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Senate

The Senate met at 10:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Beautiful Savior, You have been our dwelling place in all generations, sustaining us with Your steadfast love.

Today, surround our Senators with the shield of Your divine favor, enabling them to obey Your command to be fruitful and productive. Teach them to obey Your precepts, doing Your good will, as they find joy in Your presence. Lord, keep them from doing those things that could bring them regret, remorse, and shame. Renew their strength as You give them the courage to carry on in these challenging days. Guard them from error, save them from false judgments, and deliver them from evil.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 24, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

DIALOGUE WITH THE PRESIDENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, leaders from both parties had an opportunity to meet with President Trump and Vice President PENCE at the White House. We appreciate their time and look forward to more conversations with them in the days to come, including later today.

The President has invited the Democratic leader, the chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, and me to the White House this afternoon to meet with him regarding the Supreme Court vacancy as part of his ongoing consultations with Members of the Senate. I appreciate the President soliciting our advice on this important matter.

Later this week, Republicans in both the Senate and House will have another opportunity to engage with the President as we gather for our issues conference in Philadelphia. I know we are all eager to continue the dialogue about moving our legislative agenda, including priorities like bringing relief from the consequences of ObamaCare, confirming the President's nominees, enacting tax reform, easing the regulatory burden on our economy, and other key issues.

We are also looking forward to hearing from another special guest, British Prime Minister Theresa May. Her visit will provide Members the chance to

hear from the leader of one of our closest allies and partners. We appreciate her willingness to join us, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss the ways in which we can continue to strengthen our Nations' close relationship and pursue shared interests in the years ahead.

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. SCHUMER. 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 Democratic leader is recognized.

CAMPAIGN PROMISES OF PRESIDENT TRUMP

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, according to President Trump's words, yesterday—not Friday—was his first official day in office. It is an important distinction because throughout the campaign, President Trump made numerous promises about what he would do on his first day. So we went through them. Turns out he made upwards of 30 promises of Executive actions or plans that he would announce on day 1. This didn't require any congressional approval; he could just announce it. Even by a generous count, the President fulfilled only two or three of them. Let me mention just a few of the important omissions.

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



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The President campaigned against both establishments, promising to oppose elites and the powerful in Washington, "to drain the swamp." He campaigned against the Democratic establishment, but he also campaigned against the Republican establishment. As a result, he explicitly promised to introduce an 18-point plan for ethics reform on day 1. How did he do on that? He promised to sign a 5-year ban on lobbying after officials worked in Congress or the White House, but he did not deliver. He promised to institute a lifetime ban on White House officials from lobbying on behalf of a foreign government, but he did not deliver. He promised to put in place a complete ban on foreign lobbyists raising money for American elections, but again he did not deliver.

On day 1, did President Trump fulfill his pledge to bring ethics reform to Washington? No. In fact, looking at his "swamp Cabinet"—stacked with billionaires and bankers with myriad conflicts of interests—he may have already lowered the ethical standards in our government.

On trade—this is an issue where I am probably closer to the views of the President's than I was to either President Obama's or President Bush's, but it seems President Trump is again failing to deliver on his day 1 promises. He promised over and over again—it was one of the few things he said in the campaign I really liked. He said he was going to label China a currency manipulator on his first day. But he did not deliver. Instead, he issued an Executive action withdrawing from the TPP.

Everyone knew the TPP was dead in the water a month or two ago. Leader MCCONNELL would not bring it up on the floor of the Senate because he did not have the votes. Furthermore, saying we won't do TPP, which is not in effect anyway, isn't creating a single new job.

So there is something else he could have done—his promise: On day 1, label China a currency manipulator. China is propping up their currency at the moment. They do whatever is best for China even if it hurts American jobs and American workers over and over again. You can be sure they will continue manipulating their currency when it is in their best interest to do so. You can be sure, even when they move up the currency, they are manipulating it.

Guess who I worked with on the issue of currency manipulation. Attorney General nominee, then-Senator JEFF SESSIONS. He and I were partners in this, and many others. On our side, Senator BROWN and Senator STABENOW were allies. On their side, Senator GRAHAM and Senator COLLINS were allies. It was a broad bipartisan coalition. And we were opposed, frankly, by both President Bush and President Obama. But here we have President Trump. He promised to label China a currency manipulator on his first day in office. We are still waiting.

Last night at the White House, I mentioned this to the President. He didn't say no. I am not going to say what he said. He didn't say no. Maybe he will do it. I hope and pray he does. We await real action on trade, one of the President's signature issues. It is another promise not fulfilled.

There are many promises President Trump made during the campaign that we are glad he is not keeping, to be honest with you, but the bottom line is, there is a giant gulf between what the President says he is going to do and what he actually does. His rhetoric does not match reality. That is becoming clearer each day. Just look at what happened on Friday, inauguration day, which perfectly sums up my point. The President gave an inaugural address arguing that for too long Washington has reaped the rewards of government, while the people have suffered. Then, an hour later, the President took an Executive action that made it harder for Americans to afford a mortgage, even though Washington could certainly have afforded to give them a tax break. We are seeing a pattern emerge. President Trump is using populist rhetoric to cover up a hard-right agenda.

In short, actions speak louder than words. If day 1 is any indication, the grandiose promises this President made to the working men and women of America seem to be just a hall of mirrors.

I yield the floor.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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, with Senator ALEXANDER to be recognized for up to 15 minutes, followed by 30 minutes controlled by the Democrats.

The Senator from Tennessee.

NOMINATION OF BETSY DEVOS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, Democratic Senators are searching for a valid reason to oppose the President's nomination of Betsy DeVos to be U.S. Education Secretary because they really don't want Americans to know what

their real reason is. Here is the real reason: Betsy DeVos has spent the last 30 years—actually more than 30 years—being dedicated to helping low-income children in America have more of the same choices of schools that wealthy Americans already have.

Specifically, the Democrats object to the fact that Betsy DeVos supports the idea of tax dollars following low-income children to the school that their parents may choose—public, private, or religious. This is not a new or subversive idea. Let us go back to 1944, the GI bill for veterans. The Congress enacted probably the most successful piece of social legislation ever enacted when it passed the GI bill for veterans. As a result, veterans came home from World War II and Federal tax dollars followed them to the accredited college or university of their choice.

They could go to Notre Dame. They could go to the University of Arizona. They could go to Nashville Auto Diesel College, the University of Tennessee. It did not matter. It was their choice. That is when Americans experience with education vouchers began. I have always wondered, why would an idea that helped to create the "greatest generation"—which is what we call the World War II generation—that helped to create the best colleges and universities in the world, why would that be such a dangerous idea to use for our schools?

The idea of education vouchers following students to the college of their choice has been continued in higher education. Pell grants—we spend about \$30 billion in Pell grants every year, up to \$6,000, that follow lower income students to the community college or college of their choice. Those are education vouchers.

We have almost \$100 billion of new student loans every year. How do we spend that money? We allow that money to follow the college students to the college of their choice. Those are education vouchers. Starting with the GI bill for veterans, all the way through Pell grants, all the way through student loans, we all endorse those ideas, saying it creates great opportunity for children. It has been so successful. I have not heard any Senator in this body stand up and say: Well, let's cancel the Pell grants because it is tax money following students to a college. Let's cancel \$100 billion in student loans this year because it means tax dollars following someone to Harvard or to Notre Dame or to Yeshiva.

No one is going to say that. Then why do they get so exercised about that when it has to do with our schools? In addition to that, Mrs. DeVos has testified before our committee that she does not favor—as much as she supports the idea of giving parents choices with schools—she does not favor Washington, DC, telling Arizona or Tennessee or any other State that they must do that, even though her critics, those who are opposing her

now, delight in the idea of a national school board and in imposing their pet ideas on States, such as the common core academic standards.

Fortunately, we agreed in December of 2015 to prohibit that, but here we have a lady who has spent her time helping low-income children have more choices of schools. It was said, I respect your right to make that decision for yourself. I don't believe Washington should tell you to do that. Yes, they are really upset with her.

So I would ask: Who is in the mainstream—the GI bill for veterans; Pell grants, \$30 billion worth; \$100 billion of student loans this year; President George H.W. Bush; President George W. Bush; the 25 States that have State choice programs; Congress, with its passage of the Washington, DC, voucher program, which has 1,000 students standing in line hoping to get a chance to go to a better school; 45 Senators who voted on this floor in 2015 for the Scholarships for Kids legislation I proposed that would allow States to take \$24 billion in Federal dollars, turn them into \$2,100 scholarships and let them follow the children, the low-income children, to the school the State believes they should go to; or Betsy DeVos—that is all on one side—or her critics? I think Betsy DeVos is in the mainstream.

The second reason the Democrats on the committee are opposing Betsy DeVos is because she supports charter schools. Now, I know a little bit about charter schools. My last month as U.S. Education Secretary, in January 1993, I wrote a letter to every school superintendent in America and said: Why don't you try this new idea that the Minnesota Democratic Farmer-Labor Party has invented called charter schools.

There were only 12 charter schools then. The first President Bush, with my help, had been working for 2 years to create what we called New American Schools, start-from-scratch schools, the idea of giving teachers more freedom, parents more choices.

That seemed to us like a good idea in a country that values opportunity and competition. Well, not only did we think so, over the last 30 years or so, a lot of people have thought so. Today, there are 6,800 public charter schools in America. These are public schools. These are schools that have fewer union rules and fewer government rules so teachers have more freedom to teach and parents have more freedom to choose the school that is appropriate for their child.

Boy, that is really a subversive idea. Oh, no, it is not subversive because the last six Presidents of the United States have supported charter schools, not just the Presidents Bush but also the last four Presidents of the United States—Presidents Bush and President Obama and President Clinton and now President Trump. That is five.

