.R. 1530.

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

Article I, Section 8 Clause 3

The Congress shall have power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 1531.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, provides that "Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes . . .".

By Mr. BYRNE:

H.R. 1532.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to Article I, Section 8 which grants Congress the power to regulate Commerce with the Indian Tribes.

This bill is enacted pursuant to Article II, Section 2, Clause 2 in order the enforce treaties made between the United States and several Indian Tribes.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York:

H.R. 1533.

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

the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mrs. DINGELL:

H.R. 1534.

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

Article I Section VIII

By Ms. ESTY:

H.R. 1535.

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

Clause 18 of Section 8 on Article I of the Constitution

By Mr. FITZPATRICK:

H.R. 1536.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. GARRETT:

H.R. 1537.

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

The United States Constitution, Article 1, Section 8, Clause 17

By Mr. GRIFFITH:

H.R. 1538.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. GUTHRIE:

H.R. 1539.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. HILL:

H.R. 1540.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas:

H.R. 1541.

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 the power of Congress to provide 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. JOHNSON of Ohio:

H.R. 1542.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 1543.

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

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Article I Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KINZINGER:

H.R. 1544.

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

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

By Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire:

H.R. 1545.

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

Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the power "to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or any Department or Officer thereof."

By Mr. LOEBSACK:

H.R. 1546.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the US Constitution

By Ms. MCSALLY:

H.R. 1547.

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, Imports 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: 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 of Officer thereof.

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2: The 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. O'ROURKE:

H.R. 1548.

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

Section 4 of Article I of the Constitution: The times, places and manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each state by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations, except as to the places of choosing Senators.

By Mr. PERLMUTTER:

H.R. 1549.

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

Article 1, Section 9, Clause 8

By Mr. REICHERT:

H.R. 1550.

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."

By Mr. RICE of South Carolina:

H.R. 1551.

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

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

By Mr. ROSS:

H.R. 1552.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio:

H.R. 1553.

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

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

By Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 1554.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 3 and 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 1555.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 9 of the Constitution of the United States; the power to constitute Tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the civil asset forfeiture procedures and Section 8, Clause 9 extends to Congress the power to create inferior courts and to make rules of procedure and evidence for such courts.

By Mr. BANKS of Indiana:

H.J. Res. 89.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 11, the Congress has the power to declare war.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 30: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
 H.R. 38: Mr. LONG.
 H.R. 249: Mr. GARRETT.
 H.R. 256: Mr. ALLEN.
 H.R. 275: Mr. SMUCKER.
 H.R. 303: Mr. COURTNEY and Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.
 H.R. 305: Ms. PLASKETT.
 H.R. 354: Mr. GOODLATTE and Mr. FERUSON.
 H.R. 371: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama and Mr. ESPALLAT.
 H.R. 391: Mr. HENSARLING.
 H.R. 392: Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. BACON, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. HILL, Mr. KEATING, Mr. BERA, and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
 H.R. 426: Mr. DENT.
 H.R. 427: Ms. SLAUGHTER.
 H.R. 490: Mr. MEADOWS.
 H.R. 502: Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DEFazio, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. NEAL, Mr. HIMES, Mr. SCHRAEDER, and Ms. SPEIER.
 H.R. 613: Mr. VISCLOSKEY.
 H.R. 632: Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. MEEKS, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
 H.R. 644: Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. MESSER, Mr. BUCSHON, and Mr. SMUCKER.
 H.R. 672: Mr. GIBBS and Mr. CHABOT.
 H.R. 721: Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. HARRIS, and Mr. MARSHALL.
 H.R. 739: Mr. EVANS, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. ELLISON.
 H.R. 747: Mr. VALADAO, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. WILLIAMS, and Ms. STEFANIK.
 H.R. 757: Mrs. COMSTOCK and Mr. SHERMAN.

H.R. 765: Ms. CLARKE of New York.

H.R. 794: Ms. ESTY, Mr. HECK, Mr. NORCROSS, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. NORTON, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Mr. WALZ.

H.R. 804: Mr. DELANEY, Mr. GALLEG0, Mrs. TORRES, and Mr. PANETTA.

H.R. 807: Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. ROUZER, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, and Mr. GUTHRIE.

H.R. 816: Mrs. COMSTOCK.

H.R. 898: Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 909: Mr. CUELLAR and Mr. LAWSON of Florida.

H.R. 911: Mr. BACON.

H.R. 916: Mrs. COMSTOCK.

H.R. 918: Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 1002: Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 1006: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1017: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. PASCRELL, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 1057: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. TROTT, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1098: Mr. VALADAO and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1148: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1150: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. AMODEI, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mrs. WALORSKI, and Mr. ROUZER.

H.R. 1155: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 1164: Mr. MCCLINTOCK and Mr. BYRNE.

H.R. 1200: Mr. GOTTHEIMER and Mr. HUDSON.

H.R. 1246: Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 1248: Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 1251: Mr. KILMER.

H.R. 1278: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 1295: Mr. RUSH.

H.R. 1299: Mr. LYNCH, Mr. CLAY, and Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 1322: Mr. LAWSON of Florida.

H.R. 1346: Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. TROTT, and Mr. MAST.

H.R. 1368: Ms. BONAMICI and Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 1374: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H.R. 1375: Mr. KILMER and Mr. CONYERS.

H.R. 1380: Mr. O'HALLERAN and Mr. POLIQUIN.

H.R. 1382: Mr. DESANTIS.

H.R. 1399: Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 1421: Mr. SWALWELL of California and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 1444: Mr. ROE of Tennessee.

H.R. 1446: Mr. SIREs.

H.R. 1452: Mr. NADLER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. BEYER, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. VELA, and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1456: Ms. NORTON, Ms. DELAUR0, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. QUIGLEY.

H.R. 1468: Mr. DONOVAN.

H.R. 1485: Mr. ESPALLAT.

H.R. 1486: Ms. MOORE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. CLARKE of New York,

Mr. KEATING, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.

H.J. Res. 48: Ms. JAYAPAL and Ms. FUDGE.

H.J. Res. 54: Mr. BANKS of Indiana.

H.J. Res. 59: Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H. Con. Res. 9: Mr. CÁRDENAS and Mr. KILMER.

H. Con. Res. 10: Mr. ROKITA.

H. Con. Res. 13: Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. JONES, and Mr. SHUSTER.

H. Res. 15: Mr. COOK, Mr. VELA, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. PALONE.

H. Res. 28: Ms. FUDGE, Ms. Barragán, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. KIHUEN, Mr. NEAL, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. LAMALFA, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H. Res. 31: Mr. VELA, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. KIHUEN, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. DOGGETT, and Mr. LEVIN.

H. Res. 90: Mr. QUIGLEY.

H. Res. 162: Ms. JUDY CHU of California and Mr. POCAN.

H. Res. 187: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H. Res. 191: Ms. LEE.

H. Res. 192: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. SCHNEIDER.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

The amendment to be offered by Chairman DAVID P. ROE, or a designee, to H.R. 1259, the VA Accountability First Act of 2017, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

The amendment to be offered by Representative BRAD WENSTRUP, or a designee, to H.R. 1367, to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.



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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, clothed in dazzling splendor, we bow our hearts in Your presence. You are our helper, our defender, and our refuge. You are our hope for years to come.

Strengthen our Senators for today's challenges. Direct their thoughts, words, and actions, enabling them to follow Your leading. Use them to transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Lord, give them peace during turbulent moments and a faith that will not shrink under pressure. Make their words fountains of life. Help them to understand what really matters so that they may live pure and blameless lives that glorify You.

We pray in Your marvelous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, a few short months ago, our colleague Dan Coats retired from his post here in the Senate. At that time, I had a chance to reflect on our friend's im-

pressive career, and I noted that we could expect him to rise to the occasion if called to serve his country once again. Well, that is exactly what Dan Coats is doing now. This time he will be taking on the role of Director of National Intelligence. It goes without saying that the President made an excellent choice in selecting Dan for this job.

Our former colleague from Indiana has served his Nation in the Army, in the House of Representatives, as the Ambassador to Germany, and, of course, he has also served his State here in the Senate where he was a leader on issues regarding our national security and intelligence community. I look forward to the Senate confirming him today.

We are also working toward an opportunity to support another of the President's exceptional selections, LTG H.R. McMaster, his choice for National Security Advisor. The Chairman of the Armed Services Committee recently called him "an outstanding choice" and "a man of genuine intellect, character, and ability."

He will now be tasked with adapting his vast experience to the responsibility of coordinating our national security policy at a time when our Nation faces myriad threats and challenges. I know each of us appreciates the willingness of both former Senator Coats and General McMaster to take on these challenging positions and their continued efforts to keep our country safe.

Now onto another well-qualified nominee we will advance soon. Next week Judge Neil Gorsuch will come before the Senate Judiciary Committee for the hearing on his nomination to the Supreme Court. Senators from both sides of the aisle will have an opportunity to hear from him directly, ask questions, and listen to the testimony of others who are familiar with his professional background, abilities, and character.

I know we are all looking forward to his hearing and to learning even more about this exceptional nominee, but here is what we already know about Judge Gorsuch. The American Bar Association is an organization that the Democratic leader and former Democratic chairman of the Judiciary Committee have deemed the gold standard for evaluating judicial nominations. What have they done? They awarded him their highest rating: unanimously "well qualified."

Leading liberal lawyers like former President Obama's Acting Solicitor General, Neal Katyal, and former President Obama's legal mentor, Professor Laurence Tribe, sing his praises. Mr. Katyal says Judge Gorsuch is "an extraordinary judge and man" whose "years on the bench reveal a commitment to judicial independence." Professor Tribe says that Judge Gorsuch "is a brilliant, terrific guy who would do the Court's work with distinction."

To that list, you can now add former law partner and longtime Democrat, David Frederick, who is a board member of the liberal American Constitution Society. Other board members of the ACS include people like former Obama Solicitor General Donald Verrilli, and left-leaning law professor Erwin Chemerinsky, among others.

The ACS is anything but a conservative group. Yet now, even one of its own board members has backed Judge Gorsuch's nomination. In an op-ed recently published by the Washington Post, Mr. Frederick called Judge Gorsuch "brilliant, diligent, open-minded and thoughtful." He went on to say:

Gorsuch's approach to resolving legal problems as a lawyer and judge embodies a reverence for our country's values and legal system. The facts developed in a case matter to him; the legal rules established by legislatures and through precedent deserve deep respect; and the importance of treating litigants, counsel and colleagues with civility is deeply ingrained in him.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Mr. Frederick, who practiced law with Judge Gorsuch, states:

Over the course of his career, [Neil Gorsuch] has represented both plaintiffs and defendants. He has defended large corporations, but also sued them. He has advocated for the Chamber of Commerce, but also filed (and prevailed with) class actions on behalf of consumers. We should applaud such independence of mind and spirit in Supreme Court nominees.

And Mr. Frederick observes:

As a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, Gorsuch has not been the reflexive, hard-edged conservative as many depict him to be. He has ruled for plaintiffs and for defendants; for those accused of crimes as well as for law enforcement; for those who entered the country illegally; and for those harmed by environmental damage.

As this self-proclaimed “longtime supporter of Democratic candidates and progressive causes” points out, Judge Gorsuch will be the type of Justice each of us should want on the High Court. And though he knows he may not always agree with Neil Gorsuch’s rulings as a jurist on the Supreme Court, Frederick says we need judges like Neil Gorsuch “who approach cases with fairness and intellectual rigor, and who care about precedent and the limits of their roles as judges.”

The bottom line is this: “The Senate should confirm him because there is no principled reason to vote no.” Let me repeat that. “The Senate should confirm [Gorsuch],” Frederick said, “because there is no principled reason to vote no.” This is a board member of the left’s flagship legal group in America, and on this point, he happens to be absolutely right.

So as colleagues on both sides will continue to find at next week’s hearings, “there is [simply] no principled reason to vote no” when Judge Gorsuch’s nomination comes before the full Senate.

REPUBLICAN HEALTHCARE BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, one final matter: Last year, President Obama said his signature healthcare law had “real problems.” He recognized that there are “people who are hurt by premium increases or a lack of competition and choice.” President Clinton called it “the craziest thing in the world.” And the Democratic Governor of Minnesota said that “the Affordable Care Act was no longer affordable for increasing numbers of people.” So even Democrats recognize that the ObamaCare status quo is unacceptable.

Costs have continued to climb higher. Insurers have dropped out of the marketplace. ObamaCare is a disaster, and it is going to keep getting worse unless we act. My home State of Kentucky, like so many others across the country, just can’t take it anymore.

Republicans promised the American people relief from ObamaCare, and we are working hard to keep that promise. The legislation the House introduced to repeal and replace is already moving through the committee process.

Here are some things the Congressional Budget Office said about it: It will lower premiums by double digits. It will help stabilize the healthcare market. It will significantly reduce taxes on families and lower the deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars as well. These are the things we heard from CBO.

Instead of forcing Americans to buy something they may not want as ObamaCare does, it will actually give Americans the freedom to choose the type of coverage that is right for them. I appreciate the hard work the House is doing to advance this legislation. We look forward to receiving it here in the Senate. When we do, I expect to consider amendments as part of our robust debate.

But remember, this bill is only one part of a three-pronged strategy to help bring relief to the American people. The first prong is this bill, the second prong is executive action, and prong three is more legislation to reform the healthcare market and make it more competitive for consumers.

The one thing we shouldn’t do is nothing. ObamaCare is a failed law that is hurting the middle class. Maintaining the current ObamaCare status quo is really not a good option.

We are fulfilling our promise to the American people, and I urge all of our colleagues to join us.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, on the Republican healthcare bill, my good friend the Republican leader says that there should be amendments on the floor. On such an important matter, it would be astounding if we didn’t have committee hearings and committee votes on such a bill. I know there is an attempt to rush it through, but if it is such a fine product, it ought to withstand the scrutiny of hearings and of markups in the various committees. To rush it through is an indication that the sponsors of the bill, the supporters of the bill, are not very proud of it, and that is a theme that has continued with the executive branch and the Speaker of the House.

As we know, CBO estimated that it would cause 24 million fewer Americans to have health insurance—I don’t hear the Republican leader mention that, of course—while raising premiums in the short term and jacking up the price of healthcare for older Americans.

We have heard from the other side of the aisle that access is what is important. No, it isn’t. Access doesn’t get you healthcare. I have access to walk into a Lamborghini dealer and look at a Lamborghini, but I can’t afford one. That is true of average Americans, and

that is true of healthcare as well. Access doesn’t get you healthcare, and it is a far cry from what people need.

Because the bill helps so many fewer Americans, because the bill seems to be a tax break for the wealthy above all, it is having its trouble, and nobody seems to really want to embrace it. That is why Republicans on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue don’t want their name near any end of the bill.

As I said yesterday, Speaker RYAN doesn’t want to call it RyanCare, even though he wrote the bill. President Trump doesn’t want to call it TrumpCare. If it is so good, why doesn’t any Republican want to put their name on it? It is Abbott and Costello: You put your name on it; no, you put your name on it. That is not an indication that people are proud of this legislation, and it is particularly ironic with President Trump. President Trump slaps his name on buildings, ties, steaks, hotels, and golf clubs, but not on a bill that he supports in his daily tweets. He has spent 30 years of his business career trying to put his name on nearly everything, but not this healthcare bill, even though he is inviting wary Republicans to the White House to try and sell them on it.

Today his Vice President is here on the Hill lobbying recalcitrant Republicans. He has dispatched HHS Secretary Price, the person he picked, to lobby for the bill. His own Press Secretary says the White House is in full sale mode. Make no mistake about it, this is the President’s bill, and he should be straight with the American people about it. We call it TrumpCare. That is what it is.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, next week the Senate Judiciary Committee will begin its hearing on President Trump’s nominee to the Supreme Court, Judge Neil Gorsuch. As I have said before, we in the Senate have a special responsibility to judge whether this nominee, Judge Gorsuch, will tip the scales on the Court in favor of Big Business and powerful special interests over average Americans. The Court has steadily been moving in that direction under Justice Roberts.

My colleague SHELDON WHITEHOUSE and the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, Senator FEINSTEIN, have documented in 5-to-4 cases that the Court, over the last decade, has almost always tilted in favor of the powerful and against those who are average Americans. In fact, the Court under Justice Roberts has been judged the most pro-corporate Court since World War II. So this country can ill afford another Justice who will side with the powerful.

Judge Gorsuch may act like a studied, neutral judge, but his record suggests he actually has a rightwing, pro-corporate, special interest agenda. In today’s New York Times, this morning we learned that Judge Gorsuch’s career

has been nurtured by a far-right billionaire and corporate titan, Philip Anschutz, who has gone out of his way to fund hard-right judicial causes, including the Federalist Society and the Heritage Foundation. President Trump outsourced his choice of a Supreme Court nominee to these organizations, and they recommended Judge Gorsuch.

Neil Gorsuch represented Mr. Anschutz's firm as a young lawyer. He has earned his favor and patronage ever since. It was Anschutz's top lawyer, someone who represented Anschutz here on the Hill, who lobbied for Gorsuch to get the spot on the Federal appeals court. Judge Gorsuch has been partners in an LLC with two of Anschutz's top advisers, building a vacation home together. Of course, there is no problem with that. Anyone can be partners. But it goes to show the long-standing intertwined ties between one of the leading advocates for a hard-right pro-corporate agenda, Mr. Anschutz, and Judge Gorsuch. The long history of ties between Judge Gorsuch and Mr. Anschutz suggests a judge whose fundamental economic and judicial philosophy is favorable to the wealthy and the powerful and the far right.

Judge Gorsuch may sometimes express sympathy for the less powerful verbally, but when it comes time to rule, when the chips are down, he has far too often sided with the powerful few over everyday Americans trying to get a fair shake. He has repeatedly sided with insurance companies that want to deny disability benefits to employees. In employment discrimination cases, Bloomberg found he sided with employers 66 percent of the time. In one of the few cases where he sided with an employee, it was a Republican woman who alleged she was fired for being a conservative.

On money in politics, the scourge, the poison of our political system—undisclosed dark money—Judge Gorsuch seems to be in the same company as Justices Thomas and Scalia, willing to restrict the most commonsense contribution limits.

Judge Gorsuch's record demonstrates he prefers CEOs over citizens, executives over employees, corporations over consumers.

Later this morning, I will be meeting with people who have personally experienced the real-life implications of Judge Gorsuch's decisions: Alphonso Maddin from Michigan, a truckdriver who was fired because he left his vehicle when freezing; Patricia Caplinger from Missouri, who sued Medtronic after being injured by a medical device implanted in a non-FDA-approved manner; David Hwang and Katherine Hwang, whose late mother, Proffer Grace Hwang, sued Kansas State University after being fired following a 6-month leave for cancer and requesting to work at home because of a flu epidemic. Their stories illuminate the real-world effects of a judge who sides with Anschutz-like interests over ev-

eryday Americans like Mr. Maddin, Ms. Caplinger, and the Hwang family.

My colleague, my friend, the Republican leader, said there is no principled reason to be opposed to Judge Gorsuch. Yes, if your principles say the law should be used time and time again to support powerful corporate interests over average Americans, maybe there is no principled objection. But for most Americans, the overwhelming majority of whom want the Court to bring justice to the people who have less power—and the Court is their last resort—there are plenty of principled reasons to vote against Judge Gorsuch.

Because of starkly unequal concentrations of wealth and ever-increasing corporate power, aided and abetted by decisions like *Citizens United*, because they have skewed the playing field even more decisively to special interests and away from the individual citizen, we need a nominee who would reverse that trend, not exacerbate it.

Donald Trump campaigned on helping average people. His nominee sides with corporate interests against average people like Mr. Maddin, Ms. Caplinger, and the Hwang family over and over again. From all indications, Judge Gorsuch is not the kind of nominee who has sympathy and helps average Americans when it comes to judging and the law.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Daniel Coats, of Indiana, to be Director of National Intelligence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I rise today to support Senator Dan Coats, our former colleague and a friend, as the President's nominee to be the next Director of National Intelligence. Dan Coats has been asked to lead our Nation's intelligence community of over 100,000 individuals during, I think, the most profound period of threats and change. Let me say to my colleagues,

it is a job that Dan Coats is well prepared to do.

After graduating from Wheaton College, Dan served honorably in the U.S. Army before serving the State of Indiana as a House Member, as a Senator, and for not only Indiana but this country as Ambassador to Germany.

While in the Senate, Dan was engaged and was a valuable member of the Senate Intelligence Committee. He dedicated countless hours to understanding and overseeing the intelligence community—in essence, one of 15 people who certified for 85 others and for the American people that we do everything we can to keep America safe but we do it within the parameters of the rule of law. He is well versed in the operational capabilities and authorities. He understands the threat we are facing at home and abroad. He understands that we need to improve our ability to collect against our adversaries, and Dan will be a forceful advocate for intelligence collection but, again, never jeopardizing that line of what is legal and what is not.

Dan's legislative experience also translates to his understanding and his appreciation of the need for transparency with the appropriate oversight committees and, more importantly, with the Congress and the American people.

Dan's intellect, his judgment, his honorable service, and his commitment to the workforce make him a natural fit as Director of National Intelligence. I have absolute trust that he will lead the community with integrity, and he will ensure that the intelligence enterprise operates lawfully, ethically, and morally.

So today I rise in this austere body to urge my colleagues to support the President's nominee for Director of National Intelligence. We are now in March. We have gone from January until March with one of the most important posts of this administration unfilled. Congress must act quickly, and it is my hope that Members, before the end of this day, will make sure we have a Director of National Intelligence in place.

I urge my colleagues to support this nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Daniel Coats, of Indiana, to be Director of National Intelligence.

Mitch McConnell, Michael B. Enzi, David Perdue, Bob Corker, John Hoeven, Lamar Alexander, Bill Cassidy, John Barrasso, Dan Sullivan, Tim Scott, James Lankford, Tom Cotton, Mike Rounds, James M. Inhofe, Chuck Grassley, Roy Blunt, Richard Burr.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Daniel Coats, of Indiana, to be Director of National Intelligence, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 88, nays 11, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 88 Ex.]

YEAS—88

Alexander	Flake	Nelson
Barrasso	Franken	Perdue
Bennet	Gardner	Peters
Blumenthal	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Reed
Boozman	Hassan	Risch
Brown	Hatch	Roberts
Burr	Heinrich	Rounds
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Rubio
Capito	Heller	Sasse
Cardin	Hirono	Schatz
Carper	Hoeven	Schumer
Casey	Inhofe	Scott
Cassidy	Johnson	Shaheen
Cochran	Kaine	Shelby
Collins	Kennedy	Stabenow
Coons	King	Strange
Corker	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Tester
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	Manchin	Toomey
Cruz	McCain	Udall
Daines	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Whitehouse
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Feinstein	Murphy	
Fischer	Murray	

NAYS—11

Baldwin	Harris	Sanders
Booker	Markey	Warren
Duckworth	Merkley	Wyden
Gillibrand	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

Isakson

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 88, the nays are 11.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, first of all, I thank my friend the Senator from Texas for giving me the courtesy of letting me get in my comments about the nomination of former Senator Dan Coats to serve as the fifth Director of National Intelligence, a position recommended by the 9/11 Commission and established by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004.

Dan Coats is a friend of mine and many in this body. He represented Indiana in both the U.S. House and for separate terms in the U.S. Senate. He was also U.S. Ambassador to Germany from 2001 to 2005. As mentioned, for 6 years I served with the nominee on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. I have always found Dan to be fair-minded and know him to be an advocate for strong oversight of the intelligence community. He believes in the need for intelligence that is timely, relevant, and free of political interference.

During my private meeting with him, as well as during his confirmation hearing, Senator Coats committed to find and follow the truth, regardless of where it leads, agreeing that his primary job will be “to speak truth to power,” to the President, to policy and military leaders, and to Members of Congress. I know these are traits he will continue to employ if confirmed as the next Director of National Intelligence.

During James Clapper’s most recent tenure as the DNI, in 6 years he put in place some fundamental changes in how the Intelligence community operates. He reoriented the Office of the DNI to focus on intelligence integration with an emphasis on mission. He often was willing to roll up his sleeves and take on the hard challenges of trying to get the intel community to operate on the same IT backbone systems. If confirmed, I have encouraged Senator Coats to build upon former Director Clapper’s efforts, which are critical to ensuring that policymakers, warfighters, law enforcement, and national security officers receive intelligence products that are timely, relevant, and objective.

Of course, if confirmed, Director Coats will take on the job as the Nation’s chief intelligence officer, leading the intelligence community during a very difficult time because unfortunately this President, along with his closest advisers, has repeatedly and unfairly disparaged the professionalism and actions of the Nation’s intelligence professionals. These are men and women who maintain the highest standards of professionalism and integrity. They anonymously sacrifice for the country, often in the face of grave personal danger.

As DNI, Senator Coats is committed to defending the values and integrity of the men and women of the intelligence community, even when the White House may not like to hear it.

Another challenge Senator Coats will face on his first day on the job is to effectively support the Senate Intelligence Committee’s ongoing investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential election. Last week, I went to CIA headquarters in Langley, along with a number of other Members of the committee, to review the beginnings of the raw intelligence that led the community to conclude that Russia massively interfered in our last

Presidential election. Both in public and in private, Senator Coats has promised he will support the committee’s investigation to the fullest. We will hold him to that commitment.

On this topic, I want to reiterate on the Senate floor what I have already said numerous times. This investigation is not about being a Democrat or Republican nor about relitigating the 2016 election. The investigation is about upholding the core values and sanctity of democracy that all Americans hold dear. It is also about holding Russia accountable for their improper interference in our elections and arming our allies—one of which has an election today—with information about the means employed by Russia in our elections so they can use that information to protect the integrity of their own electoral process.

We will work to ensure that this critical investigation is done right, done in a bipartisan manner, free of any political interference, and as the chairman and I have both reiterated, that it follows the facts wherever they may lead.

I have every reason to believe Senator Coats will be forthcoming in supporting this investigation. If at any point it becomes clear to me that the Senate Intelligence Committee is unable to keep up these commitments, I am prepared to support another process.

Finally, let me acknowledge two other things.

During Senator Coats’ confirmation hearing, he was asked about his role on the National Security Council, including the Principals Committee. He assured us that he will be attending these meetings and participating in them despite the confusion created by an Executive order that appeared to disinvite the DNI from these meetings. If he is not included in these meetings, I will expect to know about it and the reason why.

Senator Coats has also committed to me personally and to the committee that he will not support the return of waterboarding and other so-called enhanced interrogation practices, nor will he support reestablishing secret detention sites into the activities of the intelligence community. He reassured the committee that he will follow the law as it now stands and that he will not advocate for changes to the law or recommend a reinterpretation of the law based on any personal beliefs. The law is clear: No interrogation techniques outside the Army Field Manual are allowed.

Finally, Senator Coats has also reassured me and all of the members of the committee that if confirmed, he will always present to the President, to his Cabinet advisers, and to those of us in Congress the unvarnished facts as represented by the best judgments of the intelligence community whether or not that analysis is in agreement with the views of the President, with ours in Congress, or with anyone else’s who might receive them.

For these reasons, I support the movement. I was glad to see 88 Members of this body support Dan's movement forward. I believe he will be a great fifth Director of National Intelligence.

I thank my friend the Senator from Texas for giving me time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I thank my friend, the Senator from Virginia, who is the vice chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, for his remarks.

I, too, support the nomination of Dan Coats to serve as the next Director of National Intelligence and succeed James Clapper, who has been in the intelligence business for 50-plus years. He has big shoes to fill, but I have every confidence Dan Coats can do that.

One of the things I hope he looks at is that post-9/11, when the Office of the Director of National Intelligence was created, we basically created another layer in the intelligence community. As the Presiding Officer and other Members know, the DNI—the Office of the Director of National Intelligence—has grown by leaps and bounds. I just hope he takes a good, hard look at the layers we have created, perhaps at the duplicative functions that do not necessarily make our intelligence any better but that do create more problems in managing what is a very important office to our national security and certainly to the intelligence community.

SUNSHINE WEEK

Mr. President, on another matter, in spite of the snow yesterday, I recognize the fact that this is Sunshine Week. Sunshine Week is a movement that was created to highlight the need for more transparent and open government. Justice Brandeis is also often quoted when one talks about transparency in government and its importance to a functioning democracy when he said that sunlight is the best disinfectant.

As a conservative, I would much rather have people change their behavior in their knowing that their actions are going to be public rather than to pass new laws and new regulations. To me, knowing that the public is going to be aware of what one is doing causes people, typically, to be on their best behavior. I think that is the reason I support Justice Brandeis' comment that sunlight is the best disinfectant. I believe that is true.

I have done my best to keep that sentiment in mind to create legislation that presses our democracy toward more openness in the Federal Government, not less. That is because I believe our country grows stronger when operating under the principle that an open government is the basic requirement for a healthy democracy. Of course, when voters know and understand what their government is doing, they are in the best position to change its direction if they disagree with it or to reaffirm that direction by casting their votes as informed members of the electorate.

Democracy can only work when the public knows what government is doing and can hold it accountable, so I am glad that at this time of year, we can look back at the successful efforts we have made to promote transparency while looking ahead to do more.

Last Congress, I introduced the Freedom of Information Act Improvement Act. It is a law that strengthens the existing Freedom of Information Act, which is the country's chief open government law, by requiring Federal agencies to operate under a presumption of openness when considering whether to release government information in their custody.

We passed it last summer, and President Obama signed it into law. This important new law accomplishes some of the most sweeping and meaningful reforms in its history to the Freedom of Information Act, and it is already making a direct impact by helping the public access more information.

Because of the Freedom of Information Act Improvement Act, last October, the CIA released a portion of its official history of the Bay of Pigs invasion, which has been kept classified for decades. This is a critical part of our Nation's history that is worth knowing, and I believe it is no longer necessary to keep it under wraps in order to protect America's national security.

This serves as an example of what we are trying to accomplish with this law and others like it so as to build upon the idea the Founding Fathers recognized hundreds of years ago; that a truly democratic system depends on an informed citizenry to hold its leaders accountable. That is an idea everyone in this Chamber, on both sides of the aisle, can agree upon.

I am thankful to the senior Senator from Vermont, Mr. LEAHY, for working with me on the Freedom of Information Act Improvement Act and making it a priority. As a matter of fact, Senator LEAHY has been my partner on a number of our efforts in this important area over the years that we have both been in the Senate.

I also appreciate Chairman GRASSLEY's leadership, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, for stewarding this bill through the committee, and I appreciate Leader MCCONNELL for making sure this was a priority for this Chamber.

In looking ahead, I will continue working with Chairman GRASSLEY to make sure the Federal agencies are implementing this law in a timely manner, and I look forward to doing more to strengthen greater government transparency measures in the future.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Finally, Mr. President, next week, the Judiciary Committee will take up the nomination of Neil Gorsuch for the U.S. Supreme Court so he may fill the seat that was vacated by the death of Justice Scalia. That process, of course, begins with hearings to consider his qualifications and his credentials, but heading into next week, we already know a lot about his record.

He has been praised by people across the political spectrum—from liberals to conservatives—as a highly qualified and exceptional judge with impeccable integrity. He served with great distinction on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, based out of Denver, for the last 10 years, after having been confirmed by this Chamber unanimously. His hometown newspaper, the Denver Post, encouraged the President to nominate Judge Gorsuch before his nomination was even announced. This, of course, was the same newspaper that endorsed Hillary Clinton for President. Clearly, Judge Gorsuch has won the respect of those across the political spectrum and on both sides of the aisle. Last week, the American Bar Association announced its unanimous decision to grant Judge Gorsuch the highest rating available; that of "well qualified" as a nominee to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States.

I should point out that both the minority leader and former chairman of the Judiciary Committee—the senior Senator from Vermont—have called the American Bar Association's rating system the "gold standard" when it comes to assessing the qualifications of judicial nominees.

Judge Gorsuch will also bring decades of experience on the bench, as I mentioned a moment ago. He has also served in private practice, as an attorney with the Justice Department, and, of course, as a Federal judge.

It is time to move forward with the President's nominee to fill the seat that was left open by the death of the late Justice Scalia, and I believe Judge Gorsuch is just the man to fill it. I look forward to hearing from him next week as we consider his nomination to this important position.

I express my gratitude to Chairman GRASSLEY and the ranking member, Senator FEINSTEIN, for their efforts thus far in putting these hearings together, and I look forward to working with the rest of my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee to consider the nomination of Judge Gorsuch, starting next Monday, March 20.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I know both sides are working on trying to get an arrangement for the vote.

Mr. President, I also want to tell my colleague from Texas that I listened very carefully to his remarks with respect to transparency in government. He has had a long interest in the Freedom of Information Act and the like. I noted that he made a comment about the Bay of Pigs, about which information is still classified, and I know something about this because my dad wrote a book about the subject. My hope is that my friend from Texas and his interest in transparency will also extend to some other areas.

As I indicated, I am very familiar with my colleague's record with respect to Freedom of Information Act issues, which really is impressive. I

hope to get him involved in some other areas of transparency—perhaps in campaign finance reform and the issue I am going to be speaking about today, that of getting the American people the information—after 6 years of stonewalling—on how many lawful Americans are getting swept up in what will be Dan Coats' top priority, that of the reauthorization of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

I want my colleague to know, in my being very much aware of his good work on the Freedom of Information Act issues, that we are going to try and conscript them into some other transparency issues as well.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, may I ask the Senator to yield to consider a couple of brief consent requests?

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, of course.

I will tell my colleague, as to what the majority and the minority have agreed to, as soon as those consent requests are ready, then we will take a time out from my remarks and make sure that matter is resolved.

As we wait for the matter Senator CORNYN has mentioned, I will begin the discussion of the nomination of Dan Coats to be the Director of National Intelligence.

I have known Senator Coats for many years. He has been the lead cosponsor of the bipartisan Federal income tax reform proposal, which has been a special priority of mine. I do not know of a single U.S. Senator who does not like Senator Coats. He is honest, a straight shooter, and gracious. My remarks are not about my personal affection for Senator Coats.

The reason I am voting against the nomination is due to the matter I just touched upon with the Senator from Texas, which is, for 6 years, it has been impossible to get the intelligence community to provide the Congress and the American people information that is absolutely critical to the debate on reauthorizing the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. For 6 long years, Democrats and Republicans, both in this body and in the other body, have been trying to get this information.

So this morning, given the fact that this legislation would be the top priority of Senator Coats, as he said in the Intelligence Committee, I want the Senate and the country to understand why this issue is so important.

First, I am happy to yield to my friend from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague for yielding for a brief UC request, as I think this would be in the best interests of the entire Senate.

I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture motion on Executive Calendar No. 19, the McMaster nomination, be withdrawn; that the time until 1:45 p.m. be equally divided in the usual form on the Coats and McMaster nominations

concurrently; and that at 1:45 p.m. the Senate vote on the Coats nomination, followed by a vote on the McMaster nomination; and that, if confirmed, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions, with no intervening action or debate. I further ask that 1 hour of minority debate time be reserved for Senator WYDEN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that following morning business on Tuesday, March 21, the Senate proceed to executive session for the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 21 and 22. I ask unanimous consent that the time until 12 noon be equally divided and that following the use or yielding back of time, 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, and 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.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague for yielding for those unanimous consent requests.

Mr. WYDEN. I thank my colleague.

Now, as we consider the nomination of Senator Coats, and recognize that his top priority, by his admission, would be the reauthorization of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—particularly section 702—I want to begin this discussion by saying that it is because the intelligence community has stonewalled Democrats and Republicans in both this body and in the other body for 6 years on the information that we need to do good oversight that I have come to the floor to outline what I think the central issue is all about.

I am going to begin my remarks by way of saying that, at a time when Americans are demanding policies that give them more security and more liberty, increasingly, we are seeing policies come from both this body and the other body that provide less of both.

A good example would be weakening strong encryption. Weakening strong encryption is bad from a security standpoint, and it is bad from a liberty standpoint. When government creates policies that give the American people less of both—less security and less liberty—obviously, the American people are not going to react well.

