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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God of all nations, author of liberty, thank You for the gift of freedom.

Today, empower our lawmakers to protect and guard the foundations of our liberty so that America may be a blessing to the world. When our Senators are weary, replenish their spirits with the inspiration of Your presence. Lord, make them aware that You will never forsake them in their hour of need. Bellow the flickering embers of their hearts until our legislators feel the fires of patriotism, service, and hope.

We pray in Your marvelous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 3, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a

Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LUJÁN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR AN EXCEPTION TO A LIMITATION AGAINST APPOINTMENT OF PERSONS AS SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WITHIN SEVEN YEARS OF RELIEF FROM ACTIVE DUTY AS A REGULAR COMMISSIONED OFFICER OF THE ARMED FORCES—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 1, S. 11.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 1, S. 11, a bill to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

SENATE SERGEANT AT ARMS STAFF

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I begin this morning with a very exciting announcement about critical leadership roles in the Senate Chamber. Three outstanding individuals are set to resume new responsibilities. LTG Karen Gibson will serve as the next Senate Sergeant at Arms, while Kelly

Fado will serve as Deputy Sergeant at Arms, and Jennifer Hemingway will serve as Chief of Staff.

The Senate Sergeant at Arms was established 223 years ago as an outgrowth of the Office of the Senate Doorkeeper, back when one of the biggest problems was making sure the Senate had a quorum. Today, the Sergeant at Arms is the Senate's chief administrative officer and chief law enforcement officer, so very important at this time. These offices have the enormous responsibility of keeping the trains running on time, while at the same time keeping everyone in the Capitol safe. As we have seen in recent weeks, the security component of the role is immensely important.

LTG Karen Gibson is the perfect person for this job, the job of Sergeant at Arms. She has spent 33 years in Active Duty in the military, much of it in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence as a senior intelligence officer, where she supported U.S. national security objectives in Iraq, Afghanistan, East Africa, Korea, the Pacific, and across the Middle East.

She is ready to hit the ground running because since January 6, she has been part of a weekslong review to identify actions that can be taken immediately—immediately—to improve the security of the Capitol and its Members. She is 100 percent committed to ensuring a safe and secure working environment for Senators, visitors, Capitol employees, Senate staff, press, and paying particular attention to staffers of color.

Lieutenant General Gibson has a big job ahead of her, but I have every confidence she will perform her duties at the same exemplary standard she set over the course of her heralded three-decade military career.

Kelly Fado and Jennifer Hemingway, meanwhile, are two of the most recognizable faces in the Capitol, Jennifer having recently filled in as the Acting Sergeant at Arms. Kelly has been part

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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of my team for many years, on the Rules Committee and in my leadership office. She has helped plan, coordinate, safeguard, and execute multiple Presidential inaugurations—and what a great job she has done in every one of them—and Capitol-wide ceremonies in general. She has been an indispensable resource to me and to my entire staff. I am very glad that Kelly is taking on this challenge.

One other note that I am very proud of—I think we all as Senators can be proud of—this will be the first time in the Senate's history that the Sergeant at Arms' leadership will be comprised entirely of women. I cannot think of a team better prepared than LTG Karen Gibson, Kelly Fado, and Jennifer Hemingway.

To all three of them: Congratulations on your new roles, and thank you for your many years of service to the Senate and to our country.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on the American Rescue Plan, as early as tonight, the Senate will move to take up the American Rescue Plan, a bill designed to immediately deliver help to American families, workers, and businesses struggling under the weight of the pandemic and to lay the foundation for our Nation's recovery, so needed.

Every day, we see signs of hope and signs of caution in our fight against the COVID pandemic. As of today, in good part because the Biden administration is really doing a good job, over 78 million doses of the COVID vaccine have been administered in the country and over 100 million have been shipped—well ahead of the rosiest expectations at the start of the year. Just yesterday, President Biden announced that there will be enough vaccines for every adult in the United States by the end of May—by the end of May—far sooner than most had thought. Again, President Biden and his team are doing a great job in moving the vaccine out quickly but fairly.

Still, the United States averages 66,000 cases of COVID per week. That exceeds anything we saw last summer during the worst months of the spread. So we cannot relax, and the need for the legislation that is before us is stronger than ever before.

It is a similar story with the economy. There are green shoots, but unemployment is still over 6 percent and 9 percent for African Americans. The economy has lost 10 million jobs compared to a year ago. Tens of millions of Americans report being thousands of dollars behind in rent and utilities. As Treasury Secretary Yellen and Federal Reserve Chair Powell have repeatedly warned us, our economy and its recovery remain deeply uncertain.

There are bumps but mainly because of the stimulus bills we have done. We did a bill in March, and the May and June numbers looked pretty good but

then sunk again over the summer and fall. We did a bill in December, and the January numbers looked pretty good. But that is not evidence that the economy is able to sustain things on its own; that is evidence that the Federal Government needs to continue its role to get us back on track.

We have come a long way, but we have a long way to go. The American Rescue Plan is designed to build on our early progress and finish the job, to help our country get through the final months of the crisis and then, equally important, bring our economy roaring back.

We cannot go through the situation we did back in 2009, where the stimulus wasn't strong enough and we stayed in recession for years. So just because the numbers are not as bad as they were doesn't mean we don't need a continued strong push to get us out of this ditch and go upward and forward.

Now, we had always hoped that this very important work would be bipartisan. Regrettably, it seems that too many of our Republican colleagues are resorting to the same predictable objections they raise about nearly every proposal supported by a Democrat. It doesn't matter what is in the bill; everything my colleagues oppose is "a liberal wish list". That is what many of them call it.

Let me tell you, this bill is not a liberal wish list; this is an American wish list. When people want checks to help them get out of the morass, that is not a liberal wish list; that is what the American people want. It is an American wish list. When people want resources to open schools quickly and safely, that is not a liberal wish list; that is an American wish list. When people want assistance for the hardest-hit small businesses, that is not a liberal wish list; that is an American wish list. Funding to keep teachers, firefighters, transit workers, first responders in Red States and Blue on the job, it is not a liberal wish list; it is an American wish list.

So many of the people affected by this bill are not liberals or Democrats. They may be Republicans, they may be Independents, they may be conservatives, but they are Americans who want some help to get out of this morass.

Money to expand the testing and speed of the distribution of vaccines, the cornerstone of ending this crisis once and for all—that is not a liberal wish list; that is an American wish list. Everyone wants the vaccine out there. Direct checks, as I mentioned, as promised to Americans struggling to keep up with expenses, to buy their groceries, medicine, to pay the rent and utilities—that is not a liberal wish list; that is an American wish list.

I would ask my Republican colleagues to go ask their constituents which of these things their constituents oppose. None. That is what the data shows.

The American Rescue Plan will be the single largest anti-poverty bill in

recent history, with crucial assistance for American families, particularly those struggling with the cost of childcare. It will give tax breaks for low-income workers, so when they work hard, they can afford the necessities of life.

So these things are "the liberal wish list" that Republicans are talking about—support for schools and jobs and families and workers and the vaccine? No way.

Ironically, the "liberal wish list" includes a whole bunch of bipartisan amendments that were accepted, including provisions to help restaurants, sponsored by Senators SINEMA and WICKER; a vaccine public awareness program, sponsored by Senators CARDIN and PORTMAN; and a provision to better target direct payments, sponsored by Senators MANCHIN and COLLINS.

Make no mistake, the American Rescue Plan is a very, very strong bill that will move our country forward in amazing ways. It should come as no surprise that support of the American Rescue Plan is coming from all over the country.

Hundreds of business leaders—not the most liberal bunch—have urged Congress to pass this bill. More than 435 mayors and State leaders, Democrats and Republicans, have said the same: They want the bill. As one Republican mayor from Michigan put it, "The need is real, and not just in Democratic communities." He went on to tell his fellow Republicans in Washington who oppose the bill to "talk to some of the Republican mayors."

But if my Republican colleagues here in the Senate don't want to listen to the words of their fellow Republican mayors and Governors, they can look at the polls, which show the vast majority of Americans, including a majority of Republicans, support this bill.

It seems like the only people who are dead set against this bill are Republican Senators—not Republicans out in the country, not Republican mayors, not Republican businesspeople, not Republican small businesses.

I guess all of this should be expected. COVID-19 is not a Red State or a Blue State crisis. Our Republican friends should know that. It is not a Democratic or Republican concern. They should know that too. COVID-19 is a menace to all of us, and we should be banding together to fight.

The economic crisis has affected all of us, and the plan that we are going to vote on this week is going to provide real, robust relief for all of us.

Whatever our Republican colleagues decide to do, the Senate majority is intent on going forward and helping the American people with bold action quickly.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last year, Congress rallied five times around historic bipartisan legislation to meet urgent and unprecedented needs. Our COVID-19 packages reinforced the healthcare frontlines, fueled the sprint for vaccines, and cast lifelines for the workers and small businesses hit hardest by shutdowns.

Together, those bills cost about \$4 trillion, but none of those measures passed the House of Representatives with less than a bipartisan supermajority of about 80 percent—completely overwhelming support.

Then, last week, House Democrats rammed through the American Rescue Plan Act on a razor-thin margin of 50.7 percent. The only thing bipartisan about their bill was the opposition to it. Their bill costs about \$2 trillion. That is roughly the same size as the entire CARES Act that saved our health system and economy through months of shutdowns last year. Even liberal experts admit this is far out of proportion to what is needed now, with vaccines going into arms and the economy already primed to literally roar back.

Amazingly, Democrats managed to allocate less than 9 percent—9 percent—of their massive bill to the entire healthcare response; 9 percent of the \$1.9 trillion related to the healthcare response, and—listen to this—even less than 1 percent of the \$1.9 trillion to the vaccines that will actually finish the fight.

They needed to save the other 91 percent of the borrowed money for a vast catalog of liberal spending with basically no relationship whatsoever to beating COVID-19. For example, they want to send wheelbarrows of cash to State and local bureaucrats to bail out mismanagement from before the pandemic. They are changing the previous

bipartisan funding formula in ways that will especially bias the money toward big blue States. This outraged a bipartisan group of Governors, largely from middle America, who went on record this week. There are generous new benefit packages for government employees. There are provisions to let abortion providers drain money from rescue programs that were built to save Main Street small businesses. There is a strange new Acela corridor kickback where they will make Medicare send more money to just New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Delaware.

Just looking at the timeframe for all of their spending belies any notion that this is an urgent rescue plan.

Take the K-12 funding which, contrary to science, Democrats say is a prerequisite for opening schools. Ninety-five percent of that supposedly urgent money would not be spent this fiscal year but, instead, over the next 7 years. Let me say that again. Ninety-five percent of the money for K-12 is not going to be spent this year, but over the next 7 years. That is not my definition of an emergency.

Grants for rural healthcare would be on a slow drip out through fiscal 2024. Agriculture-related funds would trickle out over the next—listen to this—over the next decade. It doesn't sound very urgent to me.

What the American people need are fast-acting plans to get schools reopened now, get laid-off workers back into jobs, and finish the fight against this virus right now. The Democrats have, instead, drawn up a liberal omnibus to fund miscellaneous government spending over the next decade.

We are adding all this money to the national debt, and they have a rescue package with most of the money being spent out far in the future. That is why there was bipartisan opposition over in the House. That is why aspects of the House bill are already dropping like flies before this thing even hits the Senate floor.

A pet project for the San Francisco Bay area is gone. Special upgrades for a bridge connecting New York to Canada, gone. Even CNN had to admit these were "controversial." Senator SANDERS' far-left minimum wage policy that would have killed 1.4 million jobs just as we try to recover appears to be gone, too—at least for now.

According to public reports, right now, as we speak, several of our Democratic colleagues are frantically trying to trim back other crazy provisions: the runaway government bailouts, the policies that will keep workers at home when we should be focusing on rehiring.

Just a few days ago, President Biden's Chief of Staff bragged that this smorgasbord of borrowed money will add up to "the most progressive domestic legislation in a generation."

So that is what you get when the Democratic leader persuades all of my distinguished friends across the aisle that their first undertaking as Senate

committee chairmen should be to outsource all their gavels to the House.

The Senate wrote the CARES Act. In the earliest days of the crisis, this Chamber took the bull by the horns. I personally assembled bipartisan task forces that crafted urgent solutions to help America weather the storm.

This time around, on the substance, the Senate has been largely missing in action. House Democrats are bristling and publicly pushing back if our Senate Democratic colleagues even try to make their mark on this partisan bill in small ways.

So these two radically different processes have generated two radically different pieces of legislation.

The Democrats had a choice. They chose to go it alone, tack to the left, leave families' top priorities on the cutting-room floor.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on a completely different matter, just 6 weeks into unified Democratic government, we already have another crisis brewing on our southern border. In January, Customs and Border Protection logged more than 78,000 encounters on our southwest border, more than double the figure from January of 2020.

Last week, HHS sources told reporters we just logged the busiest February in the history of the Unaccompanied Alien Children Program. The number of kids turning up on our border with no parents is soaring, and everyone expects the numbers to keep climbing.

Now the Biden administration is reportedly planning to reopen the same kinds of emergency shelters over which Democrats vilified the Trump administration a couple of years back. Both President Biden and his Secretary of Homeland Security have said this week they don't think this is a crisis. Not a crisis, they say? Well, if this isn't a crisis, with unaccompanied kids pouring in and exceeding the capacity in a pandemic, I would hate to see what one looks like.

The cause of this emergency is not some mystery. It is not mysterious at all. Everybody knows exactly what happened. The new administration explicitly campaigned on weakening border security, and 6 weeks in, they have reversed the "Remain in Mexico" policy, begun letting more people in in a haphazard way, and broadcast confusing mixed messages.

The L.A. Times says: "Biden immigration policy stirs confusion at Mexico border." They interviewed one woman who crossed the Rio Grande "on a smuggler's raft" and was only briefly detained before being released into our country. She explained she had specifically come because of the new Biden administration: "That gave us the opportunity to come."

Another reporter put it this way: "The message received in Tijuana and other Mexican border cities was

simpl[e]: Joe Biden was now letting people in.”

We are not just talking about the fine details of border policy. The big backdrop behind this whole discussion is the sweeping leftwing amnesty plan that the Biden administration unveiled before they were even sworn in. They want to fast-track 11 million illegal immigrants into temporary legal status, then green cards, and then full citizenship.

The far left loves this approach, but so does a certain cross section of Big Business. There is a whole lot of cultural power and economic power pushing the liberal vision. As for the best interest of American workers, well, that is not as trendy a cause in certain circles.

The truth is that it is not helpful or compassionate to just open up our borders. It is not fair to American citizens and workers, but neither is it fair to the people who are being lured into a humanitarian crisis in the middle of a pandemic because they believe this Democratic administration just conspicuously turned on a neon “Vacancies” sign.

Republicans just spent 4 years making major headway on the security and humanitarian crisis at our border. It took serious policy changes. It took international diplomacy with multiple countries, and it took border enforcement.

The American people would be better served if the Biden administration had chosen to build on this progress instead of rapidly trying to tear it down.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF MERRICK BRIAN GARLAND

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, history was made on Monday. Judge Merrick Garland finally got a vote before the Senate Judiciary Committee. It was a long time in coming. His nomination was approved by a bipartisan vote of 15 to 7. I am not surprised. He is superbly qualified to be the next Attorney General of the United States.

With experience, judgment, and integrity, he checks all the boxes. He served with distinction on the DC Circuit Court for 23 years and, in that time, developed a reputation for fidelity to the rule of law, a strict adherence to judicial independence, and a commitment to treat people with fairness, dignity, and respect. It is no surprise that he has been endorsed by 60 former Federal judges and by judges, of course, who have been appointed by Presidents of both political parties. In

addition to his experience on the bench, he is a longtime veteran of the Department of Justice, where he served before he ascended to the DC Circuit.

He is uniquely qualified at this moment in history to lead the Department and to investigate and prosecute, for example, the January 6 insurrection—the mob that invaded this Capitol Building. The reason he is qualified is that he led the investigation and prosecution of the Oklahoma City bombing. We remember that very well. That was clearly a case of domestic terrorism. His work on that project won praise from across the political spectrum.

He also personally understands the Department's role in protecting civil rights. I believe he is the person to restore honor and dignity to this Department. He has support from every major law enforcement organization in the country, from 150 former Justice Department officials of both parties, from the Nation's leading civil rights organizations, and from many others—left, right, and center. His credentials are second to none, and his character—in particular, his selflessness—is a model to us all.

When we held the markup on his nomination in the committee, the most significant witness may have been a lady by the name of Mrs. Tucker. She testified on the second panel. She is the mother of two DC public school students who were tutored and mentored by Judge Garland. After the first child had received his helping hand for several years, the second child asked if she could be included in the next round, and then they both won the help of Judge Garland. Doesn't it speak volumes of a man who has reached that station in life that he would be so humble as to sit down and help children whom he had never met before find their way through life? It was a touching moment when she testified. It really was an insight into his character.

So you would think, with a 15-to-7 vote, you would think with all of these endorsements, and you would think that the fact of there being four members on the Republican Senate side of the Senate Judiciary Committee behind him that this would be a nomination of an Attorney General so important to this Nation that it would be given expedited treatment on the floor of the Senate. No. Unfortunately, there was an objection to expediting his nomination so he could get to work for the Department of Justice, and, as a consequence, we face the Senate procedure, which means that it could be days, maybe even into next week, before he can take the job. That is unfortunate. We need him now more than ever. Even Republican Leader MITCH MCCONNELL has said he would support him. CHUCK GRASSLEY, my friend and the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, voted for him.

There is just no reason the Senate should not immediately hold a vote for Merrick Garland's nomination. He is

the last remaining member of President Biden's national security team to be chosen. It is time for him to take this job. The Attorney General is needed to fight the threat of domestic terrorism, which the FBI Director spoke to yesterday in the Senate Judiciary Committee, to reorganize this Department and get it moving in the right direction, and to face the many challenges when it comes to national security and the administration of justice.

We should confirm Merrick Garland immediately. I sincerely hope that whoever is holding his nomination on the other side can be persuaded to give him his chance.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a different subject, I listened to the speeches of Senator SCHUMER and Senator MCCONNELL about the American Rescue Plan—Joe Biden's proposal, his initial proposal as President—to deal with the pandemic, the state of the economy, and many other aspects of American culture and life that need to be addressed. Clearly, there is a difference of opinion.

I couldn't help but think, as Senator MCCONNELL was recounting our experience last year, that when it came to the CARES Act a year ago—the \$2 trillion plan to respond to the state of the pandemic and the economy, the plan that was engineered by Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, a member of the Trump administration, who argued and negotiated with Republicans and Democrats alike—that, when they finally agreed, the vote was 96 to nothing in this Chamber. Every Democrat voted for the proposed CARES Act that was engineered by the Trump administration. Party was pushed aside because the priority was our Nation. It happened again in December of last year. In President Trump's administration, with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin at the table and with Democrats and Republicans bargaining, the final vote was 92 to 6 in the Senate—not bad—and the 6 noes were all Republicans. Again, the Democrats stepped up and said: We will support this bipartisan effort because that is why we are here. The American people sent us here to do a job.

Now comes the new President, Joe Biden, who says: Good work last December, but that was temporary, and that was supposed to be a special effort. Now we have to finish the year. We have some deadlines coming. Just 2 weeks from now—or in less than 2 weeks—the unemployment insurance programs will be running out for millions of Americans, and the rental assistance program as well. Some will face eviction, and some will not have enough money to feed their families. So get to work. Pass the American Rescue Plan on a bipartisan basis.

We have yet to hear from one Republican Senator who will support President Biden's plan. Some of them have

legitimate differences with his policy, and I wish they would come to the table and be a part of the conversation, but none of them has really stepped up and said: We are in for the big effort that the President is calling for. That is what it will take. Unfortunately, because of that, in a 50–50 Senate, we will need every Democratic Senator to support the President's plan and to pass a version of what the House is sending over to us. We will go through an exercise called "reconciliation" in just a few days. It is not a pretty scene if you follow legislative history, but it is long overdue.

Do you know the one thing that should drive us on? It is not only the obvious need for this but the fact that the American people overwhelmingly support what President Biden has proposed. The American people believe, as he does, that we should be investing billions into more vaccines and more people to administer them. The American people believe that a cash payment to families is essential in some parts of this country. They would like to see the \$600 in last December's bill complemented with the \$1,400 in this proposal. They would like for us to put money on the table for people who are unemployed so they can put food on that same table, and they would like for us to get the schools ready to deal with reopening and classes that are safe for the kids and the teachers. There is no argument about that.

While 20 percent of the people may oppose it, 80 percent support it. Yet we can't find one Republican Senator to support President Biden's plan. They say it costs too much. Well, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Mr. Powell, a conservative Republican economist, has told us to be careful that you do too little. This economy is fragile. It needs to be strengthened. We need to inject into this economy enough of our resources so that people are back, purchasing again, and businesses are reopened. He has warned us, if you do too little and if you cut it off too soon, you are going to pay for it for years to come with unemployment and problems with the sluggish economy.

My Republican colleagues say it is just too much money. Well, I think they are wrong, and at this moment in history, I am prepared to err on the side of investing in the American people and American businesses and making certain that we have a fighting chance to put this behind us.

Our constituents know about the cost of this situation. They want us to provide the solutions. They want results from Congress. If we were to delay this payment, people would see their unemployment insurance lapse and hardships continue.

We shouldn't play politics with it either. In the two big bills last year, the Democrats were on board for plans engineered by the Trump administration. Economists believe that we need to move and move decisively.

According to an analysis by the Brookings Institution, passing a com-

prehensive plan like the American Rescue Plan could produce a 4-percent growth in U.S. GDP this year.

Moody's estimates that passing the same plan would create 7½ million American jobs. How about that?

We got good news over the weekend with the arrival of another safe and effective vaccine. This is the third one, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, in our arsenal—perhaps more to follow. It holds the promise of finally getting America inoculated, vaccinated, and breaking the back of this pandemic.

This new vaccine prevents hospitalizations and deaths, stored at normal temperatures, a single shot—all good news.

But we need more than a promise of a vaccine. We need a plan. These vaccines are of no good to us sitting on a shelf or not being produced in volumes necessary.

President Biden's rescue plan, which not a single Republican supports, would provide 100 and—I think I have got the number right—\$160 billion in resources for the production of vaccines and the distribution. If we ever needed it, this was the moment.

Thankfully, President Biden's leadership has led to allocations to Illinois of vaccines that have increased by 70 percent since he took over as President. We still have our challenges at the local level.

I want to salute the Governor, JB Pritzker; the mayor of the city of Chicago, Lori Lightfoot; the Cook County Board President Preckwinkle; and all the others who are doing their best.

I announced with Senator DUCKWORTH just last Friday that we are going to put a new facility in the parking lot of the United Center, where the amazing Chicago Bulls play basketball from time to time, and it is going to be able to vaccinate thousands of people every single day.

It is Federal assistance that is making it happen, and it happens to be in a neighborhood where African Americans and Latinos are nearby, and we need to protect them with even more effectiveness than we have to date. They account for 33 percent of the population of that area, and only 16 percent have been vaccinated.

The American Rescue Plan provides \$20 billion to expand our vaccine distribution capacity. You would think that that would maybe attract one Republican supporter. It should. There are certainly some who argue against all vaccines and spending any money for it and all the rest, but they are such a small minority. The vast majority of Americans of both political parties understand that we have got to go to vaccinations as quickly as possible. The Biden rescue plan does that. I wish they would join us in supporting it.

There is also a need for money for education. There is \$128 billion in this bill for additional education funding K–12, and there have been arguments made on the floor here by the Republicans that we just don't need it. They

point to data showing that the school districts haven't spent the money that we provided in previous relief packages. Well, just talk to the principals and the teachers in your home State about that conclusion. You will find the money is desperately needed and that the money that has been appropriated before will be spent in an orderly way and not shoveled out the window.

We are looking ahead to the entire year and making certain that we have a real school year—perhaps the remainder of this year but certainly for next year. Illinois needs these funds and America does.

When it comes to State and local support, I have to tell you, we have paid a heavy price in our State of Illinois and our major cities. We have seen expenses go up and we have seen revenue go down and we need help, not unreasonable.

This helping hand will save jobs that are necessary for us—some of them healthcare jobs, some of them security and safety jobs, but they will save jobs, and that is why the State and the local resources included in this bill are so important and timely.

Over the past year, States and localities have lost 1.3 million jobs of their payrolls, far more than the 750,000 lost in the great recession. There is needed help from the Federal Government, and it is needed now.

We have recovered just 12 million of the 22 million jobs we have lost since the start of the pandemic.