The last six U.S. Secretaries of Education have supported charter schools,

including both of President Obama's Education Secretaries, Arne Duncan and John King. John King was founder of a charter school system in Massachusetts. Forty-three States have authorized charter schools. That is where the 6,800 charter schools are; 2.9 million people go to those charter schools. That is more than 6 percent of all the children in public schools in America. I would ask the question again: Who is in the mainstream? the last five Presidents, the last six Education Secretaries, 43 States, the Senate, Betsy DeVos or her critics—or her critics?

Now, the third reason her critics don't like her is because she is wealthy. No question about that. All of her information is public for everybody to see. She has agreed to divest herself of 102 investments that the Office of Government Ethics has identified as possibly causing a conflict of interest. When those are gone, she has no conflicts of interest. Her investments are public.

They don't like the fact that she has money. Would they have been happier if she had spent the last 30 years trying to deny low-income children an opportunity to go to a better school? No. She has spent her money and her time trying to help children from low-income families go to a better school. Her opponents are really grasping for straws, and I am very disappointed in them.

"We did not have time to question her," they said at our committee hearings. Well, let's go over the facts. No. 1, she visited everyone in their offices individually, so they had a chance to ask her questions then. Then she appeared at a hearing for questions for about 3½ hours or nearly 90 minutes more than either of President Obama's Education Secretaries.

Now we have followup questions coming from the Democratic Senators. Let me tell you what they are doing. They have asked her 1,397 followup questions after the hearing. Remember, this is a hearing where she spent more time than either of President Obama's Secretaries answering questions, after she had been to be their offices answering questions.

By comparison, Republicans asked President Obama's first Secretary 53 followup questions, his second Secretary 56 followup questions. The Democrats have asked 1,397 followup questions. I think what they are doing says more about them than it does about her. In other words, they have asked 25 times as many followup questions of Ms. DeVos as Republicans asked of either of President Obama's Education Secretaries.

Finally, they are throwing around conflict-of-interest accusations. As I just mentioned—let me mention it again. Last week, Mrs. DeVos signed an agreement with the Independent Office of Government Ethics. The job of that office is to review the financial holdings of any Cabinet nominee and identify any conflicts of interest. They identified 102 because the DeVos's have

a lot of money. Mrs. DeVos agreed to sell all 102 of those assets. According to the letter of agreement between the Office of Government Ethics and the independent ethics officer in the Education Department, who is already in the Department, Mrs. DeVos is not, after she divests herself of those items, which she has 90 days to do—she has no conflicts of interest.

She has also filled out the same financial disclosure forms that are fundamentally like the ones we Senators fill out. People know where we get our money. They know what we own. They know what we owe. We know that about her.

We also know that the independent Office of Government Ethics has said she will have no conflicts and that she has agreed to that.

We also know that she supports giving low-income children more choice of schools, which more Americans support; 73 percent of the American people told a Luntz public opinion survey that they supported more choices of schools.

And then tax returns—some have mentioned tax returns. Well, Federal law doesn't require Cabinet nominees to produce tax returns. Our Education Committee does not require nominees to produce tax returns. U.S. Senators aren't required to produce tax returns, and why? Because we fill out extensive financial disclosure forms so that the public knows what we own, what we owe, and they can make an evaluation about that. They also know whether we have a conflict of interest, in the case of the Cabinet members, because the independent Office of Government Ethics decides that, and they know that we have paid our taxes because we have to declare that under oath, and there is an FBI investigation on top of that, which Mrs. DeVos, like every other Cabinet nominee, has gone through.

One year ago, the Office of Education Secretary was vacant. I talked to President Obama about it, and I said: I don't think it is appropriate for that office to be vacant. We need the institutional responsibility of having a confirmed U.S. Education Secretary responsive to the Senate.

And I said: Mr. President, if you appoint someone—and I knew very well that he intended to appoint John King, with whom I greatly disagree on the scope of Federal education policy—I said: I will make sure that he has a prompt hearing in our committee, and I will make sure that he is confirmed on the floor of the Senate.

President Obama appointed John King. He had a prompt hearing, and he was confirmed within 3 weeks. As I said, Republicans asked him 56 questions, compared with the nearly 1,400 questions the Democrats are asking Mrs. DeVos.

So I ask the American people to compare this just for a minute. Look at the reasons they really don't want to confirm Betsy DeVos. No. 1, she spent 30 years trying to help low-income children attend a better school. No. 2, she

supports public charter schools. No. 3, she spent her money helping low-income children have a better school, instead of denying them a better school. And No. 4, she has disclosed everything there is to disclose, and she has divested herself of every conflict that the independent Office of Government Ethics has said there is. In addition, I rescheduled a mark-up this week until next Tuesday so that members of the committee would have a chance to review all of this information.

Next Tuesday, we will vote on whether to approve Betsy DeVos's nomination to the Office of the Secretary of Education, and we will send that to the floor of the full Senate. I am confident we will do that, and I am confident the Senate will approve her.

Even though they may disagree with her, Democrats should give the new President a chance to have his own Education Secretary, just as we did—just as we Republicans did for President Obama.

Few Americans have done as much as Betsy DeVos has to help low-income children have a choice of a better school. The Democrats' opposition to her says more about them than it does about her.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter which I have written to my distinguished ranking member, Senator MURRAY, declining to have a second hearing on Mrs. DeVos.

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

JANUARY 23, 2017.

Hon. PATTY MURRAY,
Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MURRAY: Thank you for your letter today requesting a second hearing for Betsy DeVos.

I have carefully considered the request and decided not to schedule a second hearing, and here is why: Already Mrs. DeVos has spent considerably more time answering questions of committee members than either of President Obama's education secretaries, and I do not know why our committee should treat a Republican nominee so differently than the nominee of a Democratic president.

First, she has met with each committee member in his or her office for the purpose of answering questions.

Then, her confirmation hearing lasted nearly an hour and a half longer than those for either of President Obama's nominees for education secretary.

Now she is answering 837 written follow-up questions from Democratic committee members—1,397 if you include all the questions within a question. By comparison, Republicans asked President Obama's first education secretary 53 written follow-up questions and his second education secretary 56 written follow-up questions, including questions within a question. In other words, Democrats have asked Mrs. DeVos 25 times as many follow-up questions as Republicans asked of either of President Obama's education secretaries.

On January 4, two weeks before her nomination hearing on January 17, committee members received Mrs. DeVos' completed financial disclosure and committee questionnaire. Also on January 4, committee mem-

bers received the same information that she submitted to the Office of Government Ethics on December 12, 2016, about all of her financial holdings.

Many of the 837 written follow-up questions have to do with this financial information that has been before the committee members since January 4, two weeks before her nomination hearing.

Last Thursday, January 19, Mrs. DeVos and the independent Office of Government Ethics agreed that within 90 days of her confirmation, she would divest herself of 102 holdings "to avoid conflicts of interest." When she completes this, according to the letter from the Office of Government Ethics—done in consultation with the department's own Ethics Division—she will be "in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest."

I delayed the committee vote which was scheduled for tomorrow, Tuesday, January 24, for one week to allow committee members to review all of this information before they cast a vote next Tuesday, January 31, at 10:00 a.m. on whether or not to recommend Mrs. DeVos to the full Senate.

One year ago, because I believed presidents should have their Cabinet members in place in order to govern, I worked to confirm promptly President Obama's nomination of John King to be education secretary, even though I disagreed with him. Even though you may disagree with Betsy DeVos, I would respectfully ask you to confirm her. Few Americans have done more to help children of low-income families have a choice of better schools.

Sincerely,

LAMAR ALEXANDER,
Chairman, Senate
Committee on
Health, Education,
Labor, and Pen-
sions.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I will point out again that I see no reason I should treat a Republican President's nominee so differently than a Democratic President's nominee would be treated.

Betsy DeVos has visited every office of the Democratic Senators. She has testified for up to 90 minutes longer than either of President Obama's Secretaries. She is answering nearly 1,400 follow-up questions when each of those Secretaries under President Obama answered 53 and 56.

The reasons for opposing her are reasons that are not valid. I mean, how can you turn down a woman for U.S. Secretary when she spent 30 years of her life trying to help low-income children find a better school?

We have had our hearing. She will answer the questions. Next Tuesday we will have a vote. She will be sent to the Senate, and hopefully the Senate will confirm her. I look forward to working with her as U.S. Secretary.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I came to the floor today to talk about wom-

en's health. But before I do, I want to address an issue that my colleague, the Senator from Tennessee, just talked about: President Trump's nominee for Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos.

This is a nominee the Democrats have significant numbers of concerns about. In her hearing, where Republicans blocked us from asking questions in an unprecedented and disappointing way, Mrs. DeVos gave what has been widely seen as ill-informed, confused, and concerning responses to serious and reasonable questions. She refused to rule out slashing investments in or privatizing our public schools. She was confused that Federal law provides protections for students with disabilities. She actually argued that guns needed to be allowed in our schools across the country to "protect from grizzlies." And even though she was willing to say that President Trump's behavior toward women should be considered sexual assault, she would not commit to actually enforcing Federal laws protecting women and girls in our schools. So that nominee is absolutely not "in the mainstream." She is far from it.

When it comes to policy, many of us have serious concerns about whether she would stand with students and parents who care about strong public education for all or with President Trump and other millionaires and billionaires like them. And that does not even touch on the serious questions that remain regarding her ethics paperwork, her tangled finances, and her potential conflicts of interest—questions that Democrats have continued to demand answers to.