My view is that when the government—particularly intelligence agencies—don't level with the American people about large-scale surveillance of law-abiding Americans, our people are justifiably angry. When the government tries to keep this information secret—as I have pointed out on this

floor before—in America, the truth always comes out. Leveling with the American people is the only way for agencies to have the credibility and the legitimacy to effectively do their jobs. They have critically important jobs in keeping our people safe from threats.

Now, with respect to Senator Coats, at his confirmation hearing, since he said the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act would be his top priority, I asked our former colleague how many Americans—innocent, law-abiding Americans—have actually been swept up in the surveillance program known as section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Under section 702, the government conducts warrantless surveillance of foreigners who are reasonably believed to be overseas. It does this work by compelling telecommunications companies and internet service providers to provide the content, phone calls, and emails, and other individual communications.

Now, there are several different ways this happens, and I will get to that in the course of these remarks. What we are talking about—what I want people to understand—is that this goes to the content of communications. This is not about metadata collection. Congress, as the Senate knows, reformed that in the USA FREEDOM Act. This is surveillance without any warrants, and once the FISA Court signs off on the overall program, the details are up to the government.

Now, this was not always the case. For decades, individual warrants were required when the government needed the assistance of the country's telecommunications firms. Then the Bush administration created a secret, but legal, warrantless wiretapping program.

After the program was revealed, the government then went to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Court to get approval. But when the government ran into some trouble with the court, the Bush administration argued that the Congress should create the current program. It was first passed in 2007 under the name Protect America Act. That became the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Amendments Act of 2008.

Now, fortunately, the Congress included a sunset provision, which is why it was up for reauthorization in 2012, and that is why it is up for reauthorization this year. This year it is Senator Coats' top priority, if confirmed. Whoever is the head of the intelligence community will be the point person for this legislation.

I want it understood that the reason that I am going through this background is that I believe the American people deserve a fully informed debate about the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act reauthorization. You cannot have that debate—you cannot ensure that the American people have security and liberty—unless you know the impact of section 702 of that bill on the constitutional rights of law-abiding Americans.

So for 6 years, in this body, Democrats and Republicans—and in the other body, Democrats and Republicans—have been asking the same question: How many law-abiding Americans are having their communications swept up in all of this collection? Without even an estimate of this number, I don't think it is possible to judge what section 702 means for the core liberties of law-abiding Americans. Without this information, the Congress can't make an informed decision about whether to reauthorize section 702 or what kind of reforms might be necessary to ensure the protection of the individual liberties of innocent Americans.

At Senator Coats' nomination hearing before the Senate Intelligence Committee, I asked Senator Coats whether he would commit to providing Congress and the public with this information. I will say, because of my respect for Senator Coats and our long-time cooperation on issues like tax reform and a variety of others, I hoped that Senator Coats would be the one—after 6 years of struggling to get this information—to make a commitment to deliver it to the Senate Intelligence Committee before work on the reauthorization began. Instead, Senator Coats said: "I will do everything I can to work with Admiral Rogers at the NSA to get you that number."

If confirmed, I hope that happens. But after asking for the number of law-abiding Americans who get swept up in these searches for years, and getting stonewalled by the executive branch, hoping to get the information we need to do real oversight is just not good enough.

The problem—the lack of information on the impact of this law on the privacy of Americans—goes all the way back to the origins of the authority. In December of 2007, the Bush administration, in its statement of administration policy on the FISA Amendments Act, stated that it would likely be impossible to count the number of people located in the United States as communications were reviewed by the government. In April of 2011, our former colleague Senator Mark Udall and I then asked the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, for an estimate. In July of that year, the Director wrote back and said: "It is not reasonably possible to identify the number of people located in the United States whose communications may have been reviewed under the authority of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act."

He suggested reviewing the classified number of disseminated intelligence reports containing a reference to a U.S. person, but that is very different than the number of Americans whose communications have been collected in the first place. And that is what this is all about: How many law-abiding Americans—innocent, law-abiding Americans—are getting swept up in these searches? It will be an increasingly important issue as the nature of tele-

communications companies continues to change, because it is now a field that is globally interconnected. We don't have telecommunications systems just stopping at national borders. So getting the number of Americans whose communications have been collected in the first place is the prerequisite to doing real oversight on this law and doing our job, at a time when it is being reauthorized and the American people want both security and liberty and understand that the two are not mutually exclusive.

So Director Clapper then suggested reviewing the classified number of targets that were later determined to be located in the United States. But the question has never been about the targets of 702, although the mistaken targeting of Americans and the people in our country is another serious question. The question that Democrats and Republicans have been asking is about how many Americans are being swept up by a program that, according to the law, is supposed to only target foreigners overseas.

So let me repeat that. That is what the law says. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act says that the targets are supposed to be foreigners overseas, and Democrats and Republicans want to know how many law-abiding Americans, who might reside in Alaska or Oregon or anywhere else, are getting swept up in these searches.

(Mr. SULLIVAN assumed the Chair.)

So this bipartisan coalition has kept asking. In July of 2012, anticipating the first reauthorization of section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, I and 11 other Senators from both parties wrote to Director Clapper. This bipartisan group wrote:

We understand that it might not be possible for the intelligence community to calculate this number with precision, but it is difficult for us to accept the assertion that it is not possible to come up with even a rough estimate of this number. If generating a precise estimate would require an inordinate amount of labor, we would be willing to accept an imprecise one.

We asked about imprecise estimates, just a ballpark: How many law-abiding Americans are getting swept up in these searches that the law says are designed to target foreigners?

We asked about orders of magnitude: Is the number closer to a hundred or a hundred thousand or a hundred million?

We still got no answer, and section 702 was reauthorized without this necessary information. So last year, looking at the prospect of the law coming up, there was a renewed effort to find out how many law-abiding Americans are getting swept up in these searches of foreigners.

In April 2016, a bipartisan letter from members of the House Judiciary Committee asked the Director of National Intelligence for a public estimate of the number of communications or transactions involving U.S. persons collected under section 702 on an annual basis. This letter, coming from

the House—Democrats and Republicans—again asked for a rough estimate. This bipartisan group suggested working with Director Clapper to determine the methodology to get this estimate. In December, there were hints in the news media that something might be forthcoming. But now, here we are, with a new administration, considering the nomination of the next head of the intelligence community, who has said that reauthorizing section 702 is his top legislative priority, and there is no answer in sight to the question Democrats and Republicans have been asking for over 6 years: How many innocent, law-abiding Americans are getting swept up in these searches under a law that targets foreigners overseas?

Having described this history, I want to explain why this issue is so important, starting with the many ways in which innocent Americans can be swept up in section 702 surveillance.

The first are targeting mistakes in which, contrary to the law, the target turns out to be an American or someone in the United States. The full impact of these mistakes on law-abiding Americans is not readily apparent. The most recent public report on section 702 noted that there were compliance incidents involving surveillance of foreigners in the United States and surveillance of Americans. This is in violation of the law, and it happens.

The second way in which Americans can be swept up in section 702 collection is when they communicate with an overseas target. This is usually called incidental collection and is often mischaracterized. I have heard many times that the program is intended to find out when Americans are communicating with "bad guys"—and I want it understood, I am not interested in some kind of "bad guys caucus." I know of no Senator who is not interested in protecting our country from those kinds of threats. If a known terrorist overseas is communicating with someone in the United States, we ought to know about it. But section 702 is not just a counterterrorism program. The statute requires the collection be conducted "to acquire foreign intelligence information." As implemented, the standard for targeting individuals under the program is that the government has reason to believe those persons possess, are expected to receive, or are likely to communicate foreign intelligence information. Obviously, that is broad. It doesn't even require that a target be suspected of wrongdoing. So if someone tells you that your communications will be collected only if you are talking to al-Qaida or ISIS, that is just factually wrong.

It is also important to note that the government is prohibited from collecting communications only when the sender of an email and everyone receiving that email are in the United States. So an American in the United States could send an email to another American in the United States, but if

the email also goes to an overseas target, it is going to be collected.

That then brings us to the different kinds of collection under section 702 and how they affect the liberties of our people in different ways. In one form of collection known as PRISM, the government orders an internet service provider to provide the government with messages to and from a specific email address. Then there is something known as upstream collection, which is when the communications are collected off the telecommunications and internet backbones. In other words, phone calls and email messages are collected in transit. This kind of collection raises a number of other reasons to be concerned about how many law-abiding Americans are getting swept up. For one, it is through upstream collection that the government can collect emails that are neither to nor from a target. The email merely has to be about a target, meaning, for example, it includes a target's email address in the content. In other words, the government can collect emails to and from Americans, none of whom are of any interest to the government whatsoever, so long as the target's email address is in the content of the email. The law requires only that one of the parties to the communication, who, again, could be another American, is overseas, and even that requirement is harder for the government to meet in practice.

The implications here ought to be pretty obvious. You don't even have to be communicating with one of the government's targets to be swept up in Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act collection. You don't even have to be communicating with a foreigner. You or somebody emailing you just needs to reference a target's email address.

I have now mentioned that this target is not necessarily a terrorist because the law allows for surveillance "to acquire foreign intelligence information." That has been interpreted to allow the targeting of individuals who the government has reason to believe possess, are expected to receive, or are likely to communicate foreign intelligence information. It is a broad standard, and the government could then collect the communications of all kinds of foreigners around the world. Think about how easy it would be for an American business leader to be in contact with the broad set of potential targets of this program. Consider how easy it would be for Americans, communicating with other Americans, to forward the emails of these people. All of this could be collected by the government.

The upstream collection also includes the collection of what are called multicomunications transactions. This is when the NSA collects an email that is to, from, or about a target, but that email is embedded among multiple other communications that are not. These communications may have nothing to do with the target, but the government just kind of, sort of ends

up with them—and some of them are sent and received entirely within the United States.

These are the ways in which law-abiding Americans—innocent, law-abiding Americans who have done absolutely nothing wrong, both overseas and in the United States—can have their communications collected under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. These are law-abiding Americans, innocent Americans, not necessarily suspected of anything, and it is their privacy and their constitutional rights that have caused Democrats and Republicans in this body and in the other body to seek the actual numbers of how many law-abiding Americans are getting swept up in these searches that are supposed to target foreigners overseas.

The reason this is important is that the program is getting bigger and bigger. The exact numbers are classified, but the government's public reporting confirms steady increases in collection. At some point, the size of the program and the extent to which Americans' communications are being collected raises obvious concerns about our Fourth Amendment. The question is not if the program raises constitutional concerns, but when. And that gets to the heart of what our bipartisan coalition has been concerned about: If it is not possible for the Senate to know as part of reauthorizing this law how many Americans are being swept up by this program, we cannot determine whether the government has crossed a constitutional line.

The Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, an agency the Congress has tasked to look at these issues, has raised the very same concerns I am outlining this morning. In the 2014 report by the Board—the nonpartisan organization tasked by the Congress—concluded that the lack of information about the collection of the communications of law-abiding Americans' communications under section 702 "hampers attempts to gauge whether the program appropriately balances national security interests with the privacy of U.S. persons."

They went on to say:

The program [is] close to the line of constitutional reasonableness. At the very least, too much expansion in the collection of U.S. persons' communications or the uses to which those communications are put may push the program over the line.

They recommended exactly what our bipartisan coalition has been calling for—that the government provide to the Congress and, to the extent consistent with national security, that the public and the Congress get data on the collection of these communications of law-abiding Americans.

The most frequently heard argument against what our bipartisan group of House and Senate Members has been calling for is that, whatever number of communications are being collected on law-abiding Americans, it is minimized, which implies that information about Americans is hidden.

This is a particularly important issue. I have heard my colleagues on the other side say frequently: Well, if law-abiding Americans are having their communications swept up, we shouldn't get all concerned about that because this array of Americans' communications is being minimized. Somehow that means it is not getting out; it is being hidden. That is not necessarily what happens. To begin with, all that collection does not stay at the National Security Agency. All the emails collected through the PRISM component of section 702 go to several other agencies, including the CIA and the FBI. Then we have those three agencies, in particular, authorized to conduct searches through all the data for communications that are to, from, or about Americans: Look for an American's name, telephone number, email address, even a key word or phrase. They can do that without any warrant. There doesn't have to be even a suspicion—even a suspicion—that an American is engaged in any kind of wrongdoing. The FBI's authorities are even broader. The FBI can conduct searches for communications that are to, from, or about an American to seek evidence of a crime. Unlike the National Security Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency, the FBI doesn't even report how many searches for Americans it is conducting. Moreover, neither the FBI nor the CIA reports on the number of searches for Americans that it conducts using metadata collected under section 702.

The authority to conduct searches for Americans' communications in section 702 data is new. Before 2011, the FISA Court prohibited queries for U.S. persons. I am going to repeat that. Under the Bush administration and in the first 2 years of the Obama administration, it was not possible to conduct these backdoor, warrantless searches of law-abiding Americans. Then the Obama administration sought to change the rules and obtained authority to conduct them.

In April 2014, the Director of National Intelligence's response to questions from me and Senator Mark Udall publicly acknowledged these warrantless searches. By June the House voted overwhelmingly to prohibit them. That prohibition didn't become law, but I can tell you that it is sure going to be considered in the context of this reauthorization. The House voted overwhelmingly to prohibit these warrantless searches.

So the question really is this: What exactly is the privacy impact of these warrantless searches for Americans? In 2014, I managed to extract from the intelligence community some, but not all, necessary information about how many Americans had been subject of the searches. That was a step forward, but what the data doesn't tell us is who the subjects of these searches are. More to the point, it doesn't tell us how many Americans are potentially the subject of these searches. If the number

is small, the potential for abuse, obviously, would be smaller. If the number is large, the potential for abuse is much greater. Without an understanding of the size of the pool from which the government can pull the communications of law-abiding Americans, there is just no way of knowing how easy it would be for the government to use this law as a means to read the emails of a political opponent, a business leader, a journalist, or an activist.

I now want to turn to the ultimate form of abuse, and that is something called reverse targeting. It is prohibited by law and defined as collection “if the purpose of the acquisition is to target a particular, known person reasonably believed to be in the United States.” This prohibition also applies to U.S. persons. The question, though, is how this is defined and how the public can be assured it is not happening.

If you look at the language, you can see why there has been bipartisan concern. The collection is only prohibited if the purpose is to get the communications of Americans. The question obviously has risen: What if getting the Americans’ communications is only one of the purposes of collecting on an overseas target? What is actually acceptable here?

This issue was concerning in 2008, when the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Amendments Act passed with a prohibition on reverse targeting. But that was before the country knew about the collection of emails that are only about a foreign target and that could be to and from Americans. That was before the Obama administration sought and obtained authority to conduct warrantless searches for communications to, from, and about Americans out of section 702 PRISM collection.

That makes an important point to me. This bipartisan coalition—of which I have been a part—has fought back against executive branch overreach, whether it is a Democratic administration or a Republican administration. I cited the fact that President Obama brought back something with the great potential for abuse and that President Bush said he wanted no part of. As we look at these issues, it is important to understand exactly what the scope of the problem is. Each of the agencies authorized to conduct these warrantless searches—the NSA, FBI, CIA—are also authorized to identify the overseas targets of section 702. The agencies that have developed an interest in Americans’ communications, which are actually looking for these communications, are the same agencies that are in a position to encourage ongoing collection of those communications by targeting the overseas party.

I believe our bipartisan group believes that there is very substantial potential for abuse. Because of these decisions taking place in the executive branch without any judicial oversight,

it is possible that no one would ever know.

To quote the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board: “Since the enactment of the FISA Amendments Act of 2008, the extent to which the government acquires the communications of U.S. persons under Section 702 has been one of the biggest open questions about the program, and a continuing source of public concern.” The Board noted that the executive branch has responded with any number of excuses for why it couldn’t provide the number of how many innocent law-abiding Americans get swept up in these searches. One excuse has been the size of the program. But as Members—Democrats and Republicans—have said repeatedly, an estimate, perhaps based on a sample, is sufficient. Nobody is dictating how this be done.

Another excuse has been that determining whether individuals whose communications have been collected are American would itself be invasive of privacy. Now this is something of a head-scratcher. I will just say that, as to the value of knowing how many law-abiding Americans get swept up in these searches, privacy advocates have stated that this far-fetched theory, this far-fetched excuse for not furnishing it, doesn’t add up in terms of the benefit of finding how many Americans are swept up in these warrantless searches.

The government is genuinely concerned about the privacy implications of calculating the number. I and many of my colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, have been willing—and we renewed this in the last few weeks—to have a discussion about the methodology under consideration.

In the months ahead, the Senate is going to be debating a number of issues relating to this topic, such as U.S. person searches, reverse targeting, and the collection of communications that are just about a target. The Senate is going to discuss how to strengthen oversight by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, the Congress, and the privacy board. The Director of National Intelligence will be right in the center of the debate.

There is more information that the American people need. There is more information that this body needs in order to carry out its responsibility to do real oversight here. The center of these discussions about the reauthorization of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act involves one question: How many innocent, law-abiding Americans have been swept up in this program that has been written and developed to target foreigners overseas? Congress’s judgment about the impact of section 702 depends on getting this number. An assessment of the program’s constitutionality rests on the understanding of the impact it has on Americans. A full grasp of the implications of the warrantless searches of Americans requires knowing how many Americans’ communications are being searched through. Countless questions

related to the reauthorization of the program all require that the public have this information.

I am just going to close by way of saying what those questions are because if you want to do real oversight over a critically important program, you have to have the information to respond to these questions. The questions are these: Should there be safeguards against reverse targeting? Should Congress legislate on “upstream” collections and the collection of communications about targets, which raises unique concerns about the collection of the communications of law-abiding Americans? Are the rules related to the dissemination, use, and retention of these communications adequate? Should there be limits on the use of these communications by the FBI for non-intelligence purposes?

Just think about that one for a minute. What does it mean to people in our part of the world where people feel that liberty and security are not mutually exclusive, but they are going to insist on both? What does it mean to them on the question of whether there ought to be limits on the use of this information by the FBI for non-intelligence purposes? That is exactly the kind of question that people are going to ask.

I am heading home today for town-hall meetings in rural areas, and those are exactly the kind of questions that Oregonians ask. People understand this is a dangerous time. That is not at issue.

I serve on the Intelligence Committee, along with Senator FEINSTEIN, and I have been one of the longer serving members. The fact that this is a dangerous world is not a debatable proposition. There are a lot of people out there who do not wish our country well. But what I say to Oregonians and what I will say again this weekend is this: Any politician who tells you that you have to give up your liberty to have security is not somebody who is working in your interest because smart policies give you both.

That is why I started talking about the benefits of strong encryption—critically important for security. These questions are ones that I don’t think are particularly partisan. That is why a big group of Democrats and Republicans here and in the other body have been seeking the information about how many law-abiding Americans get caught up in these efforts to target a foreigner overseas. We are now at a critical moment. A government surveillance program, with very obvious implications for privacy and constitutional rights, is up for reauthorization by the end of the year. While more information may be part of the answer, we have to have the best possible estimate to answer those questions that I just outlined.

The American people want Congress to get to the bottom of questions that go right to the heart of our having

policies that promote both their security and their liberty. I think the public expects a full debate. You can't have a full and real debate over the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act unless you have some sense of how many law-abiding Americans are getting swept up in these searches of foreigners.

I believe the American people expect serious oversight over it. They want assurances that their representatives in Congress have a sense of what is actually being voted on. After years of secret surveillance programs being revealed only in the news media, I think the public has rightly insisted on more openness and more transparency.

So getting the information that I have described today, which will deal with Senator Coats' top priority of reauthorizing the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, is a critical first step. Once the Senate knows the impact of this program on Americans, then you can have a full and real discussion—a real debate in Congress—with the public and with the Director of National Intelligence.

I took the view in the committee, despite very much liking Dan Coats and his being the bipartisan cosponsor of what is still the only Federal income tax reform proposal we have had in the Senate since the 1986 law was authored, I said that I cannot support any nominee to be the head of national intelligence if that nominee will not guarantee that before this reauthorization is brought before the Senate and brought before the Intelligence Committee, that we have the information needed to do our job, to do real oversight, to show the American people it is possible to come up with policies that promote security and liberty. For that reason, despite my friendship with Senator Coats, I cannot support the nomination.

I yield the floor.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, never before has a sitting President so maligned our intelligence community. President Trump has repeatedly belittled and ridiculed the work of intelligence officials, calling their assessments of Russia's hack into U.S. elections "fake news." Over Twitter, President Trump accused intelligence officers of executing a Nazi-like smear campaign against him. President Trump has sided with the likes of Julian Assange and Vladimir Putin over our own intelligence community.

More disturbingly, President Trump seems to hold shallow views on critical intelligence questions like torture. On the campaign trail, Mr. Trump constantly vowed to reinstate torture, asserting that only "stupid people" would think otherwise. In an interview with the New York Times, Mr. Trump admitted that he was "surprised" that Defense Secretary Mattis opposed torture, while adding that he would be "guided by" mass sentiments on torture. Mr. Trump's pronouncements on torture are dangerous, irresponsible, and rally our enemies.

Senator Dan Coats has an enormous challenge ahead of him. President Trump removed the Director of National Intelligence from the National Security Council, marginalizing the intelligence community's essential role in informing national security decisions. President Trump reportedly plans to hire a New York billionaire with close ties to Steve Bannon to conduct a review of the intelligence agencies, a core responsibility of the Director of National Intelligence, and Senator Coats' hardline assessments of Russia may meet with skepticism in a White House that views Putin so favorably.

I am encouraged by Senator Coats' willingness to work with the Congress in a bipartisan manner, particularly on probes related to Russia's hack into our election. I expect Senator Coats to maintain his commitment to follow the law on enhanced interrogation techniques and not to seek to change them. For these reasons, I support his nomination to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

NOMINATION OF HERBERT MCMASTER

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I have a tremendous amount of respect for Lieutenant General McMaster and a great deal of admiration for his willingness to answer the call of service for his Nation as National Security Advisor.

So I want to be clear that none of my comments are intended as a reflection on General McMaster himself.

But I am greatly concerned about the current state of the organization that General McMaster is being asked to run and that the way in which the President and his senior advisers appear to be running it is creating great risk for our Nation.

The President's first National Security Advisor, who lasted less than a month in office, had failed to register as a foreign agent, a job that he held throughout the Presidential campaign and into the transition—so much for America first.

The initial Executive order structuring the National Security Council system for the new administration deliberately omitted the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Director of National Intelligence from the Principals Committee—in other words, a National Security Council without the insight and guidance of our intelligence community or military.

Every administration can structure the White House as it sees fit, but national security without intelligence or military advice is, frankly, mind-boggling.

At the same time, the NSC was to include Steve Bannon, the President's political adviser. Although previous White Houses have had staff from outside the NSC sit in on NSC meetings on occasion and as appropriate, never before has an administration suggested that the NSC's work of safeguarding our Nation be subordinate to the political goals of safeguarding a President's

political position and public opinion ratings.

Alongside the NSC, this White House has established a so-called Strategic Initiatives Group under Mr. Bannon, which is reportedly undertaking strategic reviews of U.S. policy on sensitive issues—including U.S.-Russia relations. Running a shadow NSC with crossing lines of jurisdiction and authority seems like a recipe for disaster.

So all of this has created an environment of dysfunction and an organization in severe distress. It is one thing to run a family real estate company this way, but this is our national security that is at stake.

If there is a crisis tonight—on the Korean Peninsula, with Russia, in the Middle East or Persian Gulf—it is far from clear that the NSC is in a position to provide our senior policymakers with the options they need and the decision-space necessary to safeguard America in a dangerous and unpredictable world.

I wish General McMaster all the best, but hope that he is approaching the challenges of his job with clear-eyed conviction.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, in a few short months, President Trump has undermined U.S. credibility and our standing abroad. He has called for a nuclear arms race, asserted the United States should invade Iraq to take its oil, lavished praise on Vladimir Putin, and slandered stalwart allies like Australia and Germany. He has issued two Muslim bans—a move lauded by the Islamic State and condemned by top military, intelligence, and diplomatic officials of both parties.

President Trump has put our national security apparatus under enormous stress. He has appointed Steve Bannon, an extremist with the explicit ambition to "destroy the state," to the National Security Council—the highest body charged with protecting the state. He has failed to nominate officials for dozens of crucial national security positions, hobbling our ability to respond to a future national security crisis. He has repeatedly denigrated our intelligence agencies, rejecting findings that clearly demonstrated Russia's role in his election. He has accused the FBI of breaking the law by wiretapping Trump Tower, a groundless claim for which he has offered no proof.

LTG H.R. McMaster is a respected military strategist with a reputation for an independent mind. He has demonstrated throughout his career that he is willing to challenge and criticize U.S. leadership, irrespective of party. He does not appear to be sympathetic to the view of President Trump or Steve Bannon that the United States is at war with the entire Muslim world. Instead, while commanding U.S. forces in Iraq, General McMaster told his soldiers: "Every time you treat an Iraqi disrespectfully, you are working for the enemy."

I am concerned with General McMaster's handling of sexual assault

allegations against two of his cadets at West Point. McMaster's reluctance to interfere with the training of these cadets, despite allegations of sexual assault, was in violation of Army policy. I am a strong supporter of efforts to reform the military's handling of sexual assault, which is why I cosponsored legislation in the House to pass new legal protections for victims of assault in the military.

While I remain deeply concerned with the large number of military officials in senior positions in the Trump administration, I support General McMaster's retaining his rank while he serves as National Security Advisor. I do so with the hope that General McMaster will remain faithful to his reputation for dissent, will challenge President Trump when he takes a dangerous approach to the world, will restore order to the National Security Council, and will steward a foreign policy that makes America safer.

Mr. WYDEN. 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. UDALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, this week is Sunshine Week, a week when we applaud open government and when we celebrate the institutions that hold government accountable. Throughout our Nation's history, one of the most important has been the press, the free press. Donald Trump, as candidate and President, has repeatedly attacked the press. He has called it the "enemy of the people," he has labeled the national media outlets as "fake news," and he has criticized respected reporters who have reported for years.

He has singled out mainstream newspapers like the New York Times, Politico, and the Los Angeles Times, and television outlets like ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN. That is how this President operates. He acts like a bully, and not just with the media. He attacks the courts when article III judges disagree with him, and when they find he is breaking the law. He attacks sitting judges for deciding against him, even those appointed by Republican Presidents.

Without basis, he attacks our intelligence agencies, and he even demeans career public servants who risk their lives to keep our Nation safe. The President's goal is obvious, to undermine the institutions in our country who threaten him, who criticize him. Authoritarians have used this strategy for centuries and continue to do so today in countries where democracy is weak or nonexistent and where autocracy or kleptocracy is strong.

But this is the United States. We are an example to the world of democratic principles and action. The President's

repeated attacks on our democratic institutions need to stop and they need to stop now. A free and robust press is critical for democracy to work, period, end of story. Our Nation's history of a free press dates back to our founding. Free press in the colonial United States developed in reaction to severe restrictions on free speech in England.

During the latter half of the 17th century, all books and articles were required to be licensed by the government to be published. Then, "seditious libel"—bringing "hatred or contempt" upon the Crown or the Parliament by written word—was a criminal offense. So to speak against the Crown was a criminal offense. Truth was not a defense.

No publication could criticize the Crown or the government, even if it was accurate. The first newspapers in the Colonies operated under licenses from the colonial Governor. But by 1721, James Franklin, Benjamin Franklin's older brother, was publishing one of the first colonial independent newspapers, the New England Courant, in Boston.

Ben Franklin was his apprentice, typesetter, and sometimes contributed under pen names. Several years later, Ben Franklin began publishing his own independent newspaper, the Pennsylvania Gazette. His newspaper became the most popular in the Colonies and was published until 1800.

By 1735, the tenets of seditious libel were coming undone. John Peter Zenger, the publisher of the New York Weekly Journal, ran articles harshly critical of the colonial government. Zenger was arrested and tried for libel. While he admitted he published the articles, his lawyer argued truth was a defense. The press, the lawyer argued, has "a liberty both of exposing and opposing tyrannical power by speaking and writing the truth."

The judge, however, instructed the jury as to the law at the time, that Zenger must be found guilty if he published the articles, whether truthful or not, but after 10 minutes of deliberation, the jury acquitted Zenger. These were some of the beginnings of a free press in our Nation.

The first rights in the Bill of Rights are freedom of religion, the press, speech, petition, and assembly. The press, as an institution, is expressly protected by the Constitution. In 1789, the drafters of the Bill of Rights understood that a free press was essential to the growth and success of our new democracy. They understood that debate, disagreement, the free flow of ideas, make an informed public, that the press helps educate voters.

They understood all too well that government power needed to be checked and that the press holds the powerful in check by investigating and exposing arbitrary conduct, abuse, and corruption. A democracy cannot exist without a free press. It is as simple as that, but our President does not seem to understand this or he does not care.

According to him, the press is "dishonest," "not good people," "sleazy," and, "among the worst human beings." Those are all quotes by our President.

Established press organizations are the "fake news," and a few weeks ago he declared the press "an enemy of the people." We have not heard attacks like this since Watergate, and even then, it wasn't so much so fast. The President's subordinates are now given license to accuse and to limit press access.

Chief Strategist Steve Bannon said the press should "keep its mouth shut and just listen for a while." This quote from Mr. Bannon has extra significance today because he is no longer the head of a rightwing media company. In a controversial move, President Trump issued an Executive order to add him to the National Security Council's Principal's Committee.

Today, we are going to vote on the nomination of General McMaster to retain his three-star general status while serving as the head of the National Security Council. I do not believe a political extremist like Mr. Bannon should serve on the Council. At a minimum, General McMaster should direct Mr. Bannon to stop attacking the free press while serving on the Council.

Senior adviser Kellyanne Conway called for media organizations to fire reporters who criticized Candidate Trump. Press Secretary Shawn Spicer barred the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times, BuzzFeed, and Politico from a press conference, and the Secretary of State will now travel without the press corps, disregarding a decades-old practice.

Now, don't get me wrong. The press does not always get it right. They make mistakes. News organizations have their biases. Mistakes should be corrected and bias should be tempered by using accepted journalistic methods and professional judgment and following journalism's ethics code.

Mistakes and the exercise of professional judgment are not the same thing as reporting "fake news." The President's Republican colleagues have been too silent in the face of attacks. Few in Congress have stood up against the President's hostility to the press. Government officials are afraid to disagree. Just last week, at a Senate Commerce Committee hearing, I asked the FCC Chair, Mr. Pai, a yes or no question, does he agree with the President that the press is the enemy of the people.

He did not engage. He would not answer. He let stand the President's remarks. The President's characterization of the press as the enemy is reminiscent of President Nixon, when Nixon said: "Never forget. The press is the enemy. The press is the enemy," as recorded on his secret tapes.

The press was Nixon's enemy because the press exposed his criminal conduct which led to his resignation. The press is Trump's enemy because the press exposes his and his associates' ties to

Russia, the President's myriad Trump organization conflicts of interest, his constant barrage of misrepresentations of fact.

Nixon's Press Secretary called the Washington Post investigative reporting shoddy and shabby journalism. Like President Trump's accusation of fake news, that same Post reporting won the paper a Pulitzer Prize.

Watergate was a break-in of the Democratic National Committee during the Presidential campaign. Nixon ordered his Chief of Staff to have the CIA block the FBI's investigation into the source of the funding for the Watergate burglary. During this last Presidential election, we had a cyber break-in of the DNC. Even after 17 U.S. intelligence agencies concluded Russia hacked the DNC to sway the election, Candidate Trump refused to accept their analysis.

The President's Chief of Staff pressured the FBI to publicly deny that Trump associates had contact with the Russians, while his Chief Counsel reportedly breached the firewall seeking information from the FBI about an investigation into the President and his associates. Since the press began to look hard at the ties between President Trump and the Trump organization, his associates and Russia, the President has not let up on his criticism. Just last week, the President threatened by tweet as follows:

It is amazing how rude much of the media is to my very hard working representatives. Be nice, you will do much better!

The job of the press is not to be nice. It is to gather the facts and report them. Now that the President of the United States has called the reputable U.S. news organizations fake news, others are doing the same. Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesman recently accused a CNN reporter of spreading "fake news" because the reporter asked about accusations from U.S. officials that the Russian Ambassador is a spy.

This is a dangerous path. Putin has throttled an independent press in the Russian Federation, imposing restriction after restriction on the news media. Reporters have been harassed, threatened, and jailed. The numbers of truly independent media organizations in Russia have been reduced to a very few, and they have been replaced by state-owned, state-run news media, like RT, formerly known as Russia Today, a propaganda bullhorn for Putin, according to Secretary John Kerry.

The President admires Putin as a—and I will quote the President here—"strong leader." Putin has used his strength to silence an independent press. We do not want our press silenced.

Justice Brandeis, in a famous defense of free speech in a 1927 First Amendment case, said: "[T]hose who won our independence by revolution were not cowards. They did not fear political liberty."

Does President Trump fear political liberty?

The irony of the President's accusations of "fake news" is that he himself has spread misinformation and fanned the flames of internet-driven lies, from questioning President Obama's citizenship, to his frivolous claim that millions of people committed voter fraud and that he really won the popular vote—that is the President's claim, that he really won the popular vote—to President Trump's unsubstantiated accusation that President Obama wiretapped Trump Tower.

We have entered into an era in U.S. politics never seen before in my lifetime. We cannot allow this to be sanitized or explained away. The phrase "alternative facts" has become a national joke because it sounds like something from George Orwell's "1984."

It is not acceptable for a President to falsify, misrepresent, or flatout lie. The President's party in Congress should not allow this. They should not look the other way and continue to profess that the emperor's clothes are grand.

Reacting to Mr. Trump's attacks on the press, President George W. Bush responded:

I consider the media to be indispensable to democracy. We need an independent media to hold people accountable. Power can be very addictive and corrosive . . . and it's important for the media to hold to account people who abuse their power—whether it be here or elsewhere.

That was President George W. Bush's recent comment.

President Bush's prescription for democracy in 2017 is the same as the drafters of the First Amendment in 1789: A free and independent and robust media is essential to democracy, and any broad-based attack on the press is an attack directly on our democracy.

There is one thing President Trump must understand: The press won't go away. They won't stop reporting on the actions he takes and on the decisions he makes. He can spend the next 4 years attacking the press, but they will still be there—just as they were after Nixon resigned.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO PASTOR EVELYN ERBELE

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, every week for the past few months, I have been coming down to the Senate floor to recognize a special Alaskan, someone who makes my State—what we believe is the most beautiful and unique State in our country—a better place for all of us. I call this person our Alaskan of the Week.

Last week, I had the opportunity to recognize Glen Hanson, who volunteers his time by flying in what we refer to as the Iditarod Air Force—members of the Alaska volunteer community pilots who fly supplies in for the Last Great Race.

I know the pages are really interested in the Last Great Race. So, just as a quick update, we had a winner. It is still going on, but one musher, Mitch Seavey, crossed the finish line in Nome, AK, in record time. I congratulate Mitch and all of the members of the Iditarod Air Force who are still out there, flying, when it is 30, 40, below zero. It is a tough race, a real tough race. Iowans, I am sure, could do well in it but not a lot of other Americans.

Today, I want to take my colleagues and viewers to a very different place in Alaska—about 1,300 miles southeast of Nome, where all the Iditarod action is going on, really almost a world away—to a beautiful city called Ketchikan, AK.

Ketchikan is the first port city that people will visit when they take the Alaska Marine Highway's Inside Passage up to Alaska. It is a trip that I encourage everybody to take. It is beautiful. Flanked by the towering Tongass National Forest, it is a place full of life and spirit, mountains, forests, lots of rain, lots of salmon, and lots of jaw-dropping scenery.

Yet, like most places across our country, it has its challenges, and it has a challenge with homelessness, like many communities in America and Alaska. Luckily, for all of us, Ketchikan is also home to a very caring community that has set its sights on helping its fellow Alaskans. One of these people is Pastor Evelyn Erbele, our Alaskan of the Week, who has dedicated her life to helping others.

Evelyn is the copastor with her husband Terry of the First United Methodist Church of Ketchikan. There is a day shelter in the church's social hall, which provides a hot meal, shower, clean clothes, and a place for the community's homeless to go every day of the week.