According to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, more than 8 million rental households and 2 million homeowners were behind on housing payments at the end of last year. The burden is tough, and for those of us lucky enough to have escaped it, we may not know the feeling, the empty feeling of eviction or the loss of a home that you have paid a mortgage on for years.

I am going to close. I see one of my colleagues on the floor preparing to speak, but I would like to close with the story of Galen Hensen from Midlothian, IL.

For 34 years, Galen has supported touring artists through his work in live concert production for some of America's most iconic musicians. When the American economy was upended by the pandemic, his industry froze to save other lives and to avoid crowds.

Like so many others, Galen went on unemployment. Yet, even with the Federal \$600 supplement to State unemployment, he had only half of his regular income replaced. He struggles—still struggles to make ends meet. He wrote to me urging that we put aside our partisan differences and pass the American Rescue Plan. Let's listen to Galen, and let's listen to many others like him. They are counting on us.

I hope when all is said and done after all the speeches, that just as we came together on a bipartisan basis to pass the rescue plan twice last year—96 to

nothing, 92 to 6—under the Trump administration, with all Democrats supporting it, wouldn't it be great if we showed that same bipartisanship again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, less than 2 months ago, President Biden emphasized a theme of unity at his inauguration.

"Today, on this January day, my whole soul is in this," he said. "Bringing America together. Uniting our people. And uniting our nation."

Admirable words, but so far they haven't been met with much action. On the first big legislative test of his Presidency, coronavirus legislation, President Biden and Democrats in Congress have pursued a resolutely partisan course.

They have not only failed to invite Republican input in any meaningful way, they deliberately excluded it by passing their coronavirus package using budget reconciliation.

This allows them to pass the bill in the Senate by a simple majority vote, instead of requiring the concurrence of 60 Senators to move to a vote on the bill, which is typically how legislation is passed here in the Senate, including the five coronavirus bills that we passed last year, when the Republicans had the majority here in the Senate.

Now, Democrats' decision to use reconciliation might be understandable if Republicans had declared our opposition to any further coronavirus legislation, but, of course, that is not the case.

Republicans made it clear that we were willing to work with Democrats on additional coronavirus legislation. In fact, 10 Republican Senators put together a plan and met with President Biden for 2 hours to discuss a bipartisan agreement. But while the President listened to them graciously, Democrats and the President quickly made it clear that they intended to move forward without Republican input.

Two days after Republicans met with President Biden, the House passed its partisan budget resolution to pave the way for reconciliation here in the Senate. Two days later, the Senate followed suit.

Clearly, there were no plans to let negotiations with Republicans slow down the partisan juggernaut. In fact, Democrats have been pretty determined to make sure Republicans don't have a voice in this legislation at all.

During markups of the COVID relief package in House committees, Republicans offered a number of amendments: 245 amendments, to be exact. Out of those 245 amendments, Democrats accepted exactly one for the final bill—one.

Among the amendments House Democrats rejected were commonsense

proposals to tie school funding to the reopening of schools. There was an amendment to unfreeze funding for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program for farmers and ranchers. There were amendments to target funding to overlooked rural communities and an amendment to protect healthcare providers from frivolous lawsuits.

The one thing that can be said for the House is at least it gave Members in the House a chance to review the bill in committee. Here in the Senate, Democrats' COVID package will come to the floor without any committee consideration. Senators are just supposed to accept whatever the House sent over or whatever changes the Senate Democratic leader makes, minus those items that are excluded from a reconciliation package by Senate budget rules.

Democrats' partisan course on COVID legislation is particularly disappointing because up until now, COVID relief has been a bipartisan process.

That is right. To date, Congress has passed five COVID relief bills, and every single one of those bills was overwhelmingly bipartisan.

The Republican-led Senate took up and passed COVID relief legislation by margins of 96 to 1, 90 to 8, 96 to 0, 92 to 6, and one even went by voice vote here in the Senate.

Back then, of course, Democrats thought that the minority party should have a voice in the process. In fact, the Democratic leader filibustered the original CARES Act, our largest COVID bill to date, multiple times until he got a version that he was satisfied with.

Now that the Democrats are in the majority, however, they have decided minority representation can be dispensed with. It is Democrats' way or the highway on COVID legislation. Republicans and the Americans that they represent will not be allowed to contribute.

I guess it is not surprising. After all, if the Democrats had pursued a bipartisan process, they would probably have had to eliminate some of the non-COVID-related provisions in this legislation, like the \$86 billion bailout of multiemployer pension plans, hardly a coronavirus emergency.

They might have been forced to trim their slush fund for States and ensure that the distribution formula wasn't weighted heavily in favor of blue States.

The Senator from Illinois was just down here talking about the importance of helping out the States. Well, under the formula that they have designed for this relief package, the dollars skew heavily, surprisingly, to States like New York, where the Democratic leader is from, or California, where the House Speaker is from, or Illinois, where the Senate Democratic whip is from.

It seems like a lot of States around the country sort of got left out when it

came to how to distribute what is going to be a huge amount of money that is going to go out to State and local governments if the Democrats have their way with this bill. They might have had to reject the measure to give labor unions and Planned Parenthood access to loans designed to help small businesses—again, hardly something that we ought to be doing in a coronavirus relief bill that is designed to make sure that small businesses stay viable, but it does satisfy a lot of Democrat special interest groups.

They might have had to tie funding for schools to school reopening—seems like a fair consideration. There was an amendment offered during the budget resolution when it was being considered on the floor of the Senate that would have required schools where every teacher had the vaccination to reopen in order to qualify for Federal assistance under this legislation, but there is nothing about that in this bill. There is nothing that, of all the money, the \$128 billion that will go out to schools—by the way, we put \$68 billion out there already, much of which hasn't been spent. But with all this money that would go out to schools, there is no stipulation anywhere in this legislation that would attempt to tie funding for schools to their reopening so that we can get our kids back to school and learning again in that environment.

In fact, it would be arguable, I think, that the schools, if the teachers can get vaccinated—and that was the very language of the amendment that was offered in the budget resolution by Republicans. It was defeated here in the Senate on a 50-50 vote. All Republicans voted for it, all Democrats against it. But again, all it simply said was that if you are going to get Federal funding under this bill and all of the teachers in your school are vaccinated against the coronavirus, then you have to reopen. If you don't reopen after all the teachers have been vaccinated, then you don't get funding under this bill. That seems like a fairly straightforward request, given the fact that so many schools across this country and so many of our kids continue to have to learn virtually at a time when we need to have them in the classroom. This is obviously something that wasn't included in this legislation.

I would argue that all the changes that I have just mentioned would have made the bill better, but they might not have made the Democrat allies as happy. This whole process could have been different. We could be here today with another bipartisan COVID bill that would speed up vaccination and help our country through the rest of the pandemic. In fact, as I said, there were lots of Republicans who were interested in negotiating, sitting down with Democrats to do just that.

The Democrat whip, the Senator from Illinois, was down here saying: Wouldn't it be great if this could be bipartisan like the other bills we have

done earlier that were bipartisan? I would simply point out the obvious, and that is that all of the bills that were done last year when Republicans had the majority here in the Senate were bipartisan because we did them under regular order. We did them under the 60-vote threshold that is required to move legislation through the Senate.

What the Democrat leadership has opted to do is to use a rarely used legislative vehicle here—budget reconciliation—to do a bunch of things that they could do simply with 51 votes, and it was pretty clear to me that they had no intention ever of including Republican ideas or involving Republicans in developing this legislation or, ultimately, having Republican support for at the end. In fact, that was probably made most clear by a statement made by the Chief of Staff to President Biden in the White House when he described this as “the most progressive domestic legislation in a generation,” suggesting, of course, that this is filled with all kinds of liberal priorities, most of which have very little to do with the coronavirus.

In fact, if you look at where the funding goes in this, the \$1.9 trillion, less than 10 percent—less than 10 percent—deals with funding for public healthcare; in other words, funding for vaccines, either for production or distribution; funding for providers; funding more mental health; funding for anything related to healthcare. If you look at the \$1.9 trillion, it is less than 10 percent. Less than 10 percent of it is actually directed at addressing the actual healthcare crisis that we are facing as a nation.

I would simply say that it is pretty clear to me that if Democrats had wanted to, they could have had—easily could have had—a bipartisan bill. There are 10 Republicans I know of today who would have voted for a bill that would include funding for vaccines, that would include funding for the Paycheck Protection Program, that would include funding for unemployment checks, that actually would have included funding for direct checks to go out, which I know is a very popular thing. But that consultation never occurred. That desire to get input never happened—that offer to allow the committees of jurisdiction to even have a voice or any input into this.

Frankly, if I am a Democrat here in the Senate, I would be outraged that my committees were bypassed completely. There was no consideration at any committee—any committee—here in the Senate about what the contents of this legislation should be or what the substance of it should look like in the end. It was literally ramrodded, coming from the House of Representatives, taken up by the Democratic leadership with no input from the committees—Republicans, for sure, but also Democrats, of all people, who you think would want to be heard. I mean, they got these chairmanships of these

committees for a reason. They finally got the majority, and they have committee gavels and all that, and here we are, talking about \$1.9 trillion in spending, and the committee chairs, the committees themselves had no action when it comes to shaping or in any way producing this legislation.

So to suggest, as the Democrat whip, Senator DURBIN, did earlier, that he really hopes that this will be bipartisan, I just—it is hard to take that even seriously, given how this is proceeding and how the Democrats opted to do this relative to how the other five coronavirus relief bills were passed last year under the Republican majority.

We are looking instead at a partisan bill that directs billions of taxpayer dollars to projects and policies that have nothing to do with overcoming COVID. And just as one observation—again, I made this point on the floor yesterday. But one thing that we need to remember here is that we are talking about real money here, and we are talking about it all being borrowed money. This is all money that goes on the debt. Every dollar that we are going to provide of the \$1.9 trillion that is proposed in this Democrat bill is a borrowed dollar. These are all dollars that go on the debt, the debt which has grown dramatically in this last year, in some cases because we had to move aggressively, as we did last year at this time in March with a bill that would get immediate assistance out there to people who desperately needed it. We were fighting at that time a major emergency, a major crisis. Well, here we are, a year later. We have a very different perspective on the world today than we did 12 months ago. But that \$1.9 trillion, when added to the other coronavirus relief bills, ends up being about \$6 trillion—\$6 trillion. That amount of money is absolutely hard to comprehend and hard to fathom. And we are talking about compounding the \$4 trillion or so already out there with another \$2 trillion with this bill, and as I pointed out yesterday, at some point—at some point—the chickens come home to roost. You cannot continue down this path without consequence on the economy.

Now, the argument in support of this legislation made by Democrats is that we need to do more; we have got to get this out there; we have got to stimulate the economy. My fear in a lot of respects right now is that the economy could be overstimulated. The Congressional Budget Office said just recently that without any additional assistance, the economy is going to grow in 2021 at 3.7 percent, and we are flooding the zone with so much money that the money supply numbers have been exploding.

The 2020 money supply was up—the M2 as they measure it—was up 26 percent. Year over year, from 2000 to 2019, it averaged about 6 percent. This year it is going to be up another 12 percent. There is a lot of money out there in the economy. What does that mean long-

term for our economy and for the individual workers in our economy? Well, first off, it means that as there are more and more dollars chasing fewer goods, you are going to get inflation. That is inevitable. When you get inflation, typically what happens is interest rates follow because those who are buying that debt, if it is being lost to inflation, want to make sure that they are getting a return on their investments, so interest rates start to go up.

When interest rates go up, the amount of money we borrow becomes even more expensive because we have to pay interest. We have to finance that debt. So the amount of interest—the amount of Federal tax dollars that we will be using to pay for interest on the debt will explode and will swamp—it will swamp, literally—the amount of tax revenue coming into this country. We know that because the debt is so large already, and we know that because interest rates have been low for a long time, which has lulled everybody into a sense of complacency that this is not going to have any impact, that there is no downside. We can just keep borrowing because interest rates are low.

Well, if you keep putting as much money out there as we are—another \$2 trillion out into the economy—I would argue that you are not only going to unleash inflation, which has a dramatic consequence for our fiscal situation as a country, but it also has a dramatic consequence for the personal financial situation of the American family because when inflation takes off, everything that people have to buy, from food to gasoline to clothing—all those things go up. Inflation pushes the prices of things higher, which means they are more expensive to the average family in this country.

Then the other effect, long-term, is when inflation starts to go up, as I said, interest rates start to follow. We are already starting to see some evidence of that. When interest rates go up, not only does the Federal Government fiscal picture get much, much worse because the amount of tax dollars that we have to spend to finance our debt grows dramatically, but the American consumer is also faced with higher interest rates. So mortgage payments go up if somebody is trying to finance a home. Interest rates on cars, automobiles, will go up. Interest rates on student loans go up. That also has a direct impact on the pocketbooks of people in this country.

Mr. President, I am going to conclude, but I think it is really important to point out—and I know that my State is not indicative of every State around the country. There are States that have legitimate, different financial situations. But in South Dakota right now, we have 3-percent unemployment. We have a growing economy. We have a State that has already benefited significantly from earlier coronavirus relief legislation to the point where there are dollars that they

are still trying to figure out how to use from the previous installations of Federal spending that we have put out there. It just seems to me that we ought to, given the potential adverse consequence of higher interest rates, higher inflation, higher debt and spending, think about that what we are doing here should be very targeted. It should be very specific.

We know now—we have a lot more insight into where the needs are in the economy than we did at this point last year, in March, when we did the first CARES package. We are at a time now when it is very clear where those needs are, and we could come up with a much more targeted bill. Those 10 Republicans that I have mentioned have come up with a bill that is in the \$600 billion to \$700 billion range, which addresses the healthcare issues, addresses the unemployment insurance issues, addresses the PPP program. It deals with direct checks, as I mentioned. It has got funding for education. I think some funding is in there for State and local governments, which, frankly, as I said, I am not for. I would rather see us take those dollars, if we are going to put them somewhere, put them toward something that is more targeted, at least a formula that makes more sense.

But let me just say that in my view it is really important right now that we be circumspect. We are talking about borrowed money. This is now—this is the house of dollars. This is not—this isn't just magic money that appears out of nowhere. Every single dollar that we are using is borrowed, will be added to the debt, will be a liability for somebody to have to pay back—for our kids and our grandkids. And if the potential economic impacts that I mentioned actually occur and interest rates start to tick up, it is going to be a lot more expensive money to finance in the future, and I think that is a very real consideration. It is something we ought to be thinking long and hard about, not just because of the fiscal situation that the country faces right now but because of the financial situation every American family, as they sit around the kitchen table and talk about these pocketbook issues, will be looking at. If we see higher inflation, if we see higher interest rates, it is going to affect their jobs; it is going to affect their cost of living; and it is going to make it that much harder for them to make ends meet.

Less than 2 months after the President committed himself to unity at his inauguration, the first major bill of his Presidency will be a resolutely partisan piece of legislation. I hope—I hope—that this is not a sign of things to come.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, this week, my Democratic colleagues are poised to push through the Senate here an untargeted and unfocused \$1.9 trillion tax and spending package, and it is all being done under the guise of COVID relief. Some of it is very essential for COVID relief but a small part of it.

This whole act is very unfortunate because it didn't have to be this way. In the past year, Republicans and Democrats were able to work together to pass more than \$4 trillion in COVID relief, and it was all done with strong bipartisan support.

From the start of this year, my Republican colleagues and I have stood ready to engage in good-faith, bipartisan negotiations to provide further targeted relief. However, despite all the talk of unity and bipartisanship by President Biden, the new Senate majority hasn't even attempted to reach across the aisle. Bipartisanship worked 5 times over the last 12 months, starting about 1 year ago right now.

The majority, demonstrating their unwillingness to compromise, has resorted to using special budget procedures so that they may pass a partisan bill strictly along party lines. The result is going to be an unwieldy, nearly \$2 trillion package that isn't shaped according to current economic realities but strictly by a partisan liberal agenda.

In February, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, CBO, projected that even without any further stimulus, gross domestic product will return to its prepandemic levels by mid-2021, and, for the year, the economy will grow at 4.6 percent.

If those two points aren't strong enough, it was recently reported that retail sales jumped 5.6 percent during January, and the National Retail Federation is projecting retail sales for the year to grow at the fastest rate in two decades.

If those four points aren't enough, at the same time, personal income is reported to have risen by 10 percent, and the personal savings rate has surged from a historically high 13.4 percent to over 20 percent.

The American economy will soon be roaring without a \$2 trillion further stimulus. It is no longer March of 2020 when the economy was in free fall and businesses and places of employment were shut down. And how were they shut down? By those of us right here in the Congress of the United States, the Federal Government doing it by government edict.

While many individuals and certain sectors of our economy continue to struggle and, of course, deserve a helping hand, others have largely recovered and are no longer in need of assistance.

At this time, instead of \$2 trillion, two-thirds of it not needed, why not help those hurting and not pour gasoline on the inflationary fires? A COVID relief package should reflect this reality in both size and scope.

Even longtime Democratic economists, such as Obama's former Director of the National Economic Council, have raised concerns about enacting nearly a \$2 trillion stimulus package at this point when we are already in recovery. As former Secretary of Treasury Summers—I also referred to him as Director of the National Economic Council—this is what he says: “The proposed Biden stimulus is three times as large as” the gap between actual and potential output as estimated by the CBO.

Enacting a stimulus unmoored from economic reality poses real risks to our economy, including inflation and slower economic growth moving forward. In fact, a Penn Wharton Budget Model analysis of the President's proposal projects the proposed stimulus would result in a decrease in both GDP and wages in 2022 and over the next 2 decades.

While inflation has been subdued in recent years, we shouldn't let that lull in inflation lull us into a false sense of confidence that we can spend with impunity with no consequences. We are in uncharted waters with debt held by the public exceeding the size of our economy and trillion-dollar annual deficits.

Moreover, as economist John Greenwood and Steve Hanke, professor of economics at Johns Hopkins, recently warned:

The money supply will grow by nearly 12 percent this year. That's twice as fast as its average growth rate from 2000–19. It's a rate that spells trouble—inflation trouble.

And that is without another round of stimulus that we are going to be debating in the next few days here on the floor of the U.S. Senate and probably passing before the end of the week.

Concerns of inflation have been dismissed by the White House and by the Federal Reserve. This sounds too familiar to those of us who witnessed the stagflation of the 1970s. We were told by President Nixon and his advisers that they could spend their way to lower unemployment and economic growth without inflation. They were wrong. The Nixon administration's mistakes ushered in a decade of disastrous inflation. I have said for decades, if Nixon did something, we ought to learn from it, not repeat it.

It was with this background of stagflation that I first ran for Congress on a platform of fighting inflation. Inflation is a regressive stealth tax on every single American. It is particularly unfair to those who have very little money to begin with, and those who have lived beneath their incomes to save for the future only to see their hard work wiped out as the value of the dollars that they put away plunges. Hopefully, Nixon inflation is only history never to return.

But none of us can guarantee that inflation won't return. Not only is the size of this stimulus package detached from reality; so is the scope. A common adage for stimulus and economic relief measures is that they should be timely, they should be temporary, and they should be targeted. By this standard, the Democrats' stimulus is well wide of the mark.

More than one-third, or about \$700 billion, of the funding in the bill wouldn't even be spent until 2022 or beyond, according to the CBO. How does anybody know that we need a stimulus in 2022 and beyond? By what standard does the Biden administration say that we are going to need that? And doesn't that have something to do with the failure of this bill to accomplish what it wants to accomplish, or even the need for it, if some of this money won't be spent until the outer years?

I don't know about you, but I don't see how spending hundreds of billions of dollars years from now is either timely or targeted. As these economists talk about a stimulus, if it is going to be any good, it needs to be timely and targeted.

What does all this have to do with fighting the pandemic right now, with the people hurting right now? Are these same people going to be hurting in these out years when some of this money is going to be spent? If that is the case, this brand-new administration is already admitting that their policies of the future are a failure and a failure today.

Nearly a quarter of the package, or \$422 billion, is dedicated to direct payments to households with incomes up to \$200,000, all regardless of whether they have lost a job or experienced any loss of income. Such untargeted payments make little sense when just this past week it was reported that personal income was up 10 percent and personal savings rates soared to over 20 percent. We clearly shouldn't be using taxpayer dollars to pad the bank accounts of those with six-figure incomes when we ought to be targeting this toward those who are unemployed and those who are low income.

Then we have another \$350 billion of this package that is going to be allocated to bail out fiscally irresponsible States at the expense of States that have managed their State budgets wisely, like my home State of Iowa. This spending is hard to justify given recent reports indicating most States saw little to no drop in revenue between 2019 and 2020. And many States that were previously projecting shortfalls are now projecting budget surpluses.

The package also includes hundreds of billions of dollars in liberal wish-list priorities that have very little to do with the current pandemic. This includes enhancements to refundable tax credits, an expansion of ObamaCare subsidies, and an \$86 billion taxpayer bailout of poorly managed pension plans.

On poorly managed pension plans, that is something that I have been trying to reform over the last 2 years, and reform is necessary, as much as helping them with taxpayer dollars. But there are absolutely no reforms in this stimulus of those multiemployer pension plans. It is simply an \$86 billion bailout.

In the case of COVID, there are some things that no amount of money can address. Until the widespread immunity is achieved, many people will not feel comfortable eating out, going to a movie, taking in a concert, or traveling on a vacation. Spending trillions of dollars will not change the attitude of those people who are going to still be very cautious.

So here is what I would spend the money on—and a lot less money than \$1.9 trillion. Yes, let's prioritize funding for vaccine distribution, assistance for the unemployed, and aid for small businesses in the struggling sectors. And, by all means, let's open our schools. Doing this doesn't require \$2 trillion. Let's remove the pork in this bill. Let's set aside the long-term left-wing wish list and work together as we did before in those five bipartisan bills over the last 12 months. And they have passed both bodies overwhelmingly.

Several of my Republican colleagues approached the White House a few weeks ago with a long list of what I just said—maybe a longer list of items proposed by President Biden that could get Republican support with minimal tweaks. A bipartisan package along those lines could well have passed a few days ago. It is still not too late. I hope we can make a bipartisan effort happen again.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, first, I would like to associate myself with the outstanding remarks from the senior Senator from Iowa, whose long experience in this body is one that we all look to with great admiration and respect.

When he speaks on this, he is well known for his fundamental focus on taxpayer dollars and making sure money isn't wasted, making sure money is directed to the areas where it is supposed to go, where it is needed the most. When he points out how this is a bill basically piled on with pork—and he is from Iowa; he knows about pork—he points out how misguided this effort is, how expensive it is, and how misdirected it is.

I just want to associate myself with these wonderful remarks of the senior Senator from Iowa, and it is a pleasure and a privilege to serve with him.

ELECTIONS

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I also come to the floor today to talk about the need for integrity in our elections.

In 2020, the American people voted for a 50-50 Senate. We are in that body

today. And they gave Republicans nearly a dozen more seats in the House of Representatives.

In the Presidential election, 37 electoral votes were decided by less than 1 percent in those States. Without those 37 electoral votes, President Biden would have failed to achieve a majority in the electoral college. This was a close election. The reason it is a close election is it is a closely divided country.

I am home every weekend in Wyoming and the two things I hear about is, one, this massive bill in front of the Senate right now—a \$1.9 trillion amount of money that is all going to be added to the debt—and the concern for that spending. And the other issue is the integrity of our elections.

So we have a close election. We have a closely divided country. If you would think anything, that should be a mandate to move to the middle, to find common ground, and to work for solutions. It is the kind of things that the President talked about in his inaugural address on January 20.

At a time like this, Americans want to make sure that our own elections are safe and secure and fair. I think voters, no matter what their political party or predisposition is—I think all voters deserve that, and they want it.

But when Republicans raise questions about the integrity of the election, well, we are attacked, and we have seen that now. In fact, earlier this very week, the majority leader of the U.S. Senate spoke of "the pernicious and nasty guise of election integrity." "Pernicious and nasty guise of election integrity"—the majority leader of the U.S. Senate. He attacked the motives of millions of Americans who want to be confident in our elections. Every American ought to want to be confident in our elections.

But it looks like though some Democrats may accuse us of this, many Democrats share our concerns. I hear that from both sides of the aisle.

Democrats in Iowa, right now, are contesting a congressional race, and as I stand here, Democrats in the House are considering the most sweeping changes—and this is reason I am here—to election laws in decades.

Their bill is nearly 800 pages long. It is called H.R. 1, No. 1. To me, that means it is their No. 1 priority. Otherwise, why would they introduce it as their first bill and label it as H.R. 1? H.R. 1, for Democrats in the House, is not the coronavirus. It is not jobs. It is not schools. It is a change in the election process for the American people and is a big mandate coming out of Washington. So the No. 1 priority of House Democrats is not those key issues. Their No. 1 issue is elections and changing elections in our country.