After her first hearing, Mrs. DeVos announced that she would have to divest 102 separate assets, many of them investments in education companies that Democrats were unable to ask her about. So Democrats have requested another hearing to get information on those issues and to do our job scrutinizing this nominee. I am hopeful that my colleague, the Senator from Tennessee, does allow that to happen because here in the Senate, we owe it to our constituents to scrutinize these nominees. That is our job. It is not our job to protect them from tough questions; it is our job to ask them tough questions.

While I suspect that my colleague, the Senator from Tennessee, supports Mrs. DeVos and I respect that he is the chairman of the committee, I am hopeful that he does not simply jam this nominee through without allowing us to do our job.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND THEIR ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, having said that, I am on the floor today with a number of my colleagues who will be joining me throughout the time here today in the Senate to stand up and to be a voice for women.

I was so proud to march this weekend with millions of women and men in a

clear rejection of the hate and division that President Trump campaigned on and in strong support of every woman's rights.

This past weekend, we also recognized the anniversary of the historic ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, a decision that has empowered women and expanded economic opportunity and security for families for more than four decades.

I have heard story after story from Washington State and across the country about what *Roe v. Wade* means for women. It means being able to plan your family, to be able to pursue your dreams and give back to your community. But perhaps most importantly, the decision in *Roe v. Wade* sent a clear message that access to abortion—a woman's right to make the most personal of all decisions herself—is fundamental to her freedom and her ability to chart her own path.

Now we have already seen extreme politicians in State after State do everything they can to undermine access to abortion. But, today, the constitutionally protected rights these women have had now for 44 years are, unfortunately, more at risk than ever as a result of President Trump's extreme and deeply harmful agenda.

He has promised to pick Supreme Court nominees whose beliefs about women's reproductive rights simply could not be more backwards or damaging. Unfortunately, in what looks like a sign of things to come, the President yesterday signed an Executive order limiting access to safe abortion and other family planning services on women worldwide by reinstituting the global gag rule.

I want to be very clear. If the President continues down this path, women will be hurt. Their lives will be put at risk, and the same goes for women around the world. So I am very concerned, and I am angry.

But if Saturday's march proved anything, it proved that women and men across this country are more motivated than ever, and, frankly, so am I.

Now, I can understand why President Trump may not have wanted to hear from the hundreds of thousands of marchers who completely filled the National Mall on Saturday or the millions more who marched nationwide in every State—coast to coast—and on every continent. But if he didn't get the message, this is just the beginning.

The millions of women and people who care about women's rights and their access to health care are going to keep standing up, and we in the Senate are going to continue to stand with them and fight back every step of the way and do everything in our power to make sure that our country does not go backwards. It will not be easy, but I know we can do it if we keep marching together.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

44TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, this past Sunday we celebrated the 44th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, a ruling that assured every woman of her constitutional right to make her own decision about whether and when to have a child. That fundamental constitutional right is the right to privacy, which all women should cherish and protect.

This weekend, in fact, many of us in Washington, DC, and around the country marched in the streets of our home States—or here, as I did—in support of these ideals and values, including the right to privacy, other civil rights and liberties, economic opportunity, and women's access to health care, which truly make America great.

Fundamental to the principle of women's access to health care is the *Roe v. Wade* decision that reaffirms the constitutional right to reproductive decisions made by women individually on their own in consultation with their health care providers, their families, their clergy. I was a clerk for Justice Blackmun in the term after *Roe v. Wade* was decided, and I can tell you that we all believed then very strongly that that Supreme Court decision would put to rest the question of legal access to abortion in this great country.

In fact, it did not. Despite 7 in 10 Americans opposing the potential overturning of *Roe v. Wade* according to a recent survey by Pew Research Center, the outliers and extremists still seek to eliminate the right to legal abortion. That broad public support was embodied in the spirit and dedication shown over this past weekend by protesters across the world, and I was reminded yet again that we must continue to fight for what we believe, particularly in light of the ongoing threats to and attacks on women's health care.

Efforts to undermine these rights have redoubled in recent years, and throughout the past decade we have seen unprecedented attacks through State efforts to chip away at that vitally protected constitutional right. From 2011 to 2016, there were 334 restrictions enacted by States that would cut back on *Roe v. Wade* rights, accounting for 30 percent of all abortion restrictions since the U.S. Supreme Court decided that case.

The force dedicated to enacting these restrictions, which are designed to undermine the right to reproductive health care, can be particularly disheartening as they disregard the health needs of the most vulnerable population of the women who are most often impacted, by also seeking, or at

least claiming to seek, to advance women's health care. In fact, many of those restrictions are a ruse. They are enacted in the name of health care but are a disguise for restrictions on health care. They have left many women, particularly in rural and underserved locations, with little access to health care, including basic care such as cancer screening, STD testing, and preventive health care. Clearly, improving women's health care has failed to be the focus of State legislatures in these instances, as they have actively worked to restrict access to care and chip away at the constitutional protections provided in *Roe v. Wade*.

I joined with Senator MURRAY in leading a total of 163 Members of the House and Senate in filing an amicus brief in the case of *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*. Last summer, the Supreme Court overturned the restriction at issue in that case, reiterating and clarifying the "undue burden" standard in *Roe* and debunking the lie that anti-choice extremists have been pushing for years—that medically unnecessary, onerous restrictions on clinics and clinicians that provide women abortions do not make women safer. In fact, they simply constrain access.

I am hopeful that this decision will help stem and stop the assault on women's health care taking place in so many States and communities around the country. So I am joining with my colleague, Senator MURRAY, who was here just minutes ago—a wonderful champion of this cause—as well as Senator SHAHEEN, whom I believe will be speaking later today on *Roe v. Wade*'s anniversary, in pushing back on this policy by introducing legislation to permanently repeal the global gag rule that the Trump administration, as one of its first acts, has announced, which will reverse much of the progress that President Obama made in relation to international family planning. This legislation will seek to move that progress forward again and forestall the effort to roll back that process and turn back the clock. I will oppose any and all efforts by the Trump administration to move our country backwards, including yesterday's reversion to the global gag rule.

This 44th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* should be a reminder about the importance of fighting for the right of privacy, the right to live life free of governmental interference, and, as one of our Supreme Court Justices said, the right to be let alone—in effect, let alone from government interference.

It is a right that I have fought for and that so many others have fought for throughout my career and throughout my time as a Senator and the attorney general of Connecticut. It is a right we should all continue to keep at the forefront of our work here in the Senate and for all of us in this country.

Thank you. 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.

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

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

PATIENT FREEDOM ACT

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about an issue that is important to all of us.

We are, obviously, a nation in transition. Recently, the Senate took the first steps to repeal ObamaCare and begin a transition toward policies that will ensure continued access to health care with more affordability and flexibility for all. We need a stable transition that will empower Americans to make the best health care decisions for their families.

In my home State of West Virginia, ObamaCare has been very difficult for many. It has meant skyrocketing premiums and skyrocketing copays and deductibles for families and small businesses. It has meant little, if any, choice of insurers. As a matter of fact, for the first several years, we had no choice. We now have two insurers in several counties, but in the beginning, the entire State had no choice.

It has meant fewer choices of doctors and hospitals, as networks shrink and plans become more restrictive. Now we must repair what can be fixed, scrap what is not working, and create a better health care reality for all Americans.

I have spoken with small business owners who have absorbed the cost of increased insurance, but their employees are getting less coverage. I have spoken to families who may have health insurance, but due to the high deductibles and copays, they don't use it. They can't afford to even go. I have also heard from those in my State who have real concerns about what this transition will mean to them. This is especially true for those who receive coverage through Medicaid.

My State is one of the States that did an expanded Medicaid. For all of these West Virginians—and there are somewhere around 177,000 new folks who are on Medicaid—whether they are the Medicaid recipients or the business owners and families who are currently struggling, we need to have health insurance that works for everybody.

So I want them to know—and many of them have called my office, and I have talked with them a lot in our State—that I am listening to their concerns. As we move forward, I am working to balance each of these needs and ensure access in West Virginia and across the Nation to affordable, quality health care.

To achieve this goal, I am joining Senators CASSIDY, COLLINS, and ISAKSON to introduce an alternative to ObamaCare which was introduced yesterday. It is called the Patient Freedom Act. It sounds good. We are really

good at making names that sound good, but the Patient Freedom Act lives up to its name.

The Patient Freedom Act of 2017 removes ObamaCare's most burdensome regulations. It provides our States, which are closest to the people who are accessing health care, the opportunity and funding to ensure that those currently covered by Medicaid expansion are protected and retain their health coverage. It returns authority to the States and provides more health care choices and better insurance options to individuals and families. It keeps important consumer protections, such as coverage for preexisting conditions, and extends coverage to children and dependents until the age of 26—both very popular parts of the ACA. It protects the Federal black lung benefits program, which is especially important in my State of West Virginia and the surrounding areas.

In addition to all of those important changes, it gives States a pathway forward for replacing ObamaCare. Specifically, following repeal, which we know we are going to do, States will have three options. First, a State, if it so chooses, could choose to reinstate ObamaCare, or a State could go without Federal assistance and opt to not receive any Federal funding for tax credits or Medicaid expansion. Finally, a State could choose an innovative replacement plan where the State determines its own insurance regulations. In this scenario, the State would be eligible for 95 percent of the funds it would receive under ObamaCare, and the Medicaid expansion would be fully funded. For a State like West Virginia that has already expanded Medicaid, the State could either keep its Medicaid expansion as is, or they could convert it to subsidies to help individuals purchase the private insurance.

Under this plan, individuals would use a Roth Health Savings Account to purchase health care. This would enable uninsured individuals to purchase health insurance that meets their specific needs. States would have the option to auto-enroll uninsured individuals into a standard health care plan, with individuals able to easily opt out if they didn't want it. Auto enrollment would ensure stability and soundness to our insurance markets.