Oftentimes when we think of homelessness, we think of people not having a place to sleep, but it is also important to remember that being homeless means having no place to go during the day. First City Homeless Services—Day Shelter gives people a place to go during the day. Pastor Evelyn oversees that day shelter. According to the manager of the shelter, Chris Alvarado, who himself has been homeless, she does so with commitment and with kindness and with compassion.

"She has a heart of gold and gives 100 percent," said one resident of Ketchikan about Evelyn.

Evelyn met her husband Terry in Seward, AK, where she was a nurse in 1976. From Seward, they set out on a journey to help people around the world—Nigeria, Lithuania, Russia.

In 2009, Evelyn—now with a Ph.D. in theology and ordained by the Methodist Church—went up the Alaskan

Highway from Bellingham to Ketchikan with her husband. She didn't know when she accepted the job at the Methodist Church in Ketchikan as copastor that she would be overseeing the day shelter. At first, according to her, the work was a bit unsettling. "I never intentionally walked side by side with people who are homeless," she said. She continued: "Initially, I may have been biased. I was using the word 'them' when I would describe the people I was working with. One day, the Lord said to me, Evelyn, you are them. You are my child no less or no more than they are." She said that after hearing that voice, she realized she wasn't working with "them" anymore. "I was working with men and women who were in a place that I easily could have been."

In her years working to help the homeless in her community in Ketchikan, she realized that not everybody who is homeless fits neatly into "one basket." There are lots of reasons for homelessness, she said, and the homeless may have many, many faces: men, women, children, families, the old, and the young.

As the Presiding Officer knows, homelessness is a big challenge across our Nation. On any given day, tens of thousands of Americans—hundreds of thousands—don't have a permanent place to call home. Of course, the best way to address this is to have a strong economy and job opportunities, and that is what we need to be focusing on here in the Senate. But we also need people like Pastor Evelyn not only in Alaska but across the country, who are tireless advocates for helping the homeless. I thank all of them. I especially thank her, and I thank her for being our Alaskan of the Week.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF HERBERT MCMASTER

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, since coming to office, the President's National Security Council has experienced more turmoil than any in history at this stage in a Presidency. The President's first National Security Advisor and head of the NSC, Michael Flynn, was fired after only a month in his position. The Council itself has been reshaped in ways that concern all of us. Permanent postings for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of the National Intelligence Agency have been removed and a permanent seat has been installed for White House Political Adviser Steve Bannon.

This organization is a disturbing and profound departure from past administrations. On the most sensitive matters

of national security, the President should be relying on the informed counsel of members of the intelligence and military communities, not political advisers who made their careers running a White nationalist website.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the President's primary military adviser and, along with that of the Director of National Intelligence, is the only independent, apolitical voice on the NSC. President Trump's move to strip them of their seats is baffling and potentially endangers our national security. The President has installed in their stead one of the most strident, ideological voices in his orbit.

On the most sensitive issues of national security, we have to have fact-based decisions. The President has to get the most dispassionate and accurate advice. With all due respect, that is not Mr. Bannon's forte. His installation on the principals list of the NSC moves it further away from what it needs to be and closer toward a shadow council of a dangerously ideological West Wing.

The bottom line is, this decision was poorly thought out and ill-conceived. It puts a filter on the information going to the President and will make us less safe. My concerns are shared by Members on both sides of the aisle. I know that from conversations I have had with some.

It has special relevance today because we are about to vote on reappointing H.R. McMaster to lieutenant general, who will be the next head of the NSC. General McMaster, by all accounts, will have a grounding presence in the national security apparatus of the White House. I have met him. I have a great deal of respect for both his integrity and his abilities, but I remain deeply concerned that General McMaster's judgment may not be followed and instead the fevered dreams of Mr. Bannon will influence the most sensitive national security discussions and decisions. It has been reported he doesn't want to see NATO exist or the European Union. Those are political decisions in a body charged with giving the President advice on security.

So this should concern all of us, especially Lieutenant General McMaster.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, as I did 2 weeks ago and will continue to do until he is confirmed, I rise to support the nomination of Neil Gorsuch to serve on the Supreme Court. Judge Gorsuch is an accomplished, mainstream jurist, and I look forward to helping to make

sure that he receives an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor.

Next week, my colleagues and I on the Judiciary Committee will hold confirmation hearings on Judge Gorsuch. I look forward to hearing his testimony. I am confident that he will impress the country with his knowledge of and respect for the law, just as he has impressed me and my colleagues.

But before the hearings get under way, I thought I would use this opportunity today to highlight an additional aspect of his life and his jurisprudence that make him an ideal nominee to serve on the High Court. So far I have spoken on the floor about his fitness to fill Justice Scalia's seat, as well as his defense of the separation of powers and his support for religious liberty. Today I would like to discuss a more personal aspect of Judge Gorsuch's background—the fact that he is a westerner. As an Arizonan, I cannot overstate how important it will be to have a fellow westerner serving on the Supreme Court.

Where you are from influences your understanding of cultural and regional sensitivities. When you look at the current makeup of the Supreme Court, there is an unmistakable lack of geographic diversity. Of the eight current Justices, five of them were born in New York or New Jersey, and that number was six before Judge Scalia's passing. Granted, Justice Kennedy is from Northern California, but to be frank, much of Northern California is about as culturally western as Justice Breyer's hometown of Boston.

The Supreme Court is in desperate need of a western perspective. Judge Gorsuch fits that bill. When I had the opportunity to meet Judge Gorsuch in my office last month, we discussed our respective western backgrounds. I talked to him about my days growing up on a cattle ranch in rural Arizona. He told me that his heart has always been in the American West. You can learn a lot about a person by how they spend their time with their friends and their family, and there is no mistaking this aspect with Judge Gorsuch. He is a westerner through and through.

He told me about his home outside of Boulder, where his daughters raise and show chickens and goats. I was pleased to learn that each year he takes his law clerks to the National Western Stock Show in Denver, one of the Nation's largest rodeos. By now, I think we have all seen the picture of him fly fishing with Judge Scalia. While all this demonstrates how much he has embraced the western lifestyle, what makes Judge Gorsuch a true westerner is more than just where he lives or where his personal interests are. Judge Gorsuch's western values are evident in his jurisprudence, which reflects a strong commitment to public service. Arizona has had its share of distinguished public servants. In fact, it was from this very desk that the late Barry Goldwater, one of Arizona's favorite sons, steered the public policy debate

for years after he chose to leave a successful career in the private sector. Judge Gorsuch's career reflects the same ethos.

Early on, a young Neil Gorsuch rocketed to the top of the legal profession, becoming a partner in one of Washington's most elite law firms. But instead of enjoying the comforts of a lucrative private sector career, he left it all behind for a high-responsibility, low-profile job at the Department of Justice.

After his time at DOJ, Neil Gorsuch could have easily retired or returned to a white-shoe legal practice. Instead, he returned to his home State of Colorado to serve as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. Throughout his tenure on the Federal bench, Judge Gorsuch's western disposition has shone through in his jurisprudence.

I have already spoken of his skepticism toward the administrative state, with its executive bureaucracies, which, he cautions, "swallow huge amounts of core judicial and legislative power and concentrate Federal power in a way that seems more than a little difficult to square with the Constitution of the framers' design."

He shares a healthy skepticism over an overly intrusive and heavy-handed bureaucracy with millions of his Federal westerners. Judge Gorsuch recognizes how Federal regulations interfere with the ability of Western States to govern themselves, whether it is a former administration's Clean Power Plan, its ozone rules, or even management of the Mexican gray wolf.

In numerous opinions, Judge Gorsuch has given voice to many of the frustrations experienced by his western neighbors. From his criticism of an overly assertive DC court that often feels compelled to intervene from 2,000 miles away to his recognition of excessive litigation that arises from the complexities of split-estate property rights out West, he speaks our language.

These are perspectives any westerner is familiar with, but they may not be obvious to others, including folks from New York and New Jersey. If confirmed, Judge Gorsuch will already bring generational and religious diversity to the Court. Perhaps more than anything, it will be his western perspective that most enriches the debate in the years to come.

As I have said before, Judge Gorsuch deserves fair consideration by those who serve in this body, and he deserves an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. He should be confirmed overwhelmingly, and I am confident that he will be.

Joining us on the floor today are several members of the Senate from Western States. I see that the Senator from Wyoming has joined us. I think he has some thoughts about Neil Gorsuch and his nomination to the Court.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, joining my colleague here on the floor, I

agree with all of the comments the Senator from Arizona has made. They are interesting because as to the history of the State of the Senator from Arizona and his family history, Judge Gorsuch has a similar history, to the point that his great-grandfather built a hotel in Wyoming called the Wolf Hotel, in Saratoga, WY. I found a picture of that hotel from 1878, which was 12 years before Wyoming became a State. I got that picture from the American history museum at the University of Wyoming and got a copy of the picture and gave it to Judge Gorsuch.

In front of the hotel in 1878, there was a stagecoach with six horses lined up ahead of it. The Wolf Hotel was a halfway stop on the stagecoach line between a couple of communities in Wyoming. They were about 40 miles apart. So that is the heritage from which Judge Gorsuch comes.

I think that western heritage is important. But I think that additionally important is what the Senator referred to—his judicial temperament, being such a mainstream member of the judiciary, and this general belief inherent within him that the role of a judge is to apply the law, not to legislate from the bench.

We have seen so much legislating from the bench. I think you just don't get that if you take somebody from the Rocky Mountain West who has this view of the Nation and an understanding of the rule of law and the Constitution.

So I think we are going to see that when the Senate Judiciary Committee begins its hearings next week on Judge Gorsuch's nomination to the Supreme Court. I visited with him, reviewed his writings, and then compared it to what I saw when I visited with Justice Scalia when he came to Wyoming. The Senator from Arizona mentioned the picture of the two working together, fishing together.

I just think he is the right person to continue that incredible legacy of Justice Scalia.

Mr. FLAKE. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BARRASSO. Yes.

Mr. FLAKE. You point out the sensitivities that you have when you come from the West. A lot of it has to do with, if you are in a rural area in particular, you are—as my family grew up—working on the land. Much of that land is either owned by or controlled by the Federal Government, the State government, or Tribal governments in Arizona's case. In fact, 85 percent of the State of Arizona is publicly owned. So when you live in the West and you work the land on a ranch or farm, you are dealing specifically with Federal regulators and Federal property managers. I think those who were raised in the West and have lived here understand the impact of the Federal Government's decisions. The administrative state has an outsized impact on those who live in the West, and I think that is evident in the jurisprudence you see from Judge Gorsuch.

How much of Wyoming is publicly owned?

Mr. BARRASSO. Well, it is about 50-50. But when you talk about the heavy hand of a bureaucratic government and the impact on the lives of the people who live there, it is dramatic. It can be very punishing, as we have seen over the last 8 years with regulations that have come out of agencies—sometimes, I believe, in defiance of the law, sometimes reversed by the Supreme Court.

That is why I think it is critical to have Neil Gorsuch on the Supreme Court, because he is someone who realizes that the Constitution is a legal document—not a living document, not built for flexibility, but really a rigid legal document. That is where I believe he stands. That is what his writings indicate. It is the sort of thing we have seen from him. I visited with him, and other Members have. These are the things we read about.

With regard to his writings over the years, this is a judge who has faithfully applied the law—applied the law, focusing on the Constitution. He has not been afraid to rule against the government or for unpopular parties when the law demands it because he is going to go right back to the law. I believe his opinions show great reverence for all of the Constitution—a key respect for the importance of the separation of powers.

I support his nomination completely. It is interesting, because when he was nominated for the position he currently holds, the Democratic Senator from Colorado—and I am expecting Senator CORY GARDNER to be here in a little bit to talk about the quote from Ken Salazar, the former Senator from Colorado, who talked about what a wonderful man Judge Gorsuch was and how he should be put onto that bench. He was unanimously confirmed here in the Senate.

I have full confidence in Judge Gorsuch as a son of the West, as the only Justice from the Rocky Mountain West who would be on the Court. Specifically, though, I would support him no matter where he was from because of his belief that it is the role of a judge and a justice to apply the law, not to legislate from the bench, which I think goes above and beyond where someone is from, what their background may be. But I will just tell you that his background, combined with his philosophy and mainstream approach to the law, is exactly what we need now in 2017 on the U.S. Supreme Court. I believe he deserves an up-or-down vote. I believe he will be confirmed as people get a chance to see him, get to know him better.

I see I am joined on the floor by another colleague, also from the Rocky Mountain West, the Senator from Montana. You have heard from Arizona, Wyoming, and now Montana. I would ask him about his thoughts about this nomination by President Trump of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I want to thank my esteemed colleague from Wyoming, Senator BARRASSO, for his comments. He shared many of the same views I have.

As I think about the job I do as a Senator—perhaps one of the most important jobs we have as Senators is approving a Supreme Court Justice. An Associate Justice of the Supreme Court can serve an average of 27 years. We think about Justice Scalia; he served 30 years. Neil Gorsuch is 49 years old. God willing, he probably will serve 30 years or more, perhaps. Think about that. My wife and I have four children. They are going through the college years and so forth. They are in their early and midtwenties. They will likely be grandparents when Judge Gorsuch wraps up his career on the Supreme Court, assuming he is approved. That is why a decision like this about whom to vote for, whom to stand behind, whom to stand with is so important. It is not just for today, it is for our children and our grandchildren.

The people want a Supreme Court Justice who does not legislate from the bench. The people want a Supreme Court Justice who upholds the rule of law and follows the Constitution. The people want a Supreme Court Justice with a record of constitutional jurisprudence and legal restraint to match what we saw from Justice Antonin Scalia. The people want a Supreme Court Justice with the academic credentials, who is well prepared to serve the American people on our highest Court, to wrestle with some of the most complicated issues that the High Court wrestles with.

When President Trump announced that he was appointing Judge Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court, the American people knew he was truly a supreme pick. He has a brilliant legal mind. He understands the role a judge plays in our judicial system—to interpret the law and not to legislate from the bench. In fact, on the night he was announced, when President Trump revealed his pick, I was at the White House, and I heard Judge Gorsuch say: “A judge who likes every outcome he reaches is very likely a bad judge, stretching for results he prefers rather than those the law demands.” That is the humility of a great judge.

Judge Gorsuch has impeccable legal qualifications that demonstrate he will be the type of Justice every American deserves to have on the highest Court. He graduated from Harvard Law School. He was a Harry Truman Scholar, graduated with honors in 1991. He earned his law degree and then attended Oxford University as a Marshall Scholar and received his doctorate degree in 2004 from Oxford.

As we say out West, and as a Montanan, I have to say I am thrilled to see somebody from Colorado be nominated for the Supreme Court. We say out West: Go get a good education and then get over it. And he brings that kind of humility to the bench. He un-

derstands that he is beneath the law, he is subject to the law. He is there to interpret the law, not to make the law.

He clerked for Justice Byron White. He clerked for Justice Kennedy of the Supreme Court of the United States. In fact, in 2006, Judge Gorsuch was nominated by then-President Bush to the Tenth Circuit in Denver, CO. He was confirmed without any opposition, including the support of 11 current Democratic Senators. In fact, some of those Democrats included Harvard Law classmate Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, and the current minority leader, CHUCK SCHUMER. During his time as a judge on the Tenth Circuit, he has built a solid reputation as a respected jurist with a very distinguished record.

One thing about serving on the Tenth Circuit Court for 10 years: You can run, but you can't hide. He has left a track record. It is an impressive track record. It is a consistent record of defending the Constitution, including respecting the separation of powers and respecting federalism and the Bill of Rights to protect every American from government overreach and government abuse.

When I had the opportunity to sit down with Judge Gorsuch, it was back in early February. We spoke about the role of government and federalism. We spoke about the Second Amendment. We spoke about protecting life and upholding our civil liberties. We spoke about our shared western values, mine as a native Montanan, his as a native Coloradan, both of us westerners. I know he understands our way of life. He understands Montana values. In fact, his face lit up as we talked about the love of the outdoors and his passion for hiking and fishing.

As chairman of the Western Caucus, it is important to me to have someone who understands western values, someone who understands the impact the law and his decisions will have on the West.

As westerners, we fight to protect our Fourth Amendment rights. We champion federalism so that power not expressly given to the Federal Government in the Constitution is returned back to the States and to the people. We will tirelessly fight to protect the Second Amendment. These are western values.

By the way, the Second Amendment is not primarily about hunting. Our Founding Fathers were not thinking about deer hunting or elk hunting when they were discussing the Second Amendment. It was about liberty. It was about freedom. These are western values. Judge Gorsuch's background and record strongly suggest that he recognizes and adheres to these values. He will uphold the law. He will rightfully check the administration and Congress when their actions are not done under the law, like President Obama's EPA power plan or the WOTUS rule. These are actions that cripple western economies, and they are politically charged.

I would also like to mention that Senator CORY GARDNER of Colorado and I were just at the White House meeting, just an hour ago. We were at the White House meeting with over a dozen Tribes who represent hundreds of other Tribes. We were there to discuss our support for Neil Gorsuch to be a Supreme Court Justice. I can tell you, it was great to be there with one of my hometown Tribes from Montana, the CSKT. They have endorsed Neil Gorsuch. They understand that we need a mainstream, commonsense westerner on the Supreme Court.

By the way, when you look at Neil Gorsuch's record on Indian Country issues, as a member of the Tenth Circuit Court for 10 years, he has a track record of ruling on some very complicated issues that face Indian Country. He understands sovereignty. That is very important. That is why you are seeing Tribes endorsing Judge Gorsuch.

More importantly, the American people deserve nine members on the Supreme Court. Neil Gorsuch is the mainstream judge the American people want and deserve to fill out the Court.

I am looking forward to what will happen next week in those hearings. You are going to see a very, very bright, a very, very thoughtful, a very, very kind, and a very, very humble jurist who understands and upholds the rule of law. I am excited for our country that we have such a phenomenal nominee. I look forward to casting my vote to confirm him to the highest Court in our great country.

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. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation right now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is considering the Coats nomination.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I understand that we will be voting in about 10 minutes; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct, sir.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I have had the great honor and privilege of knowing the nominee to be our Director of National Intelligence for many years. In fact, I came to the House of Representatives in the election of 1984, and I had the honor of knowing Dan Coats beginning at that time.

As is well known, Dan Coats left the Senate and became our Ambassador to Germany, where he did an outstanding job. He came back to the U.S. Senate and served in this body with distinction and honor. Now he goes on to serve as the Director of National Intelligence.

I could argue that a dedicated, experienced, knowledgeable, and courageous Director of National Intelligence

is now needed more than at any time that I can remember in the last many years.

With divisions within the intelligence community, there are challenges to the credibility of the intelligence community along the lines that I have never seen. There are questions about the activities of the intelligence community. For example, the President of the United States alleges that Trump Tower was "wiretapped," in his words, by the previous administration, and we see the former Director of National Intelligence both before the Congress and on national television stating that those allegations are not true.

There are probably more questions and more controversy surrounding our intelligence services than at any time since anyone can remember, since Watergate. So this is a perfect time, in my view, for Dan Coats to assume the highest responsibilities of our Director of National Intelligence. He has the respect and indeed affection of Members on both sides of the aisle because of his successful efforts at working in a bipartisan fashion. He served on the Intelligence Committee. He served on that committee in a very dedicated and knowledgeable fashion.

I hope my colleagues will unanimously vote in favor of our former colleague. Both sides of the aisle know him, and we know him well. I wish I had some of his qualities of congeniality and pleasantry. He has always been respectful of other views. Even in the fiercest debates that we might have, he has always been respectful of those who disagree. So he comes to the job with the much needed credibility that will make him immediately effective.

Let's be frank. The intelligence communities are probably under greater attack in a whole variety of ways, both on whether the American people trust them to do the job that they are doing or whether they have become a partisan organization. I think that with the respect and appreciation and affection that those of us who had the privilege of knowing him—on both sides of the aisle—and knowing what an honorable and decent person he is, he will not only serve as an effective Director of National Intelligence, but he will serve to restore credibility.

God knows we need credibility at this time, as we see the Russians trying to affect the outcome of our election, as we see today the Russians trying to affect the French election and possibly the German election, as we see unprecedented cyber attacks—more than at any time in the past. With the challenge of cyber alone, where our adversaries or our potential adversaries are equal to or even, in some cases, more capable of exercising their abilities and capabilities in the cyber realm, then we are in a very difficult and challenging struggle.

That is why I think that many times in history, not only does the man make the job but the job makes the man. I

am confident, in the case of Senator Dan Coats, that will be the case.

I thank the Democratic leader for allowing this vote to take place so Dan Coats can get to work immediately.

I urge my colleagues to offer their support with their vote for this nomination of a great and good and gentle man who has again volunteered to serve his Nation, for which all of us should be appreciative, and I am sure we are.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Coats nomination?

Mr. BARRASSO. 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 assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) would have voted "yea."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 85, nays 12, as follows:

(Rollcall Vote No. 89 Ex.)

YEAS—85

Barrasso	Franken	Nelson
Bennet	Gardner	Perdue
Blumenthal	Graham	Peters
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hassan	Reed
Brown	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heinrich	Roberts
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cardin	Hirono	Sasse
Carper	Hoeven	Schatz
Casey	Inhofe	Schumer
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott
Cochran	Kaine	Shahen
Coons	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	King	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Klobuchar	Strange
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Leahy	Tester
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Daines	Manchin	Tillis
Donnelly	McCain	Toomey
Durbin	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Enzi	McConnell	Warner
Ernst	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Murkowski	Young
Flake	Murphy	
	Murray	

NAYS—12

Baldwin	Harris	Sanders
Booker	Markey	Udall
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Gillibrand	Paul	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Alexander	Corker	Isakson
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to table the motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate for 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF HERBERT MCMASTER

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to render an "aye" vote for the nomination of Herbert McMaster to remain in active duty at the three-star level. He is experienced. He is talented. He knows what it is like to be in combat with the enemy, and I believe he is badly needed in this important position.

I urge my colleagues to render an "aye" vote.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Lt. Gen. Herbert R. McMaster, Jr., to be Lieutenant General in the United States Army while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the cloture motion is withdrawn.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the McMaster nomination?

Mr. TOOMEY. 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 Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea," the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) would have voted "yea," and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) would have voted "yea."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 86, nays 10, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 90 Ex.]

YEAS—86

Baldwin	Flake	Paul
Bennet	Franken	Perdue
Blumenthal	Gardner	Peters
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Reed
Brown	Hassan	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Cantwell	Heinrich	Rounds
Capito	Heitkamp	Rubio
Cardin	Heller	Sasse
Carper	Hoeven	Schatz
Casey	Inhofe	Scott
Cassidy	Johnson	Shaheen
Cochran	Kaine	Shelby
Collins	Kennedy	Stabenow
Coons	King	Strange
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Tester
Cotton	Leahy	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Manchin	Toomey
Daines	McCain	Udall
Donnelly	McConnell	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Moran	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Murphy	Wyden
Feinstein	Murray	Young
Fischer	Nelson	

NAYS—10

Booker	Markey	Schumer
Gillibrand	McCasikill	Warren
Harris	Merkley	
Hirono	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—4

Alexander	Corker
Barrasso	Isakson

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to table the motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I voted to support Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster retaining the grade of lieutenant general while serving as the National Security Advisor to the President. To be clear, this vote was to permit Lieutenant General McMaster to remain in the grade of lieutenant general while serving in this position. It is not to confirm him as the National Security Advisor.

Lieutenant General McMaster was appointed by the President to a position that does not require Senate confirmation. Indeed, he is already serving as National Security Advisor. The only remaining question is whether he will serve in the military grade of lieutenant general on Active Duty.

The position of National Security Advisor is one of the most important in our government. Not only does it require someone capable of providing timely and thoughtful counsel on national security matters, it entails coordinating advice and action across multiple executive agencies with responsibilities in the national security arena. Further, it necessitates a large measure of independence and knowledge.

This is not the first time we have considered an Active-Duty military of-

ficer for this position. Lieutenant General McMaster would be the third such officer to so serve, following Admiral John Poindexter under President Reagan and General Colin Powell under President George Herbert Walker Bush.

Many of my colleagues are rightly concerned about this and question whether it would be more appropriate for him to retire and serve in a civilian capacity. While I strongly believe it would be better for Lieutenant General McMaster to retire and avoid all perceptions of politicizing the military, he believes that serving in uniform will help him remain apolitical in service to this Administration. He can expect Congress to hold him to his word that wearing the uniform in this position will serve to keep the military above the political fray.

Some Members have expressed concern about the proper functioning of our national security apparatus and clear chains of command with respect to military advice provided to the President under this arrangement. While Lieutenant General McMaster would be the National Security Advisor to the President, providing day-to-day advice and counsel on all national security matters, General Joseph Dunford, as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would continue to be the "principal military advisor" to the President, while Secretary Mattis is the "principal assistant to the President in all matters related to the Department of Defense."

As Senator Sam Nunn described the issue with respect to the nomination of then-Lieutenant General Powell, in Senator Nunn's words, "A military officer who knows that his next promotion depends on the Secretary of Defense and the top generals and admirals in the Pentagon may simply not, over a period of time, be able to make completely objective decisions based on the fact that his promotion, his pay, and his future depend on one department, and that one department is an active player in the government."

This question centers on Lieutenant General McMaster's ability to retain the necessary measure of independence as he discharges his duties to the President. I ultimately believe, after careful consideration, that Lieutenant General McMaster will be able to balance these roles and provide advice and direction designed to further the Nation's interests and not simply those of the Department of Defense or indeed, to advance his own ambitions.

It is also my hope that Lieutenant General McMaster will be a moderating influence on a White House that desperately needs talented, informed, and professional advisers. This Administration has proposed a reorganization of the National Security Council structure that excludes the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of National Intelligence from meetings unless specifically invited. Lieutenant General McMaster assured the Committee that General Dunford and the

DNI will be invited to attend any meeting of the Principals Committee of the National Security Council, and I appreciated that assurance.

The Trump Administration reorganization also added the President's chief strategist, Steve Bannon, to the National Security Council. This politicization of the NSC is unsound, and I think without merit. The law creating the National Security Council is purposeful in trying to create a managerial and policy process that develops the best national security policy for our Nation. The idea that a partisan political operative like Mr. Bannon should serve on the National Security Council runs counter to longstanding practice, and must, in my view, be reversed.

It is my hope that Lieutenant General McMaster has the vast experience and knowledge and the requisite temperament and independence to provide the national security expertise that is sorely needed in the White House.

Moreover, Lieutenant General McMaster must have the support and the backing of the President so it is clear that he runs the National Security Council on the President's behalf. That support is not yet apparent. According to Politico just a few days ago, the President overruled Lieutenant General McMaster's advice and chose to listen to Mr. Bannon and the President's son-in-law, Mr. Kushner, in regard to the retention of a key intelligence analyst who had been brought in by Major General Flynn. This is a worrisome sign that Lieutenant General McMaster might have a title and responsibilities but not the authority he needs. I indeed hope he has that authority and exercises it wisely.

I would also like to note that there have been reports about decisions Lieutenant General McMaster made as Commanding General at Fort Benning in allowing lieutenants under his command to attend schools while being investigated for allegations of sexual misconduct. I want to assure my colleagues that the Committee held a closed and classified executive session with Lieutenant General McMaster present to answer all our questions. The Committee thoroughly considered the facts and voted to confirm his third star by a strong bipartisan vote.

We are again taking a rather extraordinary step in voting on an Active-Duty military officer to serve as National Security Advisor for the first time in 25 years, but these are extraordinary times. Our Nation faces complex national security challenges, and 3 months into a new administration, we are on a second National Security Advisor already. We see a disorganized National Security Council and an enormous number of vacancies in the State and Defense Departments.

Lieutenant General McMaster has the opportunity to bring order to the chaos. Therefore, I believe the Senate should confirm his grade of Lieutenant General while he serves as National Security Advisor.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to talk about the Republican American Health Care Act that was released, I guess, about a week or two ago, affectionately known as TrumpCare. I start by saying, what is this legislation trying to achieve? When I listen to the Republicans talk about why they have introduced this bill, what their concern is with the Affordable Care Act, they usually mention their No. 1 concern is to deal with the increased premium costs that Americans have had under the Affordable Care Act. They normally will point to the individual marketplace, where we have seen increases in premium costs as the market has adjusted to the ratings of those who entered the individual marketplace.

So it was very interesting, as I took a look at the Congressional Budget Office analysis of what the Republican TrumpCare bill would do. The Congressional Budget Office, let me remind my colleagues, is the objective scorekeeper. The leader of the Congressional Budget Office was appointed by the Republican leadership. It is the professional career people who make their best judgment of the impact of legislation that we are considering.

Remember, the Republicans have said their principal objective is to bring down the cost, particularly for those entering the individual marketplace, but according to the Congressional Budget Office, in 2018-19, the average rate in the individual marketplace will increase by 15 to 20 percent. Let me say that again. The Congressional Budget Office tells us the premium increases under TrumpCare will increase for the individual 15 to 20 percent.

Now, that could be a lot higher. That is the average. So let me give you the number. If you happen to be 64 years of age, with an income of \$26,500, under the Affordable Care Act, you would pay \$1,700 in premiums. Under TrumpCare, you would pay \$14,600, or a 750-percent increase. That would equal to about 55 percent of your income in the health insurance premiums. Obviously, that is not affordable. A person of that age and income would have no ability to purchase insurance at an affordable rate under the American Health Care Act or TrumpCare.

Let me take a look at some other reasons why we may be looking at this repeal-and-replacement bill. I listened to the President. I listened to my col-

leagues, and they say, first, they want to make sure they do no harm, that everyone will be at least as well off as they are today, and that there would be more choice to the consumers in buying health insurance.

Once again, I point to the Congressional Budget Office, the objective scorekeepers. What would happen if TrumpCare were enacted? What would happen as far as individuals who currently have health insurance today? According to the Congressional Budget Office, next year, 2018, there would be 14 million less people insured than there are under the Affordable Care Act. If you project that out to 2026, they indicate there would be 24 million more people who would lose their insurance.

Let me quote from The Baltimore Sun in this morning's editorial, where they pointed out that number: Twenty-four million would equal all the residents of Utah, Mississippi, Arkansas, Nevada, Kansas, Nebraska, West Virginia, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Alaska, Wyoming combined would have no insurance coverage. That is what 24 million represent in America. Clearly, this bill is not carrying out the commitment to do no harm because 24 million more Americans will certainly be in worse shape.

Then I heard the President talk about the fact that he wants to do no harm to the Medicare Program or the Medicaid Program. I took a look again at what this bill does in regard to Medicare because the bill repeals the tax on high income; that is, there is currently in law a tax for unearned income above \$250,000, a tax that goes into the Medicare trust fund, Part A. The TrumpCare repeals that tax. Therefore, the Medicare trust fund doesn't get the income. That would reduce the solvency of the Medicare trust fund by 3 years, jeopardizing the Medicare system. Clearly, if this bill was aimed at not hurting Medicare, it hasn't achieved that purpose.

Let's talk a little about Medicaid. What does this bill do to Medicaid? According to the Congressional Budget Office, it shifts hundreds of billions of dollars from the Federal Government to our States. Our States clearly cannot handle that. I have heard from my Governor. I am sure my colleagues heard from our other Governors. There is no possibility that they could pick up that. The Medicaid Program will be in very serious jeopardy of being able to continue anything like it is today. For Maryland—the State I have the honor of representing—the passage of TrumpCare would jeopardize the over 289,000 Marylanders who have received insurance coverage as a result of Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act. They very well would lose their coverage.

What does that mean? Well, they better stay well because they are not going to get preventive healthcare covered by insurance. They are less likely to get their preventive healthcare serv-

ices and the screenings, and, yes, they will return once again to use the emergency room of hospitals as their last resort in order to get their family's healthcare needs met—the most expensive way to get healthcare in our Nation.

With the elimination of essential health benefits for Medicaid expansion enrollees, what does that mean? That means the Medicaid population—which in Maryland is hundreds of thousands of people—would lose their essential health benefits, which includes mental health and addiction services.

We are in the midst of an opioid drug addiction epidemic in America. I have traveled my entire State and have had roundtables with law enforcement and health officials, and they tell me about the growing number of addictions in their community. One of the things they need to do is to be able to get people care and treatment, and we are saying we are going to cut off treatment for millions of Americans. That is what TrumpCare would do, cutting off those benefits.

This bill would shift costs. What do I mean by that? Well, it adds costs to the healthcare system. If an individual stays healthy and uses our healthcare system the way they should, it is a lot less costly than entering our healthcare system in a more acute fashion or using our emergency rooms rather than using healthcare providers who are a lot less expensive and more efficient.

So we are going to add to the cost of our healthcare system because of inefficiencies. Many times that extra cost is not paid for by those who have no health insurance; the fact is, it becomes part of what we call uncompensated care. We had that before the Affordable Care Act. With the increase in uncompensated care, all of us who have insurance will pay more because we are going to pay for the people who don't have health insurance, who use the healthcare system and don't pay for the healthcare system. That is a formula for extra costs for all of us.

This legislation would be an attack on women's healthcare. It would attack and eliminate not only the funding for Planned Parenthood, which is critically important in many parts of our country where they are the only healthcare provider for women's healthcare needs, but also eliminate essential health benefits for Medicaid expansion enrollees, which include maternal health. Those guarantees that exist today would no longer be there. With the pressure on the States, it is unlikely that they would be able to maintain the same degree of coverage for our women. Women are more likely to be vulnerable and on Medicaid.

It is an attack on our elderly. I have already talked about Medicare solvency, reducing Medicare solvency by 3 years, but there are more attacks than that. Over half—I think it is 60 to 65 percent of the cost of Medicaid goes to senior care, long-term care or to care

for individuals with disabilities. Most families in America get their costs covered for long-term care through Medicaid. The States are not going to be able to maintain the same level of coverage with the loss of hundreds of billions of dollars of Federal funds. Our seniors and individuals with disabilities will be in jeopardy of losing a lot of their long-term care coverage.

The legislation, TrumpCare, increases the loss ratios for older people from 3 to 1 to 5 to 1. That increases the cost dramatically for older Americans. That is one of the reasons the AARP opposes the legislation. Let me quote them:

This bill would weaken Medicare's fiscal sustainability, dramatically increase healthcare costs for Americans age 50 to 64, and put at risk the healthcare of millions of children and adults with disabilities and poor seniors who depend on the Medicaid program for long-term care services and support and other benefits.

That is AARP. I already talked about the Congressional Budget Office being a neutral observer. The AARP, of course, is interested in what impact it has on our elderly population. They very clearly say that they are being put at risk.

Let me also talk about affordability. When you have a person who can no longer afford coverage—I already mentioned that person 64 years of age who would have to pay 55 percent of their income in order to get health coverage. That person can't afford coverage. Let's say that person is relatively healthy, so they go without insurance. Well, they need insurance. Maybe someone is young and decides not to get health coverage; they will get it when they need it. There is a 30-percent surtax if you don't keep insurance. That is going to keep people out of the health insurance marketplace who desperately need healthcare.

Once again I am going to quote from the Sun paper. The Baltimore Sun really summed it up fairly well, particularly with their attack on the Congressional Budget Office. I think that is a very unfair attack. We all obviously take issue at times with the estimates of the Congressional Budget Office, but it is the objective scorekeeper. It has the most accurate assessments we get on legislation we consider here. That is why we created the Congressional Budget Office—to give us that advice.

The Sun paper, in their editorial this morning, said:

Small wonder that President Donald Trump and certain Republican leaders were busy bad-mouthing the CBO even before its report came out. The last thing they needed is the nonpartisan number crunchers to offer an informed view instead of the usual political caterwauling about the "failings" of the Affordable Care Act. And this is particularly rich: Republicans say the CBO blew ObamaCare estimates years ago when it was circumstances well beyond the CBO's control that caused analysts to incorrectly predict ObamaCare enrollment. Should analysts have expected the Supreme Court to deem the Medicaid expansion optional and GOP-controlled States to refuse to accept it? Were

they mistaken to assume Congress could actually follow the law and fund programs to stabilize state insurance exchanges?