The bill, interestingly, didn't go through a normal committee process as bills are supposed to do in the House or in the Senate. It went straight to the floor—from NANCY PELOSI's desk to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. Hundreds of pages are in there of

new mandates, and it tells each of our States how to hold elections. It doesn't read, "States, you do it." It tells the States how to do it. These aren't just any mandates. These are radical left-wing mandates that people in my home State of Wyoming view as scary and say would make the elections less secure. This bill is so radical that an earlier version of it was felt to be too liberal even for the ACLU, and the latest version is even more liberal than that. I am just going to mention a few of the mandates in this bill.

H.R. 1 would force every State—force every State—to give the vote to convicted felons. This would not be a State choice but a Federal mandate. One group of Democrats even tried to give the vote to felons who are still in prison right now, but that amendment failed.

H.R. 1 would force every State to allow same-day voter registration, online voter registration, and even automatic voter registration. Automatic voter registration? Voter registration is something somebody should have to do, register to vote. If the bill were to become law, you would be registered to vote automatically, without even knowing it, and when the States automatically register you, you are not allowed to find out how they got your information. They can't tell you. In effect, voter registration would be a thing of the past. A thing that we all did as young people, register to vote, would be a thing of the past.

H.R. 1 forces States to count provisional ballots statewide. So, if you vote Democrat in one district and are from another district, they will count it as a vote for the Democrat in your district. Mistakes like this shouldn't happen, let alone should your vote be able to be changed from the vote you actually cast.

The bill also doubles down on mail-in voting. The problems with that, I think people would agree, are obvious. Amazon—and many of us shop on Amazon, if not everyone—recently tried to restrict mail-in voting for a union election at one of its facilities. That is not because Amazon has conservative leadership; it is because they say it is harder to secure mail-in voting than it is to secure in-person voting. If you want an accurate vote, in-person voting is more accurate. The reason mail-in voting was expanded last year was because of the pandemic, but now the Democrats want to carve it into stone forever.

H.R. 1 would also take government funding and give it to political campaigns. The American people have some thoughts on that. The bill actually has a 6-to-1 match for campaign donations under \$200. So, if you were to donate \$100 to your favorite candidate, the Federal Government would take taxpayer dollars and give an additional \$600 of taxpayer money to that candidate who just got a \$100 check. Hard-working people would pay their taxes knowing that their hard-earned dollars would go to fund political activity,

even activity that they would not necessarily agree with.

Like so many liberal government programs, this is a system that could easily be defrauded. We see that now with the coronavirus bill as well. The Democrats know that they would still get their big corporate donations in New York and in San Francisco, but now they would get an added bonus—a 6-to-1 match—from taxpayers.

H.R. 1 would also give government-funded vouchers for people to donate to political campaigns. Political campaigns do not need taxpayer subsidies. People can decide how they want to spend their own money. The government shouldn't be redirecting it toward the party in power. The Democrats complain about money in politics all of the time. The solution, in seeing H.R. 1, apparently, is for there to be more money in politics as long as it is the taxpayers' money.

H.R. 1 ends the equal balance between the Republicans and Democrats on the Federal Election Commission. It ends it. The Democrats want to politicize the Commission that enforces our election laws. They want to make it a partisan organization. That is just another idea that would make it easier to commit fraud.

H.R. 1 doesn't just politicize the Federal Election Commission; it politicizes the Internal Revenue Service, the IRS. The Democrats want to break down the guardrails that currently keep the IRS out of politics. H.R. 1 gets rid of any of the limits on the IRS when giving tax exemptions to nonprofits. Now, think about this. Remember the scandal at the IRS under the Obama-Biden administration—a scandal, headlines. People are well aware. Well, H.R. 1 enshrines that into law. H.R. 1 gives a big stamp of approval to Lois Lerner and her behavior in the way she worked the IRS. Every Democrat who votes for the bill is saying that he or she will endorse what happened at the IRS under President Obama.

There is more, a lot more. The bill goes on and on. It is 800 pages. It is hard to believe too many Democrats have actually read it.

The bottom line is this: H.R. 1 would not reform our elections; it would deform our elections, change them dramatically. H.R. 1 makes our elections harder to secure, easier to defraud, and will cast doubt on every election into the future. That is the last thing we need in this country.

This is no time to sow doubt about our elections. People want confidence in the elections. That is why I am joined with Senator SCOTT of Florida, Senator HYDE-SMITH, and Senator LUMMIS to introduce a better proposal. Our bill would make our elections safe and secure and fair. It would give people more confidence in our elections.

Our bill says: no automatic registration. The House bill repeals all voter ID laws. Our bill says, if you want to register to vote, let's make sure you are a citizen. We need to make sure of

your identification. Let's make sure you have a Social Security number. Those are the sorts of things to provide integrity in the election process.

Under our bill, States can't just send out ballots in the mail based on old information, and that happened all around the country this year. You can still vote by mail. You just need to request a ballot so your information is up to date. It is the way we have done it in Wyoming. We send out requests to say, if you would like a ballot, apply for your absentee ballot, and people do. There is no question about the integrity of that system. It was in a number of States in which ballots were mailed out based on old information and without a request by a voter for that ballot that led to so many concerns about the abuse and fraud.

Our bill bans vote harvesting. It means you can't drop off somebody else's ballot.

The collection boxes they have need to be monitored. When you turn in your ballot to a ballot box, that ought to be monitored.

When votes are being counted, our bill makes sure that both sides are watching.

Our bill prohibits delays or pauses in ballot counting.

We require an audit of ballot counting systems within 30 days after the election.

Now, these are basic, commonsense measures to protect against fraud and error. You want it to be accurate. You want it to be fair.

The differences between our bill and the House's 800-page bill could not be more clear. The Republican bill makes it harder to commit fraud. The Democratic bill makes it easier to commit fraud. The Republican bill costs almost nothing. The Democratic bill costs billions. The Republican bill strengthens the protections of our elections. The Democratic bill weakens those protections and even gets rid of some of them.

This shouldn't be a partisan issue. We should all be against voter fraud. We should make it as hard to commit fraud as we possibly can. So I urge my colleagues to join me with Senators SCOTT and LUMMIS and HYDE-SMITH. Let us stand for integrity in our elections. Let us give every American citizen confidence and the peace of mind that our system works.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, this Saturday will mark 1 year since Congress passed our first response to the COVID-19 virus.

That legislation, you will recall, received overwhelming support. It passed by a vote of 96 to 1 here in the Senate and 415 to 2 in the House, and we know that it was not just a one-off. Each of the five pandemic relief bills that were

signed into law last year received overwhelming bipartisan support.

That is not to say that everybody was in perfect agreement about the size and shape of the bills. We had more than our fair share of disagreements along the way, but both sides of the aisle understood the most pressing challenges facing our country and the types of support that were needed to sustain that fight both when it came to public health and when it came to the economic fallout and recession that resulted: resources for hospitals and healthcare workers, support for the hardest hit families, assistance for small businesses, and, of course, the development, manufacturing, and distribution of vaccines. Not only did we agree on what should be in the bills, but we, actually, also agreed on what should not be in the bills.

We were all guided, I believe, by an understanding that the focus should remain on COVID-19 and that pandemic relief bills were no place to inject unrelated or partisan preferences, but now that our Democratic friends control the House and the Senate and the White House, they have tossed that principle in the trash.

The Democrats have drafted their so-called COVID-19 relief bill without the input, the ideas, or the support of a single Republican. Now, that is not because folks on this side of the aisle were unwilling. As I remember, there were 10 Republican Senators who met with President Biden at the White House and offered a \$600 billion alternative that would enjoy broad bipartisan support. This partisan legislation was a choice, not a necessity—a choice, a conscious choice.

Last year, the House majority whip referred to this crisis as a “tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision.” That was Mr. CLYBURN. The Democrats knew that a bipartisan bill would limit the scope of discussions of policies that were actually relevant to the pandemic. So, rather than maintain that relevance to the pandemic, they chose to go it alone. This opportunity to restructure, as Mr. CLYBURN said, has been months in the making, and now that the Democrats have the numbers they need to make the law without having the support of anybody but their own party, they have tacked on an entire liberal wish list and tried to call it COVID-19 relief, but nobody believes it or should believe it.

You see, these are some of the things that are in the so-called COVID-19 relief bill of \$1.9 trillion when hundreds of billions of dollars of money that we appropriated just in December haven't even been spent yet. Here is what is in the Trojan horse, otherwise known as the Democrats' COVID-19 relief bill: funding for climate justice. At a time when many Americans are asking “When can I get the vaccine?” and “How long until my children can safely return to school?” our Democratic colleagues are pushing funding to support

President Biden's unilateral climate Executive orders.

And then there is the funding—the backdoor funding—for Planned Parenthood. It is responsible for the most abortions of any other organization in America. Now, that is a personal choice for people to make, but asking taxpayers to fund Planned Parenthood so it can perform more abortions is simply irrelevant to COVID-19 relief. It is exploiting another emergency for special interest purposes.

This bill expands the criteria for the Paycheck Protection Program, one of the most successful parts of the CARES Act that we passed last March. It was designed specifically to keep small businesses afloat, but now Planned Parenthood can take advantage of the funding—something they were precluding from doing under bipartisan agreement previously.

There is another big political ally for our Democratic friends that would be newly eligible for these small business loans—the labor unions. So now labor unions can apply for and receive money that was otherwise previously directed toward mom-and-pop businesses so they could keep their doors open, so they could keep their employees on the payroll. But now it includes labor unions.

Many of the labor unions' pension plans in particular have been in dire financial straits for years, long before COVID-19 even existed. Up until now, our Democratic colleagues have not been able to find a way to bail out these mismanaged pension funds. As you can imagine, using taxpayer dollars to cover the mistakes of union bosses is incredibly unpopular, and that is because it is wrong. But the authors of this bill have found a couple of workarounds which they have tucked into this so-called pandemic relief bill.

In addition to making labor unions eligible for the paycheck protection loans, the COVID-19 relief bill also creates a taxpayer fund to bail out underfunded union pension funds. That is not to help the public generally; that is to help labor union members, which is certainly their issue. I understand why it is important, but I don't understand why my taxpayers in Texas should have to bail out underfunded labor pension funds in other States. Union bosses who have mismanaged these funds and made bad choices will be rewarded with a taxpayer-funded check.

While there is a range of provisions to line the pockets of our friends on the other side of the aisle across the country, the authors of this bill also tried to sneak in more localized fixes, two of which have already been dropped from this bill.

In one of the most audacious examples of tone-deaf Washington politics, one of these was an underground rail system in the Speaker's home State of California—an underground rail system. That has nothing to do with COVID-19.

The Bay Area Rapid Transit expansion has been in the works for years,

and Californians have raised concerns over the rising cost. In 2018, it was projected to cost nearly \$4.7 billion, and that estimate has already jumped to \$6.9 billion from \$4.7 billion.

Despite the fact that this rail system has absolutely nothing to do with the pandemic and would serve only the people of one of the wealthiest areas in the country, our Democratic friends provided more than \$100 million for this project in their so-called COVID-19 relief bill. Well, fortunately, not any thanks to our Democratic friends who wrote the bill, this completely unrelated project has now been removed from the bill because it violates Senate rules. You are not supposed to be able to appropriate money and authorize transportation projects in a budget reconciliation bill. That is why it is gone, not because our Democratic friends were embarrassed or had second thoughts after it was pointed out to them the hypocrisy of including that in the bill but because it violates the Senate rules.

Another portion of the bill would have provided money for a bridge from New York to Canada. Let me think for a minute which Senator would have stuck money for a bridge from New York to Canada in the bill. Well, there are two Senators, one of whom is the majority leader from the State of New York. Well, that has now been struck by our colleagues because it received so much blowback. It was such an embarrassing, irresponsible money grab that it is no longer in the bill.

Well, we will see if this trend continues and more of the completely unrelated partisan projects are eliminated because the long list of unnecessary spending does not end there.

This legislation also establishes a bureaucrat bailout, an exclusive paid leave fund just for Federal employees. If their kids aren't in school full time because of the pandemic, these employees could take home up to \$1,400 a week in paid leave. That is roughly equivalent to \$70,000 a year, all to stay home and not work. And these benefits would last for months. Federal employees could take home up to 600 hours of paid leave until September 30 even though President Biden said every adult who wants to get vaccinated will be vaccinated by the end of May. This benefit, this ridiculous money grab, would last until the end of September, long after people had gained antibodies and immunity from COVID-19 as a result of having been vaccinated.

Across the country, only about 35 percent of school districts have returned to fully in-person instruction. If the parents of children at the other 65 percent of school districts happen to work for the Federal Government, they can claim these benefits. Even if a school offers in-person instruction but maintains the option to learn virtually, the parent can still get paid to stay home and not perform any work. Well, parents in my State who don't work for the Federal Government

aren't receiving these same benefits. This is clearly cherry-picking to benefit Federal employees, to pay them not to work.

I respect the work that Federal employees do. I respect the work that all government employees do. But to give them preferential treatment in the midst of this pandemic by paying them not to work and using tax dollars from other States and other places that don't enjoy that benefit is simply grossly unfair.

Over the last year, countless numbers of parents have balanced the impossible: work and remote learning for their children. It has been hard. I understand that. Many parents turned their kitchen tables into makeshift offices and classroom spaces until their children were able to physically return to school. Today, less than 7 percent of the school districts in Texas are fully remote. Seven percent are fully remote, and two-thirds are fully in-person in my State. They have found a way to safely return to the classroom. There is no reason why the Texans who have made that tough juggling act, working and learning remotely, should now have to pay Federal employees who have not had to make that tough choice.

It is simply false advertising to call this a COVID-19 relief bill. It is deceptive and outrageously so. Only \$160 billion dollars—8 percent of the total cost—is directly related to combating COVID-19. Eight percent. The rest of the bill, as I have tried to point out, is a variety of—it is a grab bag, really, of partisan priorities, wasteful spending, and counterproductive policy.

What is worse, this restructuring, according to Mr. CLYBURN's language, to fit the vision of the Democratic Party will cost taxpayers nearly \$2 trillion. That is on top of the \$4 trillion we already spent last year. Two trillion more.

Well, somebody is going to have to pay that money back, and I fear it will not be us because we will be long gone. It will be our children and grandchildren, and at this rate of reckless spending, our great-grandchildren will have to be the ones to pay the money back.

This bill is not the answer to the real challenges that face our country posed by the pandemic. We have shown our willingness to work together in a bipartisan way to enthusiastically support the need to provide real relief both from the public health consequences and the economic fallout associated with the virus, but this bill doesn't even attempt to do that.

Fortunately, as a result of the work we did last year, including last December—and by the way, only about 20 percent of the money that we appropriated just a few weeks ago—actually, a couple of months ago in December—has actually been spent. Only about 20 percent has been spent, and here we are being asked to appropriate \$1.9 trillion more.

But the good news is, the money we spent last year is having real results. The money we invested in treatments and research and development of vaccines and now the distribution of vaccines—it is actually making a real difference. We are vaccinating roughly 3 million people a day in America. More than 70 million people have had shots in arms, and we are doing our best to try to get it in people's arms as fast as we safely can. President Biden said we will get that job done by the end of May. That is wonderful news.

The other wonderful news is that unemployment rates are going down and State revenue is going back up. School districts across the country have safely resumed in-person learning. One in five adults in America has now received a dose of the vaccine, and a third vaccine has now been approved, so that number will climb faster and faster and faster.

Every day we are moving closer to the light at the end of the tunnel, and now is not the time to squander the good will and trust that the American people have had in us to be good stewards of the public health and our economy by engaging in this sort of embarrassing partisan exercise.

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. CASEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The senior Senator from Pennsylvania.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I wanted to speak in particular terms about the American Rescue Plan and in particular about the provision of home- and community-based services. We know that when we speak of these kinds of services, we are talking about services that benefit seniors across the country as well as Americans with disabilities. We are also concerned as well for the heroic frontline workers who provide those services, most of whom—virtually all of whom have been underpaid and, frankly, underappreciated for far too long.

Let me start with the provision of these home- and community-based services in terms of the people who are benefiting from these services. Right now, about 4 million Americans receive home care and home health services in their own homes or apartments. Receiving these services at home reduces the likelihood that that older American will be infected by the virus.

Serving and supporting older adults and people with disabilities reduces pressure on nursing homes and other congregate settings. We know that these kind of services, the home- and

community-based services, make sure that seniors and people with disabilities have a chance to continue to live where they want to live, as opposed to living in a congregate setting. In many cases, that means they will have more contact with their families, reducing the loneliness and social isolation that can be damaging to their mental health. So this American Rescue Plan includes temporary Federal funding to States to increase Medicaid home- and community-based services.

If the bill were to pass, an additional \$9.3 billion would be made available to States to ensure that workers who provide these services have the protection and resources they need to provide the care and to provide the services.

More than 200 organizations from around the country wrote to Congress in support of these new dollars. For months, SEIU, one of the great unions in America representing workers—healthcare workers; the disability community, as well; advocates for older adults like AARP and others—have rallied around the need for this funding.

This funding can be used to increase wages for direct-service providers, the workers. It can be used to secure additional personal protective equipment and testing supplies for workers and those that they support. Home- and community-based funds can also be used to help people transition from congregate settings back to their homes. It can also be used to provide services for the 800,000 Americans waiting for this kind of help.

For example, Ira Hall from Westmoreland County, PA, just right in the southwestern corner of our State, next to Pittsburgh, in that county, Ira will continue to receive services, and he will receive that service from his direct service worker, Ray Williams. I was able to visit both of these individuals last May during a virtual home visit.

Home- and community-based services make it possible for Ira, who has a developmental disability, to live in his own apartment. Ray, who is his direct service worker, helps Ira plan his day and helps him throughout his workday and helps him find the resources he needs to meet his goals.

During the pandemic, Ray's support made it possible for Ira to remain in his home and to be safe from contracting the virus. The services Ray provides also helps Ira maintain his physical and mental health. We know that the American Rescue Plan makes it possible for services like those Ira receives and Ray provides. It will also mean the agencies providing these services will continue to operate and provide essential home- and community-based services throughout the public health crisis.

Passage of the bill would be a down payment on securing strong and comprehensive home- and community-based services infrastructure, but it is only a down payment. This pandemic has revealed a fragile home care and home health system. These funds

should be the first step in creating home- and community-based services infrastructure that can serve seniors and all people with disabilities who want to live in their own homes and remain in their communities with their families, friends, and neighbors.

With the passage of this American Rescue Plan, we will be able to address the immediate pandemic needs of older adults, as well as people with disabilities. Let's work to ensure this first step starts to create the path to a robust, comprehensive home care and home health network in every State for every senior and every American with a disability.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Ohio.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I worked with my colleague from Pennsylvania on some of these home care options, and I think it is a very positive thing. In fact, it saves a lot of cost for the system, but the question is, What is it doing in a COVID relief bill?

You know, I just have to say, having been involved in a bipartisan way on five different COVID relief packages over the last year, I am just so discouraged that we can't sit down, Republicans and Democrats alike, and work out a targeted, focused bill on COVID, and, by the way, then move on to other things, including healthcare reform, including issues that traditionally have also been bipartisan, like infrastructure and broadband expansion, like retirement security or dealing with China and supply chain issues.

But this is not the way to start. We are looking at a \$1.9 trillion package, the second largest ever written by Congress. The first one went through last year. And there was no input—virtually no input—from anybody on our side of the aisle because the administration decided they didn't want it. They wanted to jam this thing through without our participation. And it is too bad, because they will end up with a product that is not going to be as focused and targeted, but, also, it is just getting off on the wrong foot and making it more difficult for us to figure out how to come together on other issues.

It is really the opposite. This process is really the opposite of what President Biden talked about. He talked about it in his campaign. I mean, he won a campaign, including in his primary, saying he wanted to work across the aisle; he wanted to change the tone in Washington. That was pretty brave of him to say, really.

And, then, in his inaugural address, he did the same thing; didn't he? He talked about the need for unity. He talked about wanting to get people together and to work with Democrats and Republicans alike and kind of get back to that. This is exactly the opposite of that. I just don't get it. I have to tell you, I am mystified why they want to start off this way.

I was one of the 10 Republicans who went down to the White House to meet with President Biden about this a few weeks ago, and we offered our own proposal and said we would like to work with you and negotiate with you. And, you know, there has been no interest, to be honest, and I wish it weren't the case.

And \$4 trillion has already been allocated to the COVID-19 issue, and it was needed. It is a crisis. It still is. It is not over yet, although things are getting a lot better, both in terms of the healthcare crisis and in terms of the economy. But we did that, again, five different times—over \$4 trillion, five different times in a bipartisan way.

So we know we can do it. It is hard for us to do it on other issues—let's face it—like taxes or even healthcare, but it is not with regard to COVID-19. At least it hasn't been until now.

The most recent \$900 billion COVID relief package passed at the end of December by a 92 to 6 vote—92 to 6. I came out to the floor to give speeches on this Senate floor over 20 times in the months prior to that legislation finally being passed, urging Congress to come out of our partisan corners, Democrats and Republicans alike, and to come up with a COVID relief package, because I saw so much middle ground. And we found it by the end of December. I was part of a group of five Democrats and five Republicans who sat down over a month-long period or so. We actually wrote a bill. The “908 Coalition,” we called ourselves because we wrote a bill for \$900 billion that was the basis for that \$900 billion legislation that eventually passed. So I have been there. I have done it. We have done it. We can do it. Yet we are looking here at an entirely different process and, unfortunately, a product that is not targeted, not focused.

It is interesting to note that of the \$900 billion that we appropriated just a couple of months ago, at the end of the year, more than half of that, we are told, has not been spent yet. So while we are starting a \$1.9 trillion new spending project, about half of what we just did has yet to be spent. So how do we know how much is needed? It is very hard to know.

I will say that it is troubling to me that this bill is loaded up with provisions that don't relate to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, because we should be targeted and focused like a laser on that issue and not on other things. In fact, when you look at the healthcare part of this, most people would think: OK, what would you do with a COVID-19 bill? You would focus on the coronavirus. You would focus on the testing and the tracing. You would focus on the vaccine development and distribution. You would focus on the healthcare side, including healthcare providers.

Unfortunately, that is a very small part of the funding of this bill. It is \$160 billion out of \$1.9 trillion, so less than 10 percent of the bill is focused on

that. And, by the way, the alternative I mentioned that we offered to President Biden—\$160 billion. We totally believe in that part of the bill, and that we should put all of that in there, particularly with regard to the vaccines.

So it is frustrating because not only is the process not what we have done in the past and is best for this country, but also the substance of this bill is just not targeted on COVID-19. How do I tell hard-working families in my State of Ohio that there is a provision in the bill that asks Medicare to spend more money in New Jersey, Delaware, and Rhode Island but not in Ohio and other States? How do I explain that we need to set aside hundreds of millions of dollars that are in this bill in additional Federal funds for the arts? We can have that debate on the arts, but it has nothing to do with COVID-19. We have the highest deficit, as a share of GDP, since World War II—the highest debt as a share of GDP. You know, I don't think we should be spending that kind of money on things that don't relate to COVID-19.

Beyond these kinds of unrelated provisions, there are also proposals in this stimulus that are directed at important issues, but, based on what is needed to respond to the current challenges, are simply unnecessary and add up to more wasteful spending.

For example, we reached a point in this pandemic where the CDC, or the Centers for Disease Control, has said that schools can start to open safely with the right measures in place—thank goodness. We want to get our kids back to school. That should be a cause for celebration. But the plan here, the \$1.9 trillion, doesn't reflect those findings. Last year, we appropriated \$113 billion for schools to help navigate the pandemic, but, as of now, of that \$113 billion, only \$15 billion has been spent. So, roughly, \$100 billion is left over from last year with regard to schools.

If we are already opening classes safely with that amount, why does this \$1.9 trillion plan instead call for an additional investment of \$130 billion in our schools, but especially when we are told that most of that \$130 billion will not be spent in this calendar year? Nobody thinks that next year, at this time, we are going to have the crisis we have now, and yet the \$130 billion of new money will not be spent until the end of 2028.

By the way, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that about half of the funds in the entire proposal won't even be spent in this calendar year. That is their analysis—objective, nonpartisan. No one expects, again, that we will be in this crisis at that time. So it just doesn't seem to make sense to me.

There are other provisions in this bill that seem to actually take solutions we have come up with in the past COVID-19 package and make them worse. Unemployment insurance is a good example. Republicans and Democrats alike believe there needs to be

some expanded help in terms of those who have been hit hardest by the pandemic and have lost a job, and the last bipartisan spending agreement reflected that consensus. But now, after finally reaching an agreement on expanded unemployment insurance, one that got people the help they need without creating a disincentive to work, Democrats want to jam through another UI proposal that increases the \$300 per week that we just agreed to in December to \$400 a week. Now, again, that is in the context of the healthcare crisis getting better and the economy getting better and the unemployment numbers going down that we are going to put more into unemployment insurance.