The Patient Freedom Act is a smart, innovative way forward and meets the varied needs of people in my State of West Virginia and across the country. The legislation reflects Senator CASSIDY's experience as a physician, and I thank him for his innovation—he has worked with patients who are uninsured—and I appreciate his leadership so much, as I do Senator COLLINS in particular and Senator ISAKSON as another cosponsor. As other replacement plans are drafted and introduced in the Senate, I will evaluate those proposals to ensure they meet West Virginians' health care needs. I am committed to replacing ObamaCare with a system that offers us more choice. We can fig-

ure this out; we know what we need—lowers cost gives patients and families more control—because, together, we can achieve a health care system that works for everybody.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

REPEALING THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was listening carefully to the comments made by my colleague from West Virginia. I thank her for coming to the floor and expressing her feelings about the Affordable Care Act. It is truly an article of political faith on the Republican side that we must repeal ObamaCare. We have heard that for 6 years, maybe longer, and each and every time, Democrats have asked: And then what?

We have asked Republicans: What would you replace ObamaCare with? Until some of the most recent moments, there was never an answer. Now they are starting to put at least some ideas forward, but repealing ObamaCare and then talking about the possibility of replacement is a disaster. It is an invitation to uncertainty and chaos. We might expect that from a Democratic Senator who voted for the Affordable Care Act, but what I ask my colleagues in the Senate to do is, please go home. Please go back to your States. Do as I did yesterday. I called together the administrators of hospitals in Central Illinois, smalltown rural hospitals and larger hospitals such as Memorial Medical Center in my hometown of Springfield. I asked them, in a nonpressurized setting: What would you do? What is wrong with the Affordable Care Act? How would you change it? What would be the impact of repeal?

I knew, and they did as well, that there had been some reports from the Congressional Budget Office. Just last week, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office told us exactly what repeal without replacement would look like: 18 million Americans would lose health insurance in 12 months, 32 million within 10 years. According to the Congressional Budget Office, if they went through with the Republican repeal plan, premiums in the individual health insurance market would increase by 20 to 25 percent the first year and double within 10 years.

Despite this, on his first day in office, President Trump signed an Executive order that began to dismantle our health care system. We still haven't seen the President's secret replacement plan, even though he has repeatedly said he wants to replace the law at the same time he repeals it, and we are going to be so proud of what he does.

Let's talk about what repeal without replacement means in Illinois, now that I have taken it home and asked the people who are actually running the hospitals. With repeal, 90,000 young people

in Illinois would be thrown off their parents' health care plans. More than 7 million Illinoisans with health insurance through their employer would once again be subject to discriminatory health insurance practices, like discrimination based on preexisting conditions, annual and lifetime caps on coverage, and discrimination against women. In my State, the Republican repeal plan would have an impact statewide because insurance plans statewide could once again decide not to cover maternity or newborn care, mental health, or substance abuse. Those things are required under the Affordable Care Act. That would be removed with this repeal.

In my State, more than 1 million people would lose their health insurance—in fact, 1.2 million, to be exact. According to the Illinois Hospital Association, my State would lose \$11 billion to \$13 billion in annual economic activity with Republican repeal, translating to a loss of up to 95,000 jobs. Let me talk about those jobs in towns like TAYLORVILLE and Pana, IL, near my hometown of Springfield. Those are good-paying jobs. Sometimes they are the best paying jobs in the community. Those would be the jobs lost by the Republican repeal of ObamaCare.

For years, we have been hitting back against misguided and misleading claims about the Affordable Care Act. Who is hitting back now? Hospitals. And not just hospitals. Health care providers across the board are pleading with the Republicans: We know you have some campaign promise you want to keep, but keep first your promise to the people you represent to provide quality, affordable health care.

Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH and I have sent letters to every single Illinois hospital—over 200 of them—asking about the impact of repealing the Affordable Care Act without enacting a replacement to prevent total chaos. Just yesterday morning, I met with these hospital administrators and heard firsthand. I met at Memorial Medical Center in Springfield, IL, representatives from Hopedale Medical Center, Pana Community Hospital, Carlinville Area Hospital, and Warner Hospital and Health Services.

Memorial Health System is a non-profit, community-owned health care organization. When I asked about the impact of repealing the Affordable Care Act, here is what they told me: "Repeal without replacing the ACA would adversely impact patients' access to care and our hospitals' and health systems' ability to provide services as well as potentially result in job losses." They went on to say that Memorial Medical Center in Springfield, with Republican repeal of ObamaCare, could lose over \$140 million over the next 6 years, and their uncompensated care costs would "rise dramatically due to both a rise in charity care and decline in Medicaid coverage and reimbursement."

They cautioned:

We would be forced to cut spending by reducing services, reducing staff, and delaying investment in new technology and facility improvements. . . . Losses of this magnitude with repeal of the [Affordable Care Act] coverage simply cannot be sustained and would adversely impact patients' access to care and our hospitals' and health systems' ability to continue to provide services.

This is not the only hospital telling me in our State. I am from downstate Illinois, proud to represent Chicago, but I have represented in the Congress and in the Senate smalltown rural America, communities where the hospital makes a difference. If you don't have a hospital nearby, you could be an hour's drive—if you are lucky—from quality medical care, not to mention the impact that hospital has on the local economy, keeping and attracting new businesses.

According to the Illinois Hospital Association, the 15th Congressional District of Illinois stands to lose \$470 million under Republican repeal of the Affordable Care Act. That means 3,400 jobs lost in that congressional district in Central Illinois with repeal of affordable care. We talk about good jobs and creating them in this State. The President goes and makes trips, as he should, to try to save American jobs. Yet the first congressional action by the Republican majority this year is to threaten 3,400 jobs in the 15th Congressional District.

Washington County Hospital in Nashville, IL, is a 22-bed critical access hospital 50 miles from St. Louis. They provide acute care, surgical service, and gynecological services. When I asked them what Republican repeal of the Affordable Care Act would mean to Washington County Hospital in my downstate area, they said the following:

To eliminate [the ACA] would be detrimental to the thousands of people in our county that were previously uninsured either because of part-time work or serious health problems.

I guarantee that [repealing the ACA] without a strategic healthcare replacement plan, will result in more downsizing and more staff reductions at Washington County Hospital. Our community cannot continue to lose these good paying jobs and I believe our county residents will continue to move to neighboring states with more favorable job markets, better job security and stable benefits.

They ended their response with this warning:

I truly fear that many Illinois communities will lose their Critical Access Hospitals—the only sources of healthcare in many of our rural counties and a vital part of infrastructure in our communities.

As you know, our rural areas have vulnerable populations of elderly folks that have many chronic healthcare needs and limited ability to travel long distances for emergency care. . . . I sincerely hope that you heed the warnings of our physicians and hospitals—do NOT repeal the ACA in a hurried political rush.

Washington County is not a blue county, it is not a Democratic county. It is a county that votes regularly for the other party. It is a conservative-

voting populous, representing a lot of farmers and small businesses, and this is their hospital administrator warning the Republicans here in the Senate and the House: Be careful what you do in eliminating the Affordable Care Act.

According to the Illinois Hospital Association, the 16th Congressional District in Illinois stands to lose \$453 million under Republican repeal of ObamaCare, and that means the loss of 3,300 jobs.

SwedishAmerican Hospital in Belvidere, IL, in the northern part of my State, provides health care to Belvidere, Boone, western McHenry, and northern DeKalb Counties. When asked how the hospital has fared since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the administrator of SwedishAmerican said the following:

The passage of ACA has afforded our health system with significant benefit related to [compensation] of patients with uncompensated care. . . . SwedishAmerican experienced an average annual increase of \$43 million in Medicaid payments, and a \$10 million reduction in uncompensated care.

When asked about the impact of the Republican repeal of the Affordable Care Act, SwedishAmerican Hospital of Belvidere, IL, said the following:

The impact would be significant . . . it would create an unsustainable financial result and we would be forced to make significant reductions in staff and curtail future plans for capital expenditures.

Yesterday, at my roundtable in Springfield, I asked some of these hospital administrators: What is wrong with the Affordable Care Act? And they told me. Let me add quickly, I believe—as they do—there are things which need to be changed in that law. It is not perfect, by any means. They talked about the cost of care, and they should. In some areas, premiums have gone up too quickly, and the availability of insurance is not as it should be.

I have talked to the health insurance companies, including the big companies like Blue Cross Blue Shield. They have told me specifically that the method of enrollment now under the Affordable Care Act leaves loopholes for people to jump in and out of coverage as they need it. You cannot run a viable insurance risk pool if people are only forced to sign up when they are facing a health care crisis. You have to have healthy people paying premiums to cover those who get sick and need to be compensated.

So there are things certainly within the Affordable Care Act which need to be changed, and these administrators told us.

So I said: I hear commonly from my Republican friends, if we would just allow people to buy health insurance over State lines, there would be more competition.

They laughed. They said: You mean to say, if you heard that there was a health insurance plan in Alabama and you lived in Illinois, that you would buy health insurance there; is that the idea?

I said: I suppose. I hear it over and over again, if we could just buy policies across State lines.

They laughed. They said: Do you know what is going to happen? Do you know what happens when you buy insurance in Illinois and they tell you the hospitals and doctors who are eligible? You certainly want to have doctors in your home area eligible who may not be eligible under an Alabama plan. That makes sense.

Secondly, they said: If people outside the State who are truly sick start buying into Alabama to get lower premiums, the premiums are going to go up. They are going to engineer the risk pool to make sure that it is viable.