Might the CBO be off-target again? Absolutely. But it's at least as likely that the office is low-balling the most damaging effects of TrumpCare as it is potentially overstating the harm. The Congressional Budget Office is as close to an umpire as exists in Washington. It has certainly been a lot more on target than the Trump administration, which has consistently misled Americans on almost everything from the definition of "wiretapping" to the claims of "millions of illegal voters" casting ballots in the last election. Even those overstated ObamaCare enrollment estimates were closer to being on the nose than those produced by the CBO's fellow forecasters at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and RAND Corporation.

Once again, Mr. Trump and his minions have been caught making up facts. The President promised the ObamaCare replacement would provide insurance for everyone and it would be less expensive. Nobody can make that claim about TrumpCare. As the CBO points out, premiums will rise 15–20 percent overall for the first two years, and more for older Americans.

The American public expects us to work together to improve our healthcare system. Instead of repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act with this legislation that will put us in much worse shape, we should be looking at how we can build on the progress we have made under the Affordable Care Act.

Yes, we can bring down costs. Let's bring down costs by taking on the cost of prescription drugs. We know that Americans overpay on prescription drugs. There is bipartisan support in the Senate to pass legislation using America's buying power to help our consumers pay less for prescription costs.

Yes, we should have more competition with insurance carriers. Why not have a public option and see how well the private companies can compete with a public option?

Yes, we can improve the way we deliver care and make it more cost-effective. We, in a bipartisan manner, went down that path in the last Congress under the Comprehensive Recovery and Addiction Act and the 21st Century Cures Act, where we looked at ways that we can collaborate on care for addiction services and mental health so people can get the care they need in the setting they need, whether it is an emergency room or a primary care physician's office.

We have made progress making our healthcare system more cost-effective and efficient. That is what we should be doing—building on the Affordable Care Act rather than taking away critically important benefits. The Republican plan moves us in the wrong direction, and it should be rejected.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business for as long as I want.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

MONTENEGRO'S ACCESSION INTO NATO

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to be in the company of the distinguished Senator from Maryland, Mr. CARDIN, the ranking member on the Foreign Relations Committee and one who is most knowledgeable on issues of national security and foreign policy. I believe that Senator SHAHEEN from New Hampshire will be joining us.

This is an issue that I am sorry has to be brought up in this fashion. It concerns a little country that wants to be a part of the European Union, that wants to be a part of the values, customs, and ideals of the West and has been under significant pressure and even assault from Russia.

In fact, although it wasn't as recognized as it should have been at the time, Russia has sought to keep Montenegro from becoming a NATO member, launching an anti-NATO campaign that has been both brazen and unscrupulous. Russia has exerted outsized influence to stop Montenegro's membership, calling further NATO enlargement a "provocation." Russia went so far as to plot a coup d'état in which they planned to assassinate the Montenegrin Prime Minister and seize control of government buildings in the capital. I repeat: The Russians tried a coup in Montenegro. They wanted to kill the Prime Minister and overthrow the government in order to keep Montenegro from becoming a part of NATO.

If we send this clear message to Russia that it won't have veto power over NATO enlargement decisions—and, frankly, I am puzzled that there is any objection to this, considering the fact that Montenegro has spent the last 7 years preparing for NATO eligibility. This has strengthened the country's defense and intelligence forces and transformed the country into a strong Western ally.

It is a small country and a beautiful country, but it is an important Balkan nation. Its membership in NATO would improve the stability in the region, where, I know my colleagues would agree, there is great instability.

Stopping Montenegro's NATO candidacy would represent a significant shift in U.S. policy and signify an acquiescence to Moscow's growing influence in the Balkans, producing a ripple effect throughout the region that would have profound ramifications on our shared security interests.

The United States has benefited tremendously from peace and stability in Europe, and the foundation of that

peace and stability is NATO. That is why we should stand with Montenegro or risk undermining our vision of a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.

I see my two colleagues here, Senator CARDIN and Senator SHAHEEN. So I will conclude by saying this. This is a small country. This is a small country that has been the scene of conflict for centuries. This is a small country with a freely elected democratic government. This is a small country whose population wants to be part of NATO. They want to be part of the West. If we keep turning this down after 25 of the 28 governments in NATO have voted in favor of Montenegro's accession to NATO, my friends, we would be sending a terrible, terrible message.

So in a few minutes, I will ask unanimous consent for us, as the U.S. Senate, to move forward with treaty consent.

First, I would like to yield to my colleague from Maryland, Senator CARDIN. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, first let me thank Senator MCCAIN for his strong leadership on this issue and so many issues that deal with U.S. national security.

Montenegro is a small country, but the principle that no non-NATO country can veto accession into NATO is very much a major national security issue for the United States. Make no mistake about it. Russia is trying to interfere with Montenegro's accession into NATO.

I am also pleased to hear from Senator SHAHEEN, who has been one of the great leaders in the Senate on our European transatlantic relations, and I know how strongly she feels.

I just want to underscore points that Senator MCCAIN made. I am the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee did approve unanimously by voice vote the accession of Montenegro into NATO. The Presiding Officer was part of that discussion, and I thank him for his help in moving this issue forward.

This is not a controversial issue among the Members of the Senate or the Congress. This is something that should have been done by now.

As Senator MCCAIN has pointed out, 25 of the 28 nations have already ratified Montenegro's accession into NATO. It requires all 28. Another two are working actively on confirmation, and the last is the United States. We should be first, not the last. We should get this done. It should have been done before now.

The point that Senator MCCAIN made I have to underscore because we know about Russia's engagement here in the United States in our election. Well, let me tell you something. As to what Montenegro experienced during their parliamentary elections, where Russia put money into that country and tried to do violence in order to prevent their Parliament from ratifying the acces-

sion into NATO, we have to stand up against that type of bullying by Russia, that interference by Russia.

As we are here today debating, Montenegro has been subject to a wave of anti-NATO and anti-Western propaganda emanating from Russia. There are also allegations that a recent coup planned had Russian ties.

Blocking Montenegro's ability to join NATO will have real implications for how NATO is perceived. Once again, Russia does not have a veto on our enlargement of NATO. It is in the United States' national security interests that we ratify Montenegro's accession into NATO as soon as possible. I hope we can do it yet today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am happy to join my colleagues, Senator MCCAIN and Senator CARDIN, in urging the Senate to approve Montenegro's accession into NATO. It is long overdue, as they have both said. This is something that has been approved by the Foreign Relations Committee not once but twice—last year in the last Congress and again in January of this year. We have heard expert testimony from a whole bipartisan group of diplomats, national security experts, and former administration officials, urging quick action on Montenegro's accession. There is no reason for any further delay.

My colleagues here who have been such great leaders on the importance of responding to Russia's actions, of addressing their interference in our elections here in America, but also of addressing what they are doing in Europe, have said it very eloquently. We need to get this done; and 25 of the 28 member states have already ratified the protocol, according to their own procedures. The Senate must act.

One of the priorities of the NATO summit last year in Warsaw was bolstering NATO's resilience and its capacity to deter Russian aggression against NATO's eastern flank. At that summit, NATO invited Montenegro to become its 29th member.

As Senators MCCAIN and CARDIN have already said, Russia is opposed to Montenegro's accession into NATO. It has warned Montenegro of retaliation if it pursues NATO membership. Furthermore, we have seen what that retaliation looked like.

During Montenegro's general election last October, 20 people were arrested on suspicion of plotting, with support from Russia, to overthrow the government and assassinate the Prime Minister—all because he has supported NATO accession.

When we were in Munich for the security conference a couple of weeks ago, Senator MCCAIN and I and the congressional delegation that was there heard from Montenegrin Prime Minister Djukanovic, who talked about what he experienced from the Russians and about the Russian effort to over-

throw his government, a duly elected democracy.

Just last month, their chief special prosecutor announced that his government had evidence that Russia's Federal Security Service was involved in a failed coup.

Mr. President, I have two news articles about this story that I ask unanimous consent be printed in the RECORD so that everybody understands that it is very clear what is going on.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From CNN, Feb. 21, 2017]

MONTENEGRO: RUSSIA INVOLVED IN ATTEMPTED COUP

(By Milena Veselinovic and Darran Simon)

Montenegro's chief special prosecutor has told a local TV station authorities believe Russian security services were involved in a plot to kill the country's then-prime minister and overthrow the government last October.

Milivoje Katnic said Montenegro officials have evidence that Russia's Federal Security Service was involved in the failed coup, according to his statements Sunday on Atlas TV. The allegation drew an immediate rebuke and denial from Russian officials.

Katnic said the plot was an attempt to stop Montenegro from joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO. "Behind these events are nationalist structures from Russia, but we now know that certain Russian state authorities were involved also on a certain level," Katnic said.

Katnic said the alleged mastermind behind the failed coup was a man named Eduard Sismakov, who is a former deputy Russian military attaché in Poland. Sismakov was deported to Russia for espionage in 2014, according to the prosecutor.

According to Katnic, Sismakov is also known as Eduard Shirokov, and was issued a passport with the different name by Russian authorities.

"The passport was given to him by certain Russian state bodies under another name, and he is a member of the Russian military structures," Katnic said. "And his name is Eduard Sismakov, that is his personal identity and we will charge him under that personal identity."

Katnic added: "It is clear that the passport could not have been issued under another name as well as everything else—sending to Serbia, organizing everything—without the involvement of certain structures."

The Interpol Red Notice says Sismakov—listed under the name Eduard Shirokov—prepared acts against the constitutional order and security of Montenegro. The Interpol Red Notice is an international database of suspects that is shared with other law enforcement agencies. Sismakov's country of birth is listed as Russia.

Katnic said another alleged plotter is Vladimir Popov. Popov, who is of Russian origin, is also wanted by Interpol for the same acts, according to the Interpol Red Notice.

Katnic said another alleged plotter, Nemanja Ristic, was involved in the coup attempt, and Ristic has said he was connected to Russia's Federal Security Service. His task was to recruit a team to send to Montenegro to execute the coup, Katnic said. Ristic is wanted by Montenegro for attempted terrorism, according to Interpol's Red Notice.

The Kremlin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, on Monday dismissed Katnic's accusations.

"Day after day, we are faced with absurd accusations about Russia. Day after day we

deny these accusations. We say absolutely that there cannot be talk about the official involvement of Moscow in the internal events in Montenegro. Russia does not get involved and will not get involved especially in such countries as Montenegro with which we have a very good relationship," Peskov said during a conference call with journalists.

Montenegro is in accession talks to join the alliance after NATO formally invited the southeastern European country in December 2015. The move spurred threats from Russian officials, who are at odds with NATO over a multitude of issues, including Turkey's downing of a Russian warplane in December 2015.

At the time, Russian President Vladimir Putin called the incident "an enemy act."

Becoming an official member of NATO would be significant for Montenegro because, under the alliance's charter, any attack on Montenegro would be seen as an attack on all NATO members.

The ratification process for Montenegro to join NATO is in its final stages, according to NATO.

[From the Guardian, Nov. 11, 2016]

SERBIA DEPORTS RUSSIANS SUSPECTED OF PLOTTING MONTENEGRO COUP

Serbia has deported a group of Russians suspected of involvement in a coup plot in neighbouring Montenegro, the Guardian has learned, in the latest twist in a murky sequence of events that apparently threatened the lives of two European prime ministers.

The plotters were allegedly going to dress in police uniforms to storm the Montenegrin parliament in Podgorica, shoot the prime minister, Milo Djukanović, and install a pro-Moscow party.

The Russian fingerprints on the October plot have heightened intrigue about Moscow's ambitions in a part of Europe hitherto thought to be gravitating towards the EU's orbit.

A group of 20 Serbians and Montenegrins, some of whom had fought with Moscow-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, were arrested in Podgorica, the Montenegrin capital. In Serbia, meanwhile, several Russian nationals suspected of coordinating the plot were caught with €120,000 and special forces uniforms.

According to a Belgrade daily, the Russians also had encryption equipment and were able to keep track of Djukanović's whereabouts.

Diplomatic sources told the Guardian the Belgrade government quietly deported the Russians after the intervention of the head of the Russian security council, Nikolai Patrushev, who flew to Belgrade on 26 October in an apparent effort to contain the scandal. The country's interior minister Nebojša Stefanović denied the government carried out any deportations connected to the plot.

A source close to the Belgrade government said Patrushev, a former FSB (federal security service) chief, apologised for what he characterised as a rogue operation that did not have the Kremlin's sanction. In Moscow, a Security Council official told Tass that Patrushev "didn't apologise to anyone, because there is nothing to apologise for".

The Serbian government was further rattled three days after Patrushev's visit when a cache of arms was found near the home of the prime minister, Aleksandar Vučić. The weapons were discovered at a junction where Vučić's car would normally slow down on his way to the house.

Stefanović said there were "strong suspicions" that an organised crime gang had been hired to kill Vučić for €10m, but he would not specify who was behind the alleged

plot, saying further investigation would show whether people "outside the region" were involved.

"You know the people who don't like a strong Vučić or a strong government of Serbia and who could contribute some money, €10m or so, to see this kind of thing done," Stefanović told the Guardian.

"We know that the people who were potentially hired to do this kind of thing were from the region, but not from Serbia, and that there were crime groups that are operating in the region that were involved. But these were just the trigger persons," the minister added.

"We believe that criminal gangs are just being used to do the job, but the motives are not linked to the gangs. The assassination of the prime minister is not something that even they would do lightly, we believe they are being used."

Since the discovery of the weapons, Vučić has announced plans to shake up the intelligence service, saying the security situation was "even more serious than we expected."

"There will be changes in the secret service," he told the public broadcaster, RTS. "I believed in the skills of people who didn't show that they have these capacities, but I'll take responsibility for this."

It is unclear whether there is a connection between the alleged assassination plots against Vučić and Djukanović. But the intrigue of the past month comes against a backdrop of fierce east-west competition.

Djukanović has been instrumental in pulling his country to the verge of NATO membership—an accession protocol was signed in May—which has dashed Russian hopes of securing a naval foothold on the Adriatic. According to the Montenegrin press, Moscow lobbied hard in recent years for transit and maintenance facilities at the ports of Bar and Kotor.

The importance of such facilities was demonstrated late last month when a Russian carrier and its battle group was denied refueling in European ports along the way to support the Russian military effort in Syria.

In Serbia, Vučić has been seeking a delicate balance between NATO and Russia, and the country's armed forces have conducted military exercises with both, although far more frequently in recent years with NATO. Vučić has also refused to grant diplomatic status to Russian officials staffing a Serbian-Russian humanitarian center established in the city of Niš in 2012, infuriating Moscow.

Western officials suspect the center of being a Trojan horse, which could expanded as a hub for intelligence and paramilitary operations in the region. Diplomatic status, they point out, would have allowed equipment to be brought in without oversight by Serbian customs.

Some analysts have suggested the operation could have been mounted as a "semi-freelance" one, giving enough distance from Moscow to be plausibly deniable if was uncovered.

"Both sides have an interest in playing this as a freelance, vigilante-type thing, it allows them both to save face. Whether that's actually true is unclear. There's simply not enough evidence either to support or disprove it," said Vladimir Frolov, a Moscow-based analyst.

"Judging from the amount of logistical and financial support they got, it looks like they acted with at least a tacit understanding that this was sanctioned."

A few days after the would-be coup, a former intelligence officer, Leonid Reshetnikov, who ran a hawkish research institute in Moscow, was relieved of his duties by Putin. The Russian Institute for Strategic Studies has a branch office in Belgrade, and Reshetnikov had given strong backing to

the anti-Nato opposition party in Montenegro.

A regional analyst who did not want to be named said his understanding from intelligence sources was that the incidents in the Balkans were probably linked to Russian attempts to gain influence and leverage in the Balkans in the run-up to an anticipated Hillary Clinton US presidency, which was expected to take a harder line on Russian activity in the region.

In Moscow, the Russian foreign ministry took a dim view of this Guardian report on the Balkan events. Maria Zakharova, spokeswoman for the Russian foreign ministry wrote: "The publication in the Guardian with a link to 'sources' saying that Patrushev apologised for 'Russian nationalists' who had planned to kill the prime minister of Montenegro is a classic provocation aimed at spreading knowingly false information."

Mrs. SHAHEEN. The best thing we can do in the United States in the Senate is to approve Montenegro's accession because that sends a very clear message to Russia that we are not going to put up with that kind of interference.

What I don't understand is why anybody in this body wants to prevent us from approving this accession. Are they supporting Russia in their activities? Are they opposed to NATO? What is the deal here? They need to come forward and tell us what their objections are. Why aren't they letting this go through? Why are they willing to stand up for Russia and not for Montenegro and not for Europe and not for the United States?

Those are the questions that I have, and I want whoever objects to come to the floor and tell us why they are objecting, because Montenegro and our NATO partners deserve at least that much.

It is now time to stand up strong for Montenegro, for their right to self-determination, for their right to join NATO, for the West and for NATO. I hope that we are going to be able to get this through this afternoon.

I will defer to my colleague from Arizona to make the unanimous consent request.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from New Hampshire and the Senator from Maryland. This issue probably doesn't matter a lot to many of our voters. It probably is not something that is uppermost in their minds. But because of your hard work here in the Senate and your in-depth knowledge of the issues and challenges that face this country, in what is arguably the most uncertain and turbulent time in the last 70 years, you have taken the time and the effort to learn about this small country, this small beautiful country whose only wish, whose only desire is to be a part of our community of NATO so that they can come under the umbrella of protection and move forward with a thriving democracy in a very volatile part of Europe.

I want to especially thank Senator SHAHEEN and Senator CARDIN for their advocacy, affection, and appreciation

of the citizens of the small country who are only seeking what we sometimes take so much for granted. So I especially want to thank them.

I also want to thank the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator CORKER, who also was very involved in getting this through.

So, Mr. President, if there is objection—and I note that the Senator from Kentucky is on the floor, and I will say before I read this, if there is objection, you are achieving the objectives of Vladimir Putin. You are achieving the objectives of trying to dismember this small country that has already been the subject of an attempted coup.

I have no idea why anyone would object to this, except that I will say, if they object, they are now carrying out the desires and ambitions of Vladimir Putin, and I do not say that lightly.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 1, Montenegro, Treaty Document No. 114-12; that the treaty be considered as having advanced through the various parliamentary stages up to and including the presentation of the resolution of ratification; that any committee declarations be agreed to as applicable; that there be no amendments in order to the treaty or the resolution of ratification; that there be 2 hours for debate, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on the resolution; that any statements be printed in the RECORD; that if the resolution of ratification is agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that if the resolution is not agreed to, the treaty be returned to the calendar, and that there be no motions or points of order in order other than a motion to reconsider; and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCain. Mr. President, I note the Senator from Kentucky is leaving the floor without justification or any rationale for the action he has just taken. It is really remarkable that a Senator is blocking a treaty that is supported by an overwhelming number—perhaps 98, at least, of his colleagues. To come to the floor and object and walk away—walk away—the only conclusion that can be drawn when he walks away is that he has no argument to be made. He has no justification for his objection to having a small nation that is under assault from the Russians be part of NATO.

So I repeat again: The Senator from Kentucky is now working for Vladimir Putin.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I just have to follow up on Senator McCain's comments. How disappointing it is that we saw the Senator from Kentucky come to the floor to object to something that is clearly in the national security interests of this country—to support Montenegro's accession to NATO. It is in Europe's interest, in Montenegro's interest, and it is in America's interest.

I have to agree with Senator McCain. He is working in support of Russia's interests in America or he is holding this hostage for something that is totally unrelated to what we are doing with Montenegro's accession into NATO. In either case, it is totally inappropriate.

When are people in the Senate going to stop holding hostage things that are totally unrelated to the work on the floor of the Senate and start acting like adults and doing what we ought to be doing in this body? It is so hard to understand why somebody is here doing that, and, you know, I am disappointed that he is not willing to come to the floor and say why he is holding this up. If he has a good reason, he should be here talking about that reason, and let's see if we can find a compromise. But if he is not willing to come to the floor and talk about it, what does that mean? What does that mean for the future of this kind of treaty? And what is Montenegro's right to self-determination and our national security interests? It is just unfathomable.

So I am going—I think we should all keep coming to the floor on a regular basis, and I am hopeful that if we do that, we will eventually be able to find out what Senator Paul's objection is and address that because we can't let this stay in limbo in perpetuity.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I want to underscore one point here because people watching this may not understand the specific request that Senator McCain made.

What Senator McCain asked is that this resolution be brought to the floor of the U.S. Senate with debate and vote. Every Member can voice their views and then vote up or down. Senator McCain is absolutely right: On a vote there are going to be 97, 98, maybe even more Senators voting in favor of this resolution. I hope it is 100 at the end of the day. But we have one Senator objecting to the consideration.

We have to have some democratic principles here. This is a national security issue. I think we should underscore the point of what Senator McCain was requesting. He didn't ask unanimous consent that it be passed; it is unanimous consent that we have a chance to vote on it.

Each of us could have cast our vote and expressed our views. We are not denying any Senator the right to be heard on this issue or to cast their vote on this issue. It is disappointing that one Senator is holding this issue up, and it is affecting our national security.

I yield the floor.

Mr. McCain. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues, and I know I speak for 90-some U.S. Senators with a message to the brave people of Montenegro who are upholding democracy, who have fought against a coup that would have overthrown their government, who cherish freedom, who cherish the alliance that it has held so long for so many years.

We will not stop until we ratify your entrance into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I pledge to the people of Montenegro that Senator SHAHEEN, Senator CARDIN, and I, and many other Senators, will not stop until this resolution is passed and we can strengthen not only Montenegro the nation and NATO, but the region.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE CRISIS

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise to deliver my first official speech on the Senate floor. I begin by saying how deeply grateful I am to the people of New Hampshire for the great trust they have bestowed upon me.

I come from a State that combines rugged individualism with a strong sense of community. It is what I often call our "all hands on deck" approach, where we come together, we pitch in, and we help our friends and neighbors when they need it.

Right now, we see this approach each and every day with those on the front lines of our State's devastating substance misuse crisis. Law enforcement officials, medical professionals, and citizens in every corner of our State work together to try to turn the tide of this deadly epidemic. The heroin, opioid, and fentanyl crisis is the most pressing public health and safety challenge facing New Hampshire. This epidemic takes a massive toll on our communities, our workforce, and our economy, and I know it is ravaging other States all across our Nation too.

This crisis does not discriminate. It affects people in every community and from all walks of life. In 2016 alone, roughly 500 people in New Hampshire lost their lives as a result of this epidemic, and the spread of synthetic drugs, like fentanyl, is increasing dramatically the number of lives lost and

is killing people faster with smaller amounts of drugs. Last year, more than 70 percent of confirmed New Hampshire drug deaths involved fentanyl. Lives are at stake, so every Member of this body must come together and put partisan politics aside to get results for our people.

The people of my State have a long tradition of sharing their stories and making their priorities known to the elected officials who represent them, and everywhere I go, I hear stories from those who have been affected by this crisis. I hear inspiring stories from those in recovery who are working to put their lives back together, and I hear tragic stories from siblings, parents, and friends who know the pain of having a loved one taken from them far too soon. All of these stories are critical in breaking down the stigma of addiction and pushing for solutions. Instead of simply writing in an obituary that a loved one died suddenly, more and more families, including the families of one of my son's high school classmates, are speaking out and telling the painful stories of addiction and loss.

Last year, at our annual Easter egg hunt that I hosted as Governor, I was approached by a woman on our state-house lawn who was carrying a baby. After I took a picture and I admired the baby, she pulled me aside and said the little boy she was holding was not her son but her grandson and that his mother had died from an overdose 1 month earlier. She was there on the day before Easter, as we celebrated our spring ritual of renewal and hope, and shared that pain with me so we could move forward to help others in her situation.

Just this week, on Monday, I met with a man named Phil, from Laconia, who is now in recovery. Phil said that over a year and a half ago, he had lost his home and nearly everything because of his substance use disorder. Now, thanks, in part, to the fact that he was able to gain coverage through the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion, Phil is substance-free. He has gone on to become a recovery coach, and he helped found a recovery center in Laconia, where he works to help others with the same challenges he had.

We can never thank those in recovery and the families who have lost loved ones enough for speaking out about this issue and for working tirelessly and courageously to try to prevent others from suffering as they have, but while thanking them is appropriate, it is not enough. The bravery of survivors and those in recovery needs to be marked by our constant vigilance and by urgent action.

I am grateful to the Senators who have been true leaders on this issue, especially my fellow Senator from New Hampshire, JEANNE SHAHEEN, who has fought tirelessly to secure funding to combat this crisis and help the people of our State. The passage of the Com-

prehensive Addiction and Recovery Act was an important step, as was the 21st Century Cures Act, which included some funding to fight the opioid epidemic. The Cures Act will not provide enough funding for our State, and I will continue fighting, alongside Senator SHAHEEN, to ensure that the Federal Government provides New Hampshire with the resources we need.

I am pleased there has been bipartisan support for combating this crisis in the Senate, but we must continue to work together at all levels of government and with those on the front lines to battle this crisis.

During my time as a member of the National Governors Association, I worked with my fellow Governors from both parties to push for steps, including passing emergency Federal funding to support States' efforts to combat this crisis, and at the State level in New Hampshire, we proved that we could come together to implement a comprehensive, "all hands on deck" strategy to support those on the front lines and help save lives.

During my time as Governor, we secured \$5 million in additional State funding for treatment, prevention, recovery, and housing programs. We worked together to provide law enforcement with additional resources through a program called Operation Granite Hammer. We expanded drug courts throughout New Hampshire, and we worked to crack down on fentanyl. In order to prevent the overprescribing of opioids, we took steps to improve provider training and update the rules for prescribers.

Critically, Republicans and Democrats put their differences aside and came together to pass and reauthorize the New Hampshire Health Protection Program, also known as Medicaid expansion. Passing and reauthorizing this program included healthy debate and, at times, heated argument. What matters is that after those debates, we were able to take this essential step forward to continue strengthening our families, our businesses, and our economy.

Medicaid expansion is providing quality, affordable health coverage to over 50,000 Granite Staters, including coverage for behavioral, health, and substance use disorder treatment. Thousands of people have received addiction treatment after gaining coverage through the Medicaid expansion program in New Hampshire. What is clear and what I hear from people in recovery centers all across my State is that lives are being changed and saved as a result of Medicaid expansion.

Take, for example, Ashley, of Dover, NH. I first met Ashley at the Farnum Center in Manchester, and I have been inspired by her story ever since. Ashley is living proof of the positive impact of Medicaid expansion.

Ashley had struggled for nearly a decade with heroin addiction, during which time she was arrested, her husband died from an overdose, and she

lost the custody of her young child. Yet, as a result of her courage, perseverance, and the treatment she received for her substance use disorder under Medicaid expansion, Ashley's story is one of progress. She has been in recovery for over a year. She is employed, is working at Safe Harbor Recovery Center to help others who are struggling with addiction, and has moved to employer-sponsored insurance coverage.

It was an honor to have Ashley attend the President's joint address to Congress as my guest of honor, and I will continue to carry her story with me in these Chambers and beyond.

It is not just in New Hampshire. Republican Governors and some of my Republican colleagues in the Senate have made clear just how critical Medicaid expansion is to their States. As the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has found, 2.8 million people with substance use disorders, including 220,000 with opioid disorders, have coverage under the Affordable Care Act. That is real and essential progress, but we know we have far more work to do. I am committed to working with Members of both parties in the Senate to continue building on these efforts.

What we cannot afford to do, however, is to allow a partisan agenda to pull us backward. I am extremely concerned about the effect that legislation introduced by House Republicans last week—also known as TrumpCare—would have on our efforts to combat substance misuse. Make no mistake, this legislation would end Medicaid expansion, which experts have said is the most important tool available to fight the substance misuse crisis. This plan also cuts and caps the traditional Medicaid Program, which means States will be forced to either raise taxes or cut eligibility and services.

As a former Governor, I know full well the impact the decisions in Washington can have on our communities. Repealing Medicaid expansion and capping traditional Medicaid would severely hurt the ability of those on the front lines to save lives and combat this deadly epidemic.

Substance use disorder treatment providers have been clear that if Medicaid expansion is repealed, they will have to significantly cut back on the help they can provide to those in need. To pull the rug out from millions of people across the country who are seeking a lifeline from the throes of addiction is unconscionable. We cannot let that happen.

In addition to making the substance misuse crisis worse, TrumpCare would affect countless others across New Hampshire and America, from individuals who buy their own insurance who would see their premiums skyrocket to older Americans who would now be forced to pay an age tax, to women and families who would be hurt by the provision that defunds Planned Parenthood.

We know there is more work to do to improve and build on the Affordable

Care Act, but this TrumpCare bill is not the answer, and I am working with my colleagues to fight against this legislation.

Furthermore, I am working on additional legislation that would help combat this substance misuse crisis. I joined Senator PORTMAN in introducing the STOP Act, bipartisan legislation that would help stop dangerous synthetic drugs like fentanyl and carfentanyl from being shipped through our borders to drug traffickers here in the United States. These synthetic drugs are only making this crisis more dangerous, causing a spike in deaths in New Hampshire and across the Nation. We must do everything possible to stop them from entering our country.

I joined a bipartisan group of colleagues, led by Senator KLOBUCHAR, to introduce the SALTS Act, which would empower law enforcement to crack down on synthetic substances and better prosecute drug traffickers.

I also joined Senators MANCHIN, SHAHEEN, and several of our colleagues to reintroduce the LifeBOAT Act, which would establish a permanent funding stream to provide and expand access to substance misuse treatment.

These are essential steps we need to take now. I will also continue evaluating additional legislative steps to support treatment, prevention, recovery, and law enforcement efforts. We know the road ahead will not be easy. The scourge of addiction requires us, at times, to change the way we have always done things at a quicker pace than is sometimes comfortable but that can never be an excuse for inaction.

Every day, I am reminded of the stories like those of the grandmother I met at the annual Easter egg hunt, Phil's and Ashley's, and those of the thousands in my State who continue to feel the impacts of a crisis that is taking far too many lives. By making their voices heard, citizens in New Hampshire are breaking through the stigma of addiction and, in turn, are helping others seek the treatment and recovery they need. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that those critical services are there for them.

We must all continue to speak up and fight for those who are voiceless and those who continue to struggle. We must reach out and work toward policies that can truly make a difference because often when we reach out, people reach back, but if we are silent or if we allow the rug to be pulled out from under those seeking help, this epidemic will only get worse. It will devastate even further our families, our communities, and our businesses.

I am going to continue to fight to make progress, and I am willing to work with anyone to help those struggling to get the treatment they need and to support all of the dedicated professionals who are on the frontlines of battling this crisis. We will have to continue to fight together, each and

every one of us, every single day, to build on our efforts to combat this epidemic, and by working together, we can and we will stem and turn the tide.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from New Hampshire.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR HASSAN

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I just wanted to say how pleased I am to be able to join my colleague from New Hampshire on the floor for her official maiden address. It is so nice to see so many of our women colleagues here for this as well.

As she pointed out, I just wanted to echo the great work Senator HASSAN has done, especially as Governor, in expanding the Medicaid Program in New Hampshire so that it provides treatment for so many people, especially when it comes to the heroin and opioid epidemic, and why we are so concerned about any efforts to roll that back—because that would kick thousands of people in New Hampshire off of treatment with nowhere else to go. I certainly plan to continue to join her as we fight for this effort, and I know our colleagues are going to help us in that. I believe that if we all work together, we can make progress, as she has so eloquently stated.

So congratulations to Senator HASSAN for her first official maiden speech. I know it will be just one of many more to come.

(The remarks of Mrs. SHAHEEN pertaining to the submission of S. 630 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mrs. SHAHEEN. 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. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REPUBLICAN HEALTHCARE BILL

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, last week Republicans in the House released a bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act and cut Medicaid to the bone. On Tuesday, the Congressional Budget Office—those are the independent budget experts who analyze policies under consideration here in Congress—estimated that the plan would rip health insurance coverage away from 24 million Americans and cut \$880 billion in the Medicaid program. And as a bonus, the plan provides hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks for the rich. Who comes up with a plan like this? What kind of healthcare bill has, as its central feature, ripping away

health insurance from tens of millions of American citizens?

What kind of politician thinks they were sent to Congress to destroy the financial stability of millions of middle-class families and give wealthy donors a tax break that they certainly don't need? Who thinks that the central problem in America is that middle-class families have too much healthcare coverage and that the richest people in America need government to hand them more money? There is no other way to say it: This bill is just part of a Republican plan to help the rich get richer and kick dirt in everyone else's face.

This bill is an economic disaster, and at its center, it is cruel—cancer survivors losing coverage, seniors facing premium increases of \$12,000 a year, people with disabilities forced into nursing homes. And one of the cruelest things is what this bill will do to individuals, to families, and to communities struggling with the opioid crisis.

Last year in Massachusetts, nearly 2,000 people died from opioid use. That is more than double the number who died in 2013. That is right, double. Between 2014 and 2015, Massachusetts had a bigger jump in its death rate from drug overdoses than any other State except North Dakota.

Last week, I was on the front lines in Lynn Community Health Center, where dedicated staffers are trying to meet this opioid epidemic head on. This week, I went to Manet Community Health Center, where a coordinated team in Quincy is battling the opioid crisis. While I was there, I not only met with the professionals, I saw the mamas and the babies, the people who are in recovery, and people who reach out to those who are still in the grip of drugs. The opioid crisis isn't happening to someone else's family or in someone else's community. It is happening to our families in our communities, and we need to do more to stop this plague before it takes another of our loved ones.

We need to do more; what we absolutely cannot do is less. We cannot take away the resources already committed to fighting the opioid crisis so that some millionaire can get a tax break. Current law, the ACA, requires all insurance plans to cover substance use disorder treatment and prevention as an essential health benefit. That means that your insurance company can't turn off the access to treatment just when you need it most by saying: Sorry, we just don't cover that. Current law, the ACA, gave people the chance to get that insurance through health exchanges and subsidies. Millions more people got private insurance. And through Medicaid expansion, millions more were covered by Medicaid. So there it is, our first line of defense in the war on opioid addiction.

The ACA currently means that more people are covered, and that coverage includes substance abuse treatment. What does the Republican plan do? It

takes away coverage for 24 million people. That is 24 million people who no longer have any access to substance use disorder treatment and prevention services. And then they want to let insurance companies jack up the out-of-pocket costs for substance abuse programs and mental health programs. In fact, some Medicaid plans would be able to drop this coverage altogether. So millions more people would lose their one lifeline if someone in their family is taken by drugs.

Don't get me wrong. What we are doing right now is not enough. Even now, only 10 percent of those who need treatment for substance use disorder receive it and 90 percent can't get help, but that means we need more, not less help.

Repealing the protections for mental health and substance use disorders in the ACA would yank more than \$5 billion in actual funding that is currently going to mental health and treatment services. That is the Republican plan to deal with the opioid crisis. Ask any family trying to get treatment for a loved one who is addicted to drugs. We already have an opioid treatment gap. Gutting the ACA is like shoving a stick of dynamite into the treatment gap and then lighting the fuse. And if the Republicans get their way, people will lose health coverage. People will lose access to recovery services. People will die.

Now is the time to stop this cruel bill in its tracks before it hurts real people. Now is the time to speak out about the importance of the ACA and Medicaid to you and to your family.

If you or someone you know has been touched by the opioid epidemic, you know how much this matters. Maybe you have a sister, a child, a church member, or a high school friend who has struggled with substance use disorder. Maybe you know someone who has fought on the frontlines of this crisis as a healthcare provider, community advocate, as a first responder.

If you do, then you know the stakes in this debate over the ACA and Medicaid. Now is the time to act. Don't wait. If the Republicans end up destroying help for millions of people, don't wake up the next morning and wonder if you could have said more or if you could have raised your voice back when it mattered. No, the Republicans are trying to pass this terrible healthcare bill now, now is the time to speak out. It is time to stand up and to tell Republicans to end their cruel healthcare plan. Our families and our communities are counting on us and we cannot let them down. Please, speak out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

RECOGNIZING THE 45TH IDITAROD RACE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, we have been talking a lot about the

weather here in Washington, DC, the past couple of days. We got a little bit of snow yesterday in some parts. People are still kind of plowing out of their driveways. I am looking at the daffodils that were out 3 days ago, and they are now buried, and the cherry blossoms are a little bit crispy on the trees.