That creates a problem because it will mean if you go up to \$400 a week, then more than half of the workers on unemployment insurance will be earning more on unemployment than they would staying employed. We want to get people back to work. That is what we all should want, at least. So why would you do that? We shouldn't want that. It is going to result in fewer people getting to work as unemployment continues to go down, as the vaccines are more widely available. That is the opposite of what we should want.

At the same time, a new provision in this bill would allow employees who are Federal employees to take 600 hours of taxpayer-funded emergency leave this fiscal year. To put that in perspective, 600 hours is about half of the total number of working hours remaining in this fiscal year.

There are plenty of problems with the way this plan is written. To give you one example, a Federal employee with children in school would be eligible for this leave program as long as the school is offering a remote learning option, even if the kids are going to the classroom every day for in-person learning. Federal employees would also be eligible for this leave if they are feeling unwell, even if they don't have COVID-19, and with no oversight, no doctor's note, and no supervisory approval.

This is far beyond the responsible bipartisan family leave proposal we did include, because we should have, in the Family First Coronavirus Response Act, which offered 80 hours of sick leave, about one-seventh of the time off in this new proposal, and which applies to millions of private and public sector employees, in addition to the Federal employees who are only covered by this new proposal.

When none of us knew exactly how long we would be faced with the COVID-19 crisis, we decided, on a bipartisan basis, that 80 hours was sufficient. But now that we have this new proposal, at seven times that leave with no test necessary, it is at a time when we are actually turning the tide on this virus, and we all acknowledge that. When more of us are being tested and vaccinated, our numbers are going down—thank goodness—and we have a

much better understanding of the dangers of COVID-19. So why does this make sense?

Furthermore, Federal jobs are pretty secure. Why should taxpayers pay for Federal employees to get 600 hours of leave when private sector employees are suffering more job losses than the public sector? It hardly seems like a good use of taxpayer dollars. It is also disappointing in this bill, which all of us are expected to vote on here in the coming days, because the end result is so different than the last five. As I said, the last five times, we put it together in a bipartisan basis.

The process has been frustrating, and I know many colleagues who were part of the group of five Republicans and five Democrats agree with that. We are, in effect, for the sake of expediency and partisan victory, forgetting about thoughtful policy and bipartisan ship.

We have to show that we have enough Republicans to work with Democrats to get this done. I understand that. That is why 10 of us went down to the White House, because along with 50 Democrats, that would be 60, which is the magic number needed. But there is more than 10 Republicans who want to work with Democrats. There have been every time we have taken this up over the past year.

We proposed the \$618 billion counterproposal that shares a lot of common ground with the Biden plan—not \$1.9 trillion but \$618 billion. Again, we take care of all the healthcare response to the virus. This is in the Biden plan. We have a similar approach on stimulus checks: Make it a little more targeted, which everyone, I think, agrees is a good idea.

Again, with regard to schools, we don't waste the money, which we talked about earlier, but we would be focused on getting kids back to school. The main difference in our bill is we take a more targeted approach to address the most urgent healthcare and economic needs.

We heed the advice of prominent Democratic economist Larry Summers and so many others who have now said that the \$1.9 trillion Biden stimulus is not just wasting taxpayer money; it risks overheating an already recovering economy, leading to higher inflation, hurting middle-class families, and threatening long-term growth.

But rather than the counterproposal leading to this productive type of bipartisan negotiations we had last year, this time we have been told Democrats want to go it alone.

We will keep talking to the President's people. We will keep talking to Democrats in Congress, hoping they will follow through on the campaign message and the inaugural promise because that is what we should be doing as a Congress, not just on this issue but so many other issues as well. We shouldn't be going it alone.

Reconciliation has allowed Democrats to take what is essentially a "my

way or the highway" approach to a response package that would be among the most expensive pieces of legislation in our country's history. As a result, dozens of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are being shut out of providing their input on this bill, and we are going to be left with a partisan bill that fails to meet the most urgent and pressing needs.

In fact, because all of these unrelated spending measures we talked about and others are directed toward traditional Democratic constituencies, I would argue that this bill has not just been my way or the highway, but it has been my way and the highway.

The bottom line is, at the end of the road of this reconciliation process, we will have a bill that underdelivers in many respects and is overpriced, and that is sad to me. It didn't have to be this way. Again, we have done it before five times together, made it inclusive, listened to each other to come up with a bipartisan result. Let's put a stop to this runaway train that is going to add to the deficit unnecessarily and put a damper on the prospects for the bipartisanship promised by this new administration.

Wanting to heal the wounds is something all of us should want. Wanting to work together is something all of us should want. Getting back to an era where we actually sit down, debate things, work them out, and help bring the country together is something all of us should want.

I agree with what President Biden said in his campaign and the inaugural address about the need for unity. Let's do it. Let's not have rhetoric; let's have action.

We can work together to get this done. We won't get there if we continue to operate like this. It hurts not just our new President and his hopes for getting things done; it hurts the country and the ability for us to continue to work together to deal with this crisis and get back to a more normal life.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Florida.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. RES. 88

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, America is in crisis. Today, the Federal debt sits at a staggering \$27 trillion, and it has grown by more than \$4 trillion in just the last year. Now, Congress is debating whether to spend another \$1.9 trillion, raising our debt to nearly \$30 trillion.

Less than 10 percent of this massive \$1.9 trillion package actually goes directly to COVID relief, and just 1 percent is dedicated to vaccine-related programs. The rest is filled with wasteful liberal priorities.

Speaker PELOSI and Leader SCHUMER, bridges and tunnels have no business being included in a COVID relief bill. It is shameful. Only in Washington can people throw these numbers and ideas

around without a care for what it means for our future. It is dangerous, and it is time to get serious.

Congress has the responsibility to thoroughly review how every single tax dollar is spent by the Federal Government and make sure we are spending wisely. Sadly, this is rare behavior in Washington. Congress spends with reckless abandon and rarely considers how today's foolishness will impact our children and grandchildren, and we are seeing President Biden and Senate Democrats continue this dangerous behavior. For them, the Obama-era thinking of "Never let a crisis go to waste" is alive and well.

Estimates show that there is roughly \$1 trillion in enacted but unspent COVID-19 stimulus funding. Last month, I wrote to President Biden's Acting Director for the Office of Management and Budget requesting any documents related to enacted but currently unspent COVID-19 stimulus funding. The response: None. Total silence.

Here is what that means: The Senate has no idea how States are spending their allocated funds, and we don't know what the actual needs are. It would be completely irresponsible and an abdication of our duty as stewards of American tax dollars if the Senate continues to approve further spending without more information.

That is why my colleagues and I are introducing a resolution calling on President Biden to inform the Senate of how much unspent funds are left over from the previous COVID spending bills. We want to be very clear. This resolution only asks for information from the President that will help the Senate make an informed decision.

I am proud to be joined today by Senator LANKFORD and Senator ERNST to ask for transparency.

It is pretty simple. Ever since the pandemic started, I have wanted the Federal Government to step in and help those who are hurting and have lost their jobs. I will completely agree that we need to do more to help families and small businesses that continue to suffer from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. Relief is needed, but it has to be targeted. We have to consider our debt and do only what is necessary for those in need.

I grew up in public housing and watched my parents struggle to find work and make ends meet. I saw my dad's car get repossessed twice. I never want a family to go through what mine did growing up. But before another dollar is spent, especially dollars going to liberal initiatives that have nothing to do with COVID relief, there needs to be a full and clear accounting of all enacted but unspent funding. The decisions we make today have serious impacts on our children and grandchildren.

But before I continue, I yield to my colleagues from Iowa and Oklahoma and thank them for their effort.

I now yield to Senator ERNST.

Ms. ERNST. Thank you to the Senator from Florida as well and for sharing his personal story and why it is so important that we have transparency on bills like this COVID package.

Over the course of the pandemic, Congress has worked together—Republicans and Democrats—to pass five overwhelmingly bipartisan bills providing COVID-19 relief to the American people, and I think we would all agree that that relief was much needed.

Now, in March, we passed the largest stimulus package in American history. And just a few months ago, we passed the second largest. But what the Democrats aren't telling you is that much of the \$900 billion we passed in the most recent relief package, and even some of the CARES Act money, has yet to be spent. And, frankly, folks, we don't even know exactly who has spent what money Congress has doled out over the last year.

I have long said, the American taxpayer deserves to know where and how their money is being spent. Bottom line, we need transparency and to know what has and has not been spent so far.

This commonsense effort will help us get this information. Until we have those details, we should not continue throwing money to Washington bureaucrats, and we certainly should not support this partisan \$1.9 trillion package that includes many items that are completely unrelated to COVID-19.

I agree with my colleagues that there is more that we can do to help expedite the vaccine distribution and promote access to childcare so our parents can return to work. But, folks, this is not Monopoly money. This is real money.

We have a moral obligation to our future generations to spend responsibly. Iowans and all Americans deserve transparency before we add trillions of dollars to their tab.

With that, I will yield to the Senator from Oklahoma.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, Senator SCOTT, Senator ERNST, and I are not trying to ask for something that the American people aren't already asking for as well and, quite frankly, the Senate and this White House haven't already said that they wanted to be able to do: basic transparency, efficient spending.

It is Wednesday afternoon right now. We are about to take up a bill for, we think, \$1.9 trillion. And I say "we think" because none of us has seen the text of this bill yet, not one of us on either side of the aisle. And the debate was supposed to begin on it today, but none of us has seen the text for this.

Supposedly, we are supposed to start voting on it tomorrow night, though no one has seen the text of the bill yet. In addition to that, last year, this Congress, on a bipartisan basis, passed five COVID relief bills totaling over \$4 trillion. Every dollar of that \$4 trillion was borrowed, every dollar. None of that was budgeted. But there was bi-

partisan agreement as we walked through the process to determine that this is an emergency; this is a global pandemic. To help stabilize our economy from going into free fall, we have to do some very difficult things. But in the middle of all of that, we also said we don't need to borrow a dollar more than what we need to borrow. Let's borrow what we need to but not more than we need to.

Interestingly enough, of the five bills and \$4 trillion that was allocated for COVID last year, only \$3 trillion of that \$4 trillion has actually been spent yet. We still have over \$1 trillion unspent of the money from last year.

But before that last trillion dollars, which imagine just how big that really is—to give you an example, every single Agency in the Federal Government, the total budget for a year, is \$1 trillion. So this "little \$1 trillion" that is left would cover the total budget for every Agency in the Federal Government for all of next year.

With this \$1 trillion that is still unspent, the Biden administration and my Democratic colleagues are saying: We want an additional \$2 trillion. Basically, near the end of the pandemic, they want a bill as large as what we had the very first month of the pandemic a year ago, when we knew we were in economic free fall.

All we are asking are a couple of things: One is, hey, can we read the bill? No. 2, can we get real numbers of what is unspent and anything that is unspent that we can reallocate for something in the future? Let me give you an example. The best I can tell, we have about \$6 billion still left in the vaccine line item left over from last year—\$6 billion just for vaccine, and that is vaccine purchases. There is another \$17 billion left over just for all the distribution process for vaccines. That is a lot of money.

Just yesterday, President Biden announced we will have all the vaccines available for every adult in America by the end of May. It is paid for, set aside, ready to go. Yet this bill that I understand is coming tomorrow—maybe later today—has tens of billions of dollars more in vaccine money. Why are there tens of billions of dollars more in vaccine money, when just yesterday the President announced we have all the purchases done all the way through toward the end of May to vaccinate every adult in America? And there are billions of dollars still left over in the two vaccine accounts even after that. Why are we asking for tens of billions of dollars more? Where is that money going? That shouldn't be an unreasonable question. That should be a question everybody should ask. Why are we asking for tens of billions of dollars more in vaccine money when we have already purchased everything related to vaccines? Is this foreign aid vaccines? We don't know.

There is \$170 billion being requested for education expenses. All of us want to take care of education, but \$170 billion is twice as much as what the

American people spend on education in a year. The total education budget is \$67 billion for the entire year for all of the Federal education budget—\$67 billion. This is now very close to three times what the annual budget is for all of spending just for COVID. And, by the way, still unspent in the education amount from last year's budget, we understand, is about \$68 billion. So there is still \$68 billion unallocated in education entities that hasn't even been touched yet.

Hey, listen, before everybody jumps up and says, you Republicans are just being a blockade, can we just ask a question? How much money is unspent, and what is the money going toward that we are asking for? That shouldn't be an unreasonable question. That should be a reasonable question. We are not trying to be obstructionists; we are just trying to get information.

And, quite frankly, when our team calls over to the White House and says: Can you give us the details of what is unspent in this amount—I know it is early in their Presidency, and they are still getting organized, but most of the time their answer is: We will get back to you, and they never do.

We need to know what is still left over of this \$1 trillion that has already been allocated before we allocate another \$2 trillion, knowing every single dollar of that is borrowed from China or somewhere else.

This is a real issue. We should resolve this before we move to spending another \$2 trillion. And I thank very much Senator SCOTT for his leadership in this area and asking some very basic questions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, I thank Senator LANKFORD and Senator ERNST.

Passing this resolution will show the American people that Congress can be both responsive to the needs of American families and small businesses hurt by this pandemic while also remaining fully accountable for the proper stewardship of tax dollars.

This is about basic transparency and getting the facts. If this resolution passes and the administration shares the information I have been requesting, it will go a long way in helping Congress craft a targeted bill that directly addresses the real needs in our Nation today.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 88, submitted earlier today. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I reserve the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I certainly appreciate the Senator from Florida's interest in oversight of the coronavirus emergency relief funds. This funding has been and continues to be critical to the American people throughout the pandemic.

I also appreciate the Senator's support for the creation of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee when he voted for the CARES Act. This was a provision that I authored to ensure that we would have strong oversight of coronavirus relief dollars.

I agree wholeheartedly that we must be faithful stewards of taxpayer money. That is why the CARES Act directed the Government Accountability Office, our congressional watchdog, to oversee coronavirus spending. We are fortunate to receive consistent, detailed reporting and recommendations on these issues. The Senator's resolution, however, will not strengthen these oversight mechanisms, nor will it deliver any form of relief to families who are hurting and small businesses that are struggling.

If the Senator from Florida wants an update on the current status of funding from previous coronavirus relief bills, I am happy to provide one to him.

Let's first look at the first coronavirus relief measures, all of which were passed in March and April of last year. To date, approximately 93 percent of those funds have been obligated and 88 percent have been outlaid. After accounting for benefits that are, by design, continuing to be paid out over time, there is less than \$100 billion of uncommitted funds left, and approximately half of that is in the Provider Relief Fund for struggling medical providers, whose needs continue to be extremely high.

For the legislation signed into law on December 27, 2020, more than half of this funding has already been committed, but if we set aside expanded unemployment benefits, which expire next month; small business relief; and the tax credit portion of the economic impact payments, which will be disbursed over time, less than 12 percent of the funding from December remains unobligated.

We know the status of funds from past COVID relief bills. This information is not being kept secret in any way. In addition to reports from the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee and the Government Accountability Office, we have a monthly SF 133 report from the Office of Management and Budget.

Coronavirus-related spending is also publicly tracked—publicly tracked—on both USASpending.gov and on the website of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee.

We don't need more reports right now; we need action. We have been fighting a public health and economic crisis, neither of which will magically disappear without additional Federal action. We can't wait until more small businesses close or hospitals run into

the red. We know how badly Americans are hurting, and they are hurting right now.

We are a full year into this pandemic that has taken the lives of over 515,000 Americans. And this pandemic is not over. It is continuing to ravage communities all across our Nation.

Let's look at where we are right now. Upwards of 2,000 Americans are dying each and every day. Daily cases are at the same levels we saw during the last surge in July, with over 50,000 Americans testing positive for COVID-19 every day. We are also facing the new threat of emerging variants like the UK and South African strains, which unfortunately could lead to even more cases.

The economic toll continues to go on. Millions of Americans remain out of work. In January, the unemployment rate was nearly double that of prepandemic levels, and unemployment claims are still more than double prepandemic levels. We all have friends, family members, and neighbors who are hurting right now. Small businesses have had to slash their hours, cutting into their own bottom line and employees' paychecks.

We need to help struggling families by providing rental assistance, stimulus checks, and unemployment benefits. We need to help kids by supporting our schools so we can get back to in-person learning. We need to invest in the public health infrastructure necessary to combat this virus by increasing testing capacity, implementing vaccine education campaigns, and tracking and containing the new COVID variants that we see springing up.

We are starting to see a glimpse of light at the end of this very long—far too long—tunnel, but we must keep moving forward. The American Rescue Plan will finally allow us to control the virus, improve the lives of all Americans, and get us out of this crisis.

We should not be wasting time on partisan resolutions that will neither deliver relief nor meaningfully improve oversight of COVID relief efforts. We must come together and provide the relief that families and small businesses all across our country so desperately need.

Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The junior Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, I am extremely disappointed in my colleague's decision to block this resolution. My colleagues and I wouldn't be doing this resolution if we were receiving the information that my colleague said we were receiving.

This has nothing to do with whether Senate Republicans want to provide relief. We want to provide relief. We want to do it in a targeted manner, and we want to make sure that we don't waste taxpayer dollars.

This objection just blocked the Senate from requesting basic information

that will help us do our basic jobs. Senate Democrats just objected to transparency. This means they are against giving us the facts, against ensuring accountability, and against getting targeted help to the right people. My colleague is choosing to prevent the Senate from receiving information that is pertinent to our ongoing negotiations.

Senate Republicans believe in relief of those hurt by COVID-19. We want to help our small businesses. We want to help those who have lost their jobs. We want to make sure families are able to survive this crisis and come out on the other side with their health and livelihood.

My colleague's objection shows that Senate Democrats are not actually interested in finding a bipartisan solution to our Nation's problems. Instead, they want to blindly spend money on provisions completely unrelated to COVID, as if there are no consequences to racking up more debt and spending beyond our means.

I am thinking about the kids who are just like me, growing up in public housing, with parents who are barely scraping by. We need to help those families. In order to do that, we need to better understand where the need is.

I am disappointed in my colleague's decision, and I hope he reconsiders.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The Senator from Utah.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. LEE. Madam President, the bill before the Senate this week is not really about COVID relief; it is about politics. Before this, COVID relief has not been a terribly partisan issue. In fact, we have passed 5 relief bills, each with at least 90 votes. That means they are overwhelmingly broad-based and bipartisan efforts. So if this one were to pass, it would be the first of those to have passed that has been highly controversial. Why? Because, in the first place, it borrows and spends another \$1.9 trillion when there are still hundreds of billions of dollars of unspent relief money from past COVID-19 relief packages. The new spending authorizes money to go to projects in States and local governments, including many that may not even need it.

The fight against the pandemic has, of course, fundamentally changed in the months since this plan was first devised and proposed. It is already outdated. Now, as we are here, into the month of March, the circumstances have changed, yet the plan remains largely the same as it was. So it feels a little bit, to me, like we are fighting the last war using the last war's battle plan, leaving us unprepared for the battle actually in front of us.

This is a bill that will worsen our national debt and weaken our economy in the long run without even doing much to help small businesses and American families in the short term.

This is not without consequence. In fact, as the book by Drs. Reinhart and Rogoff, published nearly 10 years ago—a book known as “This Time Is Different”—notes, once we get into this cycle, once we get accustomed to spending this much and acquiring this much of a debt-to-GDP ratio, we find ourselves in dire circumstances—circumstances in which it is even more difficult to raise the same revenue based on the same tax structure or even while tweaking that tax structure, it can be very difficult to pull out of the tailspin that could be produced when we start spending in sums this large and perpetuating a debt-to-GDP ratio that is, frankly, unsustainable.

This \$1.9 trillion package has very, very little to do with COVID-19. In fact, only 1 percent of the spending in this bill will go toward accelerating vaccine distribution; just 5 percent is focused on public health. Instead, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, three times as much money will go toward partisan priorities that are “not directly related to the current crisis.”

What are some of the examples of this type of spending? Well, we have \$1.5 billion more set aside for Amtrak, which is itself already sitting on \$1 billion of unspent bailout money. What this has to do with the virus and why the virus somehow justifies giving them an additional \$1.5 billion when they are already sitting on \$1 billion of still unspent bailout money is beyond my comprehension. There is \$50 million in funding for environmental justice projects, also difficult to connect that up to COVID; \$200 million for the Institute of Museum and Library Services; \$135 million for the National Endowment for the Arts; \$135 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities; \$86 billion in a pension bailout for private sector workers.

The list goes on and on, but you get the idea. You get money that goes to projects, as well as a significant amount to State and local governments. We will get back to that in a moment. When there is as much as \$63 billion leftover in unspent funds, this money will not necessarily even help schools to reopen.

And \$350 billion in aid goes to State and local governments, even though total losses to date have mostly been covered by the \$360 billion that Congress has already provided in aid for State and local governments over the last year. While there is some disparity among and between the States and how they have responded to the COVID pandemic and how they fared as far as their revenues, State and local revenue has mostly recovered, and while 26 States saw general revenue decline, 21 States actually saw revenue gains. In fact, my home State of Utah, as well as some other States, is running surpluses. Utah's sacrifice and good governance should not go to bail out other profligate States to the tune of \$350 billion.

I think about hard-working moms and dads in Utah, struggling to make ends meet while paying their Federal and State taxes. They are told over and over and over again that they have to be giving more. They are told that what they have spent and the time they have allotted—weeks or months out of every year just to pay their Federal tax alone—still somehow isn't enough, isn't nearly enough because, in addition to the money that they have worked so hard to earn and give to the Federal Government, there is so much more that has to be spent, like \$1.5 billion going to Amtrak, even though it is already sitting on \$1 billion of unspent bailout relief.

These same moms and dads throughout Utah are not pleased when they are made to understand that, in addition to bailing out Amtrak again when Amtrak is already sitting on this \$1 billion in unspent bailout relief money, they are also going to have to bail out other States; they are going to have to bail out State and local governments that haven't been managed well, as Utah's government has. This isn't fair to them. This is a matter of fundamental fairness to them and to countless Americans, not only in Utah but in every State.

Some States still have unspent funding that they have gotten from previous COVID relief packages. California alone has \$8 billion in unspent funding, and New York has up to \$5 billion. In this bill, we are acting like States are facing a fiscal catastrophe that is specifically from COVID when they are not.

At the same time, we are acting like the unprecedented magnitude of Federal debt is a nonissue. It is not. We have got this situation exactly backward.

Look, any new relief funding just needs to be targeted, and it needs to be temporary, and it needs to be directly tied to COVID relief. This package is, instead, about fulfilling the political wish list of one political party over another and has very little, if anything, to do with the pandemic. It is offensive, and, yes, it is inappropriate for one political party—the political party that clings to the narrowest of margins of a majority in this body—to push its own political wish list onto an opportunity to provide COVID relief for the American people, and it would be equally inappropriate for Republicans to use it as an opportunity to push their own wish list.

Look, we haven't seen this before. We haven't seen anything like this before. We didn't, in the past, see any of the previous COVID relief packages pushed through reconciliation. There are a number of reasons for that, one of which was it is wrong. It is not an appropriate use of reconciliation. Another was, it wasn't necessary because we made it bipartisan, not just mildly bipartisan with a few straggler votes here or there but overwhelmingly so.

This one is different. I am not opposed to discussing what role government should play in providing actual relief from the pandemic. We can and should have that debate. I welcome it. I would love to have it right now. In fact, that is a question that I think merits its own debate. This bill is not about that, not anything close to that. It is riddled with poor economic reasoning and rank political favoritism. It will only worsen our debt and our economic health in the long run. It doesn't help America's small businesses and families in the short run. It doesn't do anything to materially advance the cause of getting our children back to school at a time when they have suffered so greatly, not only academically but socially and in so many other ways. That is where we ought to be focused.

This bill comes nowhere close to addressing that issue, and, instead, it directs itself in other directions that are not only helpful, but in many cases they are the opposite of that.

It is sad. It is disappointing. And on that basis, I can't support this bill but would urge my colleagues to figure out ways to make it better. We don't have to do it this way. It doesn't have to be a deeply partisan vote. We can still choose a different path. I, for one, hope we will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, the circumstances that we face today in the Senate are so disturbing. This is really, really unbelievable. I mean, there is so much good news out there on the healthcare front, on the pandemic front, on the economic front. But what we are going to do in this Chamber is absolutely, absolutely appalling.