That is a notion that they rejected out of hand. I asked them about health savings accounts. That is another thing you hear over and over again. If people could just set aside nontaxable income and leave that in a pool of money to pay their copayments and other expenses, then there would be a disincentive to overutilize health care. These administrators said: But people who are living paycheck to paycheck don't have money to set aside—even non-taxable money to set aside at that point—and, ultimately, many of them would put off care they desperately need until they become even sicker.

Each one of these approaches has its critics. There are people who think we ought to look at it more carefully. I think that ought to be the bottom line. To my Republican majority, look at this carefully. It is not a matter of keeping a campaign promise; it is a matter of keeping a promise to the people you represent not to leave our health care system in chaos.

I hope President Trump and my congressional Republican colleagues are listening to what my constituents back home told me yesterday, things that they will hear themselves if they will go back home and listen to people who run the hospitals in the communities where the voters they represent live.

I wish to conclude with a quote on the subject from Dr. William Gorski, president and CEO of SwedishAmerican, who wrote to me. He said:

I must also speak forcefully as a former practicing physician. Irrespective of any financial impact of repeal, real lives are at stake here. President Obama's vision recognized a great understanding of the importance of health care access to the quality and outcomes of care. Any diminishment of this access threatens the health and well-being of millions of our fellow citizens. . . . My strong view is that rather than repealing the ACA, we should be looking for ways to refine and expand it.

That comes from a doctor. I solicited his view. I don't know him personally, but it represents the feelings of many.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the State Journal-Register article from Springfield, IL, on my meeting yesterday.

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

[From the State Journal-Register, Jan. 23, 2017]

DURBIN HEARS HOSPITALS' CONCERNS ABOUT OBAMACARE REPEAL
(By Dean Olsen)

Executives from Springfield-area hospitals and health systems told U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin Monday morning that a threatened repeal of the Affordable Care Act by Congress would jeopardize local patients' access to medical services and harm their organizations' finances.

"We'd just hate to see this go away," Memorial Health System chief executive officer Edgar Curtis said of the law, also known as Obamacare, during a meeting at the Memorial Center for Learning and Innovation with Durbin and leaders from other hospitals.

Tina Casner, chief executive officer of Pana Community Hospital in Christian County, said Illinois' expansion of Medicaid eligibility—funded by the ACA—and reduced-price private insurance sold through the state's health insurance exchange have reduced the number of uninsured patients and improved the 25-bed hospital's bottom line.

"There are now folks in our community who are seeking that care," she said.

Durbin, D-Springfield, said he doubted that congressional Republicans pledging a comparable replacement of the ACA would be able to fulfill their promise without big gaps in coverage for many Americans.

Instead of "repeal and replace"—the plan for the ACA supported by local congressmen Rodney Davis, R-Taylorville, and Darin LaHood, R-Dunlap—Curtis said he is "very afraid" that Congress instead will "repeal and delay" a decision on a permanent replacement.

Action to repeal without a replacement is likely to cause disruptions in care because more insurance companies would pull out of the exchange and increase the prices of plans even more, health-care industry officials have said.

Durbin, the No. 2 Democrat in the U.S. Senate, was told by hospital administrators that the federal law isn't perfect and needs to be tweaked, especially when it comes to the high cost of private coverage and excessive paperwork.

"I'm for that," he said.

But he and the administrators expressed concerns about Republicans' plans to change Medicaid from a federal entitlement program to a block grant given to individual states as a way of getting control of Medicaid's rising cost to the federal government.

The Illinois Health and Hospital Association has said block grants for Medicaid could lead to reductions in funding in Illinois, a state that already spends less per Medicaid patient than almost all other states.

Dr. Jerry Kruse, dean and provost of Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, said the expansion of Medicaid eligibility "has been really great for us."

The expansion has decreased the uninsured rate by 80 percent for patients of SIU's federally subsidized outpatient primary care clinic, the SIU Center for Family Medicine, he said.

With insurance coverage, formerly uninsured patients are less likely to worry about incurring medical bills they can't afford to pay and more likely to seek care, Kruse said.

"It's that peace of mind," he said.

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was 16 years ago when I introduced the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act was a response to a call I received in my office. A young woman had been brought

to the United States as an infant, at the age of 2, from Korea. She lived in the United States and grew up here. When she became an accomplished pianist and was accepted at some of the best musical schools in the Nation, she started to apply but didn't know what to put down in terms of her citizenship. She called and asked, and it turned out that her mom and dad had never filed the papers that would have allowed her to become a citizen of the United States. She was undocumented. Through no fault of her own—brought to the United States—her papers weren't filed.

She grew up in Chicago, went to school, and did well, despite having a family of modest means. As I said, she developed a skill as a pianist and now had an opportunity of a lifetime and wanted to know what her legal status was. We checked the law, and it was pretty clear. She was undocumented, and the laws of America said you have to leave for 10 years, go outside of the United States, and petition to come back.

It didn't seem fair or reasonable that a child, an infant of 2, would be held responsible for mistakes made by their parents, so I introduced the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act said that if you are one of those kids and you finish school and you don't have a serious criminal record, we will give you a chance—a chance to become legal in America, a chance to become a citizen.

Those kids grew up going to school in our classrooms, pledging allegiance to that same flag we pledge allegiance to. They believed they were Americans, but it was not so in the eyes of American law.

I introduced this bill 16 years ago. It passed the Senate in one form, the House in another. It has never become the law of the land. A few years ago I wrote to President Obama and said: As President, can you find a way to protect these young people until we do what we are supposed to do in Congress?

He did. He created something called DACA. By Executive order, these young people could apply, pay about \$500 in a filing fee, go through a criminal background check, and if they had no problems—no threat to this country—be allowed to stay here on a temporary 2-year basis. They could go to school but with no Federal help, no Federal assistance for their education. They could work and renew it every 2 years. That is DACA.

Over 750,000 kids signed up. These were kids just like the one I described earlier—now young people who are going to college and doing important things with their lives. I have come to the floor over 100 times to tell their stories because political speeches, as inspiring as they are, usually don't move people. When you hear about these people and who they are, it can make a difference.

I want to introduce one today. It will just take a few minutes. I see a couple of my colleagues on the floor.

This is Belsy Garcia Manrique. When Belsy was 7 years old, she was brought by her family to the United States from Guatemala. She grew up in a small town in Georgia and became an extraordinary student. She graduated third in her high school class with a perfect 4.0 grade point average.

During high school, she was a member of the National Honor Society, was on the tennis team, and was a member of the mock trial team. She even earned a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. She went on to attend Mercer University in Macon, GA, where she was a Presidential scholar for 4 years. This award is given to students in the top 10 percent of their class.

Belsy was a member of a number of academic honor societies and the pre-med club. She worked as a researcher in their biology department. She was a leader of her college's Habitat for Humanity chapter and worked as a resident assistant in the student dorms and a tutor for high school students.

In 2013, Belsy graduated from Mercer University with a bachelor of science degree in biology, with minors in chemistry and math. She is now in her second year at the Loyola University Chicago School of Medicine. That is where I met her.

Like many States across the country, my home State of Illinois faces a shortage of physicians in the inner cities and in the downstate rural communities. As a DACA student at Loyola medical school, Belsy has promised that after she graduates and becomes a doctor, she will work for several years in underserved areas in my home State of Illinois.

Even with her busy medical school schedule, Belsy volunteers as a translator at Loyola medical clinic. She is a member of Viva la Familia, a group which educates families on healthy lifestyles, and she mentors undergraduate students who are interested in medical school.

She wrote me a letter and said:

DACA means the world to me. It has allowed me to continue the arduous journey of becoming a physician, and without it, I would not be where I am today. All I've ever wanted was the opportunity to prove myself and to further my education so that I can give back to those who need it the most. I am so close to achieving my dreams and finally making a difference in the community, but if DACA is repealed, those dreams might never become reality.

If DACA is eliminated, what happens to Belsy? If it is eliminated, she loses her right to legally work in the United States and may have to drop out of medical school, and that alone—the clinical experience in medical school—requires actually working. If she can't work, she can't pay for her education.

Aside from State of Illinois financing opportunities, Belsy doesn't qualify for a penny in Federal assistance to go to medical school. It is an extraordinary hardship on these students, but they are so darned determined, they do it anyway.

I have been encouraged recently because statements made by President

Trump, as well as yesterday his press secretary and earlier in the day his chief of staff, lead me to believe that he understands the seriousness of this problem.

Young people like Belsy, thousands of them across the United States, are simply asking for a chance to have a good life, to make this a better nation. We could use her. We could use her medical services and talents as a doctor in my State of Illinois, in the State of Texas, in the State of North Dakota, and virtually every State of the Union. Why would we want to lose a great potential doctor like her? We need her, and we need people like her.

I hope my colleagues and President Trump will join me to continue the DACA program. I hope this administration will work with Congress to pass the BRIDGE Act, a bipartisan bill I have introduced with Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM to create a transition for those like Belsy, protected by DACA, so that until this Congress—as it should—passes comprehensive immigration reform, we would protect these young people from deportation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed 5 minutes to make comments but also that my colleague from North Dakota be allowed to make comments, as well, and that we be allowed to complete those comments prior to the afternoon recess.

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

HONORING DEPUTY SHERIFF COLT EUGENE ALLERY

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the service and sacrifice of Colt Eugene Allery, a sheriff's deputy in Rolette County, ND, who was killed in the line of duty on January 18. Deputy Allery was just 29 years old and leaves behind his fiancée, Alexandria, his four children and stepdaughter, along with many family and many friends.

Deputy Allery was dedicated to serving the public and spent the last 5 years working in law enforcement. He started his career as a corrections officer, serving as a police officer in Rolla, ND, and as a tribal police officer for the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, a tribe of which he was a member.