So many of us are not feeling like spring has really sprung here. But in Alaska, in my home State, when we think of spring, one of the things that brings a smile to the face of so many of us is that it means it is time for the Iditarod, the Last Great Race on Earth. It is an exciting time of the year for so many, when we come together to celebrate a 1,000-mile race across some pretty desolate territory in the State of Alaska.

The race itself has a much storied history, one that is somewhat unique to the State of Alaska and to our culture. The race commemorates a lifesaving diphtheria serum run to the community of Nome. Back in 1925, diphtheria had raged through the community, and there was no way to get the serum to Nome. We did not have aircraft that could make it that far. Remember, it is pretty cold in February and in March. We still don't have a road. We really had no way to move the diphtheria serum.

So it was determined, after a great deal of debate and discussion and pros and cons that they would use a dog team relay to get the diphtheria serum to Nome. There are names of dogs that have now become infamous, like Togo, Fritz, and Balto, which led this amazing race. Today, the memory of that lifesaving race is lived on in a race that features just a little bit shy of 1,000 miles, again across pretty frozen isolated areas. It involves 1,000-plus dogs that are in the running.

For many of us, there are 1,000 more reasons that you really would not want to do that. But I have to tell you, as I look at these mushers, as I look at all that goes into the mushing history of our State, it makes me excited about not only the men and women who are the mushers but the true athletes, the K-9 athletes, and all that they give up.

I was home in Anchorage last weekend for the ceremonial start on Saturday. It is a great deal of hoopla. There are not too many communities in America where you actually truck snow into the downtown part of your community, fill the streets up with snow so that the dog teams can launch from downtown. Thousands of people gather to watch the start. We were commemorating the 45th annual Iditarod race.

The official start was on Monday morning in Fairbanks, AK, a town that I also call home, having gone to high school there. The route this year was from Fairbanks, what they call the northerly route, up to Nome. It shaves a little bit of the miles off. I think this year it was about 979 miles. So it was

not quite 1,000 miles, but still good enough to test a man or a woman and their dogs.

It was kind of tough starting in Fairbanks on the morning of the race. Temperatures were around 50 below. They hit the river, went right past the house where I grew up, and went downriver. By the time they got to the first checkpoint there at Tanana, the temperatures were 50 below and people were talking about how you stay warm on a sled and who has bad frostbite that is coming back after years of running.

Let's just put it this way. The Iditarod is not for the timid or the weak. It takes real grit to run this race. When you think about all the hoopla that comes with the ceremonial start and all the people who came out in the community, then you get on the trail and you are alone. You are by yourself. We have 26 different checkpoints between Fairbanks and Nome. As a musher reaches a checkpoint, there is an appreciative audience of the villagers who come out to cheer them on.

Again, the villagers can't offer help with taking care of the teams. The mushers have to do it all themselves. But there is a lot of time to think and reflect about the beauty surrounding you, a lot of time to worry about whether or not you have moose or wolf or bear or whatever is out there keeping them company. But truly, this is not only an endurance race, but it is a race that challenges the mind. There are stretches of just almost mind-numbing isolation in the cold where you are just focusing on your team in front of you.

But as you can see, when you get out—this is right on the outskirts of Nome; this is coming in at the end of the race—there is a lot of isolation out there. The temperatures that you are dealing with are tough on a human being. Over the course of this past week, the temperature range was a 70-degree range. The temperature in Nome yesterday at the conclusion was 4 degrees above zero. So it is on the positive side, which was good news for the mushers. But that is a pretty substantial range that you are going through.

It is an amazing race in terms of the strategy that goes into it. You would think: Well, you just get your dogs in line. You know where you are going to feed them. You know where you are going to let them rest.

But the strategy that goes into a race like this is really quite unique to the various mushers. What we have seen with this race is an extraordinarily fast race, where the winner was averaging between 10 and 11 miles per hour between some of these checkpoints. It is pretty extraordinary to have your dogs keep up a pace like this.

Some mushers will hop off their sleds and run alongside their dogs when they are going uphill, just to take some of

the weight off the sled. But think about that. You have been going for a week. You have been going around the clock pretty much for some of these. You are exhausted. You are freezing cold. Now you are going to jog behind your dogs to lighten the load. This is, again, extraordinary. Many of the others, as they are approaching the end, will keep their strongest dogs, shed the nonessential gear, and switch to a lighter sled to push through on the final stretch.

But there are a lot of different tactics. When a dog is tired, you can put them in the basket so the dog can rest, kind of like a coach on a basketball team: You need to be put on the bench and just kind of take a breather here. We do it with the dogs as well. But this is a race not only about the endurance, but it also is one where there is a great deal of work to ensure that these high-performance athletes are cared for and that their safety is looked after.

Again, if a dog gets too tired and is just not right, mushers can leave them at a checkpoint to ensure their well-being so that they are not pushed too much. Again, putting them in a basket, making sure that the dogs are cared for. There is a veterinarian at every step along the way. The vets check the dogs out at every checkpoint. The mushers have to carry the veterinary check record, if you will.

These vets are not local vets. There are some 50 vets that volunteer to come to Alaska for the Iditarod and go out there along the trail to one of these checkpoints and to do the checks before the race and after the race.

When I was in Anchorage last week, I was visiting with a veterinarian from Colorado. The Presiding Officer probably might even know him. But he comes every year. This was his eighth Iditarod. He volunteers his time because, again, it is an amazing race with amazing K-9 athletes. They are the ones who get the care and attention. I don't know that there are any doctors out along the trail for the mushers, but the dogs are well cared for.

It is required and there is mandatory rest that is taken. Mushers can determine where the 24-hour rest period is taken. There are two 8-hour stops, one along the Yukon River and one at White Mountain, just before you get to Nome. But, again, you think about the demands on the individual as they are mushing along at this pace.

There is a story out of this year's race about a musher. I think it was day 3 into the race. A team comes into the checkpoint. They are clipping right along, but there is no musher. The musher had fallen asleep while standing on the runners of his sled and just kind of fell off his sled.

He had a pretty good team, if I can just say. They were obviously following the trail from teams ahead of them. That team just went on and ended up at the checkpoint there. It was a little while later that another musher came along and saw this musher walking,

following his dog's footprints. He gave him a ride to the next checkpoint where his dogs were all there just waiting for him, saying: You know, we got here first. Where were you?

But it kind of speaks to some of the issues that go on along the trail. There used to be a time, up until this year, when there was no two-way communication devices that were allowed—none at all. So as to your cellphone, you could not have your cellphone with you.

It was designed to make sure you were not gaining unfair advantage in determining where other mushers were ahead of you or behind you. But for safety reasons, I think there is a recognition that being able to send out an alert if you need it is probably wise and important. A thousand miles is a lot of land to cover. There are a lot of things that can go wrong when it is just you and your dogs along the trail.

The news. The news is big about the 45th Iditarod race. This year, the winner, a fabulous gentleman by the name of Mitch Seavey, blasted the overall record—extraordinarily impressive. He set the Iditarod record of 8 days, 3 hours, 40 minutes, and 13 seconds. What is wonderful to add to this story is that this is the fastest time. The next fastest time, the fastest time that we had had up until this year, was the year prior, which was set by his son. Think about that. What athletic competition, what sport can you have a father and a son go in toe to toe beating the all-time record? Last year, the 29-year-old son was the winner. This year, the 57-year-old dad is the winner. And who came in second this year? The son.

When I was at the ceremonial start and I had the opportunity to see Mitch Seavey, I went up to him, and I said: OK, I know everyone is betting on Dallas Seavey to win because it would be win No. 5 for him, but I am going with the old guy.

Fifty-seven is not so old. Mitch Seavey certainly demonstrated that just yesterday.

The Seavey family is Iditarod legend. Dan Seavey, who is Mitch's father, ran the very first Iditarod in 1973, and then some 44 years later, his son Mitch and his grandson Dallas are still going at it. Mitch won in 2004 and in 2013, and his son Dallas won in 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2016—again, a father and son kind of trading off second and third places during each of these.

It is extraordinary when you think about the records that have been broken with this race, and the closeness of the race is exciting to look at. When the second and third place finishers came in—Dallas came in just 5 minutes ahead of the third place musher, Nicolas Petit, who calls Girdwood his hometown, as does one of our young pages here, and it is a place I call home as well.

So there is a lot of excitement with the winners, not only with Mitch Seavey's record-smashing race but also the fact that he is the oldest racer to

win, at 57. Again, as he has reminded us, 57 isn't that old.

I will acknowledge that both Dallas and Nicolas Petit came in breaking last year's record as well.

So for the sixth year in a row, we have had a Seavey champion. You talk about a family of champions, this is pretty amazing. This one is Mitch's third win, and it is an extraordinary win.

I spoke to Mitch not too long ago to offer him my congratulations, and I told him: As a parent of two 20-somethings, I like the command you demonstrate. You have still got it in you. You are going to be a fierce competitor.

But what Mitch told me was really a lovely statement. He said that what was so great was to be at the finish line seeing his son coming in and seeing Dallas genuinely happy at Mitch's win. He said that they were head-to-head competitors all throughout the race, and Dallas didn't make that five-time win that he was hoping for, that so many of us Alaskans were hoping for, but he was so genuinely proud of his father.

As of this afternoon, we have 10 mushers who have crossed the finish line. I wish all of the other mushers and their fearless dogs good luck as they continue to make their way to Nome over the next few days and beyond.

This is an event that I love to celebrate with my colleagues. I love to brag about the amazing men and women, not just the Alaskans but from all over the country and really from all over the world. Our fourth place finisher is from Norway, Joar Leifseth Ulsom. He was right up there all the way to the end. It is men. It is women. Jessie Royer was the first woman in, and she came in fifth place. Aliy Zirkle crossed in eighth place. So they are remarkable men and women—Alaskans, Americans, and people from truly around the globe—who come to compete.

Truly the ones we celebrate with great enthusiasm and gusto are these canine athletes that demonstrate to us all that there is no end, there is no limit to their love to run, their love to compete, and their desire to excel.

I am pleased to be able to celebrate with colleagues from the Senate in recognizing the 45th Iditarod race, the Last Great Race on Earth.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Oklahoma.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTION

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I want to take the chance to have just a moment to be able to reflect on what the Senate has just completed. We have worked through a process of identifying what is called the Congressional Review Act. Most Americans are not

familiar with this because it is so seldom used. In fact, it has only been used one time before this Congress successfully.

It is a moment for the Congress to be able to look back at regulations that have been promulgated by the administration and say: Was that the intent of the law?

It is something that we have worked at for a long time to be able to get as a frequent part of this national conversation. We call it the REINS Act. It allows Congress to be able to look at each major regulation when it comes out from the administration and ask the simple question: When the regulations are created, are they consistent with the statute? That is what regulations are. No administration can just invent policy and say: We think this is a good thing to do. That is the task of Congress. That is why the Constitution says that all legislative powers shall reside in the Congress, because an administration can't make up the law. It has to come from this body, from the House of Representatives, and then be signed by the President. After that is done, then regulations are created that have to be consistent with the law.

The Congressional Review Act was created years ago to allow Congress to have a second glance at regulations as they are put out and say: Is that consistent with the statute we passed? This Congress has already gone through multiples of those.

In the last 6 months of the Obama administration, many regulations were created. When they were created, they were not consistent with the statute. This Congress has already turned back billions of dollars of regulations from the American people. One of those was done this week. Ironically, it is an issue that deals with unemployment benefits and drug testing.

Many States have requested the ability to be able to do drug testing for unemployment benefits. And this is not a situation where this Congress believes that all people on unemployment benefits need to be drug tested or are unemployed because of drug use—far from it.

In 2012, Congress passed the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act. In that, it allowed States, if they chose to—they don't have to but if they chose to—to do drug testing for benefits eligibility, for unemployment benefits under two circumstances. One of them is if the applicant was terminated from their employment based on the unlawful use of a controlled substance. In other words, if they were just fired from a previous job because they were using drugs, they wouldn't be able to get unemployment benefits because they had already been certified as a drug user. The second one is that if the only available suitable work meant that they had to be drug tested, then they could be drug tested.

What is the design of this? The design of the policy was to encourage people to get back to work. If they were fired from a previous job because

they used drugs, it is a natural thing to say: Before you can get unemployment benefits, we want to make sure you have gotten off drugs since that time period you were fired, or if you will be drug tested for the only job that is available to you in your targeted area, you are not available to be able to take that job if you haven't already had some sort of drug testing.

It is a commonsense measure, and it is given to the States to say to the States: You can choose to do this or not to do this, but if you choose to do it, you can, because unemployment benefits are a partnership between the Federal Government and local States.

We believe this is one tool of many to be able to help people who are trapped in the addiction of drugs to have one more incentive to be able to get off that addiction. Multiple different methods are also used within States to enable them to walk alongside families and individuals and help them get off their substance abuse habits as well.

It is a powerful motivator to say to people: If you want to get some support into your family to help you transition back into a job, the law says that to be on unemployment benefits, you have to be available for work. And if this person is currently addicted to drugs and using drugs, they are not available for work.

This measure was passed in 2012. The Obama administration took 4 years to promulgate the rules off of this commonsense measure, and once they finally promulgated the rules, they created a set of rules so complex, so complicated, with so many exceptions built into it, that the rule meant nothing. It put us in the situation of saying: What Congress passed 4 years ago, we actually wanted that to go into effect to give those States the right to be able to do it.

So this Congress—the House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted and this week the Senate also voted to be able to block out that last-minute regulation from the Obama administration, which they took 4 years to promulgate, and to be able to say to the States: If you choose to do drug testing with someone who was fired from a previous job because of drug use or because the only job available to that person will have drug testing, if you want to help families be able to get off substance abuse and to be able to set this standard for them, you can.

We have an epidemic of drug use in our Nation. We should do everything we can to not only deal with the interdiction of drugs coming into the country but to also deal with abuse of drugs in our country. This is one of those measures, and I am glad my State and other States will again have that opportunity to be able to use this.

OKLAHOMA WILDFIRES

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, on January 15, 2017, an incredible ice storm came through my State. For

some States that haven't seen ice storms, they are beautiful, but boy are they destructive. As freezing rain comes down, it lands on power lines, lands on trees, destroys the trees, power lines come down, and it is incredibly difficult for families and for regions when this happens. You can't move. You can't function. You can't travel the streets because they are covered with ice. It is very destructive.

The northwest part of our State experienced an ice storm like that on January 15. That ice storm devastated the Woodward area and all over the northwest—trees, debris, damage, power out for weeks in that area.

Then, in early March, it was starting to warm up. The forecasters from the National Weather Service and the Forest Service saw the forecast coming out of rapidly dropping humidity levels and very high winds, with a lot of debris damage still in the area. It was the perfect storm for wildfires.

They prepositioned assets in that area to be able to respond if they broke out, but on March 6—just a week and a half ago—wildfires broke out all across northwestern Oklahoma. Four large fires in particular broke out simultaneously in multiple areas. Some of them were started by some of those same power lines that were weakened by the ice storm. Now the high winds—60 miles an hour—are taking down those weak power lines, and they are striking the ground and starting a fire spontaneously out in a field.

There were four individual fires across this area covering 315,000 acres just in Oklahoma. One of those fires spread straight across the Kansas border and burned an additional 472,000 acres. To give you a point of reference of how large these fires were, the total fire damage that was done in acres is greater than the entire State of Rhode Island. Twenty homes were destroyed, 3,000 cattle were killed in the field, 6,500 hogs were killed, and 7 people died in the fire.

Let me give you a picture of what we faced in this area as I went out last Friday with Senator INHOPE to tour the area both from the air and on the ground and to talk to farmers and those individuals who are trying to work through this very difficult process. Those farmers and ranchers are facing something you can't even imagine in their fields. For miles, there is no grass. The cattle that did survive the fire had literally no food on their ranch for miles. Hundreds of miles of fence line were taken down. Each mile of fence in Oklahoma, just a simple barbed wire fence, costs about \$10,000, and hundreds of miles of fence line were destroyed.

We have animals that burned alive as they tried to escape the fire. We had deer that, as they were running across the fields, got caught up in the barbed wire fence and 16-mile-per-hour winds, and the 16-mile-an-hour flame caught up with the deer in the fence and burned them alive as they tried to escape.

We have families who have lost absolutely everything.

We have volunteer firefighters across much of this area who would literally be fighting the fire in one county in one area and hear on the radio about how a fire had broken out in another county on a road right near their own home, and literally volunteer firefighters fighting one fire could hear on the radio about the destruction of their home at a different fire.

In different places, the volunteer firefighters and those who were gathered, both career and volunteers, would see a raging fire at the home of their neighbor, of people they knew. In western Oklahoma, you know your neighbors in that area. You know the folks in the county. They would head out to a home as the fire was rushing at them and try to fight it off, try to cut a fire line to be able to stop it. Eventually, the fire would get so close, they would literally take their fire equipment and park the equipment between the fire and the home and spray down their equipment in hopes that the fire would jump over the house as the firefighters just huddled behind their own equipment hoping the fire didn't come to them. They saved several homes by using that extreme method.

Neighbors took their own farm equipment and their own tractors and created fire lines to be able to protect their neighbors' homes.

These small community firefighters fought fires for hours and hours. They saved a lot of lives, and they saved a lot of structures.

I can't even begin to tell you the pain of walking through that area, what has been described by many as walking across a moonscape of destruction where there is literally nothing left.

What have we seen in that? I will state that what we have seen is a tenacious spirit from people who survived an ice storm, were without power for weeks in many areas, and then had a wildfire come right behind it and destroy what was left. Over 20,000 bales of hay have already been donated from farmers all over Oklahoma who are trying to feed the cattle that are still left—20,000 bales. Understand the expense of 20,000 bales of hay being donated but also understand the efforts of all the truckdrivers who loaded up their vehicles and personally paid the gas money and the travel expenses to be able to deliver that hay over hundreds of miles to those folks. Oftentimes, the travel of that truckdriver and the gas required are more expensive than the hay that is in the back of it, and they are delivering as much as they possibly can.

I have to thank the folks from the Farm Bureau; the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association; Western Equipment; Oklahoma Farm Credit; the Red Cross of Oklahoma; the Salvation Army; the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture; the Oklahoma Forestry Service; Southern Baptist Disaster Relief; Oklahoma emergency manage-

ment—first responders from all over the State, volunteer and career firefighters who worked very long and difficult hours. USDA and FEMA were also on site. I thank Harper County Extension; all the emergency management folks from Beaver, Harper, and Woodward Counties; all the folks who have donated, places like Love's Travel Stops that have donated so much to be able to move things there; the United Way; Cleanline Energy and their donations; and untold numbers of civic organizations and churches from around that community.

As I looked at many of those folks in the area last week and met with some leaders and pastors in the area, I reminded the folks that the devastation they face is not something that will be recovered from quickly. Springtime will come soon, and the area that is just black earth right now will spring to life with green grass again in the weeks ahead. But the loss of those fence lines, the loss of thousands of animals, the loss of homes, the loss of structures, will take a very long time for the folks—the farmers and ranchers who don't live on a high profit margin.

I have continued to encourage the pastors and churches in that area to walk alongside some families who will have a hard time recovering from this for a long time. I have encouraged our Oklahoma agencies and our Federal agencies to do what we can to be able to step in with repairing fence lines and helping them recover from a very traumatic event.

My wife and I stood with a rancher who talked about going out into the field after the fire. His home was completely destroyed. As he traveled out to the field around him checking on his cattle, he found dead cattle but also found cattle with their faces completely burned, blinded, with coyotes chasing them down. He said all he could do was stand there in the field and cry. These are going to be long days.

I am grateful that there are neighbors taking care of neighbors. I am proud of the people of Oklahoma watching out for each other. As we walk through this, God willing, we will continue to be able to hug and take care of our neighbors in the days ahead.

I want to tell this Senate and the people of the United States that this was a wildfire as big as the State of Rhode Island, and many people haven't even heard of it. But I can assure all of you that the folks in Oklahoma have experienced it, and we will walk through it together as a Nation.

With that, Mr. President, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be

in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUNSHINE WEEK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, this week is Sunshine Week, an annual nationwide celebration of the good that comes from peeling back the curtains on government. Sunshine Week coincides with the National Freedom of Information Day and President James Madison's birthday, both of which occur on March 16.

James Madison understood the value of an informed citizenry as a necessary check against those in power. We shouldn't forget his call for the people to "arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."

More recently in our Nation's history, Justice Brandeis declared, "sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants."

These sentiments hold true to this day. A government that operates in darkness—and a public that's kept in the dark—sows the seeds of waste, fraud, and abuse.

In the face of secrecy and obstruction, the public has a vital weapon: the Freedom of Information Act, FOIA.

Over 50 years ago, President Lyndon Johnson signed FOIA into law, establishing the public's judicially enforceable right to government information.

Before FOIA, the people had to justify their need for information to the government, but after FOIA, the government has to justify its refusal to release information to the public. FOIA's enactment marked a crucial step toward a government more accountable to the people.

No doubt, FOIA manifests Congress's recognition of the need to carefully balance the public's right to know and the government's interest in protecting certain information from disclosure, but practice and history demonstrates this balance has all too often been tilted away from transparency.

Many in government have continued to find ways to undermine citizens' right to know under FOIA. Transparency should be the norm, not the exception; yet, when it comes to FOIA requests, we have continued to see a government culture of delay, deny, and defend. When this happens, FOIA's effectiveness is undermined and the public becomes even more skeptical of its government.

We have seen this in one way or another under every administration, both Republican and Democratic, since FOIA's enactment, but the trend toward secrecy and obstruction in recent years should alarm all of us.

According to a March 14 Associated Press report, "The Obama administration in its final year in office spent a record \$36.2 million on legal costs defending its refusal to turn over federal records under [FOIA]."

In 2016, the Obama administration set records for “outright denial of access to files, refusing to quickly consider requests described as especially newsworthy, and forcing people to pay for records who had asked the government to waive search and copy fees.”

To top it off, “The government acknowledged when challenged that it had been wrong to initially refuse to turn over all or parts of records in more than one-third of such cases, the highest rate in at least six years.”

We simply cannot continue down this path.

Fortunately, a truly bipartisan and bicameral effort last year resulted in the enactment of the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016. I was proud to be a cosponsor of this important piece of legislation and to have worked closely with my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, as well as the open government community, in ensuring its passage. It achieves some of the most meaningful and necessary reforms to FOIA in history.

We are already witnessing some of the positive impacts of these reforms.

For example, the National Security Archive, a nonprofit open government advocate, fought for years to achieve the public release of certain historical documents about the Bay of Pigs invasion. But time and again, they were met with legal hurdles put up by the Central Intelligence Agency, CIA.

This past October, however, the CIA released these historically significant documents. In doing so, the CIA’s Chief Historian stated that the Agency is “releasing this draft volume today because recent 2016 changes in the [FOIA] requires us to release some drafts that are responsive to FOIA requests if they are more than 25 years old.”

This is excellent news. It is just one example of the good that can result from bipartisan work toward a common goal for the American people. I look forward to hearing many other such stories of important information finally being made publicly available under FOIA, thanks to these recent reforms.

But we can’t just rest on our laurels. No matter which party is in control of Congress or the White House, continuing oversight of FOIA—and the faithful implementation of its amendments—is essential to ensure the law’s effectiveness as a tool for the public good.

As chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I am proud during this Sunshine Week to join Senators Feinstein, Cornyn, and Leahy in sending letters to the Trump administration to learn more about specific steps taken to carry out the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 and efforts underway to improve the proactive disclosure of information.

Compliance with both the letter and spirit of FOIA should always be a top priority of any administration, so I look forward to hearing back about progress made.

Before President Trump took office, I stood on this floor and urged him to reverse the secrecy and obstruction that defined the Obama administration’s FOIA track record. Today I reiterate that call.

A new administration provides a new opportunity to get it right.

This Sunshine Week, let’s recommit to working together toward improving open government, fulfilling FOIA’s promise, and ensuring a more informed citizenry.

DISCHARGE PETITION—S.J. RES. 34

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, hereby direct that the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of S.J. Res. 34, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to “Protecting the Privacy of Customers of Broadband and Other Telecommunications Services,” and further, that the resolution be placed upon the Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

Jeff Flake, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, John Boozman, Todd Young, John Thune, Cory Gardner, Steve Daines, David Perdue, Tim Scott, Dan Sullivan, Mitch McConnell, Thad Cochran, Michael B. Enzi, Dean Heller, John Hoeven, James M. Inhofe, Roger F. Wicker, Bill Cassidy, Patrick J. Toomey, Ron Johnson, Richard C. Shelby, John Cornyn, Orrin Hatch, Shelley Moore Capito, Jerry Moran, Mike Crapo, Rob Portman, Deb Fischer, Pat Roberts.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING JOSEPH “JOE” CELESTINO GALLEGOS

• Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I wish to honor the life of Joseph “Joe” Celestino Gallegos, a beloved leader and constituent from my home State of Colorado. Mr. Gallegos passed away on December 11, 2016, at the age of 60, after a battle with cancer. He was a true visionary and leader in his hometown of San Luis, the oldest town in Colorado, where he was elected to a fourth term as Costilla County commissioner just a few months ago.

Mr. Gallegos was a fifth-generation farmer and rancher with deep ties to the American West. His family property, the Corpus A. Gallegos Ranches, was settled in 1860 and recognized as a “Colorado Centennial Farm” in 1990. The son of educators, Mr. Gallegos spent his youth in Pagosa Junction and Colorado Springs, CO, and in Questa, NM. He spent his weekends, vacations, and summers working the family ranch in San Luis and tending to livestock in the surrounding mountains of the Sangre de Cristo Range.

After graduating from Colorado State University in Fort Collins with a degree in mechanical engineering, Mr. Gallegos became an engineer in the oil

fields. His work took him to Texas, Louisiana, North Dakota, Wyoming, Ireland, and Africa before he returned to San Luis permanently in 1986.

Working with his father on the family ranch, Mr. Gallegos soon became a trailblazing advocate for the land, water, people, and culture of San Luis and Costilla County, working selflessly to preserve the area’s rich local traditions. Mr. Gallegos was one of the founders of the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association, which protects some of the oldest water rights in the State of Colorado, and his work has inspired younger generations to respect local water rights and acequia conservation. He served on the Costilla County Conservancy Board for 13 years and was also a member and ditch rider of the San Luis People’s Ditch, which holds the oldest water right in Colorado.

Mr. Gallegos was elected as a Costilla County commissioner four times, serving in office for 12 years. He was passionate about creating and sustaining local jobs; rehabilitating infrastructure and historic structures; and supporting veterans, senior citizens, and youth. One of the projects of which he was most proud was the restoration of the old Costilla County courthouse. Built in 1883, it is one of just two intact adobe courthouses in Colorado. Mr. Gallegos also worked to restore the Lobatos Bridge, the southernmost bridge over the Rio Grande River in Colorado, originally built in 1892.

He oversaw the construction of a Health and Human Services complex and a senior citizens’ center; helped create a county Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Program; supported the effort to name State Highway 159 as the Costilla County Veterans Memorial Highway; and developed the Costilla County Biodiesel Project. He also pursued other renewable energy initiatives such as biomass heat for county shops and solar electricity for county buildings.

Outside of his work, Mr. Gallegos also earned a second-degree black belt in martial arts and was gifted at training and riding horses.

Mr. Gallegos was a man whose generosity touched the lives of countless others. Over 500 people attended his funeral service at Centennial High School in San Luis. He is survived by his daughter Patricia Vialpando, her sisters Annmarie Gonzales and Cristina Miers, and their families; his sister Marie Rafaela Gallegos-McCord, his brothers Aquino “Jerry” Gallegos, James “Jimmy” Gallegos, and their families; his niece Elaiza Gallegos; his nephews Adrien and Django Gallegos; and two very special people, Rose Mendoza-Green and her granddaughter Celena.

I join with the people of Costilla County and the San Luis Valley in honoring Mr. Gallegos’s life, and I send my deepest condolences to his family and loved ones.●

TRIBUTE TO ROCKY ERICKSON

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the distinct honor of recognizing Rocky Erickson for his long run as the voice of Montana sports. When traveling along the many roads in Big Sky Country or stopping in at a local watering hole for a bite to eat, if you are in earshot of a radio and that radio is tuned to local sports, there is a good chance that Rocky is on the other end of the broadcast.

Rocky grew up on his family's wheat farm in the small McCone County community of Vida. After high school, he studied telecommunications at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. Shortly after completing his degree, Rocky returned to eastern Montana and began to provide Montana sports fans with high quality commentary. Rocky's distinguished broadcasting career began in the early 1980s and continues today. This past weekend, he was calling the play by play for the Montana High School State Basketball Championship tournament games. Rocky's Montana sports program is broadcast daily on 40 stations, and he has been recognized by his peers as the "Montana Sportscaster of the Year" on nine separate occasions. The native son of Vida, population 70, has gone on to do great things within his industry. His broadcasts are sincerely appreciated by sports fans across Montana.

Attending a Montana sporting event helps one appreciate how valued and unifying local sports can be to our communities. Rocky has shared these treasured experiences with many Montanans by giving his audience a rich texture and personal touch in each broadcast. Thank you, Rocky, for your outstanding work, and I hope to hear you again soon.●

HONOREES OF THE 28TH ANNUAL MAINE WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to honor two exceptional women, Dr. Ann Koch Schonberger and the late Clara Swan, who are the new inductees to the Maine Women's Hall of Fame. Ann and Clara have made a vital impact on the lives of women in their communities and across the State of Maine. We celebrate their dedication to improving the lives of women in Maine.

Dr. Ann Koch Schonberger, from Bangor spent more than 20 years as the director of the women's studies program at the University of Maine and now serves as faculty emerita, focusing on women's, gender, and sexuality studies. Ann also spent many years as a mathematics professor. Ann has published numerous papers and presented at dozens of conferences on her research and experiences on the intersection between STEM careers and gender. She has also spent countless hours volunteering at the Spruce Run Womancare Alliance, helping women heal from domestic abuse and other forms of violence. Ann strives to bring

to Maine the Spruce Run mantra of "imagining communities without isolation, violence, abuse and fear."

The late Clara Swan was born in Princeton, ME, and spent her life serving as an educator, administrator, and coach. Clara touched the lives of thousands of students during her 30-plus years at the Husson University campus in Bangor. Clara herself was a graduate of the school, known as the Maine School of Commerce when she graduated in 1933. She returned to Husson in 1939, and spent 34 years as a professor and administrator. She was also a women's basketball coach for 19 years, amassing a record of 240 wins, 34 losses, and 7 ties, which included two undefeated seasons. Clara's legacy will not only live on in her former students and players, but at her former institution as well. In 2002, Husson named its fitness center in Clara's honor. She somehow found the time to volunteer at St. Joseph's Hospital, and she delivered meals to seniors' homes as part of the Meals on Wheels program. Clara lived an active life until she died at the age of 104 this past January.

Congratulations to both Ann and Clara for their induction into the Maine Women's Hall of Fame. With this well-earned honor, Ann and Clara join the ranks of Senator Margaret Chase Smith, Senator Olympia Snowe, and Senator Susan Collins, remarkable women who have inspired women in Maine and across the country. Maine is lucky to benefit from such outstanding leaders and pioneers for women in higher education. I thank Ann and Clara for their service and their many contributions to the women and communities of our State.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:06 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 2302, and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council: Mr. DEUTCH of Florida and Mr. SCHNEIDER of Illinois.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following joint resolution was discharged by petition, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 802(c), and placed on the calendar:

S.J. Res. 34. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to "Protecting the Privacy of Customers of Broadband and Other Telecommunications Services".

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-1015. A communication from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Exemptions for Security-Based Swaps" (RIN3235-AL17) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1016. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iran as declared in Executive Order 12957 of March 15, 1995; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1017. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Somalia that was declared in Executive Order 13536 on April 12, 2010; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1018. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the export to the People's Republic of China of items not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1019. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; California; California Mobile Source Regulations" (FRL No. 9959-00-Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1020. 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; District of Columbia; Update to Materials Incorporated by Reference" (FRL No. 9955-98-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1021. 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 and Designation of Areas; KY; Redesignation of the Campbell County, 2010 1-Hour SO2 Nonattainment Area to Attainment" (FRL No. 9959-10-Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1022. A communication from the Attorney, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Steel Import Monitoring and Analysis System" (RIN0625-AB09) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 9, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-1023. A communication from the General Counsel, Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Inspector General of the Intelligence Community received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 9, 2017; to the Select Committee on Intelligence.