The Members of this Chamber came together five times last year and passed overwhelmingly bipartisan bills to deal with this pandemic, to deal with the economic crisis that came from the lockdown that we experienced—five times, about \$4 trillion, completely unprecedented in scope and scale, the nature of it. Never imagined before, but we did it. We did it because we needed to, and we came together. I think it was the biggest of the bills passed—the biggest by far—without a single “no” vote in this whole Chamber, completely bipartisan.

So President Biden gets elected, gives a great speech, a great inaugural speech, about uniting the country, coming together: We don't have to be divided the way we have been. We can work together and find common ground.

So 10 Republican Senators go down to the White House and say: Well, Mr. President, I know you would like to do \$1.9 trillion, whatever it is, but we think there is a good case for \$600 billion.

Now, I don't happen to agree with those 10 Republican Senators, as it happens. I don't think even that is appropriate, but they did. And the reason that is significant is that there were 10 of them, which just so happens to be exactly the minimum number needed of Republican Senators to join with the Democrats to pass anything they want on a bipartisan basis. So there, handed to him on a silver platter, to the President, was the opportunity to do a bipartisan bill to figure out where that common ground was. The Republicans were offering to negotiate from there. This probably could have ended easily at \$1 trillion or so after just weeks before passing a \$1 trillion bill. The President could have gotten so much of what he wanted, but President Biden didn't want any part of that. You have to ask yourself, why is that when he campaigned as the guy who is going to unify America, and he had every Republican vote he needed sitting in his office, asking him to work this out? He said: No, not interested. Effectively, that is what he said.

Well, when you look at the bill, it is clear why President Biden chose this path, because there is no justification for this bill. There is no medical justification. There is no pandemic justification. There is no economic justification. This isn't about coming together and doing something about a crisis; this is about a partisan leftwing wish list. And, of course, Republicans aren't interested in that kind of political gesturing that is going to do economic damage.

I am reminded of the words of Rahm Emanuel, who famously said: “You never want a serious crisis to go to waste.” Rahm Emanuel must be very proud of our Democratic colleagues and President Biden because what they have done is they have taken a crisis that is rapidly receding—let's be honest—and they decided this is their chance to make one last mad dash to the door with a staggering amount of money and presumably claim credit for the recovery that is already well underway.

The good news is—there is a lot of good news, right? We went through one of the most trying times we have been through in a very long time in this country. This pandemic was devastating. It was deadly, it was scary, and the economic crisis was very, very real. But now we have over 100 million doses of vaccines that have gone into people's arms. You figure that we might very well have 100 million Americans who have had the disease and recovered. We have to have well over half of the American population who has either recovered or been vaccinated and is therefore no longer at risk to this disease—not a significant risk. That is fantastic news.

By the way, the vaccine administration is accelerating. Following that, we are unsurprisingly seeing this terrific collapse in the number of new cases. The daily count of new cases of the

coronavirus, of COVID-19, peaked at around 250,000 new cases in a single day. We were running at that pace. By the time we got to the inauguration of President Biden, we were down to 185,000, and yesterday was about 60,000. So we are less than a quarter of the number of new cases on a daily basis that we were experiencing at the peak, and it continues to drop. It is going to continue to decline probably very rapidly as we continue to roll out these vaccines. That is terrific.

There is a sort of parallel recovery of the economy underway. If you go back to April of 2020, when it was at its worst, the unemployment rate was almost 15 percent, 14.8 percent. That is a terrible, terrible unemployment rate. As of January of this year, just a few months ago, the unemployment rate was 6.3 percent, less than half of where we were. We are not back to the fantastic economy we had a year ago just before this pandemic broke, but we are getting there. Eighteen States across the country have unemployment rates below 5 percent, so we are going to get there.

The economy is growing. After a collapse in the second quarter of last year, the third quarter came roaring back, and the fourth quarter grew. The Congressional Budget Office thinks that in this whole calendar year of 2021, our economy will grow almost 5 percent. Most private economists think it will be more than that. There is a lively debate about whether we will even reach 6 or 7 or more percent growth. We were told never again to expect to see 3 percent. But that is how strong this economic recovery is because of the resiliency of the American people, the tremendous ingenuity of the private sector to come up with vaccines that are incredibly effective—several of them—and do it in a record time, I mean a fraction of what was the previous record time. It is amazing.

And yes, you know what, we played a role in this too. I think we did. The bipartisan cooperation of Congress to pass one bill after another on a huge scale—like I said, five bills. The biggest was without a single dissenting—actually, I am not sure any of them had a dissenting vote in the Senate. And there was almost a trillion dollars in December, leaving tens of billions of dollars that we approved that haven't even been spent yet. The intended beneficiaries haven't gotten the money yet. It takes a little while to get the money out the door.

Given this context, given this history, this is why it is so dispiriting to see our Democratic colleagues insisting on a bill that has almost nothing to do with COVID. That is the truth. It is not about reopening the economy; it is a partisan leftwing spending binge. That is what it is. Let's take a look at some of the individual items.

We have these so-called stimulus checks—I never heard anything more inaptly named—\$414 billion. The fact is, real, personal income in the country

today is higher than it was just before the pandemic. Disposable, real, per capita income rose at its highest rate since 1984. Personal savings rate hit an alltime record high in 2020. Why? Because we more than replaced lost income through all of the bills that we passed. What about that data suggests we need another round of universal payments to people? It is not going to stimulate the economy. Even the last check—60 percent of that money went to savings accounts or paying down debt. According to a Penn Wharton study, about 75 percent of these checks are going to go into savings.

Why in the world are we sending so many checks to tens of millions of people who never had any lost income? Under this bill, the Federal Government is going to send out \$5,600 to a family of four—\$5,600 to a family of four who makes \$160,000 a year and never had a dime of income loss, no interruption of income, no loss of income. They are going to get \$5,600. By the way, that is on top of the \$5,800 they already got last year, with no need, no demonstrated problem here. So \$11,400 of money that we don't have, we are going to send to people who never had a dime of lost income. That is a big chunk of this bill.

It may not be the worst. It may be that the worst is the \$350 billion we are going to send to State and local governments to bail out the mismanaged blue States and cities. The amazing thing is, you can't possibly make the case that they need the bailout. They don't even need it. Why do I say that? Well, if you look in 2020—the books are closed now. We know what we didn't know early in the year of 2020. We are in 2021 now. We know what happened in 2020.

What happened was States and municipalities in the aggregate brought in more revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019, which was a record year. So they set an alltime new record for tax revenue collected—alltime new record. And that does not include the \$500 billion we sent them anyway. I mean, these States are loaded with cash. I don't know what they are going to do with it.

There is \$60 billion in rainy day funds. We heard: Oh my goodness, these States are going to have to cut essential services. All the teachers are going to be laid off. The firemen and the police officers are all done.

How is that when they have taken in more revenue than they ever have before in their history and then we sent them another \$500 billion? Now we are going to send them yet another \$350 on top of this? How does this make any sense at all? We are going to borrow or print this money so we can send it to a bunch of States, many of which are sitting on so much cash, they are going to probably cut taxes. It is just unbelievable.

Then there is the ObamaCare expansion. What does that have to do with COVID? This is just a decade-long goal

of our Democratic colleagues to continue the endless expansion of ObamaCare. There is \$45 billion in this bill to pay insurance companies more money to cover people who already have health insurance. That is what they are doing. Sixty-three percent of these new subsidies will go to people who already have health insurance through ObamaCare. By the way, it includes huge numbers of people who make over \$100,000 a year. Never miss a chance to make more people dependent on government.

It has policies, big policies, that will absolutely slow the economic recovery. Let me be clear. This bill will slow down the economic recovery underway. Why do I say that? Well, the bill insists on adding \$400 a week on top of whatever States are paying in unemployment benefits. Well, what does that mean? It means that more than half of everyone who is unemployed is going to get paid more not to work than they get paid working. Who could even think this up?

We have had unemployment insurance for decades in this country. We have never said: Let's systematically make sure that people can make more money not working than they can make if they go to work.

I hear some of my colleagues talk about the dignity of work. I think there is a lot of dignity in work. What is our message to people about the dignity of work when we say: You are worth more to us sitting on the couch than you are at your job. That is what this is. It is a terrible idea.

How do you know for sure that nobody on the other side is even pretending that this is really about the economic recovery? Well, you know for sure because the Congressional Budget Office has told us that only a fraction—a small fraction—of this money is even going to be spent this year. How long do we think the pandemic is going to be with us as a pandemic? How long do we think we are going to have these lockdowns? We are going to be out of the woods pretty soon here.

As I said, half of all Americans have already been either vaccinated or recovered from this. But the school numbers are a good illustration, the elementary and secondary education. This bill has \$128 billion—\$128 billion—and \$6.5 billion is going to be spent in 2021. The rest gets dribbled out for years and years. How long do they think before schools can reopen? Oh, by the way, this bill doesn't require schools to reopen. You don't even have to reopen. Just throw billions and billions of dollars at schools whether or not they are actually having kids in the school.

Some of these provisions are so blatantly unrelated to COVID or the economy that it is really just hard to even read them with a straight face.

There is \$86 billion to bail out multiemployer pension plans without any reform whatsoever. Look, we all know we have a multiemployer pension problem in this country, and there has been a

lot of discussion about what do you do about these grossly underfunded pension plans and how do you fix this. The conversation has always been, what kinds of reforms come with what kind of cash so that these errors of the past are corrected? There are no reforms here. None. Nothing. Just a big pile of cash. It is a clear message that you don't have to fix anything. You don't have to reform the flaws of these programs that got us here. And by the way, it is the same message to the insolvent public pension plans of most of the major cities in many States: Don't worry. Look what Congress will do if the Democrats have their way. They will just send you so much cash, you don't have to worry about the insolvency you are dealing with.

What a terrible message.

There is \$270 million for the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities. That is COVID-related. Thank goodness that is there.

There is \$91 million for "outreach" to student loan borrowers. I don't even know what that means.

There is \$50 million for environmental justice grants. I have no idea what that means.

But this one is really rich. There is about \$4 billion for "socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers." I say "about \$4 billion" because it says "such sums as may be necessary." Here is what the money is for. It is going to pay off 120 percent of the debt of these farmers and ranchers, 120 percent of the borrowings.

So what in the world are the requirements to have 120 percent of your debt paid off? Well, you actually have to have debt. OK, so you have to have borrowed money from the USDA farm loan. There are tens of billions of dollars out there. They lend a lot of money. And you have to be a member of one of the following groups: African American, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islanders, refugees, or immigrants.

As long as you are in one of those categories of mostly racial and ethnic groups, then the taxpayers are going to pay off 120 percent. It is not the whole loan but more than the whole loan—120 percent.

The thing that is so disturbing about this is that the essential criterion is your skin color. The essential criterion is your race. This is unbelievable to me. By the way, there is no income test and no asset test for the underlying loans. There is no requirement whatsoever that COVID caused any problem—caused any lost income or any other problem. It is not mentioned.

So what is the effect of this?

This means that, if you have a wealthy Hispanic rancher who has a \$1 million loan from the USDA, he is going to get \$1.2 million and pay off the loan—200,000 bucks with which to do whatever he likes. Meanwhile, if you are a poor White farmer in rural Pennsylvania and you have a \$100,000 loan, you get nothing, exactly nothing. How

is that even remotely fair? I don't even know how that could be constitutional. It is, certainly, not in any way COVID related.

There was an amendment in the House that would have limited the payment. It would have allowed the program, which I object to, but it would have allowed this repayment of debt but only for debt incurred during the COVID crisis. The Democrats all voted that down. That failed. This is unbelievable stuff.

Even the provisions that purport to be about public health are completely divorced from any reality. As I think I mentioned earlier, we are administering almost 2 million doses of vaccines every day now. That is terrific. It is actually the highest daily rate of doses administered anywhere in the world. The government has already purchased 700 million doses. Now, we have fewer than 350 million Americans, and not all Americans are going to need two doses. You can do the math: We have bought more vaccine doses than we need to administer, and that is fine. Yet how many more do you need to buy when you have already bought more than enough for every single American?

That is not all we paid for. Through the previous bills that we passed, we paid for the research and development. We paid for the production. We paid for the transportation. We paid for all of the accompanying supplies, like the syringes, the vials, and the dry ice. We paid for all of that, and we should have. That was the right thing to do. Insurance covers the cost of the administering of the vaccines. Between Medicare and Medicaid and private insurance, it is free. What is left to spend money on? I am all ears, but I haven't heard what we need to spend money on.

So what do we have in this bill?

We have no justification for it in terms of public health. We certainly have no justification for it in terms of the economy. We certainly have no justification for it in terms of basic fairness. Frankly, it is going to do more harm than good, but you don't have to take my word for it. We could take the word of prominent liberal Democrat economist Larry Summers. He was the Treasury Secretary under President Clinton, and he was the Director of the National Economic Council under President Obama.

He said about this bill:

[M]acroeconomic stimulus on a scale closer to World War II levels than normal recession levels will set off inflationary pressures of a kind we have not seen in a generation.

Or consider the words of Steve Rattner, who is a liberal economist. President Obama named him the "czar." You may recall him administering that program.

He said of the American Rescue Plan, which is, apparently, what they call this:

The American Rescue Plan is also partly a legislative Trojan horse—an enormous aid package aimed at addressing needs that, in

some cases, go well beyond the immediate challenges of COVID. Some of the most expensive provisions are the least well targeted to help the neediest.

That is from a liberal Democrat who, I think, supports the bill, but at least he is being honest in his description of it.

So my suggestion, my plea, to my Democratic colleagues and to the new President is to listen to some of the things you have said. Try an approach that is actually informed by the facts on the ground—the health facts, the economic facts, the reality. Look at what the science is currently telling us about the course that this virus has been taking. What about actually attempting to bring people together—the path of unity—after we demonstrated five times last year that we can work together and do something on a bipartisan basis?

I urge my colleagues: Don't push through this radically partisan bill that will probably, in the end, do more harm than good.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, let me first say that I wish this Chamber were full of our colleagues who had listened to my Republican colleague's description—the Senator from Pennsylvania—of what this bill is and what this bill isn't. It is not a COVID relief bill. Senator TOOMEY did an excellent job. I am hoping that people are watching it on their TV screens. They really can't be reading the bill yet because it is not constructed. I don't want to repeat all of the excellent points the Senator from Pennsylvania made, but I wanted to come down because I think we have grown immune to these vast amounts of money.

I always knew we were going to be in big trouble when we stopped talking about hundreds of billions of dollars and switched to talking about trillions of dollars. When we talk about \$1 trillion or \$2 trillion, it just doesn't sound like as much as \$200 billion or \$800 billion, which was in the stimulus package under the Obama administration. The fact of the matter is we have already authorized \$4 trillion in COVID relief. That is 18 percent of last year's GDP, and, roughly, \$1 trillion is yet to be spent. Some of that isn't even obligated, and we are going to be debating, over the next couple of days, \$1.9 trillion. So I just wanted to come down here to the floor and try to illustrate what a massive amount of money \$1.9 trillion is. You have to use analogies. Again, the human mind really can't contemplate what "a trillion" is.

I found this first analogy—my wife talked to me about it—in terms of time. This one is simply talking about, if I would give the Presiding Officer \$1 per second, how long would it take me to give her \$1 million? You see the

chart here. It would take 11.6 days. Again, with \$1 per second, how long would it take to give her \$1 million? 11.6 days.

The next question: How long would it take you to accumulate \$1 billion?

Again, when you do the math, you find out it would take 31.7 years. That was back when the Chinese had their protests in Tiananmen Square.

The next question: What about \$1 trillion?

This is what becomes mind-boggling. If I gave you \$1 every second and I wanted to give you \$1 trillion, it would take 31,688 years to give you \$1 trillion. That takes us back to beyond the last glaciation period, a period in time when Wisconsin was under a mile-thick glacier.

By the way, as a quick aside for my colleague, the Senator from Rhode Island, since that point in time, about 20,000 years ago, the water level in the San Francisco Bay has increased 390 feet. Now, that is global warming—that is a rise in sea level—but that is what happened through natural causes. That was an aside.

How long would it take to accumulate \$1.9 trillion? Over 60,000 years. Again, put that in context. The human race began to develop language about 50,000 years ago. So that is the time analogy.

Another way of looking at this is through distance and volume. So here is the calculation. I should have brought a \$1 bill to just demonstrate its thickness, but the thickness of a \$1 bill is 4.3-thousandths-of-an-inch thick. To illustrate how much \$1 trillion is, let's start with \$1 million. If you stacked a million dollar bills on top of each other, they would stack up to be 358 feet high. You can see the calculation here. That is about a 30- to 35-foot-story building.

How big would a stack of a billion dollar bills be? It would be 67.86 miles.

Now, there is something called the Karman line. I think I am pronouncing that right. That is the point at which the atmosphere ends and outer space begins. That is 62 miles. So a stack of a billion dollar bills would actually exceed the atmosphere and extend into outer space—62 miles.

Then, the next question is: How big would a stack be of a trillion dollar bills? Well, it would be 1,000 times that. So it would be 67,866 miles high. That is an astonishingly large stack of dollar bills that equals \$1 trillion.

Again, we are not just talking about \$1 trillion. We are not talking just about 67,000 miles worth. We are talking about \$1.9 trillion, which would stack up to be 135,732 miles high. The distance to the Moon is 238,900 miles. So that stack of \$1.9 trillion worth of \$1 bills would be more than halfway to the Moon. That is what we are debating spending—a stack of dollar bills that extends more than halfway the distance to the Moon. This is at a point in time when we are about \$28 trillion in debt. That single stack would be

over 1.9 million miles or, if you were to put it relative to the Moon, there would be eight stacks—seven stacks that go directly to the Moon and one further stack that would be 95 percent of the way there.

These are astonishing sums that we are talking about, and the majority party here wants to jam this through using the reconciliation process—no consultation with our side. They want to just blow it through here with 20 hours of debate, a vote-arama, pass \$1.9 trillion in spending, and go home, having no consideration whatsoever about the fact that we are mortgaging our children's futures. At some point in time, there will be a day of reckoning—a debt crisis—and it won't be pretty.

My suggestion, at least as we consider this, is to actually have a debate. Let's have a discussion. Let's consider the amendments. Let's not do this in 20, 24, 30 hours. Let's take the time to seriously consider what we are doing to our children in contemplating spending a stack of dollar bills over 135 miles high, extending more than halfway to the Moon.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio.

MULTIEMPLOYER PENSION SYSTEM

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Madam President. This week, we have an opportunity to finally deliver for millions of retirees and workers and small businesses by saving America's pensions. The multiemployer pension system is on the verge of collapse, threatening the livelihoods of more than a million Americans and thousands of small businesses from New Hampshire to Ohio, across the country. This affects more than 100,000 workers and retirees in my State alone and millions more around the country. These pension plans were in danger before. Now the economic emergency we are in has accelerated the crisis even further.

Multiemployer pension plans receive contributions based on the hours worked. As workers have been laid off during the pandemic, their employers no longer contribute to the pension plans, while current retirees continue receiving their earned benefits, making the plan even more likely to fail. And if that happens, it won't just be retirees feeling the pain.

Current workers will be stuck paying into pension funds for benefits they will never receive. Small businesses will be left drowning in pension liability they can't afford to pay. Small businesses that have been in the family for generations could face bankruptcy, and workers will lose jobs in businesses which have been forced to close up shop. The effect will ripple across the

entire economy at a time when we can least afford it.

The Chamber of Commerce has said:

The multiemployer pension system is an integral part of [our] economy.

It is not only union businesses that participate in these plans that will close their doors. This will devastate small communities across the industrial heartland. Small businesses in these communities are already hurting because of the virus. That is why we have to get this done.

After a lifetime of hard work and service to our country, these workers and retirees have already waited far too long for Congress to do the job we should have done. We have been trying to solve this for years. Unions, the Chamber of Commerce, small businesses pretty much agree we need to get this done.

The House has done its part. They have passed a solution multiple times. Every time it stopped because of MITCH MCCONNELL and the U.S. Senate. He has deliberately blocked it. We have continued to try. The House does it year after year. People like the Presiding Officer and others have fought for this in the Finance Committee, have fought for this on the Senate floor, and we simply haven't been able to move it.

Now that Senator MCCONNELL is out of the way, we can finally keep the promise to these workers and their families. They spent years working on assembly lines, bagging groceries, driving trucks, working to keep our economy going, and money came out of every single one of their paychecks to earn these pensions.

People in this town don't always understand the collective bargaining process. People give up dollars at the bargaining table today for the promise of a secure retirement with healthcare and a pension. That is what collective bargaining is. Union workers sit down with each other and their employer, talk about giving up wages. They are willing to give up wages today to have a more secure future. What is more American than that?

For years now, they have lived in fear of drastic cuts. One retiree from Michigan told us he would lose two-thirds of his income and that "at 71 years old, there's no jobs out there that we could get to recover what we'd lose."

He said:

Pass the Butch Lewis Act so . . . we can take this weight off of us, and retire with the dignity that we earned for 30, 40, 50 years of hard working labor.

It is always the same story. When Wall Street is in trouble, there is a bailout. When corporations need something, the stock market is in trouble, the Washington elite drop everything to help. But these workers, they are not asking for a bailout; they are not asking for a handout; they are just asking for what they earned.

These workers have been in the fight for years. Their activism has gotten us

this far. They have traveled all day and all night on buses. They have rallied outside in the bitter cold, in the hot DC summer, all trying to get people in this town to listen.

Let's finally deliver for them. Let's give them peace of mind. Let's keep this promise. It comes back to the dignity of work. When work has dignity, we honor the retirement security people earned. When work has dignity, we honor their retirement security that they gave up at the bargaining table in collective bargaining.

I urge my Republican colleagues in this body—colleagues with healthcare and retirement plans paid for by taxpayers, including these taxpayers that have been paying into their own pension funds for years. I urge my Republican colleagues to think about these retired workers and think about the small business owners. Companies like Smucker's—there is a baker in Navarre, OH. Think of the candy company, Spangler, in Bryan, OH—companies like that. Think about these retired workers. Think about these small business owners and think about the stress they are facing.

I have listened to my colleagues' speeches for years, extolling the values of hard work and the virtue of small businesses. This is your chance to live up to your own words, to show Americans if you work hard all your life, your government will, in fact, be there for you.

Join us, and let's pass a solution that really indeed does honor the dignity of work.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO DR. ELLEN HODGES AND ELIZABETH BATES

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, it is that time of the week that our pages—when we had them—used to always look forward to. It is the time of the week that I come down on the floor and talk about someone in Alaska who is making a huge impact on my State, a lot of times for the country. These two Alaskans I am going to talk about actually have gotten national news for the great work they are doing, somebody we call our Alaskan of the Week. It is usually about a group of individuals, one, two, maybe a group of people who are helping make Alaska what, in my view, is the greatest State in the country—resilient, tough, generous, kind, unique.

Like so many States, this pandemic has really hit Alaska hard—tourism for sure. The oil and gas sector last year was really hit hard with low prices. Unfortunately, this year, with the Biden

administration's attacks on this sector of the United States and Alaska's economy, it is tough; commercial fishing, tough. It has been a tough year economically. But an area of good news during the pandemic, one that I am very proud of for all of my constituents, involves how we in Alaska have responded on the health side. Vaccines, testing, death rates—we have consistently been the top State rated in all of these categories throughout the pandemic, which is kind of amazing given that we are a very, very big State with a very small population.

I know that so many Americans watching right now want to get back out, visit Alaska. Our Governor, Mike Dunleavy, recently tweeted:

With the best vaccination efforts [in the country] & some of the lowest COVID numbers in the country, Alaska is open for business . . . safe for travelers!

So come on, America, get back up to Alaska. Love to have you.

So this is all very true. Our vaccination efforts are viewed as the best in the United States of America, and the great lengths that so many in Alaska have gone through to make it so have captured the country's imagination. These efforts just in the last couple of weeks have been featured all across the country—USA TODAY, “Good Morning America,” the Washington Post, the New York Times, a great piece by Bloomberg News, and so many others. So big thanks to the press corps, the national press corps, for featuring my State's efforts and importantly the heroic work being done to distribute lifesaving vaccines to a State that is more than 2½ times the size of Texas. Sorry there, Senator CORNYN, Senator CRUZ. It is true.

Most of the geography of Alaska is dotted with small villages without roads in freezing-cold temperatures. I was in Fairbanks last weekend—just a couple of weeks ago in Fairbanks. It almost hit 40 below. That is cold.

All across Alaska, our healthcare workers are jumping on boats, single-prop airplanes, snow machines, and, yes, in a couple of cases, dog sleds to bring the vaccine and hope to their fellow Alaskans. And it shows.

As of a few days ago, close to 160,000 Alaskans had received at least their first vaccine dose. That is about 21 percent of our State's population.