He became a deputy with the Rolette County Sheriff's Office just 3 months ago. His colleagues remember him for his friendly and positive disposition and his commitment to making his community and our State safer. He was also well known in St. John, the tight-knit community where he was raised by his grandparents. He was known for always serving his friends and his family. They say Colt was happiest when he was doing things for others, which is

why he chose law enforcement as his career.

Deputy Allery's life is a reminder to each of us of the enormous debt we owe to all of the men and women in law enforcement who leave home every day and go to work to protect us and help make our communities and our States safer places—places that we are proud to call home.

My wife Mikey and I extend our deepest condolences to Deputy Allery's family and friends during this difficult time. Our thoughts and prayers are with his loved ones and his law enforcement colleagues, in the coming days and months and especially today, as Deputy Allery is laid to rest. May God bless him and his family.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and turn to my colleague from North Dakota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I come here again today on what is a sad day and really a sad week for law enforcement in North Dakota, for the community of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, and certainly for the family of Colt Eugene Allery.

Colt was a deputy in the Rolette County Sheriff's Office who tragically lost his life in the line of duty last Wednesday night near Belcourt, ND. Colt joined in a high-speed chase with several fellow officers Wednesday evening after a report and identification of a stolen vehicle. As the stolen vehicle was coming to a forced stop, shots were fired, and the call came over the radio that shakes all of North Dakota law enforcement and our entire State to the core: "Officer down."

Colt never got back up that evening, succumbing to his injuries not very far from the small community where he grew up. He leaves behind five beautiful young children, including a stepdaughter; his fiancée, Alexandria; his grandparents, Gene and Rita Allery, who raised him; his family, his friends, and a community that will miss his constant smile and playful attitude.

He also leaves behind his fellow deputies and colleagues in the Rolette County Sheriff's Office. I know this is an incredibly tough time right now for Rolette County Sheriff Medrud and his deputies as well. I know that the people across the State of North Dakota and I have your back during this difficult time.

This is now the second time in less than a year that I have come to the floor of the U.S. Senate to talk about the heroism and service of one of North Dakota's peace officers—one of those peace officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

It is heartbreaking to have to stand here yet again to make one of these speeches in recognition of a North Dakota peace officer. In fact, during my 8 years as North Dakota's attorney general, I saw two deaths, two violent deaths of peace officers in my State. In less than a year, we have two.

Talking to many of my friends in law enforcement in my State, they will tell you that the business of law enforcement and the work of law enforcement in our State have become more and more dangerous and more and more challenging. As I have said many times—and I will say it again here today—North Dakota has the finest peace officers in the entire country. Colt Allery personified that dedication of our peace officers to protect and serve their communities.

Losing an officer in the line of duty is always devastating, but in States like North Dakota, where we often say we know everyone, Colt's loss is being felt in communities across the State. Colt and his family will know that the entire State mourns his loss and that we had his back in this life and we will have theirs as they struggle with this incredible and unimaginable loss.

Growing up in St. John, ND, and as an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, Colt never strayed far from home. And he made a commitment to do more than just be part of his community, he made a commitment to protect his community as a peace officer.

Colt started out as a corrections officer for Rolette County. After graduating from law enforcement training academy, he started work in the Rolla Police Department. He then went to serve his fellow tribal members as a tribal police officer of Turtle Mountain before recently moving to the Rolette County Sheriff's Office.

In North Dakota, we have a proud history of peace officers like Colt serving their State and local communities with distinction. I have had the privilege over my years in public service to work with law enforcement officials, from highway patrol, to State and local officers, to various Federal officers and our tribal police, and I will tell you again that these are some of the finest men and women I have ever worked with. These are the men and women—just like Colt—who could have chosen a different path. Instead, they chose to take the oath to protect and serve. They chose to selflessly put themselves in harm's way so they could make North Dakota a safer place for each and every person who lives there or who may by chance be passing through. They chose to put the needs of others before their own needs and, in fact, before their own families' needs. They chose a more difficult path to tread than most of us would be willing to follow.

Putting that uniform on each and every day places you in a unique and special group, a tight-knit community that very few people could understand what it takes to get the job done. All too often, it takes a tragedy like this one outside of Belcourt, ND, last week to recognize and appreciate our peace officers and the sacrifice they and their families make every day so that we can feel safe and secure in our daily lives.

I stand here this morning not only to celebrate the life of Colt Allery but to

celebrate each and every peace officer working in the State of North Dakota and across the country. I know that although Senator HOEVEN and I cannot be at the ceremony and at the celebration of Colt's life today, we stand today with the community and with the State in appreciation, and we stand today in mourning for the loss of Colt Allery and for the terrible sacrifice his fiancée, his children, and his family have made in service to our country and our State and their community.

Deputy Allery, I thank you for your service and your sacrifice on behalf of the people of North Dakota. May God bless you and welcome you, and may He bless your family.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, for all the people of North Dakota, we thank Colt for his service, and we ask that God bless Colt Allery and his entire family.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:34 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

GEORGIA SEVERE STORMS AND DEADLY TORNADOES

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise today to express my sympathy and support for the people in my home State of Georgia. This past weekend, severe storms and deadly tornadoes tore through South Georgia destroying homes and businesses and taking the lives, unfortunately, of at least 15 Georgians.

Among those areas hit the hardest were counties surrounding the cities of Adel and Albany. These counties and cities are very near where I grew up and where I now reside personally. When last weekend's storms hit, emergency management teams there were still leading recovery efforts in response to deadly storms that had just caused widespread destruction earlier this month.

I am very grateful for the tireless and ongoing efforts of our first responders in our State and stand with our Georgia families during this difficult time. Our hearts, of course, go out to the families affected by these severe storms.

I now yield for the senior Senator from Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I want to thank my partner, Senator PERDUE,

for arranging this colloquy today. I want to join him in expressing sympathy to the families of those who were lost in Georgia and to the thousands and thousands of Georgians who have been injured or hurt and who lost valuable property.

My wife Dianne sends her wishes as well. This part of Georgia is very close to me. I grew up as a young boy working on a farm in Fitzgerald, GA, not far from Albany. I know what these people are like, and they are salt-of-the-earth folks. They don't deserve something like this happening, but they do deserve and they do merit everything we can do to get them aid.

I am so happy Secretary Kelly called yesterday to offer the services of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Governor Deal has done a great job of arranging the disaster area, and the Georgia emergency management people are already in place.

So my heart goes out to the injured. My heart goes out to my State. My prayers go out to the families of those who were injured and are in the hospital and those who have passed away and perished from the terrible tornadoes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate observe a moment of silence for those who have lost their lives in Georgia and across the southeast in these recent storms.

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

The Senate will now observe a moment of silence.

(Moment of silence.)

Mr. PERDUE. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. FLAKE pertaining to the introduction of S. 195 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about this Friday's March for Life. This Friday, the National Mall and Capitol campus will again be filled with men and women from every corner of the country. Together, they will gather in celebration of the sanctity of life and in solidarity for its protection. For 43 straight years, the March for Life has given a powerful platform for average people to join in the political discourse to influence Federal policy in support of life.

That emphasis on the ability of a single person to bring about historic

change is the theme of this year's march. Now, this year's march is called the Power of One. The March for Life uses the following quote from the author J.R.R. Tolkien to encapsulate this theme: "Even the smallest person can change the course of history."

This is a powerful message that we should all embrace. It reminds us that from the young people marching on a cold January morning to the unborn children whose futures are filled with unlimited potential, any one of them has the power to be a positive force for good.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

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

MEDICAID

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the Medicaid Program, a program that I am sure a lot of folks in Washington and around the country hear about a lot. We talk about it a lot, but I am not sure that people around here have a real sense of what it means to folks back at home.

Medicaid is a program that is more than 50 years old now. In some ways, the name doesn't convey the scope of it. In some ways, I wish it had a different name because it would remind people who benefits from it.

Instead of referring to it as the Medicaid Program, if you called it the "kids, seniors, and folks with disabilities program," or something like that, you would be accurately describing the scope and the reach of the program because it has a profound impact on the lives of children, on the lives of older citizens trying to get long-term care in nursing homes, and, of course, it has a huge impact on individuals with disabilities.

We know that in the campaign, President Trump made a statement. I am not quoting him exactly, but it was a brief statement during his campaign, and it was in writing that he would not cut Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. I think a lot of people had forgotten about that third one.

One of the tasks that we have in the Senate is to make sure that, when a statement like that is made, any President is held accountable to that promise.

The examples I could cite are many about the impact of Medicaid. Just a couple are significant. Not by way of exclusion, but I will just mention a few.

I am holding here a March of Dimes document. It is an issue brief by the March of Dimes, and it is entitled "The Value of Medicaid." I won't read it all, but here is just one fact that I am not sure a lot of people know. "Medicaid covers 45% of all births"—and they have a footnote for that. I am not sure

there are many in Washington who know that. But that is why I referred to it earlier in a more informal way as "the baby program," because all of those children come into the world paid for by Medicaid.

Medicaid has a substantial impact on rural families, rural America, and rural hospitals. By one estimate a couple of years ago, First Focus, one of the advocacy groups here in Washington that tracks issues that relate to children, estimated that as of 2012—and I doubt that it has changed much since then—more than 45 percent of rural children got their health care through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program. So almost half of rural children were benefitting from one program or the other.

Here are just a couple more. One in five seniors receives Medicare assistance through Medicaid, and that includes premium assistance, cost sharing, long-term care, dental care, and vision care.

Another important number is that two-thirds of nursing home residents are covered by Medicaid.

I mentioned children before and the profound impact it has on their lives. Medicaid covers 40 percent of all children in the country. I mentioned CHIP and Medicaid combined covering almost half of rural children. Just Medicaid alone covers 40 percent of all children—rural, urban, and everywhere in between. If you just consider low-income kids, or children who come from low-income families, Medicaid covers some 75 percent of those children.