EC-1024. A communication from the Acting Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the progress made in licensing and constructing the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-1025. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of New Reactors, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Special Topics for Mechanical Components" ((NUREG-0800) (SRP 3.9.1)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 13, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1026. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of New Reactors, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Determination of Rupture Locations and Dynamic Effects Associated with the Postulated Rupture of Piping" ((NUREG-0800) (SRP 3.6.2)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 13, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1027. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of New Reactors, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Applicable Code Cases" ((NUREG-0800) (SRP 5.2.1.2)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 13, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1028. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of New Reactors, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Seismic and Dynamic Qualification of Mechanical and Electrical Equipment" ((NUREG-0800) (SRP 3.10)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 13, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1029. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of New Reactors, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Postulated Rupture Locations in Fluid System Piping Inside and Outside Containment" ((NUREG-0800)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 13, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1030. A communication from the Chief Human Resources Officer, United States Postal Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Postal Service's fiscal year 2016 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1031. A communication from the Chairman, Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the memorial construction; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-11. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana memorializing the United States Congress to recognize that the Louisiana coastal area is an area in crisis and to enact federal regulatory reform and disaster recovery regulations that minimize delays in the processes by which the state of Louisiana responds to the crises faced as a result of coastal land loss and natural disasters; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4

Whereas, the citizens of Louisiana are no strangers to natural disasters and have been heavily involved in the fight for flood protec-

tion infrastructure that will protect our vital region, home to two million people who live and work at the epicenter of our nation's valuable energy, wetlands, and seafood resources; and

Whereas, Louisiana's three million acres of wetlands are lost at the rate of about sixteen square miles per year, but reducing these losses is proving to be very difficult and extremely costly; and

Whereas, Louisiana's wetlands today represent nearly forty percent of the wetlands located in the continental United States, but account for nearly eighty percent of the losses experienced in the continental United States; and

Whereas, many studies indicate that major shifts in the course of the Mississippi River over thousands of years built the land in south Louisiana through its delta building process; and

Whereas, man-made levees have contributed significantly to the degradation of the wetlands with the disintegration intensified by the channelization caused by the construction of the Mississippi River levees and man-made canals; and

Whereas, the seasonal flooding that previously provided sediments critical to the healthy growth of wetlands that sustain our deltaic system has been virtually eliminated by construction of massive levees that channel the river for over a thousand miles which in turn cause the sediment carried by the river to now be discharged into the Gulf of Mexico far from the coast, thereby depriving wetlands of vital sediment; and

Whereas, Louisiana's coastal area is critical to our nation's energy security with half of the country's oil refineries, a network of pipelines that serve ninety percent of the nation's offshore energy production and thirty percent of its total oil and gas supply, and a port complex supporting twenty percent of all waterborne commerce vital to thirty-one states; and

Whereas, these valuable and necessary human activities such as energy exploration, commercial and recreational navigation, agriculture, and development during the past century have affected the wetlands, directly and indirectly, enabling salt water from the Gulf of Mexico to intrude into brackish and freshwater wetlands and contributing to wetlands deterioration and loss increasing the vulnerability of our coastal communities; and

Whereas, the state has committed extensive resources to address this crisis, through the establishment of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority tasked with development of a state Master Plan to provide hurricane protection, coastal restoration, the reduction of saltwater intrusion, and improving hydrology throughout the coastal area by allowing water to move between the interior and exterior marshes of the system, including a mitigation plan that will create an additional one thousand three hundred and fifty-two acres of coastal marsh, and risk reduction benefits; and

Whereas, the state has substantially increased its financial commitment to the coast resulting in significant progress on projects that maintain land and reduce risk, however capricious regulatory requirements waste tax payer money, delay or deny projects, and increase risk both to the federal treasury and our citizens resulting in increased construction and emergency response costs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana memorializes the Congress of the United States to recognize that the Louisiana coast is in a state of crisis and in need of recognition by the President and the federal government, that federal disaster attention and co-operation are acutely needed to assist the

state to better provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the people who need it most, and to increase federal investment in infrastructure that provides coastal protection in coastal Louisiana; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate and the clerk of the United States House of Representatives and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress as well as the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to enable collaboration between the federal, state, and local officials to clear regulatory hurdles, and inform Americans everywhere about the value of our critical communities, ecosystems, and our unique hurricane protection and disaster recovery needs.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*Elaine C. Duke, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. REED, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 630. A bill to amend the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 to make 2,500 visas available for the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 631. A bill to amend the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 to provide guidance and limitations regarding the integration of unmanned aircraft systems into United States airspace, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. NELSON):

S. 632. A bill to amend title 28 of the United States Code to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges; and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 633. A bill to amend the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 to apply whistleblower protections available to certain executive branch employees to legislative branch employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. LEE):

S. 634. A bill to require reductions in the direct cost of Federal regulations that are proportional to the amount of increases in the debt ceiling; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MARKEY, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 635. A bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to prohibit the exclusion of individuals from service on a Federal jury on account of sexual orientation or gender identity; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 636. A bill to allow Americans to earn paid sick time so that they can address their own health needs and the health needs of their families; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 637. A bill to amend titles XI and XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide greater transparency of discounts provided by drug manufacturers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 638. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide appropriate rules for the application of the deduction for income attributable to domestic production activities with respect to certain contract manufacturing or production arrangements; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. BENNET, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 639. A bill to clarify that nonprofit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity may accept donated mortgage appraisals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 640. A bill to prioritize funding for an expanded and sustained national investment in biomedical research; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 641. A bill to prioritize funding for an expanded and sustained national investment in basic science research; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. KING, Mr. UDALL, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 642. A bill to restore the integrity of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 643. A bill to provide for media coverage of Federal court proceedings; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COCHRAN (for himself and Mr. WICKER):

S. 644. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Medgar Evers House, located in Jackson, Mississippi, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. KING, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 645. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to conduct an assessment and analysis of the effects of broadband deployment and adoption on the economy of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 646. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the enforcement of employment and reemployment rights of members of the uniformed services, to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to improve the protection of members of the uniformed services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 647. A bill to amend title 9, United States Code, with respect to arbitration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. WICKER):

S. 648. A bill to establish a grant program to promote the development of career education programs in computer science in secondary and postsecondary education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 649. A bill to permit the televising of Supreme Court proceedings; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 650. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to expand tax credit education and training for small businesses that engage in research and development, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mrs. McCASKILL (for herself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 651. A bill to require the posting online of certain government contracts; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. KAINE):

S. 652. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis, and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 653. A bill to amend the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 to make the maintenance of effort provision less burdensome on States; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 654. A bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself and Mr. KING):

S. 655. A bill to exempt certain 16- and 17-year-old individuals employed in logging operations from child labor laws; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. LEE, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 656. A bill to help individuals receiving disability insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act obtain rehabilitation services and return to the workforce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. BROWN):

S. 657. A bill to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendation for Americans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 658. A bill to treat all controlled substance analogues, other than chemical substances subject to the Toxic Substances Control Act, as controlled substances in schedule I regardless of whether they are intended for human consumption; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 659. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to the People's Republic of China in relation to activities in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 660. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 in order to fulfill the Federal mandate to provide higher educational opportunities for Native American Indians; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. UDALL:

S. 661. A bill to assist entrepreneurs, support development of the creative economy, and encourage international cultural exchange, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. KAINE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WYDEN, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 662. A bill to provide incentives for hate crime reporting, grants for State-run hate crime hotlines, a Federal private right of action for victims of hate crimes, and additional penalties for individuals convicted under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. THUNE:

S. 663. A bill to establish the position of Choice Program Ombudsman within the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs to manage complaints regarding the provision of hospital care and medical services under section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 664. A bill to approve the settlement of the water rights claims of the Navajo in Utah, to authorize construction of projects in connection therewith, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 665. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to authorize additional lease sales to be added to an approved 5-year leasing program; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCOTT (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 666. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 667. A bill to amend titles 5, 10, 37, and 38, United States Code, to ensure that an order to serve on active duty under section 12304a or 12304b of title 10, United States

Code, is treated the same as other orders to serve on active duty for determining the eligibility of members of the uniformed services and veterans for certain benefits and for calculating the deadlines for certain benefits; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WYDEN, and Ms. HARRIS):

S. 668. A bill to nullify the effect of the recent executive order regarding border security and immigration enforcement; 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 Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. Res. 87. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate concerning the ongoing conflict in Syria as it reaches its six-year mark in March, the ensuing humanitarian crisis in Syria and neighboring countries, the resulting humanitarian and national security challenges, and the urgent need for a political solution to the crisis; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. PETERS, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. Res. 88. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the President and the Secretary of State should ensure that the Government of Canada does not permanently store nuclear waste in the Great Lakes Basin; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. Res. 89. A resolution supporting the designation of March 2017 as "National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. Con. Res. 9. A concurrent resolution recognizing the George C. Marshall Museum and George C. Marshall Research Library in Lexington, Virginia, as the National George C. Marshall Museum and Library; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 29

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 29, a bill to permit disabled law enforcement officers, customs and border protection officers, firefighters, air traffic controllers, nuclear materials couriers, members of the Capitol Police, members of the Supreme Court Police, employees of the Central Intelligence Agency performing intelligence activities abroad or having specialized security requirements, and diplomatic security special agents of the Department of State to

receive retirement benefits in the same manner as if they had not been disabled.

S. 34

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 34, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for the en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for "midnight rules", and for other purposes.

S. 82

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 82, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the denial of deduction for certain excessive employee remuneration, and for other purposes.

S. 204

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 204, a bill to authorize the use of unapproved medical products by patients diagnosed with a terminal illness in accordance with State law, and for other purposes.

S. 205

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 205, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the estate and generation-skipping transfer taxes, and for other purposes.

S. 236

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 236, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 255

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 255, a bill to increase the rates of pay under the General Schedule and other statutory pay systems and for prevailing rate employees by 3.2 percent, and for other purposes.

S. 275

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 275, a bill to allow the financing by United States persons of sales of agricultural commodities to Cuba.

S. 324

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of S. 324, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

S. 341

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 341, a bill to provide for congressional oversight of actions to

waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

S. 374

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 374, a bill to enable concrete masonry products manufacturers to establish, finance, and carry out a coordinated program of research, education, and promotion to improve, maintain, and develop markets for concrete masonry products.

S. 382

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 382, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a voluntary registry to collect data on cancer incidence among firefighters.

S. 415

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 415, a bill to nullify the effect of the recent Executive order that makes the vast majority of unauthorized individuals priorities for removal and aims to withhold critical Federal funding to sanctuary cities.

S. 445

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 445, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 448

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 448, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for treatment of clinical psychologists as physicians for purposes of furnishing clinical psychologist services under the Medicare program.

S. 459

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 459, a bill to designate the area between the intersections of Wisconsin Avenue, Northwest and Davis Street, Northwest and Wisconsin Avenue, Northwest and Edmunds Street, Northwest in Washington, District of Columbia, as "Boris Nemtsov Plaza", and for other purposes.

S. 479

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 479, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening.

S. 497

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 497, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 515

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 515, a bill to require the Secretary of Labor to maintain a publicly available list of all employers that relocate a call center overseas, to make such companies ineligible for Federal grants or guaranteed loans, and to require disclosure of the physical location of business agents engaging in customer service communications, and for other purposes.

S. 517

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 517, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act with respect to the ethanol waiver for Reid vapor pressure limitations under such Act.

S. 518

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 518, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for technical assistance for small treatment works.

S. 544

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 544, a bill to amend Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the termination date for the Veterans Choice Program, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 544, *supra*.

S. 608

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 608, a bill to nullify the effect of the March 6, 2017 executive order that temporarily restricts most nationals from six countries from entering the United States.

S. 629

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 629, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drugs, and Cosmetic Act to ensure the safety and effectiveness of medically important antimicrobials approved for use in the prevention, control, and treatment of animal diseases, in order

to minimize the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

S.J. RES. 27

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 27, a joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to "Clarification of Employer's Continuing Obligation to Make and Maintain an Accurate Record of Each Recordable Injury and Illness".

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. REED, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 630. A bill to amend the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 to make 2,500 visas available for the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor again today to speak about a program I have been working on that has had bipartisan support for a number of years; that is, the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program. This program allows Afghans, including interpreters, who have supported the U.S. mission in Afghanistan and who face threats as a result of their service to apply for refuge in the United States. As I said, this has had strong bipartisan support. I have worked with Senators MCCAIN, TILLIS, LEAHY, GRAHAM, and so many others here in the Chamber to try to make sure we provide enough visas for those Afghans who are being threatened and who want to come to the United States.

I wish to point out that the Trump administration, even as it has sharply restricted immigration and refugee programs, has made exceptions for those who served alongside our soldiers and diplomats. In fact, when the administration's original Executive order on immigration was released, there was bipartisan anger that Iraqi interpreters were not protected because this program has served not just those in Afghanistan who have helped us but also those in Iraq. So the administration recognized its mistake and has made an exception for Iraqi SIV recipients, and now they have exempted Iraq from their Executive order.

It is really past time that we rally renewed support for the Afghan SIV Program. Last week, we learned that the State Department has stopped interviewing applicants for the Afghan program because there are more applicants in the final stages of the process than there are visas. Unless Congress acts, the final visas will be exhausted by the end of May. It is estimated that more than 10,000 applicants are still in some step of the process of obtaining these visas.

For these Afghans, it really is no exaggeration to say that this is a matter

of life and death. Interpreters who served the U.S. mission are being systematically hunted down by the Taliban, and unless Congress acts, this program will lapse and we will abandon these Afghans to a harsh fate.

The United States promised to protect those Afghans who served our mission with great loyalty and at enormous risk, and it would be a stain on our national honor to break this promise. It would also carry profound strategic costs. U.S. forces and diplomats have always relied on local people to help us accomplish our missions. We continue to require this assistance in Afghanistan, and we will need this support in other places in the future where we face conflict. So we have to ask, if we don't keep our promise, why would anyone agree to help the United States if we abandon those who assist us? This is exactly why the former commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, GEN David Petraeus, and his predecessor, GEN Stanley McChrystal, have pleaded with Congress to extend the Afghan SIV Program. In a letter to Congress last year, more than 30 additional prominent generals, including Gen. John Allen, the former commander in Afghanistan, GEN George Casey, the former commander in Iraq, and two former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff also urged Congress to extend the program.

In addition, our soldiers and marines are keenly interested in protecting the interpreters who served with them in Afghanistan. Many of them owe their lives to the interpreters who went into combat with them. In recent years, I have gotten to know one of those servicemen, a former Army captain, Michael Breen, who is a Granite Stater. He served with the infantry in Iraq and led paratroopers in Afghanistan. He speaks with admiration about one interpreter in particular who was an Iraqi—part of the Iraqi program—a woman in her early twenties who was named Wissam.

On one occasion, Captain Breen and his soldiers were at a small forward operating base in Iraq. He said that a man approached, frantically pointing to his watch and indicating an explosion with his hands. The Americans didn't speak Arabic, so they couldn't tell if the man was trying to warn them or threaten them. Wissam hurried over toward Captain Breen to assist. Wissam was beloved by her American comrades, always cheerful and eager to help. She listened to the man and said that he was actually there warning of an improvised explosive device on the main road.

As Captain Breen later told me, "A trusted interpreter can be the difference between a successful patrol and a body bag." He noted that every night, he and his fellow soldiers would hunker down in their heavily guarded perimeter, but Wissam would leave the compound and go home. One evening after she left the American compound, three gunmen ambushed her car. She was killed—one more interpreter who paid

the ultimate price for serving the American mission. As Captain Breen later said, one day there will be a granite monument with the names of all of the American servicemembers who died in Iraq and Afghanistan. Wissam deserves to have her name on that monument, too, because she took great risks and she gave her life while serving the United States.

To be eligible for a visa through the Afghan SIV Program, new applicants must demonstrate at least 2 years of faithful and valuable service to the U.S. mission. To receive a visa, they must also clear a rigorous screening process that includes an independent verification of their service and then an intensive interagency review.

We know that the service of these individuals has been critical to our successes in Afghanistan.

Last month in Keene, NH, I met with a remarkable recent immigrant from Afghanistan named Patmana Rafiq Kunary. Patmana had worked closely with the U.S. Agency for International Development in Kabul. She went door to door, encouraging women to take out microloans to start their own businesses. Patmana eventually became vice president for operations at the USAID-sponsored Microloan Program.

In fact, just today I talked to a woman reporter from Afghanistan who wanted to know what message of hope I could provide to the women of Afghanistan. Well, I told her about Patmana, and I told her that one of the things that keep us in Afghanistan supporting our soldiers is concern about what is happening to the women in Afghanistan.

For Patmana, going door to door and working closely with Americans—this was dangerous work. She drew unwelcome attention wherever she went, and she became a high-profile target for the Taliban and others. And then one day in 2013, she got a call at her USAID office. It was from the distraught wife of one of her USAID colleagues, another Afghan. The caller's husband had just been murdered, apparently in retaliation for his work with the Americans.

Realizing that her life was in danger, too, Patmana applied for a special immigrant visa. For 2 years, she and her husband were subjected to repeated interviews at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. Her background was checked and rechecked before visas were finally granted. She told me that they would move frequently. They couldn't stay in one place very long because the Taliban would find them. And she said occasionally there was a knock on her relatives' door, saying "We know where Patmana is," and that would be a signal to move.

She and her husband now live happily in Keene, NH. I am pleased to say her husband has found work as an auditor with a local financial company, and they have a 2-year-old daughter. They are welcomed as valued members of the Keene community and of our larger Granite State family.

The many contributions of these Afghans—both in Afghanistan and now as residents or citizens of the United States—those contributions help explain why senior U.S. commanders and diplomats have urged Congress to extend the Afghan SIV Program. Our Secretary of Defense, GEN James Mattis, during the confirmation process, said: "Most of our units could not have accomplished their missions without the assistance, often at the risk of their lives, of these courageous men and women."

We would never leave an American warrior behind on the battlefield. Likewise, we must not leave behind the Afghan interpreters who served side by side with our warriors and diplomats.

We made a solemn promise to these brave people, and I am going to do everything I can to ensure that we keep this promise. I know there is a lot of bipartisan support in this body to do that. So today I am introducing the Keep Our Promise to Our Afghan Allies Act with Senators MCCAIN, REED, and TILLIS. This legislation would authorize additional special immigrant visas and would help ensure that the program does not lapse and leave behind thousands of Afghans who helped us with the threat by the Taliban.

In addition, I intend to work closely with Senators who are negotiating legislation to fund the Federal Government in order to ensure that additional visas are included. I urge my colleagues to join me. Let's keep the promise we made to our Afghan allies and support these efforts.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 640. A bill to prioritize funding for an expanded and sustained national investment in biomedical research; to the Committee on the Budget.

S. 640

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 "American Cures Act".

SEC. 2. CAP ADJUSTMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 251(b)(2) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E); and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (C), the following:

"(D) BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH.—

"(i) NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH.—If a bill or joint resolution making appropriations for a fiscal year is enacted that specifies amounts for the National Institutes of Health at the Department of Health and Human Services, then the adjustments for that fiscal year shall be the amount of additional new budget authority provided in that Act for such programs for that fiscal year, but shall not exceed—

"(I) for fiscal year 2017, \$2,966,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(II) for fiscal year 2018, \$4,718,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(III) for fiscal year 2019, \$6,643,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(IV) for fiscal year 2020, \$8,743,000,000 in additional new budget authority; and

"(V) for fiscal year 2021, \$10,981,000,000 in additional new budget authority.

"(ii) CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION.—If a bill or joint resolution making appropriations for a fiscal year is enacted that specifies amounts for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at the Department of Health and Human Services, then the adjustments for that fiscal year shall be the amount of additional new budget authority provided in that Act for such programs for that fiscal year, but shall not exceed—

"(I) for fiscal year 2017, \$1,430,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(II) for fiscal year 2018, \$1,828,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(III) for fiscal year 2019, \$2,264,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(IV) for fiscal year 2020, \$2,740,000,000 in additional new budget authority; and

"(V) for fiscal year 2021, \$3,247,000,000 in additional new budget authority.

"(iii) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HEALTH PROGRAM.—If a bill or joint resolution making appropriations for a fiscal year is enacted that specifies amounts for the Department of Defense health program, then the adjustments for that fiscal year shall be the amount of additional new budget authority provided in that Act for such programs for that fiscal year, but shall not exceed—

"(I) for fiscal year 2017, \$135,100,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(II) for fiscal year 2018, \$241,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(III) for fiscal year 2019, \$356,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(IV) for fiscal year 2020, \$482,000,000 in additional new budget authority; and

"(V) for fiscal year 2021, \$618,000,000 in additional new budget authority.

"(iv) MEDICAL AND PROSTHETICS RESEARCH PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—If a bill or joint resolution making appropriations for a fiscal year is enacted that specifies amounts for the medical and prosthetics research program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, then the adjustments for that fiscal year shall be the amount of additional new budget authority provided in that Act for such programs for that fiscal year, but shall not exceed—

"(I) for fiscal year 2017, \$36,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(II) for fiscal year 2018, \$65,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(III) for fiscal year 2019, \$98,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

"(IV) for fiscal year 2020, \$134,000,000 in additional new budget authority; and

"(V) for fiscal year 2021, \$172,000,000 in additional new budget authority.

"(v) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this subparagraph:

"(I) ADDITIONAL NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY.—The term 'additional new budget authority' means—

"(aa) with respect to the National Institutes of Health, the amount provided for a fiscal year, in excess of the amount provided in fiscal year 2016, in an appropriation Act and specified to support the National Institutes of Health;

"(bb) with respect to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the amount provided for a fiscal year, in excess of the amount provided in fiscal year 2016, in an appropriation Act and specified to support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

"(cc) with respect to the Department of Defense health program, the amount provided for a fiscal year, in excess of the

amount provided in fiscal year 2016, in an appropriation Act and specified to support the Department of Defense health program; and

“(dd) with respect to the medical and prosthetics research program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the amount provided for a fiscal year, in excess of the amount provided in fiscal year 2016, in an appropriation Act and specified to support the medical and prosthetics research program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“(II) CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION.—The term ‘Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’ means the appropriations accounts that support the various institutes, offices, and centers that make up the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“(III) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HEALTH PROGRAM.—The term ‘Department of Defense health program’ means the appropriations accounts that support the various institutes, offices, and centers that make up the Department of Defense health program.

“(IV) MEDICAL AND PROSTHETICS RESEARCH PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—The term ‘medical and prosthetics research program of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ means the appropriations accounts that support the various institutes, offices, and centers that make up the medical and prosthetics research program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“(V) NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH.—The term ‘National Institutes of Health’ means the appropriations accounts that support the various institutes, offices, and centers that make up the National Institutes of Health.”.

(b) FUNDING.—There are hereby authorized to be appropriated—

(1) for the National Institutes of Health, the amounts provided for under clause (i) of such section 251(b)(2)(D) in each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year;

(2) for the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the amounts provided for under clause (ii) of such section 251(b)(2)(D) in each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year;

(3) for the Department of Defense health program, the amounts provided for under clause (iii) of such section 251(b)(2)(D) in each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year; and

(4) for the Medical and prosthetics research program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the amounts provided for under clause (iv) of such section 251(b)(2)(D) in each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year.

(c) MINIMUM CONTINUED FUNDING REQUIREMENT.—Amounts appropriated for each of the programs and agencies described in section 251(b)(2)(D) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (as added by subsection (a)) for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, and each subsequent fiscal year, shall not be less than the amounts appropriated for such programs and agencies for fiscal year 2016.

(d) EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN APPROPRIATIONS FROM SEQUESTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 255(g)(1)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act (2 U.S.C. 905(g)(1)(A)) is amended by inserting after “Advances to the Unemployment Trust Fund and Other Funds (16–0327–0–1–600).” the following:

“Appropriations under the American Cures Act.”.

(2) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to any sequestra-

tion order issued under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 900 et seq.) on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 641. A bill to prioritize funding for an expanded and sustained national investment in basic science research; to the Committee on the Budget.

S. 641

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 “American Innovation Act”.

SEC. 2. CAP ADJUSTMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 251(b)(2) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E); and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (C), the following:

“(D) BASIC SCIENCE RESEARCH.—

“(i) NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.—If a bill or joint resolution making appropriations for a fiscal year is enacted that specifies amounts for the National Science Foundation, then the adjustments for that fiscal year shall be the amount of additional new budget authority provided in that Act for such programs for that fiscal year, but shall not exceed—

“(I) for fiscal year 2017, \$429,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(II) for fiscal year 2018, \$834,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(III) for fiscal year 2019, \$1,279,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(IV) for fiscal year 2020, \$1,764,000,000 in additional new budget authority; and

“(V) for fiscal year 2021, \$2,279,000,000 in additional new budget authority.

“(ii) DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, OFFICE OF SCIENCE.—If a bill or joint resolution making appropriations for a fiscal year is enacted that specifies amounts for the Office of Science at the Department of Energy, then the adjustments for that fiscal year shall be the amount of additional new budget authority provided in that Act for such programs for that fiscal year, but shall not exceed—

“(I) for fiscal year 2017, \$378,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(II) for fiscal year 2018, \$674,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(III) for fiscal year 2019, \$998,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(IV) for fiscal year 2020, \$1,351,000,000 in additional new budget authority; and

“(V) for fiscal year 2021, \$1,727,000,000 in additional new budget authority.

“(iii) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS.—If a bill or joint resolution making appropriations for a fiscal year is enacted that specifies amounts for the Department of Defense science and technology programs, then the adjustments for that fiscal year shall be the amount of additional new budget authority provided in that Act for such programs for that fiscal year, but shall not exceed—

“(I) for fiscal year 2017, \$931,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(II) for fiscal year 2018, \$1,661,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(III) for fiscal year 2019, \$2,456,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(IV) for fiscal year 2020, \$3,320,000,000 in additional new budget authority; and

“(V) for fiscal year 2021, \$4,258,000,000 in additional new budget authority.

“(iv) NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH AND SERVICES.—If a bill or joint resolution making appropriations for a fiscal year is enacted that specifies amounts for the scientific and technical research and services of the National Institute of Standards and Technology at the Department of Commerce, then the adjustments for that fiscal year shall be the amount of additional new budget authority provided in that Act for such programs for that fiscal year, but shall not exceed—

“(I) for fiscal year 2017, \$42,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(II) for fiscal year 2018, \$73,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(III) for fiscal year 2019, \$108,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(IV) for fiscal year 2020, \$147,000,000 in additional new budget authority; and

“(V) for fiscal year 2021, \$188,000,000 in additional new budget authority.

“(v) NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION SCIENCE MISSION DIRECTORATE.—If a bill or joint resolution making appropriations for a fiscal year is enacted that specifies amounts for the Science Mission Directorate at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, then the adjustments for that fiscal year shall be the amount of additional new budget authority provided in that Act for such programs for that fiscal year, but shall not exceed—

“(I) for fiscal year 2017, \$302,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(II) for fiscal year 2018, \$600,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(III) for fiscal year 2019, \$928,000,000 in additional new budget authority;

“(IV) for fiscal year 2020, \$1,286,000,000 in additional new budget authority; and

“(V) for fiscal year 2021, \$1,666,000,000 in additional new budget authority.

“(vi) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this subparagraph:

“(I) ADDITIONAL NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY.—The term ‘additional new budget authority’ means—

“(aa) with respect to the National Science Foundation, the amount provided for a fiscal year, in excess of the amount provided in fiscal year 2016, in an appropriation Act and specified to support the National Science Foundation;

“(bb) with respect to the Department of Energy Office of Science, the amount provided for a fiscal year, in excess of the amount provided in fiscal year 2016, in an appropriation Act and specified to support the Department of Energy Office of Science;

“(cc) with respect to the Department of Defense science and technology programs, the amount provided for a fiscal year, in excess of the amount provided in fiscal year 2016, in an appropriation Act and specified to support the Department of Defense science and technology programs;

“(dd) with respect to the National Institute of Standards and Technology scientific and technical research services, the amount provided for a fiscal year, in excess of the amount provided in fiscal year 2016, in an appropriation Act and specified to support the National Institute of Standards and Technology scientific and technical research services; and

“(ee) with respect to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Science Mission Directorate, the amount provided for a fiscal year, in excess of the amount provided in fiscal year 2016, in an appropriation Act and specified to support the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Science Mission Directorate.

“(II) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS.—The term ‘Department of Defense science and technology programs’ means the appropriations accounts that support the various institutes, offices, and centers that make up the Department of Defense science and technology programs.

“(III) DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY OFFICE OF SCIENCE.—The term ‘Department of Energy Office of Science’ means the appropriations accounts that support the various institutes, offices, and centers that make up the Department of Energy Office of Science.

“(IV) NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION SCIENCE MISSION DIRECTORATE.—The term ‘National Aeronautics and Space Administration Science Mission Directorate’ means the appropriations accounts that support the various institutes, offices, and centers that make up the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Science Mission Directorate.

“(V) NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH AND SERVICES.—The term ‘National Institute of Standards and Technology scientific and technical research and services’ means the appropriations accounts that support the various institutes, offices, and centers that make up the National Institute of Standards and Technology scientific and technical research and services.

“(VI) NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.—The term ‘National Science Foundation’ means the appropriations accounts that support the various institutes, offices, and centers that make up the National Science Foundation.”.

(b) FUNDING.—There are hereby authorized to be appropriated—

(1) for the National Science Foundation, the amounts provided for under clause (i) of such section 251(b)(2)(D) in each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year;

(2) for the Department of Energy Office of Science, the amounts provided for under clause (ii) of such section 251(b)(2)(D) in each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year;

(3) for the Department of Defense science and technology programs, the amounts provided for under clause (iii) of such section 251(b)(2)(D) in each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year;

(4) for the National Institute of Standards and Technology scientific and technical research and services, the amounts provided for under clause (iv) of such section 251(b)(2)(D) in each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year; and

(5) for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Science Mission Directorate, the amounts provided for under clause (v) of such section 251(b)(2)(D) in each of fiscal years 2016 through 2021, and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year.

(c) MINIMUM CONTINUED FUNDING REQUIREMENT.—Amounts appropriated for each of the programs and agencies described in section 251(b)(2)(D) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (as added by subsection (a)) for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021, and each subsequent fiscal year, shall not be less than the amounts appropriated for such programs and agencies for fiscal year 2016.

(d) EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN APPROPRIATIONS FROM SEQUESTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 255(g)(1)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act (2 U.S.C. 905(g)(1)(A)) is amended by inserting after “Advances to the Unem-

ployment Trust Fund and Other Funds (16-0327–0–1–600).” the following:

“Appropriations under the American Innovation Act.”.

(2) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to any sequestration order issued under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 900 et seq.) on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 643. A bill to provide for media coverage of Federal court proceedings; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, affirming the public’s right to know how their government is run, Sunshine Week is an annual reminder of the importance of transparency and accountability in a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. In the spirit of government transparency, I am pleased to join a bipartisan group of colleagues to introduce the Sunshine in the Courtroom Act of 2017. This important piece of legislation furthers the public’s access to court proceedings by permitting Federal judges at all Federal court levels to open their courtrooms to television cameras and radio broadcasts.

For decades, and with great results, States such as my home State of Iowa have allowed cameras in their courtrooms. In fact, all 50 States and the District of Columbia now allow some news coverage of proceedings, and it is time we join them. This openness in our courts improves the public’s understanding of the legal system and what happens inside our courts.

However, our Federal judicial system unnecessarily remains a mystery to many across the country. The bill I am introducing today, along with Senator KLOBUCHAR and a number of cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, will greatly improve public access to Federal courts by letting Federal judges open their courtrooms to television cameras and other forms of electronic media. Letting the Sun shine in on our Federal courtrooms will allow Americans to better understand the judicial process.

The Sunshine in the Courtroom Act will ensure that the introduction of cameras and other broadcasting devices into courtrooms goes as smoothly as it has at the State level. This legislation leaves the presence of the cameras in Federal trial and appellate courts to the sole discretion of the judges—it is not mandatory. The bill also provides a mechanism for Congress to study the effects of this legislation on our judiciary before making this change permanent through a 3-year sunset provision. The bill protects the privacy and safety of nonparty witnesses by giving them the right to have their faces and voices obscured. Additionally, the bill prohibits the televising of jurors and includes a provi-

sion to protect the due process rights of each party.

It is time to open the courthouse doors and let the light shine in on the Federal judiciary. Granting the public greater access to an already public proceeding will inspire greater faith in and appreciation for our judges who pledge equal and impartial justice for all.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of this 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. 643

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 “Sunshine in the Courtroom Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. FEDERAL APPELLATE AND DISTRICT COURTS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) PRESIDING JUDGE.—The term “presiding judge” means the judge presiding over the court proceeding concerned. In proceedings in which more than 1 judge participates, the presiding judge shall be the senior active judge so participating or, in the case of a circuit court of appeals, the senior active circuit judge so participating, except that—

(A) in en banc sittings of any United States circuit court of appeals, the presiding judge shall be the chief judge of the circuit whenever the chief judge participates; and

(B) in en banc sittings of the Supreme Court of the United States, the presiding judge shall be the Chief Justice whenever the Chief Justice participates.

(2) APPELLATE COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.—The term “appellate court of the United States” means any United States circuit court of appeals and the Supreme Court of the United States.

(b) AUTHORITY OF PRESIDING JUDGE TO ALLOW MEDIA COVERAGE OF COURT PROCEEDINGS.—

(1) AUTHORITY OF APPELLATE COURTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under subparagraph (B), the presiding judge of an appellate court of the United States may, at the discretion of that judge, permit the photographing, electronic recording, broadcasting, or televising to the public of any court proceeding over which that judge presides.

(B) EXCEPTION.—The presiding judge shall not permit any action under subparagraph (A), if—

(i) in the case of a proceeding involving only the presiding judge, that judge determines the action would constitute a violation of the due process rights of any party; or

(ii) in the case of a proceeding involving the participation of more than 1 judge, a majority of the judges participating determine that the action would constitute a violation of the due process rights of any party.

(2) AUTHORITY OF DISTRICT COURTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—

(i) AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except as provided under clause (iii), the presiding judge of a district court of the United States may, at the discretion of that judge, permit the photographing, electronic recording, broadcasting, or televising to the public of any court proceeding over which that judge presides.

(ii) OBSCURING OF WITNESSES.—Except as provided under clause (iii)—

(I) upon the request of any witness (other than a party) in a trial proceeding, the court

shall order the face and voice of the witness to be disguised or otherwise obscured in such manner as to render the witness unrecognizable to the broadcast audience of the trial proceeding; and

(II) the presiding judge in a trial proceeding shall inform each witness who is not a party that the witness has the right to request the image and voice of that witness to be obscured during the testimony of the witness.

(iii) EXCEPTION.—The presiding judge shall not permit any action under this subparagraph—

(I) if that judge determines the action would constitute a violation of the due process rights of any party; and

(II) until the Judicial Conference of the United States promulgates mandatory guidelines under paragraph (5).

(B) NO MEDIA COVERAGE OF JURORS.—The presiding judge shall not permit the photographing, electronic recording, broadcasting, or televising of any juror in a trial proceeding, or of the jury selection process.

(C) DISCRETION OF THE JUDGE.—The presiding judge shall have the discretion to obscure the face and voice of an individual, if good cause is shown that the photographing, electronic recording, broadcasting, or televising of the individual would threaten—

(i) the safety of the individual;

(ii) the security of the court;

(iii) the integrity of future or ongoing law enforcement operations; or

(iv) the interest of justice.

(D) SUNSET OF DISTRICT COURT AUTHORITY.—The authority under this paragraph shall terminate 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) INTERLOCUTORY APPEALS BARRED.—The decision of the presiding judge under this subsection of whether or not to permit, deny, or terminate the photographing, electronic recording, broadcasting, or televising of a court proceeding may not be challenged through an interlocutory appeal.

(4) ADVISORY GUIDELINES.—The Judicial Conference of the United States may promulgate advisory guidelines to which a presiding judge, at the discretion of that judge, may refer in making decisions with respect to the management and administration of photographing, recording, broadcasting, or televising described under paragraphs (1) and (2).

(5) MANDATORY GUIDELINES.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Judicial Conference of the United States shall promulgate mandatory guidelines that a presiding judge is required to follow for obscuring of certain vulnerable witnesses, including crime victims, minor victims, families of victims, cooperating witnesses, undercover law enforcement officers or agents, witnesses subject to section 3521 of title 18, United States Code, relating to witness relocation and protection, or minors under the age of 18 years. The guidelines shall include procedures for determining, at the earliest practicable time in any investigation or case, which witnesses should be considered vulnerable under this section.

(6) PROCEDURES.—In the interests of justice and fairness, the presiding judge of the court in which media use is desired has discretion to promulgate rules and disciplinary measures for the courtroom use of any form of media or media equipment and the acquisition or distribution of any of the images or sounds obtained in the courtroom. The presiding judge shall also have discretion to require written acknowledgment of the rules by anyone individually or on behalf of any entity before being allowed to acquire any images or sounds from the courtroom.

(7) NO BROADCAST OF CONFERENCES BETWEEN ATTORNEYS AND CLIENTS.—There shall be no

audio pickup or broadcast of conferences which occur in a court proceeding between attorneys and their clients, between co-counsel of a client, between adverse counsel, or between counsel and the presiding judge, if the conferences are not part of the official record of the proceedings.

(8) EXPENSES.—A court may require that any accommodations to effectuate this Act be made without public expense.