Now, in Southwest Alaska, what we called the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, or the YK Delta—those are two giant rivers that come together—these efforts have been particularly impressive. That is largely thanks to the amazing people at the YK Health Corporation, or YKHC, which is the YK Delta's Tribal health provider. The whole organization, consisting of just about 90 healthcare professionals, serves around 28,000 people in the YK region, which is about the size of Oregon, so a huge area, not a lot of people.

Prior to the vaccine, the YK Delta had been stricken by COVID-19 with one of the highest infection rates in

the country, in a very far-flung place in terms of the dispersal of the population. It is the efforts of two women there in the YK Delta, Drs. Ellen Hodges and Elizabeth Bates, who are our Alaskans of the Week, who have been in charge of getting the vaccine to roughly 50 remote villages in Southwestern Alaska. Spread out over a territory, as I said, about the size of Oregon, the village populations in the YK Delta range from about 1,200 people to as small as 10 in terms of population.

Let's start with Dr. Hodges. She is the chief of staff at YKHC. She grew up in rural Minnesota. After graduating from the University of Minnesota Medical School, Dr. Hodges came to Anchorage as a resident in 2002, eventually making her way to Bethel, which is the hub village. It is a big community, the biggest in the YK Delta. She absolutely fell in love with the area. She said it has everything—very friendly people, authentic. It is beautiful. Soon enough, her patients turned into her family. Also soon enough, she was—according to Tricia Franklin, Alaska's director of the State Office of Rural Health Division—“the go-to person for how things are working in rural communities” and how to get things done.

She worked in the emergency room tending cuts, bruises, broken bones. She delivered babies. She worked tirelessly to contain a number of tuberculosis outbreaks in the region. And then the virus hit, and as I mentioned, it hit the YK Delta region very hard with some of the highest COVID rates in America.

There are reasons for that: the multigenerational housing, very crowded housing in this region; communal lifestyle; and also—here is a big one, and it should be a shock for every American listening—about 50 percent of the households in this region of America lack running water. Let me say that again. Some of the most patriotic communities in the country, as Alaska Natives serve at higher rates in the military than any other ethnic group in the country, live in communities that don't have running water or flushed toilets—American citizens.

It is wrong. It is wrong. And we need—we the U.S. Senate, Congress—to continue to work on this issue. How do you wash your hands five times a day, as the CDC wants you to do during the pandemic, when you don't have running water or flushed toilets? We need to keep working on this. It is a disgrace, to be honest.

So what happened when COVID hit in this region? Because of a lack of sanitation and many other problems, precious lives were being lost. Elders, who are vital to pass on the traditional wisdom of the Native Alaskan culture and heritage, were being lost. Because of a lack of functioning sanitation, even young people, whom this virus doesn't really impact, were starting to have respiratory illnesses and getting sick, and some were even dying. That is hor-

rible. It was terrifying, particularly for an area that is still dealing with the multigenerational trauma of previous pandemics, particularly the Spanish flu of 1918, which in several Alaskan Native communities wiped out entire communities; 60, 70 percent mortality rates from that flu. So we needed to get to work fast, particularly in this region.

Enter another intrepid doctor and our Alaskan of the Week, Dr. Elizabeth Bates. Dr. Bates arrived in Bethel in December of 2018—just a little over 2 years ago—and she found a community that she loved. She had experience working in women's health and infection control and emergency care and disaster relief. She has great experience across the country—really, across the world. As a doctor, she worked with patients during 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and has spent time even in refugee camps in Rwanda.

In Bethel, she was in charge of setting up testing centers for the region. Working hand in glove with Dr. Hodges, she started one of the first drive-through and airport testing sites in rural Alaska, much of it outside in the cold weather under tarps.

But we all know that testing alone, particularly, as I said, when people are living so closely together and don't live in places where you can wash your hands frequently, wasn't nearly enough. They tried everything—public service announcements, reaching out to villagers, helping them use bleach to sanitize. It was a 24/7 effort, but, as I said, it wasn't enough. The virus was spreading rapidly. They were losing. People were dying.

Then on December 18, a few days before winter solstice—the darkest day of the year—hope came to Bethel, AK, because the first vaccines arrived. Thanks to the great work of so many scientists, government workers, private sector workers, Operation Warp Speed, the vaccine arrived on December 18 to the YK Delta. These two intrepid doctors I have been talking about cried. They had seen a lot of death and struggles in the region, and like a Christmas miracle, this vaccine arrived. They hugged each other, and then they got to work.

As I said, there are roughly 50 remote villages in the YK Delta spread out over a territory about the size of many States in our country—as a matter of fact, bigger than most States in our country—so they traveled on small planes, trucks, on ice roads, snow machines, dog sleds.

Their operation, Project Togo, is named in reference to one of the famous sled dogs that helped carry the diphtheria serum to Nome, which, of course, is the original inspiration for the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. Sometimes it was so cold that they had to keep the syringes filled with COVID serum under their clothes, lest the serum froze.

The operation that they initiated and organized has hit every single village,

all 50 in the YK Delta, bringing the vaccine to pretty much anyone who wants it. In some villages, they have been able to vaccinate as much as half the population. As a result, the numbers of COVID infections and deaths are plummeting in this region, and hope is spreading.

This great team, Drs. Hodges and Bates, as well as all in the community and all working at YKHC, have made a huge difference, and this team has created a special bond that nobody will forget.

Dr. Bates, a relative newcomer to Alaska, says that the experience has made her fall in love with the YK Delta region even more. She bought a home. She intends on staying. She describes the beauty of the region, something that she appreciates even more now, as “Our sky is huge. . . . We have a front-row seat to the entire universe.”

These two doctors also have a front-row seat in providing a front-row seat to hope during this pandemic.

So I want to thank both of them again, Dr. Hodges and Dr. Bates, and all those across Alaska who are helping distribute the vaccine.

As I mentioned, right now, Alaska is the No. 1 State in the country per capita in terms of vaccine distribution and the No. 1 State per capita in terms of testing and has one of the lowest death rates. This is really amazing, really, when you see how big and widespread and harsh the weather conditions can be in the great State of Alaska.

Our fellow Alaskans are tough, resilient, and innovative, and Dr. Hodges and Dr. Bates are a huge and essential part of this effort. That is why I want to congratulate them and thank them again for being our Alaskans of the Week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

ADVANCING EDUCATION ON BIOSIMILARS ACT OF 2021

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 164 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 164) to educate health care providers and the public on biosimilar biological products, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 164) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 164

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 “Advancing Education on Biosimilars Act of 2021”.

SEC. 2. EDUCATION ON BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS.

Subpart 1 of part F of title III of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 262 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 352A. EDUCATION ON BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS.

“(a) INTERNET WEBSITE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may maintain and operate an internet website to provide educational materials for health care providers, patients, and caregivers, regarding the meaning of the terms, and the standards for review and licensing of, biological products, including biosimilar biological products and interchangeable biosimilar biological products.

“(2) CONTENT.—Educational materials provided under paragraph (1) may include—

“(A) explanations of key statutory and regulatory terms, including ‘biosimilar’ and ‘interchangeable’, and clarification regarding the use of interchangeable biosimilar biological products;

“(B) information related to development programs for biological products, including biosimilar biological products and interchangeable biosimilar biological products and relevant clinical considerations for prescribers, which may include, as appropriate and applicable, information related to the comparability of such biological products;

“(C) an explanation of the process for reporting adverse events for biological products, including biosimilar biological products and interchangeable biosimilar biological products; and

“(D) an explanation of the relationship between biosimilar biological products and interchangeable biosimilar biological products licensed under section 351(k) and reference products (as defined in section 351(i)), including the standards for review and licensing of each such type of biological product.

“(3) FORMAT.—The educational materials provided under paragraph (1) may be—

“(A) in formats such as webinars, continuing education modules, videos, fact sheets, infographics, stakeholder toolkits, or other formats as appropriate and applicable; and

“(B) tailored for the unique needs of health care providers, patients, caregivers, and other audiences, as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(4) OTHER INFORMATION.—In addition to the information described in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall continue to publish—

“(A) the action package of each biological product licensed under subsection (a) or (k) of section 351; or

“(B) the summary review of each biological product licensed under subsection (a) or (k) of section 351.

“(5) CONFIDENTIAL AND TRADE SECRET INFORMATION.—This subsection does not authorize the disclosure of any trade secret, confidential commercial or financial information, or other matter described in section 552(b) of title 5.

“(b) CONTINUING EDUCATION.—The Secretary shall advance education and awareness among health care providers regarding biological products, including biosimilar biological products and interchangeable biosimilar biological products, as appropriate, including by developing or improving continuing education programs that advance the education of such providers on the prescribing of, and relevant clinical consider-

ations with respect to, biological products, including biosimilar biological products and interchangeable biosimilar biological products.”.

FOOD ALLERGY SAFETY, TREATMENT, EDUCATION, AND RESEARCH ACT OF 2021

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 578, which was introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 578) to improve the health and safety of Americans living with food allergies and related disorders, including potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis, food protein-induced enterocolitis syndrome, and eosinophilic gastrointestinal diseases, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DURBIN. I further ask that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 578) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 578

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 “Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research Act of 2021” or the “FASTER Act of 2021”.

SEC. 2. FOOD ALLERGY SAFETY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 201(qq)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321(qq)(1)) is amended by striking “and soybeans” and inserting “soybeans, and sesame”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to any food that is introduced or delivered for introduction into interstate commerce on or after January 1, 2023.

SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) shall submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

(1) descriptions of ongoing Federal activities related to—

(A) the surveillance and collection of data on the prevalence of food allergies and severity of allergic reactions for specific food or food ingredients, including the identification of any gaps in such activities;

(B) the development of effective food allergy diagnostics;

(C) the prevention of the onset of food allergies;

(D) the reduction of risks related to living with food allergies; and

(E) the development of new therapeutics to prevent, treat, cure, and manage food allergies; and

(2) specific recommendations and strategies to expand, enhance, or improve activities described in paragraph (1), including—

(A) strategies to improve the accuracy of food allergy prevalence data by expanding and intensifying current collection methods, including support for research that includes the identification of biomarkers and tests to validate survey data and the investigation of the use of identified biomarkers and tests in national surveys;

(B) strategies to overcome gaps in surveillance and data collection activities related to food allergies and specific food allergens; and

(C) recommendations for the development and implementation of a regulatory process and framework that would allow for the timely, transparent, and evidence-based modification of the definition of "major food allergen" included in section 201(qq) of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321(qq)), including with respect to—

(i) the scientific criteria for defining a food or food ingredient as a "major food allergen" pursuant to such process, including recommendations pertaining to evidence of the prevalence and severity of allergic reactions to a food or food ingredient that would be required in order to establish that such food or food ingredient is an allergen of public health concern appropriate for such process; and

(ii) opportunities for stakeholder engagement and comment, as appropriate, in considering any such modification to such definition.

(b) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall make the report under subsection (a) available on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services.

MAKING A TECHNICAL CORRECTION TO THE ALS DISABILITY INSURANCE ACCESS ACT OF 2019

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 579, which was introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 579) to make a technical correction to the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DURBIN. I further ask that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 579) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows

S. 579

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

SECTION 1. RETROACTIVE ACCESS TO SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS INDIVIDUALS WITH AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (ALS).

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2(b) of the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-250) is amended by striking "applications for disability insurance benefits filed after the date of enactment of this Act" and inserting "applications for disability insurance benefits approved after the date that is 5 months before the date of enactment of this Act".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-250).

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 90, S. Res. 91, S. Res. 92, and S. Res. 93.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NATIONAL TRIBAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WEEK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 94, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 94) designating the week beginning February 28, 2021, as "National Tribal Colleges and Universities Week".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 94) was agreed to.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that 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 preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

REMEMBERING BILL NIGHBERT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, earlier this year, my home State of Kentucky said goodbye to Bill Nighbert, a longtime public servant and a kindhearted friend. Both as a local mayor and a statewide official, Bill was instrumental to the achievements of communities across our Com-

monwealth. Today, I would like to recognize his lifetime of contributions to Kentucky.

As the Gateway to the Cumberland, the city of Williamsburg holds a special significance not just in Southeastern Kentucky but for the entire Commonwealth. Bill worked several jobs for the city he loved before being elected mayor in 1993. For the next decade, the people of Williamsburg put their trust in him. In return, Bill worked around the clock to deliver for his community. Even in the city's top job, Bill could still be found helping plow snow, deliver goods, or any other job that needed doing. A beloved local splash park is just one tangible example of Bill's leadership and vision for his city.

As a successful mayor, Bill's reputation grew across the Commonwealth. He was elected president of the Kentucky League of Cities in 2002, using his talents to improve communities throughout the Bluegrass. Bill left city hall when Governor Ernie Fletcher tapped him to be deputy commissioner of the Department of Local Government and later the secretary of the Transportation Cabinet. Even as Bill served the entire Commonwealth in Frankfort, he still took care of Whitley County. For instance, he was a driving force in the construction of a new interchange over I-75 near Williamsburg.

Apart from his professional work, Bill was legendary for his ability to make a friend in any situation. I guess you don't become the president of the Optimists Club without a sunny disposition. He was a role model and a little league coach, lending whatever free time he could find to a variety of local organizations.

Of course, Bill's greatest achievement was the love he shared with his wife of 34 years, Susan, as well as his children and their spouses, Brad and Monica, Renee and Chris, and Benton. Anyone who was lucky enough to know Bill could see the immense pride he had in his children and grandchildren. He said they were the reasons he dedicated so much of his life to public service. On behalf of the Senate, I send sincere condolences to Bill's friends and loved ones. We are grateful they shared him with us for so many years. Kentucky was made better as a result.

NOTICE OF A TIE VOTE UNDER S. RES. 27

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to print the following letter in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

To the Secretary of the Senate:

PN78-2, the nomination of Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services having been referred to the Committee on Finance, the Committee, with a quorum present, has voted on the nomination as follows—

(1) on the question of reporting the nomination favorably with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed, 14 ayes to 14 noes; and

In accordance with section 3, paragraph (1)(A) of S. Res. 27 of the 117th Congress, I hereby give notice that the Committee has not reported the nomination because of a tie vote, and ask that this notice be printed in the RECORD pursuant to the resolution."

RON WYDEN.

RECOGNIZING THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE BLIND AND PRINT DISABLED

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled on its 90th anniversary. The National Library Service, or NLS, is an important part of the Library of Congress, an institution that has long been committed to serving readers with disabilities. The concept of a national library for the blind was introduced in 1897 by the seventh Librarian of Congress, John Russell Young, who established a reading room for the blind that included more than 500 books and music items in raised characters.

In 1913, Congress began to require that one copy of each book be made in raised characters and deposited in the Library of Congress for educational use; however, as impressive as this collection was, it was only available to people who were able to visit in person.

In 1930, legislation was introduced in both the House and the Senate to fund a Library of Congress program to provide service to blind readers on a national scale. This led to passage of the Pratt-Smoot Act which, on March 3, 1931, established what we now know as the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled. The act has been amended several times, not only increasing funding for the program, but also expanding service to children and people with physical and reading disabilities and adding what is now the world's largest accessible music materials collection.

Missouri has wonderful local libraries that play a key role in connecting the NLS program to my constituents across the State. NLS and the Wolfner Talking Book and Braille Library serve nearly 6,500 individuals and more than 600 intuitions in Missouri, providing daily access to all the incredible resources NLS has to offer.

NLS is continuing its innovative and adaptive approach to serving Americans with disabilities. NLS has a vibrant history that spans phonograph records, cassette tapes, flash memory cartridges, and the internet, all while continuing to supply hardcopy and digital braille materials. With its modernization efforts underway, NLS no doubt has a very exciting future ahead.

Today, it is my pleasure to congratulate NLS on its 90th anniversary. I wish the wonderful staff at NLS continued success as they work to ensure the NLS mission "that all may read."

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER PICKENS

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, today I wish to recognize Mr. Christopher Pickens, a Knauss Sea Grant fellow on the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. Pickens has had a significant impact during his time as a fellow. His expertise on fisheries management and ocean sciences has meaningfully contributed to the committee's efforts. He has worked on several pieces of legislation that have passed the Senate or have become law, such as the FLOODS Act and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Amendments Act. His contributions will help improve ocean and flood monitoring to keep Americans safe, promote deep sea ocean exploration, and inform the stewardship of our Nation's marine resources.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Mr. Pickens for all of the fine work he has done and wish him luck in the years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST FINALISTS

• Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD some of the finalists' essays written by Vermont High School students as part of the 11th annual "State of the Union" essay contest conducted by my office.

The material follows:

FINALISTS

EMILY BORRAZZO, SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, SOPHOMORE

Supporting Our Veterans

Every day, men and women in the military risk their lives for the protection of their fellow citizens. The ideology of our nation depends on their service. Yet every day, veterans across the country face issues regarding claim approvals, mental health, and post-service employment.

The lengthy claim approval process and 36% claim granting rate is something that many veterans encounter. The issue is not the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' generous budget, but how the money is spent, and the efficiency/availability of the benefits being offered. The VA should hire more people to process claims in order to shorten the processing time, which is currently four months or longer on average. Hiring veterans in these positions would also address unemployment issues. Additionally, more guidance should be given on how to file a claim. This includes identifying the quickest claim type and specifying what medical information should be given. Lastly, the VA only approves claims for illnesses and injuries which they deem to be a direct cause of service. Extending this to all serious illnesses and injuries throughout life, or at least partial financial and medical support, would be extremely beneficial to veterans and could even improve their mental health.

Studies have shown that veterans have a higher risk for alcohol/drug abuse, and suicide. One in five veterans suffer from mental

health problems like PTSD, depression, and severe anxiety. Veterans account for 13.8% of the suicides in America, and for over a decade 17-18 veterans have died daily from suicide. We cannot take away their experiences, but offering more support in their recovery is the least we can do. Many veterans with mental health problems are not aware of their condition, or are too embarrassed to ask for help. Educating veterans (especially while serving) about signs and effects of mental health problems, and the care and treatment available to them, could save lives. Additionally, implementing a mental health scan for veterans every few years could be very effective in identifying these issues early on, and opening thousands of veterans' eyes to the care available to them. Enforcing quality-of-care standards for treatment in all mental health care facilities would also benefit the nation.

American veterans receive very effective military training and preparation, but are rarely prepared for post-service employment. Studies suggest the unemployment rate for veterans is considerably higher than their civilian counterparts. This can be attributed to the rarity of higher education and the numerous mental health issues among veterans. Increasing accessibility and lowering costs for college education would broaden the post-service career opportunities for countless veterans. Lower tuition rates for veterans could be paid for by the VA, with the extra money resulting from having to offer less veterans unemployment benefits.

Our nation cannot forget the selfless sacrifices our soldiers and military families make. Brave women and men have been taking care of this nation for almost 250 years. It's time we start taking care of them.

LING BUSHEY, BELLOWS FREE ACADEMY, FAIRFAX, SENIOR

The sexual health education and curriculum in America is not adequate to our current society, and should be focused on immensely to ensure better health in our youth population. Kids are not educated on the topics revolving around sexual health, and this leads to struggling mental health effects and potentially life changing decisions that teens should be informed on.

Ignorance on sexual orientation, contraceptives, and diseases leads to a dangerous society, where teens are unaware of consequences and ignorant to possible solutions of preventions. According to the USC Department of Nursing, nearly 750,000 teenagers in the United States will become pregnant this year; and half of the 20 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases will be diagnosed in young people ages 15 to 24. Being informed about the physical, mental, and emotional changes in a teenagers' life and environment will benefit not only the person learning, but relationships surrounding them for years to come. By starting to educate kids in middle school will normalize these discussions to be had later on, and create a more open and unjudged environment. According to the United Nations, understanding one's own body is a human right, and the US needs to address a human's right to learn about their body and have legislature and youth service providers fund and educate a coherent and inclusive sexual education across the nation.

A guaranteed cohesive program or set curriculum addressing sexual health, will also allow for schools to help inform kids in the LGBTQ community, what the subject is and how to respect and support members that are a part. The importance of educating a positive outlook sexual orientation, and safe hetero and homosexual activities is crucial. Only 24 states mandate sex education, which is unacceptable. America needs to educate

teens on the opposite sex's changes during puberty, and normalize these changes as they are inevitable. Mandating sexual education in schools will give students a coherent safe space to learn about these topics, which might not be offered and found from other inaccurate sources which leads to false information and misinterpretations.

While this might be a tedious and drawn out process, our legislature should mandate sexual education across the nation by making a federal law. This law would teach an all inclusive comprehensive curriculum across all states. Overall this would positively affect teens all across America and would take a step towards a brighter and better future. Along with this federal mandate we need to make teens and young adults have access to a planned parenthood or a trusted medically accurate source to trust and rely on for information. Especially during these strenuous times during this pandemic, the availability of these sources are more crucial than ever.

FATIMA KHAN, ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL, JUNIOR

July 17, 2014: "I Can't Breathe." These were the last words of Eric Garner. A 43-year-old father of six children. A man who was known as the "neighborhood peacemaker." Eric Garner was an unarmed black man, who was choked to death by Daniel Pantaleo, a New York City police officer, as he repeatedly pleaded for him to stop.

May 25, 2020: "I Can't Breathe." These were the last words of George Floyd. A 46-year-old father of one daughter. A man who wanted to "touch the world." George Floyd was an unarmed black man, who died when Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin, pressed his knee into his neck, for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, as he repeatedly pleaded for him to stop.

The murder of Eric Garner, in 2014, ignited fierce emotions and propelled people into action, all over the country. A developing project which began as a response to the murder of Trayvon Martin, was beginning to receive national attention. It was known as Black Lives Matter. Today, BLM is one of the most influential social movements today, and among many human rights issues, it has awakened the eyes of the nation to the issue of police brutality.

Although we have come a long way in our work against police brutality since 2014, there is still plenty of work to do. Black Americans are disproportionately affected by police violence across the US. According to Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, black Americans are 3.23 times more likely than white Americans to be killed by police. In order to truly combat this issue, there needs to be a reformation of our police departments.

To do so, the responsibilities of police officers relating to mental health, homelessness, and drug abuse, needs to be pared back. According to the US Department of Justice, there are over 10 million arrests, annually. Only a small fraction of those are violent crimes. This makes the US the world's largest jailer, housing about 25 percent of the world's prisoners. Police departments are overworked and our jails are overcrowded. Overcriminalization has led to mass incarceration in our criminal justice system. To address overcriminalization, policymakers should consider what offenses result in conviction and prison time, and reduce arrestable offenses. More resources should be put into education and training for officers, not arrests. Additionally, more mental health professionals should be deployed as first responders.

We also have to hold every police officer accountable to the law. Too many times, police officers who have broken the law, haven't faced adequate consequences for

their actions, because of qualified immunity. Qualified immunity has protected police officers in cases where they have disgustingly abused their power. Victims whose constitutional rights have been violated have been denied justice. By altering this doctrine, we can ensure that nobody is above the law. Increasing the consequences of misconduct, will weed out the bad apples in our police departments.

By critically reforming our police departments, we can ensure a more equitable future for all Americans.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13660 OF MARCH 6, 2014, WITH RESPECT TO UKRAINE—PM 4

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014, with respect to Ukraine is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2021.

The actions and policies of persons that undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets, and the actions and policies of the Government of the Russian Federation, including its purported annexation of Crimea and its use of force in

Ukraine, continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13660 with respect to Ukraine.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 2, 2021.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13692 OF MARCH 8, 2015, WITH RESPECT TO THE SITUATION IN VENEZUELA—PM 5

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13692 of March 8, 2015, with respect to the situation in Venezuela is to continue in effect beyond March 8, 2021.

The situation in Venezuela continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13692 with respect to the situation in Venezuela.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 2, 2021.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13288 OF MARCH 6, 2003, WITH RESPECT TO THE ACTIONS AND POLICIES OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE AND OTHER PERSONS TO UNDERMINE ZIMBABWE'S DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES OR INSTITUTIONS—PM 6

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United

States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13288 of March 6, 2003, with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2021.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa has not made the necessary political and economic reforms that would warrant terminating the existing targeted sanctions program.

Throughout the last year, government security services routinely intimidated and violently repressed citizens, including members of opposition political parties, union members, and journalists. The absence of progress on the most fundamental reforms needed to ensure the rule of law, democratic governance, and the protection of human rights leaves Zimbabweans vulnerable to ongoing repression and presents a continuing threat to peace and security in the region.

The actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13288, as amended, with respect to Zimbabwe and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 2, 2021.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. WYDEN for the Committee on Finance.