So there is a lot to talk about. But one issue that we are in the process of engaging on as an issue is: What will happen to Medicaid?

Despite what the President said when he was campaigning—and I am talking specifically about Medicaid—just this weekend, the administration announced—without much attention drawn to it at the time, but I hope increasingly more attention—that the administration would support block-granting Medicaid. That is at variance with what the President said. In my judgment, it is a total contradiction of what he said, and now, apparently, his administration has embraced the House Republican approach to Medicaid, which is block-granting.

There are a lot of ways to measure the impact of block-granting. One that I will just cite for the record is a report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities dated March 15, 2016, entitled "Medicaid Block Grant Would Add Millions to Uninsured and Underinsured," which I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Mar. 15, 2016]

MEDICAID BLOCK GRANT WOULD ADD MILLIONS TO UNINSURED AND UNDERINSURED
(By Edwin Park)

House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Price's budget plan would radically restruc-

ture Medicaid by converting it to a block grant, cutting federal funding by about \$1 trillion over the next decade. It would also repeal health reform's Medicaid expansion. The combined result would be a total Medicaid cut of \$2.1 trillion over the next ten years, relative to current law, likely making tens of millions of Americans uninsured or underinsured.

Repealing the Medicaid expansion means that at least 14 million people would lose Medicaid or not get it in the future, based on Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates. In addition, the large and growing funding cut from the block grant would almost certainly force states to sharply scale back their Medicaid programs.

The Price plan would also repeal health reform's other coverage expansions, including the subsidies to help people afford marketplace coverage.

All told, not only would the estimated 20 million Americans who've already gained coverage through health reform lose it, but millions more who qualify for Medicaid apart from health reform would likely lose their Medicaid coverage as well. Tens of millions of Americans would likely become uninsured.

Under Price's "State Flexibilities Funds" block grant proposal, the federal government would no longer pay a fixed share of states' Medicaid costs, apparently starting in 2018. Instead, states would get a fixed dollar amount of federal funding, which would rise only modestly each year, as explained below.

Block-grant funding would fall further behind state needs each year. The annual increase in the block grant would average about 4.3 percentage points less than Medicaid's currently projected growth rate over the next ten years. In the plan's tenth year (2026), federal Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) funding would be \$169 billion—or roughly 33 percent—less than under current law (see graph). And the cuts would likely keep growing after 2026.

The block grant would cut federal Medicaid funding by \$1 trillion from 2017–2026. A small share of these cuts could come from CHIP which the Price plan would presumably merge into the Medicaid block grant as in past House Republican budget plans. Over the next ten years (2017–2026), the budget plan would provide nearly 25 percent less in federal Medicaid and CHIP funding to states than under current law—not counting the lost federal funding for the Medicaid expansion.

The loss of federal funding would be greater in years when enrollment or per-beneficiary health care costs rose faster than expected—for example, due to a recession or new treatment that improved patients' health but raised costs. Currently, the federal government and the states share in those unanticipated costs; under the Price plan, states alone would bear them.

As CBO concluded in 2012 when analyzing a similar Medicaid block grant from then-House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan:

"The magnitude of the reduction in spending . . . means that states would need to increase their spending on these programs, make considerable cutbacks in them, or both. Cutbacks might involve reduced eligibility, . . . coverage of fewer services, lower payments to providers, or increased cost-sharing by beneficiaries—all of which would reduce access to care."

In making these cuts, states would likely use the large added flexibility that the Price plan would give them. For example, the plan would likely let states cap Medicaid enrollment and turn eligible people away from the program, or drop benefits that people with

disabilities or other special health problems need.

The Urban Institute estimated that the 2012 Ryan proposal would lead states to drop between 14.3 million and 20.5 million people from Medicaid by the tenth year (outside of the effects of repealing health reform's Medicaid expansion). That's an enrollment decline of 25 to 35 percent. Urban also estimated that the Ryan plan would lead states to cut reimbursements to health care providers by more than 30 percent. The Price block-grant proposal likely would mean similarly draconian cuts.

Mr. CASEY. Here is one of the headlines of that article, one of the basic inclusions by a respected organization that tracks this information. I will just read that headline: "The block grant would cut federal Medicaid funding by \$1 trillion from 2017–2026."

So if you are saying you are going to protect children and you are going to protect seniors and you are going to make sure that those with disabilities don't have any problems going forward, it is pretty difficult to do that if you take a trillion dollars out of the Medicaid Program over the course of a decade.

There was an op-ed in the New York Times on Christmas Day. It was interesting that it actually was printed on that holy day. There was an op-ed by Gene Sperling. Gene is someone who many people in Washington know. But for those who don't, Gene served two Presidents; he served both President Clinton and President Obama as the Director of the National Economic Council.

Here is one of the conclusions that Gene reached, based upon his research and his vast experience. I will quote him directly from the December 25 op-ed in the New York Times entitled "The Quiet War on Medicaid": "Together, full repeal"—and there he means full repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act—"and block granting would cut Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program funding by about \$2.1 trillion over the next 10 years—a 40 percent cut."

So whether you look at it in terms of block granting's impact on Medicaid or the combination of that block-granting policy, which the administration has now embraced fully, and the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, the result of that is that you adversely impact two programs—the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Medicaid Program.

Let me bring this back to real people. I just want to highlight a couple of excerpts from a letter I received recently, and then I will conclude.

This is a letter from Coatesville, PA, the southeastern corner of our State, a letter sent to me by Pamela E. Simpson. I will just call her Pam, even though I don't know her personally.

She wrote me a letter about her son. Pam Simpson's son is Rowan. She said that Rowan, who I guess is now 5 years old, back in 2015 was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. She went on

to say how much Rowan has benefitted from the Medicaid Program. We call it Medical Assistance in Pennsylvania.

She said that among the services he received was the behavioral specialist consultant helping him and a therapeutic staff support worker. They received direct help, direct intervention so that Rowan could grow and benefit from those direct services.

She said that the agency that administers these kinds of wraparound services for Rowan and children like him—in this case, the Child Guidance Resource Centers—started a particular program focused on social skills, especially for children with autism.

But here is how she concluded her letter, and this is why I want to cite it in the context of this critically important debate we are going to have about Medicaid and the question of block granting, which sounds kind of benign; doesn't it? When you say it, it doesn't sound that bad. But in my judgment, it would be devastating to these families.

She said to me in the letter: Please think of my dear Rowan and his happy face, his big blue eyes, and his lovely strawberry blonde hair.

You can see him in these pictures that I should have mentioned earlier. Rowan is in these two different pictures, and there he is dressed as a firefighter.

She continued: Please think of me and my husband, working every day to support our family, and please think of my 9-month-old daughter Luna who smiles at her brother daily.

There is Luna in the picture, being held by Rowan.

She says that she is worried that that little girl, when she is much older, will have to take care of Rowan later in life when Pam and her husband are gone.

She ends the letter this way: Overall, we are desperately in need of Rowan's Medical Assistance and would be devastated if we lost these benefits. What she is referring to there, of course, is Medicaid.

I have real trouble believing that if the Trump administration's proposal on block granting Medicaid marches forward, now that they have embraced the proposal that Republicans in Washington have embraced for years—they had voted for block granting over and over and over again. Now it is a live issue. Now it is no longer just voting. Now it is an issue that could be enacted into law, and I think that would be a terrible step in the wrong direction.

So I think we have to remember that when we consider these budget debates, when we consider the debate about health care, and especially when we consider real families like Pam's and real children like Rowan.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized in morning business.

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

WOMEN'S MARCH ON WASHINGTON

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I understand the majority leader may be coming to the floor to make a request. If he does, I certainly would be willing to yield to him, and I hope I won't lose my right to the floor.

Mr. President, a lot has happened here in Washington in the last few days. Marcelle and I knew that a number of Vermonters were coming down for the Women's March on Washington. We said to them, "Look, if any Vermonters are coming down, why don't you join us for coffee?" We arranged it right here on Capitol Hill, so they could.

At first, we didn't know how many would show up until we started getting the responses. Marcelle and I were there, along with members of my staff, shortly after 6 in the morning, and people started pouring in. Eventually, we had 500 or 600 from the little State of Vermont who joined us. I had a chance to speak to them.

My wife, Marcelle, gave one of the most powerful speeches, totally ad-libbed, that I have heard, pointing out the stakes of what is happening in this country. Of course, she pointed to the Supreme Court just next door.

What got me is that these people came from all walks of life in Vermont. Some I knew, and a lot I didn't. Some are Republicans. Some are Democrats. Some are Independents. All were very concerned. Most came down in buses and drove all through the night, a little over 500 miles, to show that our brave little State says no to hate. We had thousands more who marched in my State capital, Montpelier. Let me put this in perspective. Our State capital—I was born there, and I know it very well—is home to only 8,500 people, but 15,000 Vermonters stood on our statehouse lawn to show the President that they are paying attention, they want their voices to be heard, and the American people will hold him accountable.

I got some of the most enthusiastic emails and tweets. My 14-year-old granddaughter, Francesca, told me how thrilled she was to be there. One Vermonter who took part in the enormous Women's March in Montpelier told a member of my staff, "This is the first time I have been able to smile since Election Day."

In Washington, Marcelle and I were proud to march with our daughter, Alicia, and 12-year-old granddaughter, Sophia. I was proud to see this 12-year-old holding her head high, knowing the respect that was being shown to her and her mother, as well as to Marcelle and me. She knew that respect went to her in a way that reflected everybody—Black, White, no matter what you might be. People cared.