(9) INHERENT AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this Act shall limit the inherent authority of a court to protect witnesses or clear the courtroom to preserve the decorum and integrity of the legal process or protect the safety of an individual.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 649. A bill to permit the televising of Supreme Court proceedings; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

S. 649

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 “Cameras in the Courtroom Act”.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO TITLE 28.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 45 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting at the end the following:

“§ 678. Televising Supreme Court proceedings

“The Supreme Court shall permit television coverage of all open sessions of the Court unless the Court decides, by a vote of the majority of justices, that allowing such coverage in a particular case would constitute a violation of the due process rights of 1 or more of the parties before the Court.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The chapter analysis for chapter 45 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting at the end the following:

“§ 678. Televising Supreme Court proceedings.”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 87—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE CONCERNING THE ONGOING CONFLICT IN SYRIA AS IT REACHES ITS SIX-YEAR MARK IN MARCH, THE ENSUING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, THE RESULTING HUMANITARIAN AND NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES, AND THE URGENT NEED FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS

Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. MURPHY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 87

Whereas the transnational Salafi-jihadi organizations ISIL and al Qaeda are utilizing the conflict in Syria and the actions of the Assad regime to recruit and mobilize fighter and popular support;

Whereas the crisis in Syria has led to the creation of terrorist safe havens controlled by ISIL and al Qaeda, along with other ex-

tremist groups, which have become bases from which to plan, direct, and inspire attacks against the United States and its allies and partners;

Whereas the spread of violence perpetuated by the Syrian conflict and the flow of refugees is a threat to the security of United States allies in the Middle East and Europe, placing immense domestic and humanitarian burdens on Syria's neighbors, most notably Lebanon and Jordan, as well as Turkey and Iraq;

Whereas the Syrian conflict has allowed Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its proxies to increase their influence in parts of Syria and potentially threaten Israel's borders;

Whereas United Nations Security Council resolutions 2332 (2016), 2268 (2016), and 2139 (2014) call for the implementation of a cessation of hostilities in Syria and reaffirm the international community's support for the immediate, direct, and uninhibited access of humanitarian workers throughout the Syrian Arab Republic;

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that the Syrian conflict has created 4,800,000 refugees and 6,600,000 internally displaced persons;

Whereas widespread and systematic attacks on civilians, schools, hospitals, and other civilian infrastructure, in violation of international humanitarian law, continue in Syria, in particular as result of the actions of the Assad regime and its Russian and Iranian supporters;

Whereas widespread and systematic violations of the human rights of the people of Syria continue to be perpetrated by the Assad regime;

Whereas, according to Amnesty International, the Assad regime has a documented record of committing mass human rights abuses against detainees, including 5,000 to 13,000 detainees summarily executed by hanging between September 2011 through December 2015;

Whereas the regime of Bashar al-Assad has repeatedly blocked civilian access to or diverted humanitarian assistance, including medical supplies, from besieged and hard-to-reach areas, in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions;

Whereas the Assad regime is subject to and in violation of both United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118 (2013) on the Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2209 (2015) Condemning the Use of Chlorine Gas in Syria;

Whereas the Governments of the Russian Federation and Iran have supported the Assad regime, perpetuated the conflict, and deployed tactics and strategies that have caused grave harm to civilians, including their conduct in the siege of eastern Aleppo, constituting war crimes and crimes against humanity;

Whereas there exists sufficient documentation, as well as credible, clear, and convincing reporting, to charge Bashar al-Assad with war crimes and crimes against humanity due to the Assad regime's confirmed use of chemical weapons, use of barrel bombs against noncombatants, widespread use of torture, summary executions, prolonged sieges, forcible relocations, and indiscriminate targeting of civilians and humanitarian actors;

Whereas the United States Government has provided over \$5,800,000 since 2011 in humanitarian assistance to communities and people directly impacted by the Syrian conflict, including \$364,000,000 that will be provided in fiscal year 2017 for refugees and other people displaced by the Syrian conflict; and

Whereas the United States Armed Forces are leading the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and are deployed with Coalition allies within the territory of Syria and are working by, with, and through local Syrian partner forces to defeat ISIL and stabilize territory taken from it: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) strongly condemns the regime of Bashar al-Assad for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity during the Syrian conflict, including the use of chemical weapons, in violation of its obligations as required by United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015), and for the widespread use of torture, summary executions, prolonged sieges, forcible relocations, and indiscriminate targeting of civilians and humanitarian actors;

(2) condemns the Assad regime and the Government of the Russian Federation for using indiscriminate cluster munitions on civilian areas and infrastructure and for the deliberate targeting of United Nations humanitarian aid convoys;

(3) urges all parties to the conflict, particularly the Russian Federation, Iran, and Iranian-backed militias, to immediately halt indiscriminate attacks, the imposition of starvation sieges, and other forms of warfare directed against civilians and civilian infrastructure;

(4) strongly urges all parties to the conflict to allow for and facilitate immediate, unfettered access to humanitarian assistance throughout Syria, respecting the safety, security, independence, and impartiality of humanitarian workers and ensuring freedom of movement to deliver aid, particularly in areas of Syria controlled by opposition forces;

(5) affirms the neutrality of medical professionals providing humanitarian assistance and health care on a non-political basis, and condemns attacks against such personnel or interference in the provision of medical care, particularly in areas of Syria controlled by opposition forces;

(6) encourages the President to make it the policy of the United States Government to continue to coordinate a comprehensive and generous response to the Syrian humanitarian crisis, including assistance and development, and protection of human rights inside Syria and in the region;

(7) urges all parties in Syria to support the immediate and full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2268 (2016), which calls for a cessation of hostilities in the conflict, except with ISIL and al Qaeda and their affiliated organizations, to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction of war-affected communities in Syria;

(8) affirms that the elimination of al Qaeda and ISIS safe havens in Syria, from which those organizations can plan and launch attacks against the United States and its partners, is a vital national security interest of the United States;

(9) commends the Syrian Democratic Forces, the Syrian Arab Coalition, and other local, Syrian partner forces for their support of Operation Inherent Resolve and the efforts of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL;

(10) affirms that the stability of key European and Middle Eastern partners is vital to the national security of the United States and preventing the Syrian conflict from undermining that stability is a top priority for the United States;

(11) calls on the international community to continue to support neighboring countries and host communities who are generously supporting refugees and internally displaced persons fleeing the conflict in Syria;

(12) calls on the President to continue the active participation of the United States Government in a robust and effective diplo-

matic process to achieve a political agreement to the Syrian conflict; and

(13) urges the President to develop and submit to the Committees on Foreign Relations and Armed Services of the Senate within 90 days a strategy for providing long-term stability and security in areas seized from ISIL.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, 6 years ago, the Syrian people rose up against the tyranny of the Assad regime and hoped that the international community would stand by their side in this monumental endeavor. Nearly half a million Syrians have been killed by this conflict. More than 13 million Syrians have been forced to flee their homes and continue to face starvation and sieges by pro-Assad forces. Assad's barrel bombs and Russian airstrikes still target hospitals and schools. Syria's neighbors have provided refuge to nearly 5 million, mostly women and children. At the same time, many Syrians continue to risk their lives in an attempt to find safety on Europe's shores.

In the vacuum left by Assad's devastation, extremist groups like ISIS and al-Qaida have found fertile ground. Ankara, Baghdad, Beirut, Brussels, Paris, San Bernadino—these are just a few of the places impacted by ISIS. As long as the Syrian conflict continues, violence and extremism will continue to spiral out of the region. It is time for the United States and international community to hold the Assad regime and its backers accountable for their actions. The Trump administration should take an active role in resolving this conflict. The Syrian conflict has many dimensions—leaving this to the Russians and hoping that they can end this war is not a strategy. American leadership, along with support from regional actors and the international community, is the only meaningful approach towards bringing peace to Syria and its citizens and justice to the Assad regime for its brutal actions.

I am pleased to introduce this resolution with Senators McCain and Rubio and Murphy that condemns the Assad regime's blatant disregard for international law and human life and asks the Trump administration to pursue a strategy that can help bring the brutal conflict to a peaceful conclusion. The resolution also denounces Iran and Russia for their political and military support of the Assad regime and calls for protection of civilians and humanitarian workers.

SENATE RESOLUTION 88—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA DOES NOT PERMANENTLY STORE NUCLEAR WASTE IN THE GREAT LAKES BASIN

Ms. Stabenow (for herself, Mrs. Gillibrand, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Brown, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Franken, Mr. Peters, and Ms. Baldwin) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 88

Whereas the water resources of the Great Lakes Basin are precious public natural resources, shared by the Great Lakes States and the Canadian Provinces;

Whereas the United States and Canada have, since 1909, worked to maintain and improve the water quality of the Great Lakes through water quality agreements;

Whereas over 40,000,000 people in both Canada and the United States depend on the fresh water from the Great Lakes for drinking water;

Whereas Ontario Power Generation is proposing to build a permanent geological repository for nuclear waste less than one mile from Lake Huron in Kincardine, Ontario, Canada;

Whereas nuclear waste is highly toxic and can take tens of thousands of years to decompose to safe levels;

Whereas a spill of nuclear waste into the Great Lakes could have lasting and severely adverse environmental, health, and economic impacts on the Great Lakes and the people that depend on them for their livelihood;

Whereas 187 local, county, State, and tribal governments have passed resolutions in opposition to Ontario Power Generation's proposed nuclear waste repository;

Whereas tribes and First Nations' citizens have a strong spiritual and cultural connection to the Great Lakes, and its protection is fundamental to treaty rights;

Whereas Ontario Power Generation has promised not to move forward with their current proposal without the support of the First Nations that would be impacted; and

Whereas, during the 1980s, when the Department of Energy, in accordance with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, was studying potential sites for a permanent nuclear waste repository in the United States, the Government of Canada expressed concern with locating a permanent nuclear waste repository within shared water basins of the two countries: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the Government of Canada should not allow a permanent nuclear waste repository to be built within the Great Lakes Basin;

(2) the President and the Secretary of State should take appropriate action to work with the Government of Canada to prevent a permanent nuclear waste repository from being built within the Great Lakes Basin; and

(3) the President and the Secretary of State should work together with their Government of Canada counterparts on a safe and responsible solution for the long-term storage of nuclear waste.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 9—RECOGNIZING THE GEORGE C. MARSHALL MUSEUM AND GEORGE C. MARSHALL RESEARCH LIBRARY IN LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA, AS THE NATIONAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

Mr. Kaine (for himself and Mr. Warner) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

S. CON. RES. 9

Whereas General George C. Marshall served as Army Chief of Staff during World War II,

Special Ambassador to China, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense;

Whereas General George C. Marshall was promoted to General of the Army in 1944, one of only five Army five-star generals in the history of the United States;

Whereas General George C. Marshall was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1946 for his military strategy and vital role during World War II;

Whereas General George C. Marshall was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953 for developing the European economic recovery strategy known as the Marshall Plan;

Whereas the George C. Marshall Foundation was established in 1953 and is devoted to preserving the legacy of General George C. Marshall through educational scholarship programs and facilities;

Whereas the George C. Marshall Foundation opened the George C. Marshall Museum and George C. Marshall Research Library in 1964 in Lexington, Virginia, on the post of the Virginia Military Institute, which is the alma mater of General George C. Marshall;

Whereas the George C. Marshall Museum educates the public about the military and diplomatic contributions of General George C. Marshall through extensive exhibits; and

Whereas the George C. Marshall Research Library maintains the most comprehensive collection of records documenting the life and leadership of General George C. Marshall: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress recognizes the George C. Marshall Museum and George C. Marshall Research Library in Lexington, Virginia, as the National George C. Marshall Museum and Library.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the George C. Marshall Foundation's museum and library as the National George C. Marshall Museum. General George C. Marshall was born in Uniontown, PA to a Virginia family. He is a distant relative of Chief Justice John Marshall, the fourth Supreme Court Justice of the United States. General Marshall graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1901 as senior first captain of the Corps of Cadets.

General Marshall served in a variety of posts in the Philippines, the United States, France, and China, distinguishing himself as a military leader. In 1939 he was named Chief of Staff by President Roosevelt and was responsible for building, supplying, and deploying over 8 million soldiers. Marshall also urged military readiness prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

After World War II, President Truman sent General Marshall to China to broker a coalition government between the Nationalist allies under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists under Mao Zedong. In 1946, General Marshall received the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor. President Truman appointed Marshall Secretary of State in 1947. In what became known as the Marshall Plan, as Secretary of State Marshall oversaw the postwar European economic recovery strategy. In 1953, General Marshall received the Nobel Peace Prize for his postwar work, the only career officer in the U.S. Army to ever receive this honor.

The George C. Marshall Foundation was established in 1953 and officially

opened in 1964. The foundation's museum is located in Lexington, Virginia and is dedicated to educating the public and the military and diplomatic career of General George C. Marshall. The foundation has devoted its mission to educating the public about the important contributions of General Marshall through its museum and research library. The Museum has five extensive exhibits and houses General Marshall's Nobel Peace Prize.

I am proud to introduce this resolution which will recognize and honor General George C. Marshall.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I have 10 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 15, 2017, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "Assessing U.S. Sanctions on Russia: Next Steps."

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room 106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, at 11 a.m., to hold a hearing entitled "Six Years of War in Syria: The Human Toll."

HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, at 10 a.m.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 15, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Vows for Visas: Investigating K-1 Fiancé Fraud."

VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the ses-

sion of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. in SR-418, to conduct a hearing entitled, "GAO's High Risk List and the Veterans Health Administration."

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, from 1:30 p.m., in room SH-219 of the Senate Hart Office Building.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND

The Subcommittee on Airland of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, at 3:30 p.m.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME AND TERRORISM

The Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism, is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 15, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the privileges of the floor be granted to Alexander Haberstroh, a military fellow for my office, as well as Charlotte Regula-Whitefield, an oceans fellow for my office, for the remainder of 2017.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FALEOMAVAEGA ENI FA'AUA'A HUNKIN VA CLINIC

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1362 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title. The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1362) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa, the Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. LANKFORD. 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. 1362) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE TRAFICKING OF ILLICIT FENTANYL INTO THE UNITED STATES FROM MEXICO AND CHINA

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign

Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 83 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 senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 83) expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the trafficking of illicit fentanyl into the United States from Mexico and China.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LANKFORD. 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. 83) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 8, 2017, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

HONORING IN PRAISE AND REMEMBRANCE THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE, STEADY LEADERSHIP, AND REMARKABLE, 70-YEAR REIGN OF KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ OF THAILAND

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 9.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 9) honoring in praise and remembrance the extraordinary life, steady leadership, and remarkable, 70-year reign of King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LANKFORD. 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 9) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of January 10, 2017, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF MARCH 21, 2017, AS "NATIONAL ROSIE THE RIVETER DAY"

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary

Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 76.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 76) expressing support for the designation of March 21, 2017, as "National Rosie the Riveter Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LANKFORD. 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 76) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 1, 2017, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF MARCH 2017 AS "NATIONAL COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH"

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 89, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 89) supporting the designation of March 2017 as "National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LANKFORD. 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. 89) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 21, 2017.)

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2017, THROUGH TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2017

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it 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: Thursday, March 16 at 11:30 a.m. and Monday, March 20 at 10 a.m.; I further ask that when the Senate adjourns on Monday, March 20, it next convene at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 21; 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 for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein; finally, that the morning business hour be equally divided, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LANKFORD. 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, following the remarks of Senator HATCH.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to once again address the nomination of Judge Neil M. Gorsuch to be the next Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

I am extraordinarily pleased that the President has nominated such an outstanding individual to fill the seat that was held by my friend, the late Justice Antonin Scalia, for nearly three decades.

In the weeks since Judge Gorsuch's nomination, I have done my best to make the case that he is exactly the kind of Justice that we need: one that will—in the timeless words of *Marbury v. Madison*—say what the law is, not what he wishes the law would be.

In my view, his outstanding credentials and his understanding of the proper role of a judge under our Constitution make him a choice that should command universal support. Unfortunately, this feeling does not appear to be as broadly shared as it should be.

Leftwing activists are demanding a scorched-earth approach to Judge Gorsuch's nomination, and I am afraid that some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle appear to have been swept up in this fervor. Their opposition stems from two different

sources and has taken two different forms.

The first cause is the visceral reaction among some to our new President. After last year's bitterly fought election campaign, many on the left simply refuse to accept the legitimacy of the new administration and are dead set on all-out opposition to every initiative, every policy, and every nominee of this President. As a case in point, we are in mid-March and the President is still waiting for the Senate to confirm his Cabinet nominees. This hasn't happened, to my knowledge, in the 40 years I have been in the Senate.

Skeptical of any nominee's willingness to hold the administration that nominated him accountable to the law, they are demanding assurances about how Judge Gorsuch would rule on the administration's most controversial moves.

The Supreme Court confirmation process should not be treated as just another forum to litigate the wisdom and lawfulness of the new administration's policies. Not only does such an approach distract from the proper focus on the nominee's qualifications and judicial philosophy, but it also threatens to undermine the very independence Democrats claim to want in a Supreme Court Justice.

As I have explained in detail as recently as last week, nominees of both parties for decades have refused to speculate on cases that may come before them in order to not prejudice their potential future judgments. Moreover, as a sitting Federal judge, Judge Gorsuch is bound by the code of conduct for United States judges, one of the canons of which prohibits a judge from making "public comment on the merits of a matter pending or impending in any court."

In light of this longstanding, necessary, and, in Judge Gorsuch's case, legally mandated practice, I have found it extraordinarily disappointing to hear some of my colleagues try to turn on its head Judge Gorsuch's admirable efforts to protect his independence. For example, the minority leader has repeatedly castigated Judge Gorsuch for refusing to take a definitive stand on the legality of the new administration's policies, accusing him of "avoiding answers like the plague."

For those of us of all political stripes who want a Supreme Court Justice who decides cases on the basis of what the law commands, rather than whether the result serves a particular political or policy agenda—be it Republican or Democrat, conservative or liberal, pro-Trump or anti-Trump—Judge Gorsuch's refusal to prejudice his approach to future cases should be celebrated, not condemned.

As Justice Sotomayor said recently: "Any self-respecting judge who comes in with an agenda that would permit that judge to tell you how they will vote is the kind of person you don't want as a judge."

Put more colorfully, there is a plague threatening judicial independence;

here, this plague takes the form of the minority leader's attempt to extract these sorts of inappropriate answers, and Judge Gorsuch is wise to avoid that. The minority leader should know better.

Moreover, we know the minority leader does know better, given his many years of service on the Judiciary Committee and, in particular, how he acquiesced to the same approach when now-Justices Sotomayor and Kagan were presented with similar timely hypotheticals during their confirmation processes.

Sadly, I have little doubt that this line of attack on Judge Gorsuch will continue to infect the confirmation process, but we should be completely clear and unambiguous about what these attempts to get Judge Gorsuch to answer hypothetical questions about the legality of the administration's policies represent. They are illegitimate, partisan attempts to derail his nomination, cleverly shrouded in a cloak of alleged concern about his independence. Americans should not be under any illusions that these proper concerns about independence amount to anything else.

To turn to the second source of opposition to Judge Gorsuch's nomination, one need only examine this week's New York Times heading, which blared: "Democrats' Line of Attack on Gorsuch: No Friend of the Little Guy."

This same theme has been repeated by various leftwing interest groups and by some of my colleagues here in the Senate. They should be ashamed. As I have explained extensively in the past, the judge's critics view the judiciary as simply an extension of politics, just another forum to relitigate battles that they lost in the policymaking process. In their view, the job of a judge is not to apply the law to the facts dispassionately, but rather to pick winners and losers on the basis of the political popularity of the litigants and the policy consequences of the decision.

While such an approach is antithetical to the role of a judge under the Constitution, it has become an entrenched article of faith for most of those on the left. As such, they have approached Judge Gorsuch's nomination in a predictable manner: cherry-picking and mischaracterizing his opinions as evidence of a political agenda with total disregard of what the law commanded in each of those cases.

Simply put, this line of attack on Judge Gorsuch is ludicrous. Any reasonable analysis of his opinions shows that his decisions apply to laws enacted by the people's elected representatives, without regard to his own personal preferences. His approach manifests the Constitution's vision of the appropriate role of a judge that has been prominently embraced by Justice Scalia: "If you're going to be a good and faithful judge, you have to resign yourself to the fact that you are not always going to like the conclusions you

reach. If you like them all the time, you're probably doing something wrong."

Today, I want to examine just a few of the cases seized on by Judge Gorsuch's liberal critics to demonstrate just how unfounded their attacks are. *Compass Environmental v. Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission* involved a Tenth Circuit ruling against a firm for failing to provide adequate training to protect its employees from electric shock hazards. Judge Gorsuch did indeed rule in the firm's favor, but the case did not present the question of whether the company should do more to protect its workers. Rather, the case turned on the question of whether the Secretary of Labor satisfied the standard of showing any evidence to demonstrate that the firm in question was providing less training than what is the norm in the industry.

One need only examine the judge's opinion to understand how that specific legal burden was met, reaching the same conclusion as the administrative law judge below.

Next, *Riddle v. Hickenlooper* touches on one of the liberals' faith talking points: the supposed need to regulate political speech in order to fight money in politics. While this case has been characterized as some invitation for wealthy and large corporations to exert undue influence in politics, it actually turned on a rather narrow and technical question of whether a \$200 disparity in the contribution limits for major party and write-in candidates for Colorado's State House of Representatives amounted to an equal protection violation.

Judge Gorsuch joined the majority opinion of his colleagues—an Obama appointee, by the way—in agreeing that it did constitute such a violation, and then wrote a brief concurrence outlining how unclear Supreme Court precedent was on this particular point.

Moreover, he stated how "clear" it was that "with a little effort, Colorado could have achieved its stated policy objectives . . . without offending" the Constitution.

In essence, Judge Gorsuch adopted a particularly narrow position on a relatively minor issue in the grand scheme of campaign finance law, meriting none of his opponents' extrapolations about larger issues of political speech.

Finally, several of Judge Gorsuch's writings have called into question the so-called *Chevron* doctrine, under which Federal courts defer to administrative agencies' interpretations of the law. His opponents have seized on this skepticism to argue that Judge Gorsuch is somehow reflexively opposed to regulation. Nothing could be further from the truth.

These critics of Judge Gorsuch should recall that the *Chevron* deference first flourished as a reaction against liberal judges overturning the deregulatory actions of the Reagan administration. I myself am a skeptic of

Chevron and have led the fight to overturn it with my Separation of Powers Restoration Act. But as the name of my legislation suggests, overturning Chevron is about restoring the constitutional allocation of powers between the three branches, maintaining fidelity to the text of the Administrative Procedure Act, and ensuring that the bureaucracy abides by the law no matter its policy goals.

These are a few of Judge Gorsuch's opinions that have been most prominently mischaracterized as driven by a political agenda, when in reality their results are demanded by the law. Sadly, I expect that these mischaracterizations and inappropriate demands of Judge Gorsuch will continue to appear in this confirmation process. They don't have any better arguments, and those arguments are not only flawed, but they are wrong and inappropriate.

Let me quote from a prominent liberal law professor, Harvard's Noah Feldman, to sum up how I think we all should feel about this strategy:

I'm not sure who decided that the Democratic critique of U.S. Supreme Court nominee Judge Neil Gorsuch would be that he doesn't side with the little guy. It's a truly terrible idea. . . . [S]iding with workers against employers isn't a jurisprudential position. It's a political stance. And justices—including progressive justices—shouldn't de-

cide cases based on who the parties are. They should decide cases based on their beliefs about how the law should be interpreted.

That is a liberal law professor agreeing with me, really, and condemning these types of ad hominem attacks by people who know better or should know better.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to resist the temptation to give in to partisan and ideological pressure to engage in these tactics I described earlier, and I hope people will pay attention to what I have suggested. These are unworthy of the Senate's role, and they are unmerited with respect to such a stellar nominee as Judge Gorsuch, a man who is clearly committed to the proper, independent role of a judge.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in helping to ensure his speedy confirmation. This man is a decent, honorable, intelligent man who deserves the support of this decent, honorable, intelligent body. The arguments of the other side are without merit and, frankly, are really abysmal, and I sure hope they will reconsider and vote for this man who will be an excellent Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 11:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:04 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 16, 2017, at 11:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 15, 2017:

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. HERBERT R. MCMASTER, JR.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

DANIEL COATS, OF INDIANA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING BRIDGEPORT CITY
COUNCIL PRESIDENT TOM
McCARTHY ON ST. PATRICK'S
DAY

HON. JAMES A. HIMES

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise to extend my sincere congratulations to Tom McCarthy for being awarded the title of Grand Marshal of the 34th Annual Greater Bridgeport St. Patrick's Day Parade. In his fifteen years as City Councilman, nine of which he has served as President, Tom McCarthy has dedicated himself to serving Bridgeport and representing its citizens with thoughtfulness, competence and ability. Tom McCarthy's hard work and dedication to the City of Bridgeport is much appreciated, and this honor is well deserved.

IN RECOGNITION OF JENNIFER
MORGAN

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments and contributions of Jennifer B. Morgan of Newtown Square, PA.

Jennifer Morgan was appointed President of SAP North America in 2014, a position in which she oversees some 20,000 employees with more than 100,000 customers in every sector and industry of the U.S. economy.

With Jennifer at the helm, SAP has launched a successful expansion into groundbreaking new cloud computing services and other innovative new business segments. SAP is not only one of the largest employers in Delaware County, PA, it's also a good corporate citizen, sponsoring and supporting non-profits and economic development in our region.

Jennifer is a groundbreaking female executive, and one of far too few females at the pinnacle of American business and industry. She's prioritized diversity in the workplace, promoted pay equality and worked to level the playing field for all employees.

This National Women's History Month, Jennifer is being honored by the Delaware County Women's Commission with their Woman of Achievement Award. It's a fitting honor to an outstanding leader in our community.

DOJ'S FAILURE TO PROTECT
VOTING RIGHTS

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in protest of President Trump and his Justice Department's failure to protect Americans' voting rights. The right to vote is a sacred right for which Americans have fought for generations. From the battlefields of the Revolutionary War, to the Women's Suffrage Movement, to Bloody Sunday in my hometown of Selma, Alabama, Americans have risked their lives for the right to vote.

Unfortunately, The Trump Justice Department recently decided to dismiss their discriminatory purpose claim against Texas's voter ID law. Texas's current draconian Voter ID law places harsh restrictions on minorities and young voters. In 2013, the Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against the state of Texas claiming that their voter photo identification law, SB 14, violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. Since then, two courts have agreed that this law is discriminatory. So it is incredibly disturbing that the new Department of Justice reversed their position and withdrew their lawsuit. This action represents a dramatic shift from the Obama Administration's policy of protecting Americans' voting rights.

The American people deserve a Justice Department that values and protects the right to vote. New barriers to voting are being erected across the country, threatening the integrity of our electoral process and our democracy. For example, after the Supreme Court struck down key provisions of the Voting Rights Act, many states, like Alabama and Texas responded to the Supreme Court's decision by imposing voter ID laws similar to those of the Jim Crow era. These laws are blatantly discriminatory, undemocratic, and un-American.

In Alabama, the state government passed a law requiring a photo ID to vote while simultaneously closing 34 DMV offices. Doing so had a discriminatory effect on 8 out of the 10 counties in Alabama with the highest percentage of Black registered voters. Clearly we cannot yet trust certain states to protect their citizens' right to vote. As Americans, we should all be horrified of these laws and the Department of Justice's failure to fight these regressive measures.

States must not be allowed to return to an era of mass-voter discrimination, and historically, it has been the responsibility of the Justice Department to protect Americans from new Jim Crow like laws. Unfortunately, President Trump's Justice Department seems to be rolling back this policy.

In 2015, I introduced the Voting Rights Advancement Act, legislation that would require states with a recent history of voter discrimination to seek approval from the U.S. Department of Justice before making any changes to their electoral laws. Specifically, this bill will re-

store Section 4(b) of the VRA which the Supreme Court invalidated in *Shelby County v. Holder*. Under the new Trump Administration, it is more important than ever that we pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act, and have an independent Justice Department that is committed to protecting Americans' right to vote.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DEBORAH
MANNING

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable woman who dedicated her life to serving New York's 21st District.

Deborah Manning was born in Ticonderoga, New York, and served as Hague Town Clerk for 23 years.

In the 21st District, we are proud of Deborah Manning's legacy of dedicated public service, and we honor the life she led with integrity and compassion.

I would like to extend my deepest condolences to her friends and family.

REMEMBERING IRON BILL
DOWLING

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, March 15, 2017 the last alarm will be sounded for one of Houston's finest, Captain William "Iron Bill" Dowling. Although Iron Bill fought tirelessly these last few years, he went home with the Good Lord shortly before his 44th birthday: March 14, 1973–March 7, 2017.

While we mourn the loss of this Houstonian Hero, we also remember his service to his city and country. On May 31, 2013, Houston Fire Department suffered its most tragic event in its history. A 5-alarm blaze at a hotel in southwest Houston claimed the lives of four firefighters and injured fourteen other firefighters when the roof collapsed, some critically.

The following lives were lost:

Captain EMT Matthew Renaud, 35, of Station 51;

Engineer Operator EMT Robert Bebee, 41, of Station 51;

Firefighter EMT Robert Garner, 29, of Station 68;

Probationary Firefighter Anne Sullivan, 24, of Station 68.

They were the best we had in Houston, and we are still saddened that they are gone.

One of the brave who survived was Captain Dowling.

Iron Bill was injured serving Houston, the community in which he was raised. A graduate of Klein Oak High School, Captain Dowling left

● 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.

Texas to serve his nation as an enlistee with the United States Marine Corps. In 1993, on leave from Marine boot camp training, he married his high school sweetheart, Jacki. As a Marine, Iron Bill served 4 years, including a deployment to Somalia with I Marine Expeditionary Force in support of Operation Restore Hope, 1995. He returned home to Texas and to Jacki to begin his career and to start a family. Twenty-one years later, Captain Dowling and Jacki have three children: Forrest, Faith and Foster.

Iron Bill's patriotic spirit and love of the community led him to join the Houston Fire Department. He graduated from the Houston Fire Department Academy in 2000 and steadily rose through the ranks. He worked at Stations 12, 19, and 48 before making Captain at Station 68 in January of 2013. Firehouse 68 is located at the corner of Bissonnet and South Gessner in the heart of Southwest Houston. In 2013, the fire apparatus of Firehouse 68 made 14,847 responses, making it the third busiest fire station in the City of Houston. There, at Firehouse 68, Captain Dowling became known as Iron Bill, a fitting nickname to describe a strong and courageous hero.

It was just five months after he arrived at Station 68 that Captain Dowling and fellow firefighters received an alarm call that would take them to the gates of hell.

On that fateful day, in the heat of the Texas noonday sun, Captain Dowling along with the four other firefighters rushed into the hotel to find potential trapped guests. While the firefighters were in the hotel, the roof collapsed, trapping and killing Garner and Sullivan from Station 68 and Bebee and Renaud from Station 51. Captain Dowling's legs were crushed and burned, but he remained calm, radioed for help and waited for his brothers to pull him from the flames.

The attending physician in the ambulance said that Captain Dowling, though severely injured, kept asking about the condition of his crew. He was more concerned for the safety of others than himself, the testament of a true hero. He told the doctor, on the way to the hospital, to tell his wife and children that he would fight for them. Hearing this comes as no surprise to Captain Dowling's family; they know him as a fighter.

Captain Dowling was seriously injured with burns over thirty percent of his body, and he was placed in a medically induced coma for months at Memorial Hermann Hospital and Medical Center. He subsequently had both legs amputated and suffered brain damage. A long road of recovery was ahead for Captain Dowling, but surrounded by a team of doctors, his family, firefighter family, friends, church and the entire city and state of Texas, Iron Bill was not alone. Deserving, Captain Dowling became everyone's hero.

Since returning home, Jacki left her full time job at Frank Elementary to care for her husband full time. It's no surprise that as a Texas woman, she's strong and determined, but quite simply, the strength that she possesses is amazing. To keep the community updated on Iron Bill, she started blogging on a community Facebook page entitled "Capt. William Dowling Iron Bill". This blog allows the community to rally behind the Dowling family, cry with them, laugh with them, pray for them and see their hero survive.

In August of 2016, the Dowling family moved to Durango, Colorado in order for Cap-

tain Dowling to make the most of his journey in the great outdoors. He became hooked on skiing through Adaptive Sports. Jacki said he was the healthiest he had been in a long time and was thriving in the mountain air so Jacki returned to coaching volleyball.

On the morning of March 7, 2017 Jacki asked for prayers for Iron Bill, as she was worried about his recent spell with pneumonia. That evening Captain William Dowling took his final journey home into the arms of the Good Lord.

Captain Dowling will be remembered for his bravery, determination, and loyalty. He always put others ahead of himself and was dedicated to serving his community. The legacy Iron Bill leaves behind is one that his friends, family, and community will never forget.

Today, the entire city of Houston will pay tribute to the life of one of Houston's heroes, one of our finest.

Houston firefighters are grateful for the support of 174 firefighters from 30 Texas departments that will ride in Houston stations tomorrow so A-shift firefighters can attend the memorial service for Iron Bill Dowling. Thanks to firefighters from College Station, Plano, Montgomery County, Conroe, Weatherford, Pearland, New Braunfels, South Montgomery County, Fort Worth, Sugar Land, China Grove, Kemah, West University, Longview, Nacogdoches, Bexar County ESD 2, Lewisville, Galveston, Lubbock, Baytown, Southlake, Benbrook, Seguin, Austin, Dallas, Westfield, Waco, Hutchins, Tomball, and The Woodlands.

As the family of Iron Bill mourns the loss of a great man, I hope they know the community of Tomball, the greater Houston area and Texas' Second District will keep the family in their thoughts and prayers. Our community will always be grateful for his service and sacrifices. Once a hero, always a hero. That's the man we call Iron Bill.

And that's just the way it is.

CELEBRATING MAPLE SEASON IN NEW YORK'S 21ST DISTRICT

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a time-honored tradition in New York's 21st district. Specialty crop products are a critical part of the North Country's economy, and maple holds a special and delicious place among them. Every year in late winter and early spring, the cultivation of maple tree sap gives residents a reason to celebrate.

New York State is home to the largest resource of tappable maple trees within the United States. Every year, our farms produce thousands of gallons of sap, which will then be made into syrup and other maple products. These products are not only a staple in households across the region, they also encourage tourism and support our small and local businesses.

The benefits of maple syrup production are a source of celebration for communities throughout the North Country. Throughout March, maple festivals are held across New York, with families and friends gathering to enjoy delicious products and attend tours of locally owned farms.

In our district, the Toad Hill Maple Farm has been producing high quality maple products for over 30 years. Utilizing more than 100 acres of land and currently standing as the largest maple producer in Warren County, the system used at Toad Hill can turn 1,000 gallons of sap into 25 gallons of syrup per hour.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand on the House floor today to support our North Country maple farmers.

IN RECOGNITION OF CYNTHIA WILBANKS' SERVICE AND ACTIV- ISM ON BEHALF OF THE SOUTH- EAST MICHIGAN COMMUNITY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Cynthia Wilbanks, the University of Michigan's Vice President for Government Relations, for receiving the United Way of Washtenaw County's 2017 Woman of the Year Award. Ms. Wilbanks has served Washtenaw County and southeast Michigan with distinction through her involvement in nonprofit and community organizations.

Cynthia Wilbanks has been an effective advocate and leader in southeast Michigan through her work at the University of Michigan and on behalf of the community. While serving as the University's Vice President of Government Relations, Ms. Wilbanks has championed initiatives to strengthen the University community and coordinate the University's policies and responses to federal, state and local legislation. In addition, Ms. Wilbanks serves on the boards of directors of numerous nonprofit organizations, including the Riverside Arts Center Foundation, Center for Michigan, and Ann Arbor SPARK, a startup and business incubator. She is also an active member of United Way and served as the University of Michigan United Way's Campaign Chair for four straight years.

Ms. Wilbanks has also distinguished herself through her outstanding record of public service. She has served on the staff of several U.S. Representatives, including working as Rep. Carl Pursell's district director from 1979 through 1992. During her time as a public servant, Ms. Wilbanks was a tireless advocate who fought for policies to benefit southeast Michigan and its residents. Her record of achievement has helped make Michigan a great place to live and work.

Ms. Wilbanks' leadership and hard work have been critical to the growth and success of the University of Michigan as well as the greater southeast Michigan community. As a result of her efforts, Ms. Wilbanks was named one of the 100 most influential women in Metro Detroit by Crain's Detroit Business in 2002 and has also received the Girl Scouts of the Huron Valley Council's Women of Distinction Award. These accolades, in addition to being named Woman of the Year, are a testament to Ms. Wilbanks' record of success and continued activism in the community. It is my hope that Ms. Wilbanks continues to build on these accomplishments in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Cynthia Wilbanks and her tremendous work on behalf of the University of Michigan and the community at large. She has distinguished herself through her outstanding professional and volunteer efforts.

RICHARD BLANKENSHIP

HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of Richard Blankenship of Hillsboro, Ohio.

Richard's time here on earth will be remembered by many as serving both his community, and his country. He was a U.S. Army veteran, having served his country with dedication.

And that dedication and passion was felt in the Cincinnati and Hillsboro communities, where Richard served in a number of different roles, influencing the lives of many.

From the Cincinnati Bengals, to the Southern State Community College, to East Clinton High School, where he served as both a coach and a teacher. At Finneytown Local Schools, where he taught and held various coaching positions, teaching students important lessons of teamwork and leadership.

When Richard retired from teaching in Finneytown in 2003, he said "I will miss being with students and parents, but it's time to hang up my gym shoes."

Richard, our communities are better for having you here, teaching our children, students, and those around you, and changing their lives for the better.

My thoughts are with the Blankenship family.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MICHAEL
F. RING

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable man who dedicated his life to serving the 21st District of New York.

Michael Ring was a loving father and a successful business owner, but he was also a man who believed in public service and the importance of participatory government. Michael worked as a broadcast engineer throughout New York's North Country. However, this is only a portion of his immense contribution to the community.