*Katherine C. Tai, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

*Adewale O. Adeyemo, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. LEE:

S. 553. A bill to require the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to estimate the value of electromagnetic spectrum assigned or otherwise allocated to Federal entities; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 554. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study on the establishment of, and the potential land that could be included in, a unit of the National Forest System in the State of Hawaii, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 555. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to increase the Federal minimum wage for employers with at least \$1,000,000,000 in annual revenue, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 556. A bill to establish a Federal Advisory Council to Support Victims of Gun Violence; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 557. A bill to establish a pilot program for native plant species, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 558. A bill to establish a national integrated flood information system within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 559. A bill to amend the Grand Ronde Reservation Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. STABENOW:

S. 560. A bill to improve coverage of maternal oral health care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. KAINNE, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 561. A bill to increase the rates of pay under the statutory pay systems and for prevailing rate employees by 3.2 percent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 562. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to citizen petitions; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CRAMER (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. INHOPE, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. CASSIDY, Mrs.

CAPITO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. CRAPO, and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. 563. A bill to amend the Federal Reserve Act to prohibit certain financial service providers who deny fair access to financial services from using taxpayer funded discount window lending programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. WARNOCK, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 564. A bill to prohibit Members of Congress from purchasing or selling certain investments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. KING, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. COLLINS, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 565. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the treatment of veterans who participated in the cleanup of Enewetak Atoll as radiation-exposed veterans for purposes of the presumption of service-connection of certain disabilities by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 566. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 42 Main Street in Slatersville, Rhode Island, as the "Specialist Matthew R. Turcotte Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 567. A bill to provide for conservation and economic development in the State of Nevada, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. HAWLEY, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 568. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to certify, before removing an entity from the entity list, that the entity is no longer involved in activities contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the United States and that removing the entity from the list does not pose a threat to allies of the United States; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 569. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to transfer certain National Forest System land to the State of South Dakota, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. SASSE):

S. 570. A bill to prohibit the trading of the securities of certain Communist Chinese military companies on a national securities exchange, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BROWN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. CASEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 571. A bill to fully fund the Prevention and Public Health Fund and reaffirm the importance of prevention in the United States healthcare system; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 572. A bill to provide for the water quality restoration of the Tijuana River and the New River, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. LEE):

S. 573. A bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 574. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, to promote the investigation of fraudulent claims against certain trusts, to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide penalties against fraudulent claims against certain trusts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 575. A bill to provide Federal criminal penalties for lynching; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 576. A bill to amend title 14, United States Code, to require the Coast Guard to conduct icebreaking operations in the Great Lakes to minimize commercial disruption in the winter months, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. HAGERTY):

S. 577. A bill to amend the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 to limit the exemption from the registration requirements of such Act for persons engaging in activities in furtherance of bona fide religious, scholastic, academic, or scientific pursuits or the fine arts to activities which do not promote the political agenda of a foreign government, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to clarify the disclosures of foreign gifts by institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. 578. A bill to improve the health and safety of Americans living with food allergies and related disorders, including potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis, food protein-induced enterocolitis syndrome, and eosinophilic gastrointestinal diseases, and for other purposes; considered and passed.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 579. A bill to make a technical correction to the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019; considered and passed.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 580. A bill to reauthorize the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BROWN:

S. 581. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to improve access to adult vaccines under Medicaid; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINÉ, Ms. SMITH, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. OSSOFF, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 582. A bill to prohibit the imposition of the death penalty for any violation of Federal law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Ms. ERNST, and Mr. CARPER):

S. 583. A bill to promote innovative acquisition techniques and procurement strategies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 584. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide coverage of medical nutrition therapy services for individuals with eating disorders under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 585. A bill to reauthorize the United States Anti-Doping Agency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. KAINÉ (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. LEE, Mr. COONS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. DURBIN):

S.J. Res. 10. A joint resolution to repeal the authorizations for use of military force against Iraq, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. SMITH, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. Res. 87. A resolution recognizing that the United States needs a Marshall Plan for Moms in order to revitalize and restore mothers in the workforce; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Ms. ERNST, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. Res. 88. A resolution requesting that the President transmit to the Senate not later than 14 days after the date of the adoption of this resolution documents in the possession of the President relating to the amount of funding previously enacted under certain public laws and currently unspent; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. ROMNEY (for himself and Mr. MURPHY):

S. Res. 89. A resolution honoring the humanitarian work of Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches to save the lives of French Jews and other persons during the Holocaust; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. KING, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PETERS, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. Res. 90. A resolution designating the week of February 1 through 5, 2021, as "National School Counseling Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. KAINÉ (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNETT, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROMNEY, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. Res. 91. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of "Career and Technical Education Month"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. WARREN):

S. Res. 92. A resolution designating March 5, 2021, as "National Speech and Debate Education Day"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SHELBY (for himself and Mr. TUBERVILLE):

S. Res. 93. A resolution congratulating the University of Alabama Crimson Tide football team for winning the 2021 National Collegiate Athletic Association College Football Playoff National Championship; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Ms. SMITH, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. THUNE, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. KELLY, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. ROUNDS, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. Res. 94. A resolution designating the week beginning February 28, 2021, as "National Tribal Colleges and Universities Week"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 243

At the request of Mr. CRAMER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 243, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand tax-free distributions from individual retirement accounts to include rollovers for charitable life-income plans for charitable purposes.

S. 253

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 253, a bill to expand research on the cannabidiol and marihuana.

S. 319

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 319, a bill to amend the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended, to strengthen the

conspicuous statement required on certain informational materials, and for other purposes.

S. 339

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 339, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to list fentanyl-related substances as schedule I controlled substances, and for other purposes.

S. 401

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 401, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit governmental discrimination against health care providers that do not participate in abortion.

S. 450

At the request of Ms. SMITH, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 450, a bill to award posthumously the Congressional Gold Medal to Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley.

At the request of Mr. WARNER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 450, *supra*.

S. 454

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 454, a bill to provide health care and benefits to veterans who were exposed to toxic substances while serving as members of the Armed Forces at Karshi Khanabad Air Base, Uzbekistan, and for other purposes.

S. 460

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 460, a bill to extend the authority for Federal contractors to reimburse employees unable to perform work due to the COVID-19 pandemic from March 31, 2021, to September 30, 2021.

S. 488

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 488, a bill to provide for congressional review of actions to terminate or waive sanctions imposed with respect to Iran.

S. 495

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 495, a bill to prioritize the allocation of H-2B visas for States with low unemployment rates.

S. 496

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 496, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from taxable income any student loan forgiveness or discharge.

S. 547

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Maryland

(Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 547, a bill to provide relief for multiemployer and single employer pension plans, and for other purposes.

S. 548

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 548, a bill to convey land in Anchorage, Alaska, to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, and for other purposes.

S. 549

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 549, a bill to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Tanana Tribal Council located in Tanana, Alaska, and for other purposes.

S. 550

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 550, a bill to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium located in Sitka, Alaska, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 34

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 34, a resolution recognizing the 200th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating democracy in Greece and the United States.

S. RES. 81

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 81, a resolution honoring Las Damas de Blanco, a women-led non-violent movement in support of freedom and human rights in Cuba, and calling for the release of all political prisoners in Cuba.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 554. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study on the establishment of, and the potential land that could be included in, a unit of the National Forest System in the State of Hawaii, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a bill that requires the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study on the establishment of, and the potential land that could be included in, a unit of the National Forest System in the State of Hawaii.

The U.S. Forest Service currently oversees more than 150 National forests that receive Federal funding for water-

shed protection, wildlife conservation, enhancement of recreational access, wildfire prevention, among other things. Despite having unique forest ecosystems found nowhere else in the Nation, Hawaii is currently among the few States that do not have a National Forest. If warranted, a National Forest designation in Hawaii could provide additional Federal research and management resources.

This bill directs the U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary, acting through the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, to conduct a study in coordination with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, and in consultation with the Hawaii Department of Agriculture as well as other State and local stakeholders, on the islands of Hawaii, Oahu, Kauai, Molokai, Lanai, and Maui.

This study would, among other things, assess unique vegetation types, opportunities to improve and protect forest resources, secure favorable water flows, and opportunities for visitor use.

The Secretary of Agriculture is given three years to conduct the study and report the results to Congress. Information from that report will then inform which lands in Hawaii, if any, would be suitable for inclusion in a National Forest. This bill is supported by the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 557. A bill to establish a pilot program for native plant species, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Native Plant Species Pilot Program Act. I am pleased to be partnering with Senator CANTWELL on this initiative. Our bipartisan bill would create a new pilot program at the National Park Service to support the use of native plants, and would direct the Park Service to review existing data and study the cost-effectiveness of using native plants.

Native plants are species found naturally in regions and can add beauty and value to our National Park System. Benefits range from using less water and pesticides, purifying the air, and recharging groundwater in wetlands. By using native species, the Park Service can also improve habitat for wildlife and restore important species of birds and butterflies to their natural environment.

In Acadia National Park, native plants are an important part of the ongoing conservation efforts undertaken by Superintendent Kevin Schneider and all those who work to encourage the use of native plants. Acadia National Park protects more than 900 plant species, including some that are globally, nationally, and locally rare.

Acadia is home to the vibrant rhodoras that flower along wetland edges in the spring and stunning wood lilies that bloom on the mountain tops

in August, helping to attract the more than 3.5 million visitors a year to the seventh most-visited national park in the United States. The Wild Gardens of Acadia, located at Sieur de Monts, are a collection of more than 400 native plants maintained almost exclusively by park volunteers and represent the natural plant communities found within Acadia National Park. This partnership project with Friends of Acadia allows visitors to easily step through the park's myriad habitats and learn about the splendor of Acadia's native plant species. The Wild Gardens celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2021.

Native plants, however, face many threats, such as non-native pests, non-native plants, diseases, and a changing climate. Today, almost one quarter of Acadia National Park's species are non-native to the park. The red spruce, iconic to Acadia, is projected to lose a substantial amount of its habitat in coming decades because of climate change. In addition, invasive pests, such as the Emerald Ash Borer and the hemlock woolly adelgid are affecting northern forests and have expanded into Maine. Hemlock woolly adelgid recently infested hemlock trees just outside of the park on Mount Desert Island.

Our bipartisan bill has earned endorsements from the Garden Club of America, Friends of Acadia, Scenic America, and the Native Plant Center at Westchester Community College. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to help protect the natural landscapes at our national parks for years to come.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 569. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to transfer certain National Forest System land to the State of South Dakota, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 569

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 "Gilt Edge Mine Conveyance Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **FEDERAL LAND.**—The term "Federal land" means all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to approximately 266 acres of National Forest System land within the Gilt Edge Mine Superfund Boundary, as generally depicted on the map.

(2) **MAP.**—The term "map" means the map entitled "Gilt Edge Mine Conveyance Act" and dated August 20, 2020.

(3) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

(4) **STATE.**—The term "State" means State of South Dakota.

SEC. 3. LAND CONVEYANCE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to the terms and conditions described in this Act, if the State submits to the Secretary an offer to acquire the Federal land for the market value, as determined by the appraisal under subsection (c), the Secretary shall convey the Federal land to the State.

(b) **TERMS AND CONDITIONS.**—The conveyance under subsection (a) shall be—

(1) subject to valid existing rights;

(2) made by quitclaim deed; and

(3) subject to any other terms and conditions as the Secretary considers appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

(c) **APPRAISAL.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Before submitting an offer under subsection (a), the State shall complete an appraisal to determine the market value of the Federal land.

(2) **STANDARDS.**—The appraisal under paragraph (1) shall be conducted in accordance with—

(A) the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions; and

(B) the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.

(d) **MAP.**—

(1) **AVAILABILITY OF MAP.**—The map shall be kept on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate office of the Forest Service.

(2) **CORRECTION OF ERRORS.**—The Secretary may correct any errors in the map.

(e) **CONSIDERATION.**—As consideration for the conveyance under subsection (a), the State shall pay to the Secretary an amount equal to the market value of the Federal land, as determined by the appraisal under subsection (c).

(f) **SURVEY.**—The State shall prepare a survey that is satisfactory to the Secretary of the exact acreage and legal description of the Federal land to be conveyed under subsection (a).

(g) **COSTS OF CONVEYANCE.**—As a condition on the conveyance under subsection (a), the State shall pay all costs associated with the conveyance, including the cost of—

(1) the appraisal under subsection (c); and

(2) the survey under subsection (f).

(h) **PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF LAND.**—Any proceeds received by the Secretary from the conveyance under subsection (a) shall be—

(1) deposited in the fund established under Public Law 90-171 (commonly known as the "Sisk Act") (16 U.S.C. 484a); and

(2) available to the Secretary until expended, without further appropriation, for the maintenance and improvement of land or administration facilities in the Black Hills National Forest in the State.

(i) **ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS.**—Notwithstanding section 120(h)(3)(A) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9620(h)(3)(A)), the Secretary shall not be required to provide any covenant or warranty for the Federal land conveyed to the State under this Act.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 572. A bill to provide for the water quality restoration of the Tijuana River and the New River, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to re-introduce the "Border Water Quality Restoration and Protection Act."

For over two decades, cleaning up the Tijuana River Valley has been one of my top priorities for Southern Cali-

fornia. The wastewater, trash and sediment that continues to flow into San Diego and Imperial Counties is an alarming danger to public health and our economy. Although we have made recent strides in cleaning up this pollution, there is much work remaining.

That's why I am proud to introduce this important legislation, once again, to help address this decades-long issue. I am very pleased Senator PADILLA has joined me as an original cosponsor and I look forward to working with him on this important issue.

Polluted water from the Tijuana and New Rivers flows north across the border into the United States causing unsanitary water conditions, pollution and beach closures across Southern California. It also jeopardizes military training exercises for Navy Seals in Camp Pendleton.

Three-quarters of the 1,700-square-mile Tijuana River watershed lies in Mexico. However, the watershed, along with all its pollutants, drains into San Diego County and the Tijuana River Valley.

In addition to jeopardizing human health and safety, two of the most drastic effects from this cross-border water pollution are harm to wildlife and damage to the tourism industry, integral to Southern Californian communities. As the coronavirus pandemic continues to threaten our nation's health and economy, it is critical we work to address the pollution in the region so California can welcome visitors back to their beaches when it is safe to do so.

The beaches in the region are central to San Diego's tourism economy. In recent years, beaches in the communities of Coronado and Imperial Beach were closed for more than 200 days in a single year due to pollution.

Health and safety of residents and workers are also at risk. In recent years, local Border Patrol union officials reported that 80 officers suffered from contamination, rashes, infections, chemical burns and lung irritation due to toxic cross-border flows.

In addition, pollution from Mexico harms sensitive areas that provide critical habitat for more than 300 species of birds as well as marine animals like leopard sharks and bottlenose dolphins. The region is home to multiple parks and public lands, including the Tijuana River's National Estuarine Research Reserve, the River Mouth State Marine Conservation Area and River Valley Regional Park Preserve.

The harmful effects of pollution in the Tijuana River Valley on our residents, businesses, economy and environment are simply unacceptable.

In February 2020, the Government Accountability Office issued a comprehensive report, "International Boundary Water Commission: Opportunities Exist to Address Water Quality Problems." My office worked closely with the GAO to utilize their findings to craft meaningful change through this legislation.

Simultaneously, we were able to secure \$300 million in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement to address pollution in the Tijuana River Valley Watershed.

With significant funding and detailed findings by the GAO investigation, we developed this legislation in concert with federal, state and local agency input. As beaches in both the United States and Mexico continue to close due to high levels of pollution, it is as imperative as ever to advance a solution that engages all stakeholders.

The Border Water Quality Restoration and Protection Act includes key reforms to advance concrete solutions.

One of the problems is that no one agency is in charge of this problem. A whole range of agencies—EPA, International Boundary and Water Commission, State Department, Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, Defense Department—all have jurisdiction or interest in this international issue.

What we need is one agency in charge, taking input from the others so decisions can be made. This approach is similar to other large, regional environmental challenges like the Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, Everglades and Chesapeake Bay. Here in California, we have also seen great success with this model of interagency coordination at Lake Tahoe.

Here's how the bill would work:

The EPA would be officially named the agency with overall control of this effort.

The EPA, along with its federal, state and local partners, would be directed to identify a list of priority projects. It also would be authorized to accept and distribute funds to build, operate and maintain those projects.

The bill would permanently authorize the Border Water Infrastructure Program to manage storm water runoff and water reuse projects.

State and local authorities would also be authorized to contribute funding to federal projects, which is currently not allowed.

The International Boundary and Water Commission would be authorized to mitigate storm water from Mexico and the pollution that comes with it and is required to construct, operate and maintain projects on the priority list developed by the agencies within the U.S. that improve water quality.

We need a new and comprehensive approach to this issue that has plagued border communities for too long. This bill creates a formal process to consider effective, long-term solutions and additional wastewater infrastructure to mitigate cross-border pollution and I hope the Senate can move on this bill quickly.

I want to thank California Environmental Protection Agency, California Natural Resources Agency, San Diego and Imperial counties, cities of Imperial Beach and Coronado, Mayor of Chula Vista, Mary Casillas Salas, the City of San Diego and the Port of San

Diego for supporting this legislation. These communities, and others, have been negatively impacted by this issue for far too long.

It's past time that we finally solve this problem to safeguard local health and economic growth.

Once again, I thank Senator PADILLA for his cosponsorship. Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. 578. A bill to improve the health and safety of Americans living with food allergies and related disorders, including potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis, food protein-induced enterocolitis syndrome, and eosinophilic gastrointestinal diseases, and for other purposes; considered and passed.

S. 578

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 "Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research Act of 2021" or the "FASTER Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. FOOD ALLERGY SAFETY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 201(qq)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321(qq)(1)) is amended by striking "and soybeans" and inserting "soybeans, and sesame".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to any food that is introduced or delivered for introduction into interstate commerce on or after January 1, 2023.

SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this section as the "Secretary") shall submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

(1) descriptions of ongoing Federal activities related to—

(A) the surveillance and collection of data on the prevalence of food allergies and severity of allergic reactions for specific food or food ingredients, including the identification of any gaps in such activities;

(B) the development of effective food allergy diagnostics;

(C) the prevention of the onset of food allergies;

(D) the reduction of risks related to living with food allergies; and

(E) the development of new therapeutics to prevent, treat, cure, and manage food allergies; and

(2) specific recommendations and strategies to expand, enhance, or improve activities described in paragraph (1), including—

(A) strategies to improve the accuracy of food allergy prevalence data by expanding and intensifying current collection methods, including support for research that includes the identification of biomarkers and tests to validate survey data and the investigation of the use of identified biomarkers and tests in national surveys;

(B) strategies to overcome gaps in surveillance and data collection activities related to food allergies and specific food allergens; and

(C) recommendations for the development and implementation of a regulatory process and framework that would allow for the timely, transparent, and evidence-based modification of the definition of "major food allergen" included in section 201(qq) of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321(qq)), including with respect to—

(i) the scientific criteria for defining a food or food ingredient as a "major food allergen" pursuant to such process, including recommendations pertaining to evidence of the prevalence and severity of allergic reactions to a food or food ingredient that would be required in order to establish that such food or food ingredient is an allergen of public health concern appropriate for such process; and

(ii) opportunities for stakeholder engagement and comment, as appropriate, in considering any such modification to such definition.

(b) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall make the report under subsection (a) available on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 579. A bill to make a technical correction to the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019; considered and passed.

S. 579

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

SECTION 1. RETROACTIVE ACCESS TO SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS INDIVIDUALS WITH AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (ALS).

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2(b) of the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-250) is amended by striking "applications for disability insurance benefits filed after the date of enactment of this Act" and inserting "applications for disability insurance benefits approved after the date that is 5 months before the date of enactment of this Act".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-250).

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 580. A bill to reauthorize the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Ms. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the "Affordable Housing Redevelopment Act," which I introduced today.

I want to thank Senator PADILLA for joining me on this important bill, and Representatives JARED HUFFMAN and MIKE THOMPSON for leading a companion measure in the House of Representatives.

Established in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the Neighborhood Stabilization Program was created by Congress to help provide assistance to communities hit hard by the recession by funding the acquisition and rehabilitation of troubled residential properties.

The program helped States, local governments, and nonprofit organizations acquire properties and rehabilitate or repurpose them as long-term affordable housing.

Between 2008 and 2019, Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds have facilitated the construction or rehabilitation of more than 50,000 homes, and the program has generated \$1.8 billion in return income, allowing communities to stretch Federal investments even further.

Today, more than 7.4 million units of affordable housing are needed across the U.S. to meet the needs of low-income renters. In my home State of California, more than 1.4 million units are needed to address the State's affordable housing shortage.

Due to financial burdens and loss of income resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of people in the United States are at risk of eviction or foreclosure, and the need for more affordable housing is expected to increase dramatically.

In addition to making long-term investments in building new affordable housing in the United States, it is also critically important to focus resources on more immediate solutions, such as acquiring and rehabilitating existing buildings.

Acquisition and rehabilitation provides two distinct advantages: it lowers per-unit construction costs and makes affordable housing units available to low-income households much faster.

The "Affordable Housing Redevelopment Act" would reauthorize and expand the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to help State and local governments purchase blighted, vacant, abandoned, foreclosed, or surplus properties, and convert them into affordable housing. Eligible projects would include mixed-use development and conversions of non-residential office and retail properties.

All new units would have to serve households whose income does not exceed area median income, and at least 25 percent of units would serve households whose income does not exceed 50 percent of area median income. Long-term affordability requirements would apply in all cases.

The bill would authorize \$1.5 billion in discretionary appropriations to be allocated as a competitive grant program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

This bill provides a targeted and cost effective way for the Federal government to help communities build more affordable housing, while also stimulating local economies and creating jobs.

I hope my colleagues will join me in support of this bill. Thank you, Mr. President, and I yield the floor.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Ms. SMITH, Mr.

MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. OSSOFF, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 582. A bill to prohibit the imposition of the death penalty for any violation of Federal law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 582

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 "Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON IMPOSITION OF DEATH SENTENCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person may be sentenced to death or put to death on or after the date of enactment of this Act for any violation of Federal law.

(b) PERSONS SENTENCED BEFORE DATE OF ENACTMENT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any person sentenced to death before the date of enactment of this Act for any violation of Federal law shall be resentenced.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. LEE, Mr. COONS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. DURBIN):

S.J. Res. 10. A joint resolution to repeal the authorizations for use of military force against Iraq, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I am pleased today to introduce in the Senate, with my colleagues Senators YOUNG, DUCKWORTH, LEE, COONS, GRASSLEY, DURBIN and PAUL a bipartisan resolution to repeal the 1991 and 2002 Authorizations for Use of Military Force (AUMF) against Iraq. This legislation will formally end the authorizations for the Gulf and Iraq wars—30 and 19 years, respectively, after these AUMFs were first passed, reasserting Congress' vital role in not only declaring wars, but in ending them. The repeal of these authorizations also recognizes the strong partnership the United States now has with a sovereign, democratic Iraq.

The United States is no longer at war with Iraq and our legal frameworks should reflect this reality as much as our policy frameworks, to include the Strategic Framework Agreement that Iraq and the United States signed in November 2008, which affirms the establishment of a long-term relationship of cooperation and friendship, based on the principle of equality in sovereignty and the rights and principles that are enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Since 2014, U.S. troops have been in Iraq, alongside Iraqi forces, at the Government of Iraq's request for assistance in combating the Islamic State of Iraq

and Syria (ISIS). Current Administration officials, including President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken, Secretary of Defense Austin and Commander of the United States Central Command, General McKenzie, have routinely emphasized that United States military forces remain in Iraq at the invitation of the Government of Iraq and in respect to its sovereignty. Recent presidential administrations have maintained that the 2002 AUMF only serves to "reinforce" any legal authority to combat ISIS provided by the 2001 AUMF and is not independently required to authorize any such activities. As such, repealing the 1991 AUMF and the 2002 AUMF would not affect ongoing United States military operations. It would however, prevent the future misuse of the Gulf and Iraq War authorizations and strengthen Congressional oversight over war powers.

It is past time to repeal both AUMFs and formally mark the end of the Iraq War that resulted in a devastating loss of life and wounded tens of thousands of our troops. It makes no sense that two AUMFs remain in place against a country that is now a close partner. They serve no operational purpose, run the risk of future abuse by the President, and help keep our nation at permanent war.