Mr. Ring worked for the betterment of others during his time as an advisor to the Jefferson County Board of Cooperative Education Services as well as through his efforts as Co-Chair of the Watertown Area Emergency Alert System. His guidance and care could be seen in his time as a volunteer teacher, college student mentor and PTA member as well as through his participation in a multitude of groups that advocated for the importance of national security.

I first met Mike when he was a fellow candidate for Congress in 2013. I was immediately struck by Mike's genuine kindness,

generosity, warmth, and dedication to mentoring others. Mike made friends with people from around the globe and advocated on their behalf. He also was a self-published author of wonderful books. I will miss seeing Mike's smile at community events in Jefferson County.

I would like to extend my sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Michael Ring, especially his beloved wife Penny. Thank you for sharing him with us all.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CON-
GRESSMAN ELIGIO "KIKI" DE
LA GARZA

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Congressman Eligio "Kiki" de la Garza, who passed away this Monday, March 13, 2017.

De la Garza served as the federal representative for the 15th District of Texas from 1965 to 1997. During his Congressional service, he was Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture from 1981 to 1994 and Ranking Member of the Committee from 1995 to 1997. De la Garza was a founding member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

At the age of 17, de la Garza joined the United States Navy and served for two years, including the final months of World War II. Upon returning home, he completed his high school education before attending Edinburg Junior College and St. Mary's University in San Antonio. While at St. Mary's, de la Garza was again deployed, this time to the Korean War where he was an artillery officer in the United States Army. He then earned his Juris Doctor from St. Mary's University in San Antonio. De la Garza was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1951, at the young age of 24, serving six terms before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

During his tenure in the U.S. House of Representatives, de la Garza endeavored to improve the lives of rural Texans, working to expand and improve federal support for farmers and ranchers. He also stood up for the disenfranchised, supporting landmark civil rights legislation that led to important progress for our society. Born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley, de la Garza understood the importance of maintaining strong international relations and was a staunch supporter of the U.S.-Mexico relationship. He was the first Member of Congress to receive Mexico's Order of the Aztec Eagle Award and Israel's Vulcan Center's Lifetime Achievement Award—both awards recognized his efforts to cultivate stronger, more constructive ties between the United States and its allies. As a founding member and chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the first Hispanic to chair a standing committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, he is an inspiration for the next generation of Latino leaders.

Mr. Speaker, this week our country lost a statesman, public servant, husband, father, grandfather, and friend, but his legacy will live on. It is a privilege to follow in the footsteps

of Eligio "Kiki" de la Garza, who was genuinely committed to empowering rural areas and the Hispanic community.

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS HOLINESS
THE GYALWANG DRUKPA JIGME
PEMA WANGCHEN

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa Jigme Pema Wangchen on the occasion of his birthday.

His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa is the head of the 1,000 year-old Drukpa Lineage of Buddhism, which originates from the Indian Scholar-Saint Naropa, an unbroken ancient lineage that continues to thrive. The Drukpa Lineage has over 30 million followers worldwide and has a profound cultural influence throughout the Himalayan region.

Inspired by a strong belief that all individuals can work for the benefit of their communities, His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa is a world-renowned humanitarian, environmentalist, and champion of gender equality. His good works have been recognized by the United Nations and the Indian Government. The international non-profit Waterkeepers Alliance named His Holiness the Guardian of the Himalayas.

His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa and his followers provided relief services to tens of thousands in the Himalayas following the devastating 2015 earthquake in Nepal and continues to rebuild the community. Additionally, he supports and organizes clinics which provide access to medical services in remote communities.

His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa works tirelessly to empower, educate, protect and inspire girls and women in the Himalayas and around the world and has led efforts to ensure that the rights of peoples of all faiths and nationalities are equally respected and protected.

His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa personally trekked and bicycled thousands of miles across the Himalayas to further the goals of gender equality and of environmental stewardship.

His Holiness supports myriad educational initiatives which seek to improve people's lives through education while simultaneously fostering respect for and knowledge of indigenous cultures. In furtherance of this aim, His Holiness has led efforts to preserve local art and to disseminate globally knowledge about the local cultural heritage.

His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa has led multiple initiatives to protect the environment in the Himalayas. As part of the One Million Trees project, His Holiness organized in 2012 the largest simultaneous tree planting initiative to support clean air and protect against soil erosion.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the spiritual and humanitarian leadership of His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa Jigme Pema Wangchen on the occasion of his birthday.

RECOGNIZING MS. LISA COHEN

IN MEMORY OF BARRY JOLLETT

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Ms. Lisa Cohen, Executive Director of the Washington Global Health Alliance, in light of her retirement. During a CODEL to the Middle East I visited Afghanistan as a freshman in Congress and visited an abandoned school meant for female students. Yet unfortunately, it was not used for very long due to rule of law that girls are not allowed to be educated. Since then, I made it a mission to serve as a Co-Chair on the Global Health and Poverty Caucus and fought for the opportunity that girls can and should be educated. And I could not have done this without the extremely important and valuable partnership of Ms. Cohen. From day one, Ms. Cohen has never said no in helping me fight for human rights around the world, and in fact, she has taught and encouraged me to take on other global issues that we must stand for today. Ms. Cohen has been such a wonderful force in the global community, and not just in the Seattle area, but around the country, as she has been diligently working to form an alliance in the Atlanta region too. With more alliances for global health, we can someday have a world where polio no longer exists and every woman can give a healthy birth to a child in a fully-functioning hospital. I will truly miss working with Ms. Lisa Cohen of the Washington Global Health Alliance, but am delighted to know that we shall remain friends. I thank Ms. Cohen for everything that she has done to make this world a better place for every single person.

PEARLAND BASKETBALL COACH
WINS 700TH GAME**HON. PETE OLSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Pearland High School's Steve Buckelew for winning his 700th game as a boys' basketball coach.

Steve's 700th game was won as he coached the Pearland High School Oilers to an 83-48 home victory over Brazoswood High School. Steve has been a basketball coach for the last 32 years, with his last 21 years as Pearland's head coach. He spent time coaching basketball teams in Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas, with five years as an assistant coach at Louisiana Tech. When asked how many more wins are left in him, he said "I don't know, but I'd like to get about six or seven more this year."

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Steve Buckelew of Pearland for winning his 700th game as a boys' basketball coach. We are extremely proud to have him coaching our athletes to victory each year. Keep up the good work.

HON. THOMAS J. ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Barry Jollett, of Punta Gorda, Florida, who tragically passed away on March 1.

When Barry and his wife, Mary, moved to Florida 15 years ago, they immersed themselves in our local community. For the past four years, Barry took on the challenge of serving as the Chairman of the Charlotte County Republicans, as well as the Vice Chair for the Republican Executive Committee. Under his leadership, the Charlotte County Republicans continued to spread their message throughout our community and the entire county is better because of it.

Barry was no stranger to leadership roles when he moved to Florida. Before starting his lifelong career with Verizon, he served in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War. He also served as a Commodore for the PGI Seafarers, and his dedication to our country was evident even after he left our military. We are all eternally grateful for his service and leadership.

I have had the pleasure of meeting Barry many times during my tenure in office and I believe that his memory will be preserved in the legacy he left behind. Barry was a strong leader, a loyal patriot and hard worker. But more importantly, he was a friendly neighbor, loving husband and caring father. His memory will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I speak for all of Charlotte County when I say that Barry Jollett will be truly missed. My thoughts and prayers are with his wife Mary and their family during this time.

IN HONOR OF THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of The Brick Presbyterian Church, one of the nation's oldest and most venerable religious institutions. The Brick Church has been in continuous operation since 1767, with the exception of a few years during the Revolutionary War, and has a rich history of serving the community as a spiritual home. Pastoral leaders of The Brick Church have had a profound impact on the nation as spiritual leaders, brilliant composers of sacred music and compassionate advocates for the poor, the downtrodden and refugees.

The Brick Church began as an expansion of the First Presbyterian Church at Wall Street, whose growing congregation could no longer be accommodated. Its first building was on Beekman Street on a site now occupied by Pace University's downtown campus. The first

pastor was Reverend John Rodgers who would close the street in front of the church during services to eliminate noise. Dr. Rodgers also corresponded with George Washington, was the first moderator of the General Assembly and served as chaplain to the New York State Legislature.

During the Revolutionary War, the British commandeered the church for use first as a hospital and later as a brig. By 1858, after surviving two wars, three epidemics and three fires, the church followed its congregation uptown to Fifth Avenue at 37th Street. Nearly a century later, in response to further migration north, the church moved in 1940 to its present location at 91st Street and Park Avenue.

The church's other pastors were Gardiner Spring (1810 through 1873), James Ormsbee Murphy (1865 through 1875), Llewellyn Bevan (1877 through 1882), Henry Van Dyke (1883 through 1900), Maltbie Davenport Babcock (1900 through 1901), William Rogers Richards (1902 through 1910), William Pierson Merrill (1911 through 1938), Paul Austin Wolfe (1938 through 1964), D. Reginald Thomas (1965 through 1970), James Seth Stewart (1972 through 1974), and Herbert B. Anderson (1978 through 2001). Rev. Van Dyke became ambassador to the Netherlands under President Woodrow Wilson and organized efforts to serve the tens of thousands of refugees flooding the country at the onset of World War I.

The Brick Church is currently led by the remarkable Reverend Michael L. Lindvall who was installed on October 27, 2002 as only its 13th installed pastor. Rev. Lindvall has made education a center of his ministry at the church, recognizing that parishioners may have less exposure to the Bible, theology or the history and governance of the church than they once did. Accordingly, educational programs such as the Children's Sunday Church School, youth programs, and adult education are critically important to The Brick Church.

Over the centuries, Brick Church has assisted in educating poor children, supported immigrant congregations and settlement houses, and worked to improve the neighborhood. Before the Civil War, leaders of the congregation were outspoken abolitionists who condemned slavery and corruption. Members of the Brick Church have supported the Deacon Ministries and Grants program that helps over 22,000 people annually. Members also volunteer for a wide variety of community-based organizations that tutor young people, help homebound seniors, serve the homeless and help the formerly incarcerated make a fresh start.

A number of The Brick Church's clergy have made significant contributions to sacred music, including Revs. Van Dyke, Babcock, Merrill and Wolfe. In addition, Clarence Dickinson provided outstanding musical leadership along with Helen Dickinson, who founded the School of Sacred Music at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Today, Keith S. Tóth, a graduate of the Oberlin and Juilliard Schools of Music, carries on the church's fine tradition of musical excellence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring The Brick Church for providing a spiritual home to New Yorkers for 250 years.

ABBY HOUSE WINS TEXAS
HISTORY ESSAY CONTEST

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Abby House of Needville, TX, for being the grand-prize winner of the Save Texas History essay contest in the seventh grade division.

The statewide contest is sponsored by the Texas General Land Office's Save Texas History program. The essay students were asked to write was, "What history in your community, or in Texas, is worth saving?" Abby wrote about the storied history of the Imperial Sugar building in Sugar Land, TX. The students' essays were judged based off of how compelling their story was, how useful and interesting the facts were, grammar, spelling and organization. For winning the grand-prize, Abby received numerous prizes from the San Antonio Tourism Council, from Six Flags Fiesta Texas tickets, to tickets to the San Antonio Zoo, and more. She is currently a seventh grader at Needville Junior High School.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Abby House for winning the grand-prize of the Save Texas History essay contest. We're proud to have her represent TX-22 and look forward to seeing her future accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KYRSTEN SINEMA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, due to illness, I was unable to vote on roll call votes 138 through 158. Had I been present, I would have voted: nay on roll call number 138; nay on roll call number 139; aye on roll call number 140; aye on roll call number 141; aye on roll call number 142; aye on roll call number 143; aye on roll call number 144; aye on roll call number 145; aye on roll call number 146; aye on roll call number 147; nay on roll call number 148; aye on roll call number 149; aye on roll call number 150; aye on roll call number 151; nay on roll call number 152; aye on roll call number 153; aye on roll call number 154; aye on roll call number 155; aye on roll call number 156; aye on roll call number 157; and nay on roll call number 158.

COMMEMORATING THE 24TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE BANGLADESH
ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA'S
ASIAN FOOD FAIR & CULTURAL
SHOW

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Bangladesh Association of Florida. For 24 years, this fine organization has presented the Asian Food Fair & Cultural Show in

Palm Beach County. This annual program is eagerly awaited by citizens around South Florida for its exciting and diverse performances of singing, dancing, acrobatics and food from many Asian nations.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have been involved with the people of the Bangladesh Association of Florida since the inception of this wonderful program. It is one of the cultural highlights of every year. It is widely appreciated and greatly enjoyed by everyone who experiences its variety of entertainment. We are fortunate to have it on our schedule of great events, and I thank the Bangladesh Association for bringing it to us.

KOPFER TROMBONE SKILLS
RANKED FIRST IN STATE

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Benjamin Kopfer of Fort Bend, TX, for being ranked first in state for playing bass trombone.

On top of being ranked first in state, Benjamin, a sophomore at Fort Bend Christian Academy (FBCA), was invited to participate in the Texas Private School Music Educators Association All-State Band for the second year in a row. It's rare for a sophomore to be invited to play with the All-State Band, let alone a sophomore who played the year before as well. When not amazing audiences with his musical talents, Benjamin also plays on the FBCA baseball team.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Benjamin for being ranked first in state. We are extremely proud of him and look forward to him achieving the All-State Band again next year.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS FULFILL
PROMISE

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week, House Republicans delivered on the promise to make the health care system work for American families by introducing the American Health Care Act. This legislation puts the patient first, not the government.

Families in the Second Congressional District and across the country have experienced how Obamacare has failed. Obamacare destroyed jobs, increased premiums, and presented people with fewer health care choices. The American Health Care Act is a real solution to ending the Obamacare failure.

The bill specifically protects those with pre-existing conditions, allows young adults to remain on their parent's insurance until they are 26, and provides a stable transition to a system of lower costs and increased options.

I appreciate Ways and Means Committee Chairman KEVIN BRADY, Chairman GREG WALDEN of Energy and Commerce, and Speaker PAUL RYAN for their dedication and remarkable

leadership. This is a positive first step that will advance health care for all Americans, as championed by President Donald Trump and Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, with HHS Secretary Tom Price.

In conclusion, God Bless Our Troops. We will never forget September 11th in the Global War on Terrorism.

INTRODUCTION OF THE
SUPERFUND REINVESTMENT ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, joined by 14 original cosponsors, I am pleased to reintroduce the Superfund Reinvestment Act. This legislation would provide much needed funding to clean up toxic waste sites throughout the United States and relieve the financial burden of cleanup that is currently shouldered by the American taxpayers.

There are more than 1,100 severely polluted Superfund sites across the United States that approximately 49 million Americans live within three miles of. These contaminated sites harm air and water quality and threaten the economic and social vitality of vulnerable communities. These communities can be exposed to toxins such as arsenic, benzene, PCBs, mercury, and a wide range of solvents, which can lead to health problems such as infertility, low birth weight, birth defects, leukemia, and respiratory difficulties.

The Superfund program was originally created in 1980 to clean up these contaminated sites help reduce exposure to the health risks and fears that come from living close to toxic waste. Unfortunately, at approximately 30 percent of Superfund sites known as orphan sites, those responsible for the pollution cannot be found or do not have the ability to pay, so instead the federal government foots the bill.

Originally, payments for orphan sites were financed through taxes on chemicals, petroleum, and corporate income, which were deposited into the Superfund Liability Trust Fund. This Fund ensured that those industries responsible for pollution pay for the remediation of sites where there is no responsible party. These taxes expired in 1995 and were not reauthorized. As a result, the Trust Fund has been depleted and the funding for the cleanup of orphan sites has shifted primarily to general funds.

The Superfund Reinvestment Act would reinstate taxes on the petrochemical industry to fund the cleanup of hazardous waste sites across the country. It would make sure that polluters, not taxpayers, are paying for cleanup of orphan sites. The bill includes excise taxes of \$.163 per barrel on crude oil or refined oil products and taxes ranging from \$.51 to \$11.35 per ton on certain chemicals. The bill would reinstate a corporate environmental income tax of .12 percent on a corporation's modified alternative minimum taxable income that exceeds \$3.735 million. This legislation would expand the definition of oil to include unconventional crude oil sources, such as tar sands and oil shale. This legislation also would guarantee that money from the Trust Fund is only spent on Superfund cleanups.

I urge my colleagues to join me in working to strengthen the Superfund program by ensuring that polluters continue to pay. With our environment at such a high risk, we need a fully funded Superfund program now more than ever. Restoring these taxes will go a long way towards making certain that funds are available to cleanup America's most toxic waste sites and to help keep our communities and our families safe, healthy and economically secure for future generations.

CHRIS NILSSON NAMED TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Chris Nilsson of Fort Bend County, TX, for being named as the Texas Computer Education Association's (TCEA) Technology Administrator of the Year for 2017.

Chris is Lamar Consolidated Independent School District's Director of Technology Integration and oversees computer technicians and the districts Campus Instructional Technology Specialists. He was nominated by two of the technology specialists thanks to his exemplary vision and technology management. His colleague, David Jacobson, the district's Chief Technology Information Officer, said he's done an outstanding job leading and uniting two departments and is very deserving of this recognition. His expertise is an asset for both the school district and the students.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Chris for being named as TCEA Technology Administrator of the Year. We're very proud of him and look forward to his future accomplishments.

THOMAS S. WILLIAMSON, JR.

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the extraordinary life of Thomas S. Williamson, Jr., who passed away this month at the age of 70. Mr. Williamson was a former president of the D.C. Bar and a member of our Federal Law Enforcement Nominating Commission, which advises me on the selection of important federal officials for the District of Columbia, including federal district court judges and the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia. Tom will be especially remembered as a champion for equal legal access to justice for all. His service will be held at the National Cathedral tomorrow.

Tom Williamson began his career at the law firm Covington & Burling LLP in 1974, where he became a partner, focusing on employment law, complex litigation, and health and welfare law matters for state governments. As a student, Tom played varsity football at Harvard College and excelled academically. He went on to Oxford University, where he was a

Rhodes Scholar, and then to the University of California at Berkeley School of Law. From the beginning of his career and for more than 40 years, Tom had a deep commitment to pro bono service and civil rights. His passion for equal justice was influenced by his experience as a child when his family integrated a white neighborhood in Piedmont, California and experiencing the racism that resulted.

District residents are particularly grateful to Tom, who was an influential member of a team of attorneys representing the District in *Adams v. Clinton*, a case that sought voting rights for the District in the House and Senate. Throughout his years in successful private practice, Tom continuously provided legal service to those most in need of good lawyers—whether providing pro bono service to residents or leading the defense of the District's marriage equality law. Tom's career in law also included public service, where he served as the deputy inspector general at the U.S. Department of Energy and the solicitor of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Mr. Speaker, as my thoughts are with Tom's wife, Shelly Brazier, and his family, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the extraordinary life of Thomas. S. Williamson, Jr.

BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, March 13 through 17, 2017 commemorates Brain Awareness Week, which presents an important opportunity to educate lawmakers, students, and the broader public about brain science, and its many impacts and benefits. This is critical when you consider that brain disorders and diseases affect the lives of nearly 100 million Americans—from Alzheimer's to ALS to mental illness.

Neurological and neurodegenerative disorders are among the leading causes of disability in the United States and around the world—greater than heart disease and cancer put together. As society ages, this number will increase exponentially as will the cost to the healthcare system and to the economy. Yet, the underlying causes of most neurological diseases remain unknown.

Neuroscience is the next great frontier. Research and work being done in this field needs to be front and center in both the private world and Congress.

The bipartisan Congressional Neuroscience Caucus' mission is to build awareness of the intrinsic role brain research plays in understanding ourselves and our society. As the Co-Founder and Co-Chair, I am committed to working on these important issues and hope my colleagues will join our efforts as members of the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus.

NEW STEAKHOUSE DEBUTS IN RICHMOND, TX

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a new upscale restaurant in Richmond, TX, and its executive chef, Ja'Nel Witt.

Sammy's Steakhouse will be Sammy Vela's sixth restaurant in the area and will cater to steak and wine lovers. The menu has a variety of delicious dishes, from green chili-smoked gouda mac and cheese to mouth-watering steak. An extensive wine bar allows customers to complete their dish with the perfect complement. The executive chef, Ja'Nel Witt, will be a great addition to the new restaurant, especially having been the Season II winner of Gordon Ramsey's Hell's Kitchen. Her culinary talents will be appreciated by Richmond and Houston area visitors.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, I again recognize and welcome the newest restaurant, Sammy's Steakhouse, to TX-22. We look forward to trying Sammy's Steakhouse.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, March 16, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 20

11 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Neil M. Gorsuch, of Colorado, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

SH-216

MARCH 21

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine U.S. policy and strategy in Europe.

SD-G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine opportunities to improve and expand infrastructure important to Federal lands, recreation, water, and resources.

SD-366

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine FDA user fee agreements, focusing on improving medical product innovation for patients.

SD-430

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security

To hold hearings to examine fighting back against scams used to defraud Americans.

SR-253

Special Committee on Aging

To hold hearings to examine raising grandchildren in the opioid crisis and beyond.

SD-562

MARCH 22

9 a.m.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of R. Alexander Acosta, of Florida, to be Secretary of Labor.

SD-430

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine the promises and perils of emerging technologies for cybersecurity.

SD-106

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the state of global humanitarian affairs.

SD-419

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine perspectives from the DHS frontline, focusing on evaluating staffing resources and requirements.

SD-342

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple veterans service organizations.

SD-G50

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Department of Defense

To hold hearings to examine defense readiness and budget update.

SD-192

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard

To hold hearings to examine the state of the Coast Guard, focusing on ensuring military, national security, and enforcement capability and readiness.

SR-253

Committee on Foreign Relations

Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy

To hold hearings to examine a progress report on conflict minerals.

SD-419

3:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Airland

To hold hearings to examine Army modernization.

SR-222

MARCH 23

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine United States European Command.

SD-G50

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Jay Clayton, of New York, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

SD-538

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Personnel

To hold hearings to examine Department of Defense civilian personnel reform.

SR-232A

MARCH 29

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Subcommittee on Federal Spending Oversight and Emergency Management

To hold hearings to examine the effect of borrowing on Federal spending.

SD-342

3 p.m.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

To hold hearings to examine how small businesses confront and shape regulations.

SR-428A

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate confirmed the nomination of Daniel Coats, of Indiana, to be Director of National Intelligence.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1809–S1851

Measures Introduced: Thirty-nine bills and four resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 630–668, S. Res. 87–89, and S. Con. Res. 9. **Pages S1839–41**

Measures Passed:

Faleomavaega Eni Fa’aua’a Hunkin VA Clinic: Committee on Veterans’ Affairs was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1362, to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa, the Faleomavaega Eni Fa’aua’a Hunkin VA Clinic, and the bill was then passed. **Page S1848**

Trafficking of illicit fentanyl into the United States from Mexico and China: Committee on Foreign Relations was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 83, expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the trafficking of illicit fentanyl into the United States from Mexico and China, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Pages S1848–49**

Honoring King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand: Committee on Foreign Relations was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 9, honoring in praise and remembrance the extraordinary life, steady leadership, and remarkable 70-year reign of King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1849**

National Rosie the Riveter Day: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 76, expressing support for the designation of March 21, 2017, as “National Rosie the Riveter Day”, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1849**

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 89, supporting the designation of March 2017 as “National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month”. **Page S1849**

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: Thursday, March 16, 2017 at 11:30 a.m.; Monday, March 20, 2017 at 10 a.m.; and that when the Senate adjourns on Monday, March 20, 2017, it next convene at 10:30 a.m., on Tuesday, March 21, 2017. **Page S1849**

Breyer and Reeves Nominations—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that following morning business on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, Senate begin consideration of the nominations of Charles R. Breyer, of California, to be a Member of the United States Sentencing Commission, and Danny C. Reeves, of Kentucky, to be a Member of the United States Sentencing Commission; that the time until 12 noon be equally divided, and that following the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote on confirmation of the nominations en bloc, with no intervening action or debate; and that no further motion be in order. **Page S1814**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 85 yeas to 12 nays (Vote No. EX. 89), Daniel Coats, of Indiana, to be Director of National Intelligence. **Pages S1811–24, S1851**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 88 yeas to 11 nays (Vote No. 88), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination.

Pages S1811–12
By 86 yeas to 10 nays (Vote No. EX. 90), Lt. Gen. Herbert R. McMaster Jr., U.S. Army.

Pages S1824–26, S1851

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination be withdrawn. **Page S1814**

Messages from the House: **Page S1838**

Executive Communications: **Pages S1838–39**

Petitions and Memorials: **Page S1839**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S1839**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1841–42**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:
Pages S1842–48

Additional Statements: **Pages S1837–38**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S1848**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S1848**

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—90) **Pages S1812, S1824–25**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:04 p.m., until 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 16, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1849.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense received a closed briefing regarding a ballistic missile defense program update from Vice Admiral James D. Syring, USN, Director of the Missile Defense Agency, Department of Defense.

STEM EDUCATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine STEM education, focusing on preparing students for the careers of today and the future, after receiving testimony from Sarah Tucker, West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education, Charleston; Larry Plank, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Tampa, Florida; Neil Lamb, HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology, Huntsville, Alabama; and Caroline King, Washington STEM, Seattle.

WARFARE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Airland concluded a hearing to examine all arms warfare in the 21st century, after receiving testimony from Lieutenant General David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.), Mitchell Institute of Aerospace Power Studies; Colonel Douglas A. Macgregor, USA (Ret.), Burke-

Macgregor Group; and Paul Scharre, Center for a New American Security 20YY Warfare Initiative.

ASSESSING U.S. SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine assessing U.S. sanctions on Russia, focusing on the next steps, after receiving testimony from Eric Lorber, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, and Elizabeth Rosenberg, Center for a New American Security, both of Washington, D.C.; and Rodney D. Ludema, Georgetown University Department of Economics, Rockville, Maryland.

UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine unmanned aircraft systems, focusing on innovation, integration, successes, and challenges, after receiving testimony from Earl Lawrence, Director, Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration Office, Federal Aviation Administration; Diana Marina Cooper, Precision Hawk USA Inc., Raleigh, North Carolina, on behalf of the Small UAV Coalition; Ben Fowke, Xcel Energy, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Brendan Schulman, DJI Technology, Inc., New York, New York; John Villasenor, University of California, Los Angeles; and Emilio T. Gonzalez, Miami-Dade Aviation Department, Miami, Florida.

SOLUTIONS TO CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine innovative solutions to control invasive species and promote wildlife conservation, after receiving testimony from Jim Kurth, Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Jamie K. Reaser, Executive Director, National Invasive Species Council, both of the Department of the Interior; Brian R. Nesvik, Wyoming Game and Fish Department Chief Game Warden and Chief of the Wildlife Division, Cheyenne; Carter Roberts, World Wildlife Fund, Washington, D.C.; and David Ullrich, Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

SIX YEARS OF WAR IN SYRIA

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine six years of war in Syria, focusing on the human toll, after receiving testimony from Neal Keny-Guyer, Mercy Corps, Portland, Oregon; David Miliband, International Rescue Committee, New York, New York; and Farida, Abdulkhalek, and Abu Rajab, all of the Syrian American Medical Society, Aleppo, Syria.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 585, to provide greater whistleblower protections for Federal employees, increased awareness of Federal whistleblower protections, and increased accountability and required discipline for Federal supervisors who retaliate against whistleblowers;

S. 582, to reauthorize the Office of Special Counsel, with an amendment;

S. 576, to amend title 5, United States Code, to extend certain protections against prohibited personnel practices;

S. 317, to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, with an amendment;

S. 500, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism;

S. 218, to restrict the inclusion of social security account numbers on documents sent by mail by the Federal Government, with an amendment;

S. 188, to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the costs of painting portraits of officers and employees of the Federal Government;

H.R. 274, to provide for reimbursement for the use of modern travel services by Federal employees traveling on official Government business;

H.R. 366, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's vehicle fleet, with an amendment; and

The nomination of Elaine C. Duke, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

K-1 VISA FIANCE FRAUD

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine visas, focusing on investigating K-1 fiance fraud, after receiving testimony from Greg Nevano, Deputy Assistant Director for Illicit Trade, Travel, and Finance Division, Homeland Security Investigations, Immigration and Customs En-

forcement, and Daniel M. Renaud, Associate Director, Field Operations, Donald Neufeld, Associate Director, Service Center Operations, and Matthew Emrich, Associate Director, Fraud Detection and National Security, each of Citizenship and Immigration Services, all of the Department of Homeland Security; David T. Donahue, Acting Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs; Grace Huang, Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, Oakland, California; Jamal Hussain, Lakewood, California; and Elena Maria Lopez, Bordentown, New Jersey.

AUTOCRACIES TOOLS FOR UNDERMINING DEMOCRACIES

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism concluded a hearing to examine the modus operandi and toolbox of Russia and other autocracies for undermining democracies throughout the world, after receiving testimony from former President of the Republic of Estonia Toomas Hendrik Ilves, Institute for International Studies Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford, California; Heather C. Conley, Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Kenneth L. Wainstein, Cadwalader, Wickersham and Taft LLP, both of Washington, D.C.; and Ben Buchanan, Harvard University Belfer Center Cybersecurity Project, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

VETERANS HEALTH

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Government Accountability Office's high risk list and the Veterans Health Administration, after receiving testimony from Debra A. Draper, Director, Health Care, Government Accountability Office; and Michael J. Missal, Inspector General, and Carolyn Clancy, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, Veterans Health Administration, both of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 28 public bills, H.R. 1528–1555; and 3 resolutions, H.J. Res. 89; H. Con. Res. 33; and H. Res. 199 were introduced. **Pages H2081–83**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H2084**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 1309, to streamline the office and term of the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–37);

H. Res. 173, providing for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress (H. Rept. 115–38); and

H. Res. 198, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1259) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1367) to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1181) to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the conditions under which certain persons may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes (H. Rept. 115–39). **Page H2081**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Webster (FL) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H2061**

Suspension: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure. Consideration began Wednesday, March 8th.

Arbuckle Project Maintenance Complex and District Office Conveyance Act of 2017: H.R. 132, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land and appurtenances of the Arbuckle Project, Oklahoma, to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nay vote of 407 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 159. **Pages H2063, H2066–67**

Approving the location of a memorial to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and pass S.J. Res. 1, approving the location of a memorial to commemorate and honor the members

of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield. **Pages H2063–64, H2067–68**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to amend the Definite Plan Report for the Seedskaadee Project to enable the use of the active capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir: H.R. 648, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to amend the Definite Plan Report for the Seedskaadee Project to enable the use of the active capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nay vote of 408 yeas with none voting “nay”, Roll No. 160; and

Pages H2064–65

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Act of 2017: H.R. 267, amended, to redesignate the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia.

Pages H2065–66, H2071

Recess: The House recessed at 5:05 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H2066**

Question of Privilege: Representative Crowley rose to a question of the privileges of the House and submitted a resolution. The Chair ruled that the resolution did not present a question of the privileges of the House. Subsequently, Representative Crowley appealed the ruling of the chair and Representative McCarthy moved to table the appeal. Agreed to the motion to table the appeal of the ruling of the Chair by a yeas-and-nay vote of 223 yeas to 183 nays with 1 answering “present”, Roll No. 161. **Pages H2068–71**

Providing for the appointment of members of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance to replace members whose terms expire during 2017: The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.R. 1228, as amended by Representative Harper, to provide for the appointment of members of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance to replace members whose terms expire during 2017. **Page H2071**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yeas-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H2067, H2067–68 and H2070–71. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 4:30 p.m. and adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Committee Meetings

CRAFTING AN INFORMATION WARFARE AND COUNTER-PROPAGANDA STRATEGY FOR THE EMERGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities held a hearing entitled “Crafting an Information Warfare and Counter-Propaganda Strategy for the Emerging Security Environment”. Testimony was heard from Timothy Thomas, Senior Analyst, Foreign Military Studies Office; and public witnesses.

DISRUPTER SERIES: ADVANCED MATERIALS AND PRODUCTION

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection held a hearing entitled “Disrupter Series: Advanced Materials and Production”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MODERNIZING ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPANDING HYDROPOWER GENERATION

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Energy held a hearing entitled “Modernizing Energy Infrastructure: Challenges and Opportunities to Expanding Hydropower Generation”. Testimony was heard from Kieran Connolly, Vice President, Generation and Asset Management, Bonneville Power Administration; and public witnesses.

EXAMINING THE CREATION AND MANAGEMENT OF MARINE MONUMENTS AND SANCTUARIES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans held a hearing entitled “Examining the Creation and Management of Marine Monuments and Sanctuaries”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

HOUSE BILL TO IMPROVE THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO HIRE AND RETAIN PHYSICIANS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES; VA ACCOUNTABILITY FIRST ACT OF 2017; VETERANS 2ND AMENDMENT PROTECTION ACT

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 1367, to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; H.R. 1259, the “VA

Accountability First Act of 2017”; and H.R. 1181, the “Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act”. The committee granted, by record vote of 8–3, a structured rule for H.R. 1259. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule makes in order as original text for the purpose of amendment an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–7 and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in part A of the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in part A of the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Additionally, the rule grants a structured rule for H.R. 1367. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule makes in order as original text for the purpose of amendment an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–6 and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in part B of the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in part B of the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Lastly, the rule grants a closed rule for H.R. 1181. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The rule

waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the bill shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill. The rule provides one motion to recommit. Testimony was heard from Representatives Roe of Tennessee, Walz, Esty, Takano, Wenstrup, and Lynch.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE MATERNAL, INFANT, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING PROGRAM

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Human Resources held a hearing entitled “Reauthorization of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, p. D213)

H.R. 609, to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs health care center in Center Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, as the “Abie Abraham VA Clinic”. Signed on March 13, 2017. (Public Law 115–9)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research, hearing entitled “The Next Farm Bill: Agricultural Research”, 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry, hearing entitled “The Next Farm Bill: Forestry Initiatives”, 2 p.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, oversight hearing on Department of Transportation and Department of Housing and Urban Development, 9 a.m., 2358–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled “Investing in the Future—Early Childhood Education Programs at the Department of Health and Human Services”, 10 a.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, hearing entitled “Members’ Day”, 10 a.m., HT–2 Capitol.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled “The Current State of the U.S. Navy”, 8 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled “Oversight Review of Infrastructure Needs and Projects Ready for Immediate Implementation in the Nuclear Security Enterprise”, 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, hearing entitled “The Effect of Sequestration and Continuing Resolutions on Army Modernization and Readiness”, 3:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on the Budget, Full Committee, markup on reconciliation submissions, 10 a.m., 1334 Longworth.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Honoring Our Commitment to Recover and Protect Missing and Exploited Children”, 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Environment, hearing entitled “Reinvestment and Rehabilitation of Our Nation’s Safe Drinking Water Delivery Systems”, 10 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection, hearing entitled “Disrupter Series: Smart Communities”, 10:15 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade, hearing entitled “Sound Monetary Policy”, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance, hearing entitled “Flood Insurance Reform: A Community Perspective”, 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency, hearing entitled “Immigration Benefits Vetting: Examining Critical Weaknesses in USCIS Systems”, 9:30 a.m., HVC–210.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, markup on S. 305, the “Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet, hearing entitled “Bringing Justice Closer to the People: Examining Ideas for Restructuring the 9th Circuit”, 10:30 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, hearing entitled “Combating Crimes Against Children: Assessing the Legal Landscape”, 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Federal Lands, hearing entitled “Identifying Innovative Infrastructure Ideas for the National Park Service and Forest Service”, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 756, the “Postal Service Reform Act of 2017”; and H.R. 760, the “Postal Service Financial Improvement Act of 2017”, 1 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Tax, and Capital Access, hearing entitled “Cafeteria Plans: A Menu of Non-Options for Small Business Owners”, 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, hearing entitled “Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: The National Preparedness System”, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

11:30 a.m., Thursday, March 16

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will meet in a pro forma session.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, March 16

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of H.R. 1181—Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of H.R. 1259—VA Accountability First Act of 2017 (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of H.R. 1367—To improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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