I am proud to join this group of Senators in introducing a bill to repeal these outdated and unnecessary authorizations. I hope we can continue to find bipartisan compromise on these tough war power issues to include revising and replacing the 2001 AUMF.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 87—RECOGNIZING THAT THE UNITED STATES NEEDS A MARSHALL PLAN FOR MOMS IN ORDER TO REVITALIZE AND RESTORE MOTHERS IN THE WORKFORCE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. SMITH, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 87

Whereas any relief and long-term recovery from the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic must recognize, rebuild, and return mothers to the workforce;

Whereas women, and especially working mothers, are bearing the brunt of the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of existing social barriers and policy failures such as—

(1) the lack of a care infrastructure, including child care deserts and lack of care infrastructure caused by high child care costs;

(2) the lack of family-supportive workplaces;

(3) the lack of a national paid leave policy; and

(4) gender and racial pay inequity;

Whereas, at the beginning of 2020, women made up the majority of the workforce for

the first time in almost a decade, even as women continued to face unjust gender and racial wage gaps;

Whereas 2,300,000 women have left the labor force since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, including 275,000 who exited in January 2021;

Whereas participation by women in the labor force was less than 55 percent in April 2020 for the first time since 1986, in part because of the child care crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;

Whereas participation by women age 20 and older in the labor force fell to a 33-year low in January 2021, hitting 57 percent;

Whereas women—

(1) have suffered the majority of pandemic-related job losses; and

(2) have lost over 5,400,000 net jobs since February 2020, and account for 55 percent of overall net job loss since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic;

Whereas 86 percent of net jobs lost in December 2020 were jobs held by women, with women losing 196,000 jobs during that month;

Whereas mothers in the prime of their working lives have paid an especially high price, with mothers ages 25 to 54 experiencing a 5.7-percentage point decline in employment since the COVID-19 pandemic began, compared to a 3.1 percentage-point decline for fathers in the same age group;

Whereas women are overrepresented in low-wage jobs and underrepresented in high-wage jobs;

Whereas employment in the bottom quartile of the wage distribution has declined by 17 percent since February 2020, far exceeding the overall employment decline of 6.5 percent;

Whereas wages for women are key to the economic security of the families of such women;

Whereas women of color play a particularly vital role in the financial stability of their families, and any disruption to their earnings can be detrimental to the welfare of their families;

Whereas the absence of affordable child care exacerbates inequality by severely inhibiting low-income parents from attaining promotions and higher salaries;

Whereas child nutrition is strongly linked to the employment status of mothers, such that almost 1 in 4 children experienced food insecurity in 2020 at the same time that mothers experienced work disruptions or unemployment that led to income loss;

Whereas work interruptions caused by school closures and child care closures have disproportionately impacted women, forcing women to reduce work hours, take a leave of absence, or permanently leave the workforce;

Whereas, without reliable and affordable child care, mothers who have left the workforce will not be able to return to work, since such mothers often cannot pay for child care without the income made from going back to work;

Whereas essential workers who are single parents face additional challenges and greater financial burden due to needing affordable child care;

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing stigmas against working mothers that falsely assume that their role as caregivers will negatively impact their work performance;

Whereas mothers forced to permanently leave the workforce or reduce work hours because of the COVID-19 pandemic are experiencing career trajectory disruptions that lower their lifetime earnings potential and endanger their future Social Security earnings and other potential retirement income;

Whereas child care is a lifeline for working mothers, and over 75 percent of mothers with

children younger than age 10 say child care is one of their top 3 challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic;

Whereas, in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States, there were roughly 9,700,000 working mothers with a child younger than age 6;

Whereas 95 percent of the child care workforce is comprised of women, and yet nearly ¾ of child care workers with children report problems with accessing public support programs and often struggle to afford high-quality child care for their own families;

Whereas 60 percent of businesses in the child care industry are minority-owned;

Whereas a significant investment in child care would be simultaneously job creating and job enabling, creating care jobs and supporting parental employment, both of which would benefit women;

Whereas women of color are disproportionately represented in many frontline industries that also lack critical benefits such as paid sick leave and flexibility to telework, including food services, hospitality, retail, and social assistance;

Whereas the unprecedented burdens of child care, work, and remote learning have strained the mental and emotional health of mothers; and

Whereas access to paid leave during the COVID-19 pandemic has been linked to a reduction in the spread of COVID-19 by as many as 15,000 new cases per day where people were able to use the leave, such that paid leave has prevented the compounded stressors of countless evictions, hospitalizations, and hungry children: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) mothers, especially mothers of color, have been pushed to the brink of economic, social, and emotional collapse during the COVID-19 pandemic because of the existing economic and social inequalities that women have long faced;

(2) any relief and long-term recovery package to address the COVID-19 crisis should recognize and rebuild moms in the workforce, in order to secure meaningful and sustainable economic recovery, by including, at a minimum—

(A) a robust paid leave plan, which is essential to securing the physical health and financial health of families, including emergency paid leave policies that would create a path toward permanent paid leave solutions;

(B) the means to rebuild and stabilize the child care industry, which is essential to economic recovery and bolstering women in the labor force;

(C) major investments in our education systems, which must be made in order to safely reopen schools and campuses, providing funding to support and protect the safety and health of educators, support staff, students, and families;

(D) recurring child benefits, and expanded and improved child tax credit and earned income tax credit to help reduce child poverty and provide economic security for families;

(E) an expanded unemployment insurance program that benefits struggling workers, including those experiencing long-term unemployment; and

(F) access to mental health support for mothers, which is essential to maintaining the health of the family; and

(3) employers and policymakers in the United States must prioritize addressing the economic cliff facing mothers, and make permanent the aforementioned policies so that mothers are protected against any future economic calamities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 88—REQUESTING THAT THE PRESIDENT TRANSMIT TO THE SENATE NOT LATER THAN 14 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF THE ADOPTION OF THIS RESOLUTION DOCUMENTS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE PRESIDENT RELATING TO THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING PREVIOUSLY ENACTED UNDER CERTAIN PUBLIC LAWS AND CURRENTLY UNSPENT

Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Ms. ERNST, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. HOEVEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

S. RES. 88

Whereas the national debt of the United States is \$27,900,000,000,000;

Whereas this represents \$223,441 in debt per taxpayer;

Where Congress appropriated over \$4,000,000,000,000 on a bipartisan basis to address COVID-19 during 2020;

Whereas Congress passed additional COVID-19 relief legislation as part of the bipartisan-bicameral omnibus COVID-19 relief deal on December 21, 2020;

Whereas the latest reports from the Congressional Budget Office indicate that a substantial portion of funds previously allocated remain unspent;

Whereas Congress needs reliable information on unspent funds before it should consider allocating additional dollars;

Whereas, according to Center for a Responsible Federal Budget, the proposed American Rescue Plan allocates less than 10 percent of its total funding to directly combat COVID-19 needs;

Whereas, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the level of spending in the proposed American Rescue Plan is at least 3 times the size of the output shortfall in our economy, which will lead to higher inflation; and

Whereas, almost half of the American Rescue Plan would not be spent until fiscal year 2022 or later, with at least \$140,000,000,000 not being spent until fiscal year 2024 or later: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the President is requested to transmit to the Senate not later than 14 days after the date of the adoption of this resolution documents in the possession of the President relating to the amount of funding previously enacted and currently unspent provided under the following laws:

(1) The Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-123).

(2) The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (Public Law 116-127).

(3) The CARES Act (Public Law 116-136).

(4) The Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act (Public Law 116-139).

(5) Division N (relating to additional coronavirus response and relief) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260).

SENATE RESOLUTION 89—HONORING THE HUMANITARIAN WORK OF DR. ARISTIDES DE SOUSA MENDES DO AMARAL E ABRANCHES TO SAVE THE LIVES OF FRENCH JEWS AND OTHER PERSONS DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Mr. ROMNEY (for himself and Mr. MURPHY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 89

Whereas Nazi Germany invaded France on May 10, 1940, and after brief but intense hostilities, secured the surrender of France on June 22, 1940;

Whereas, as a consequence of the Nazi conquest, the lives of French Jews and Jewish and non-Jewish persons of other nationalities seeking refuge in France were put in grave and imminent danger;

Whereas many thousands of those persons fled to Bordeaux, France, and elsewhere in southwest France, seeking to traverse Spain and escape to Portugal;

Whereas, in 1939, the Government of Portugal under Antonio de Oliveira Salazar issued Circular 14, which sharply restricted the availability of visas to displaced persons;

Whereas the Consul General of Portugal in Bordeaux was Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches;

Whereas, in June 1940, confronting a humanitarian crisis and in defiance of Circular 14, Sousa Mendes, assisted principally by his diplomatic colleagues Jose de Seabra, Manuel de Vieira Braga, and Emile Gissot, issued without charge tens of thousands of visas, including thousands to fleeing Jews;

Whereas Sousa Mendes reportedly stated, "I declare that I shall give, free of charge, a visa to whosoever shall request it. My desire is to be with God against Man rather than with Man and against God.";

Whereas those visas, as well as Sousa Mendes' personal intervention at the border between France and Spain, enabled the refugees to reach safety in Portugal;

Whereas, in July 1940, the Government of Portugal under Oliveira Salazar responded by recalling Sousa Mendes, dismissing Sousa Mendes later from active diplomatic service, and subjecting him to economic retribution and subsequent ostracism;

Whereas, in 1941, Sousa Mendes explained, "In truth, I disobeyed, but my disobedience does not dishonor me. I chose to defy an order that to me represented the persecution of true castaways who sought with all their strength to be saved from Hitler's wrath. Above the order, for me, was God's law, and that's the one I have always sought to adhere to without hesitation. The true lesson of Christianity is to love one's neighbor.";

Whereas, in 1954, Sousa Mendes died penniless in Lisbon, Portugal, under the cloud of the discipline imposed for his defiance;

Whereas, in 1966, Yad Vashem recognized Sousa Mendes as a Righteous Among the Nations for his selfless efforts to save Jewish lives at personal risk to himself, making Sousa Mendes the first of a number of diplomatic rescuers to be so honored;

Whereas, in 1988, the United States Senate passed Senate Resolution 270, 110th Congress, agreed to June 23, 1988, to commemorate Sousa Mendes' humanitarian efforts;

Whereas, in 1986, President of Portugal Mario Soares posthumously rehabilitated Sousa Mendes, decorating Sousa Mendes as an Officer of the Order of Liberty;

Whereas, in 1988, the Parliament of Portugal posthumously granted Sousa Mendes the status of Ambassador;

Whereas, in 1995, President of Portugal Mario Soares posthumously bestowed on Sousa Mendes the Grand Cross of the Order of Christ;

Whereas, in 2017, President of Portugal Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa posthumously bestowed on Sousa Mendes Portugal's highest honor, the Grand Cross of the Order of Liberty;

Whereas, in 2020, the Parliament of Portugal unanimously voted to memorialize Sousa Mendes in the National Pantheon in Lisbon; and

Whereas, in 2020, on the 80th anniversary of his heroism, the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad initiated commemorations in honor of Sousa Mendes in Bordeaux, France, and Portugal: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors and salutes the humanitarian and principled work of Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches, Consul of Portugal in Bordeaux, France, for acting with great courage and at personal risk to issue transit visas to French Jews and other persons, sparing them from Nazi occupation and the Holocaust, thus saving many thousands of innocent lives;

(2) directs the Secretary of the Senate to transmit copies of this resolution to the President; and

(3) requests that the President transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of Portugal and the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal.

SENATE RESOLUTION 90—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 1 THROUGH 5, 2021, AS "NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK"

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. KING, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PETERS, and Ms. ROSEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 90

Whereas school counselors are more important now than ever, as the COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the mental health crisis among the youth of our Nation;

Whereas the American School Counselor Association has designated February 1 through 5, 2021, as "National School Counseling Week";

Whereas school counselors have long advocated for equitable opportunities for all students;

Whereas school counselors help develop well-rounded students by guiding students through academic learning, social and emotional development, and career exploration;

Whereas personal and social growth can help lead to increased academic achievement;

Whereas school counselors play a vital role in ensuring that students are ready for both college and careers;

Whereas school counselors play a vital role in making students aware of opportunities for financial aid and college scholarships;

Whereas school counselors assist with and coordinate efforts to foster a positive school climate, resulting in a safer learning environment for all students;

Whereas school counselors have been instrumental in helping students, teachers,

and parents deal with personal trauma as well as tragedies in their communities and the United States;

Whereas students face myriad challenges every day, including peer pressure, bullying, mental health issues, the deployment of family members to serve in conflicts overseas, and school violence;

Whereas a school counselor is one of the few professionals in a school building who is trained in both education and social and emotional development;

Whereas the roles and responsibilities of school counselors are often misunderstood;

Whereas the school counselor position is often among the first to be eliminated to meet budgetary constraints;

Whereas the national average ratio of students to school counselors is 430 to 1, almost twice the 250 to 1 ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, and other organizations; and

Whereas the celebration of National School Counseling Week will increase awareness of the important and necessary role school counselors play in the lives of students in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of February 1 through 5, 2021, as "National School Counseling Week"; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe National School Counseling Week with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of the role school counselors play in schools and the community at large in preparing students for fulfilling lives as contributing members of society.

SENATE RESOLUTION 91—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF "CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH"

Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROMNEY, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 91

Whereas a competitive global economy requires workers who are prepared for skilled professions;

Whereas 3,000,000 workers will be needed for the United States' infrastructure in the next several years, including designing, building, and operating transportation, housing, utilities, and telecommunications;

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has displaced millions of workers in the United States and fundamentally shifted entire industries within foundational aspects of the

economy, creating significant demands for high-quality and efficient upskilling and reskilling opportunities to ensure a quick and equitable recovery;

Whereas career and technical education (referred to in this preamble as “CTE”) ensures that competitive and skilled workers are ready, willing, and capable of holding jobs in high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand career fields such as science, technology, engineering, art and design, mathematics, nursing, allied health, construction, information technology, energy sustainability, and many other career fields that are vital in keeping the United States competitive in the global economy;

Whereas CTE helps the United States meet the very real and immediate challenges of economic development, student achievement, and global competitiveness;

Whereas the United States has 30,000,000 jobs providing an average income of \$55,000 per year that do not require a bachelor's degree yet increasingly require some level of postsecondary education;

Whereas over 12,800,000 students are enrolled in CTE across the country at the secondary and postsecondary levels, with CTE programs in thousands of CTE centers, comprehensive high schools, career academies, and CTE high schools, and nearly 1,000 2-year colleges;

Whereas CTE matches employability skills with workforce demand and provides relevant academic and technical coursework leading to industry-recognized credentials for secondary, postsecondary, and adult learners;

Whereas CTE affords students the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills, and credentials needed to secure careers in growing, high-demand fields;

Whereas secondary CTE is associated with a lower probability of dropping out of high school and a higher likelihood of graduating on-time;

Whereas according to an American Federation of Teachers poll, 94 percent of parents approve of expanding access to CTE and other programs that prepare students for jobs;

Whereas students at schools with highly integrated rigorous academic and CTE programs are significantly more likely to meet college and career readiness benchmarks than students at schools with less integrated programs;

Whereas, in 2018, Congress affirmed the importance of CTE by passing the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Public Law 115-224), which supports program improvement in secondary and postsecondary CTE programs in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, and outlying areas; and

Whereas, February 23, 2019, marked the 102nd anniversary of the signing of the Act of February 23, 1917 (39 Stat. 929, commonly known as the “Smith-Hughes Vocational Education Act of 1917”), which was the first major Federal investment in secondary CTE and laid the foundation for the bipartisan, bicameral support for CTE that continues as of February 2021: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of February 2021 as “Career and Technical Education Month” to celebrate career and technical education across the United States;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of Career and Technical Education Month;

(3) recognizes the importance of career and technical education in preparing a well-educated and skilled workforce in the United States; and

(4) encourages educators, school counselors, guidance and career development pro-

fessionals, administrators, and parents to promote career and technical education as a respected option for students.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, by supporting the development of a workforce trained in in-demand skills, we can accelerate the recovery of our economy. The Nation's continued progress and the socioeconomic mobility of our citizens are contingent on the education and skills of the American workforce and its ability to adjust to and fulfill the needs of the 21st century economy—especially in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Career and technical education (CTE) programs are vital to every student's education, providing them access to the important knowledge, skills, and credentials needed to obtain careers in rapidly growing, high-demand industries. Today, approximately 12.8 million students across the Nation are enrolled in CTE programs offered by thousands of career academies, comprehensive high schools, CTE high schools, community colleges, and CTE centers. Through applied learning, these students obtain workplace skills and technical training that mirror in-demand positions in the workforce.

In the next decade, millions of skilled workers will be needed to fill infrastructure positions in the United States, including jobs related to designing, building, and operating transportation, housing, telecommunication, and utilities facilities. CTE programs intentionally match skills with workforce demands, lowering the probability of high school drop-out and increasing the likelihood of on time graduation rates. These CTE programs will help fill the estimated 30 million U.S. jobs available with an average annual income of \$55,000 that do not require a bachelor's degree yet necessitate some level of postsecondary education.

Across Virginia, I hear about an increase in workforce needs from frontline health services to manufacturing PPE to contract tracing—the list goes on. As we see a surge in unemployment overall from the pandemic, it is essential that we highlight the important role of CTE in the country's ability to meet the challenges we face in economic recovery and development, student achievement, and global competitiveness. In 2018, Congress affirmed the importance of CTE by passing the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act which supports CTE programs in secondary and postsecondary education. We also need to ensure we continue reskilling and upskilling workers by supporting workforce development programs.

Today, with my Senate CTE Caucus co-chairs Senator PORTMAN, Senator BALDWIN, and Senator YOUNG and more than half of my colleagues in the Senate, I am pleased to again introduce a bipartisan resolution to designate February as Career and Technical Education (CTE) month. CTE Month en-

courages students, parents, counselors, educators, and school leaders to learn more about the diverse educational opportunities offered in their communities, and recognize the valuable role of CTE in developing a well-educated and highly skilled workforce in the United States.

By formally recognizing CTE Month through this resolution, we hope to bring greater awareness to improving access to high-quality career and technical education for millions of America's students and our nation's ongoing economic competitiveness.

SENATE RESOLUTION 92—DESIGNATING MARCH 5, 2021, AS “NATIONAL SPEECH AND DEBATE EDUCATION DAY”

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. WARREN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 92

Whereas it is essential for youth to learn and practice the art of communicating with and without technology;

Whereas speech and debate education offers students myriad forms of public speaking through which students may develop talent and exercise unique voice and character;

Whereas speech and debate education gives students the 21st-century skills of communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration;

Whereas critical analysis and effective communication allow important ideas, texts, and philosophies the opportunity to flourish;

Whereas personal, professional, and civic interactions are enhanced by the ability of the participants in those interactions to listen, concur, question, and dissent with reason and compassion;

Whereas students who participate in speech and debate have chosen a challenging activity that requires regular practice, dedication, and hard work;

Whereas teachers and coaches of speech and debate devote in-school, afterschool, and weekend hours to equip students with life-changing skills and opportunities;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day emphasizes the lifelong impact of providing people of the United States with the confidence and preparation to both discern and share views;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day acknowledges that most achievements, celebrations, commemorations, and pivotal moments in modern history begin, end, or are crystallized with public address;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day recognizes that learning to research, construct, and present an argument is integral to personal advocacy, social movements, and the making of public policy;

Whereas the National Speech & Debate Association, in conjunction with national and local partners, honors and celebrates the importance of speech and debate through National Speech and Debate Education Day; and

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day emphasizes the importance of speech and debate education and the integration of speech and debate education across grade levels and disciplines: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 5, 2021, as “National Speech and Debate Education Day”;

(2) strongly affirms the purposes of National Speech and Debate Education Day; and

(3) encourages educational institutions, businesses, community and civic associations, and all people of the United States to celebrate and promote National Speech and Debate Education Day.

SENATE RESOLUTION 93—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA CRIMSON TIDE FOOTBALL TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2021 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. SHELBY (for himself and Mr. TUBERVILLE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 93

Whereas the University of Alabama Crimson Tide football team went 13-0 and won the 2021 National Collegiate Athletic Association College Football Playoff National Championship, defeating the Ohio State University Buckeyes by a score of 52 to 24 at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, Florida, on January 11, 2021;

Whereas this victory marks the sixth College Football National Championship in the last 11 years for the University of Alabama and the 18th National Championship overall;

Whereas the 2021 National Collegiate Athletic Association College Football Playoff National Championship was the 73rd post-season football bowl appearance and the 44th football bowl victory for the University of Alabama;

Whereas the 2020–2021 Crimson Tide football team won the Southeastern Conference Championship and went 11-0 in conference play, becoming the first team in college football history to win 11 Southeastern Conference games in a single season;

Whereas the 2020–2021 Crimson Tide football team averaged 48.5 points per game, which is the most in Southeastern Conference history;

Whereas the University of Alabama head football coach, Nick Saban, has now won 7 College Football National Championships, setting the record for the most national championships won by a single head coach;

Whereas this victory extends the record of Coach Saban to 170 wins and 23 losses during his tenure as the head football coach of the University of Alabama;

Whereas members of the 2020–2021 Crimson Tide football team have been honored by various awards throughout the season and during the post-season, including the 2020 Heisman Trophy winner, DeVonta Smith;

Whereas Chancellor Finis St. John IV, President Stuart Bell, and Athletic Director Greg Byrne have emphasized the importance of academic success to the Crimson Tide football team and all student-athletes at the University of Alabama; and

Whereas the 2020–2021 Crimson Tide football team has brought great pride and honor to the University of Alabama, loyal fans of the Crimson Tide, and the entire State of Alabama: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the University of Alabama Crimson Tide for an undefeated season and winning the 2021 National Collegiate Athletic Association College Football Playoff National Championship game;

(2) recognizes the achievements of all players, coaches, and staff who contributed to the championship season; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate prepare an official copy of this resolution for presentation to—

(A) the President of the University of Alabama, Dr. Stuart Bell;

(B) the Athletic Director of the University of Alabama, Greg Byrne; and

(C) the Head Coach of the University of Alabama Crimson Tide football team, Nick Saban.

SENATE RESOLUTION 94—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING FEBRUARY 28, 2021, AS “NATIONAL TRIBAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WEEK”

Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Ms. SMITH, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. THUNE, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. KELLY, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. ROUNDS, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. HOEVEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 94

Whereas there are 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities operating on more than 75 campuses in 16 States;

Whereas Tribal Colleges and Universities are tribally chartered or federally chartered institutions of higher education and therefore have a unique relationship with the Federal Government;

Whereas Tribal Colleges and Universities serve students from more than 230 federally recognized Indian tribes;

Whereas Tribal Colleges and Universities offer students access to knowledge and skills grounded in cultural traditions and values, including indigenous languages, which—

(1) enhances Indian communities; and

(2) enriches the United States as a nation;

Whereas Tribal Colleges and Universities provide access to high-quality postsecondary educational opportunities for—

(1) American Indians;

(2) Alaska Natives; and

(3) other individuals that live in some of the most isolated and economically depressed areas in the United States;

Whereas Tribal Colleges and Universities are accredited institutions of higher education that prepare students to succeed in the global and highly competitive workforce;

Whereas Tribal Colleges and Universities have open enrollment policies, and approximately 15 percent of the students at Tribal Colleges and Universities are non-Indian individuals; and

Whereas the collective mission and the considerable achievements of Tribal Colleges and Universities deserve national recognition: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning February 28, 2021, as “National Tribal Colleges and Universities Week”; and

(2) calls on the people of the United States and interested groups to observe National Tribal Colleges and Universities Week with appropriate activities and programs to demonstrate support for Tribal Colleges and Universities.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have 7 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a briefing.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12 noon, Thursday, March 4; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

Mr. DURBIN. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I

ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:51 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 4, 2021, at 12 noon.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

DILAWAR SYED, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, VICE ALTHEA COETZEE.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. JOHN M. BREAZEALE
BRIG. GEN. MATTHEW J. BURGER
BRIG. GEN. KENNETH R. COUNCIL, JR.
BRIG. GEN. DANIEL J. HEIRES
BRIG. GEN. ERICH C. NOVAK
BRIG. GEN. JEFFREY T. PENNINGTON
BRIG. GEN. JOHN N. TREE
BRIG. GEN. CONSTANCE M. VON HOFFMAN

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. JOSEPH R. CLEARFIELD
COL. MARK H. CLINGAN
COL. SIMON M. DORAN
COL. WALKER M. FIELD
COL. ANTHONY M. HENDERSON
COL. MICHAEL E. MCWILLIAMS
COL. MATTHEW T. MOWERY
COL. ANDREW M. NIEBEL
COL. AHMED T. WILLIAMSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. SEAN N. DAY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. MARK A. HASHIMOTO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. JAY M. BARGERON
BRIG. GEN. BRIAN W. CAVANAUGH
BRIG. GEN. DIMITRI HENRY
BRIG. GEN. RYAN P. HERITAGE
BRIG. GEN. CHRISTOPHER A. MCPHILLIPS
BRIG. GEN. ROBERT B. SOFGE, JR.
BRIG. GEN. MATTHEW G. TROLLINGER