We have heard disrespectful, offensive and dangerous comments seep into

our national discourse. The millions of men and women who participated in marches across the country this week-end offered a powerful statement that they will not tolerate policies that restrict the rights of women or treat women like second-class citizens. They will not treat my wife as one, they will not treat my daughter as one, they will not treat my three wonderful granddaughters as one, and all five of our grandchildren will be treated the same.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration ignored the voices of millions of Americans and is already undermining the rights of women. Two of the President's first Executive Orders targeted women. His first Executive Order attempts to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, which throws into limbo the health insurance arrangements of millions of American women who have been guaranteed maternity coverage as part of their health care plans, who have been able to have affordable birth control for the first time, who have been able to tell insurance companies that no, pregnancy is not a preexisting condition. In other words, women can be treated the same as men when they seek insurance.

President Trump also reinstated the so-called Mexico City policy, a policy that would be illegal and unconstitutional in this country—that will only result in more abortions and more pregnancy related deaths in developing countries. A former Republican Senator whom I respected highly, when he was chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee—he was strongly against abortion, but he said this kind of a policy is only going to result in more abortions and more pregnancy-related deaths in developing countries, and he is right. He is right. Affordable health care, affordable birth control, and the availability of these services would bring down abortion and pregnancy-related deaths, whether in the United States or the countries we help.

Mr. President, Americans are watching. From what I heard and saw from Vermonters on Saturday, I could tell you that they are fired up and ready to go. We need a President who is committed to equality and opportunity for all people, no matter their sex, gender, or race. We will not stand for policies that turn back the clock on so much progress we have made. To paraphrase Dr. Martin Luther King, we have to accept finite disappointment, but we must not give up infinite hope. Only light can crowd out the darkness.

I was proud to see so many Vermonters speaking up. They are not going away, and, as I pledged to them on Saturday, I am not going away. I am going to speak. I am going to speak the same way I did when Marcelle and I walked with our daughter and our granddaughter in the million women march. I will continue to speak up, as the people in my office in Vermont did, in Montpelier. I will speak up for all five of our grandchildren, for Francesca and Sophia and Fiona, but also for Pat-

rick and Roan. I will speak up for all Americans. I will speak up for all Vermonters. They expect nothing less and they deserve nothing less.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

44TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to follow my neighbor from Vermont, Senator PATRICK LEAHY. We also had a very inspiring march in the capital of New Hampshire on Saturday that Senator HASSAN and I both attended. But I am not here to talk about that so much as about the 44th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision. That anniversary happened this past Sunday. That ruling affirmed the constitutional right of women to control our own reproductive choices. It made birth control safer and more accessible for women across this country.

On Saturday, as Senator LEAHY said so eloquently, we saw millions of women and men come together in Washington and Concord, NH, and other cities across New Hampshire and across the United States and all across the globe. There were events in all 50 States and in 32 countries. We came together to defend this constitutional right, as well as other critical gains for women in recent years. Our message, expressed peacefully and powerfully, was that we will not allow these gains to be taken away. We will not be dragged backward.

Despite the progress since the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, women's reproductive health care remains under constant assault. States have passed restrictions intended to shut down clinics and limit access. Sadly, Republican leadership here in Congress has repeatedly attempted to defund Planned Parenthood, which is one of this Nation's leading providers of high-quality, affordable health care for women, and over 95 percent of the work that is done by Planned Parenthood is done to provide preventive services and health care to women, such as mammograms, cervical cancer screenings, and other important preventive care.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration and Republican leaders here in Congress have exhibited a dangerous obsession with rolling back women's reproductive rights. President Trump has promised to nominate Supreme Court Justices who will overturn Roe v. Wade. It is interesting—he has talked about court decisions around LGBT rights as being settled law, and yet we have the Roe v. Wade decision, which is 44 years old, and for some reason he doesn't include that as settled law.

Just yesterday, in one of his first official acts, the President signed an Executive order reinstating the global gag rule, also known as the Mexico City policy that began with Ronald Reagan's Executive order. That Execu-

tive order prohibits U.S. financial aid to many international organizations that offer contraception and comprehensive family planning services to women. But what we have seen with this Executive order that President Trump signed is a broad expansion of that Mexico City policy.

The new Trump administration has joined with Republican leaders in Congress in pledging a much broader assault on women's rights and the gains women have made in recent years. In addition to terminating funding for Planned Parenthood, which more than 12,000 Granite Staters depend on for quality, affordable health care, they have promised to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which would have profoundly negative consequences for women's health. The repeal would end ObamaCare's ban on discrimination against women in health insurance. Depending on how the law is crafted, it would allow insurers to once again classify pregnancy as a preexisting condition and to deny many women coverage; it would allow insurers to charge women more simply because we are women; it would reverse women's access to contraception without cost-sharing; and it would end access to preventive health services, such as mammograms and cervical cancer screenings, without cost-sharing—all very significant benefits of the Affordable Care Act.

Last week, we also saw reports that at the Justice Department, the Trump administration plans to eliminate the Office on Violence Against Women, including all 25 grant programs that have been working to prevent domestic violence, sexual assault, and other forms of violence against women for more than two decades—this at a time when one in five women in this country still reports being the victim of a completed or attempted rape.

Taken together, these actions amount to more than a dangerous obsession with throwing back women's reproductive rights, they amount to an assault on the safety and well-being of women and girls in the United States and across the globe. This is exactly what millions of women and men were protesting on Saturday.

Sadly, people are not just concerned, they are frightened, and unfortunately with very good reason.

As those of us who gathered and marched on Saturday made very clear, we are not going to stand still for this assault on our rights and gains. We are not going to be taken backward. This week, I am introducing bipartisan legislation to permanently repeal the global gag rule, with Senator COLLINS. This rule bans Federal funds for non-governmental organizations that provide abortion services or information about abortion as part of comprehensive family planning services.

As I said earlier, the Trump administration's reinstatement of the global gag rule is even more extreme and harmful than it has been in previous

Republican administrations. Previously, under President Reagan and the Bush administration, this policy applied only to family planning funding, but under President Trump's order, it applies to every program that falls under global health assistance. This means that it puts at risk 15 times more funding and millions more women and families. This targets some of the most effective health organizations that work in the developing world—organizations that are doing great work to provide HIV services and maternal health care and to counsel women on the risks of the Zika infection—and it ignores decades of research. We know that when family planning services and contraceptives are accessible, there are fewer unplanned pregnancies, fewer maternal deaths and child deaths, and fewer abortions. So if you want to prevent abortion—something I think we all agree on—then why not give women and their families access to family planning services? I don't think we can allow extreme ideology to triumph over the urgent practical needs of women and families across the world.

The facts make clear that when family planning services are accessible and contraceptives are affordable, rates of unplanned pregnancies and abortions go down. Here in the United States, the abortion rate has dropped to the lowest level since 1943—a success that is directly attributed to reduced cost-sharing for contraception under the Affordable Care Act. And what do we have? We have the leadership and Congress trying to reverse that assistance to women and families.

In recent days, we have been presented with a fateful choice. We can stand aside and allow the Trump administration to lead an across-the-board assault on women's rights—on women's access to health care, on programs that protect women from sexual assault and other forms of violence—or we can come together on a bipartisan basis to protect the important gains women have made in recent years and decades.

Back in the early 1980s, I chaired a committee in New Hampshire that was working on women's employment in the State. One of the conclusions we came to was when women are supported, their families are supported. So this is not just about women in this country; this is about families. It is about women and their children and their husbands and their brothers and their fathers and their mothers. This is about what is in the best interests of the American people.

Millions of Americans joined together on Saturday, peacefully and passionately, to urge Congress to make the right choice, to protect women's constitutional rights, to protect our access to health care. I urge my Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle to listen to those voices, and I urge my colleagues to join with me in ending the global gag rule once and for all.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, this past Sunday was the 44th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. I wish to take a moment to reflect on how far we have come since the Supreme Court decision.

Because of *Roe v. Wade*, American women for the last 44 years have had the right, the freedom, the privacy to make their own decisions about their own bodies with their doctors and with their families, without the Federal Government barging its way into the conversation and telling them what they can or can't do with their own bodies.

Roe v. Wade was one of the most important Supreme Court decisions in the history of women's rights in this Nation, but it was only a start. In the 44 years since, we have made so much progress with women's health, and much of that progress has to do with what we accomplished in the Affordable Care Act.

Millions of American women now have access to health care coverage that used to be extremely difficult and expensive for a lot of women to get. Millions of American women now have access to affordable preventive health care services, including contraception, birth control, STD screenings, mammograms, breastfeeding support and supplies, and cervical cancer screenings, and since the Affordable Care Act was passed, the number of unwanted pregnancies has gone down, in part, because more women have access to affordable contraception.

There is no doubt that American women have better access to safe and affordable health care because of *Roe v. Wade* and the Affordable Care Act, but some of my colleagues are committed to turning back the clock on women's health and taking away women's access to this lifesaving care. They are doing everything in their power to get rid of the Affordable Care Act, and they are determined to see *Roe v. Wade* get overturned.

One of President Trump's first Executive orders was so extreme that it would take away funding for any international organizations that even talk about whether a woman might want to terminate a pregnancy. We should never let this happen. If we take away women's access to the health care they need, it would be devastating—even life-threatening—for millions of American women.

This weekend, a massive group of women and men and children joined together in women's marches across the globe. They were there to speak out, to be heard, to protest some of these issues that would deeply affect American families and women in particular. I was so proud to march with them. I was inspired by them—their passion, their determination, and their commitment to never give up.

The women's marches were truly the biggest outpouring of support and activism I have seen in my lifetime and certainly that we have seen in this generation. They were loud and clear statements that we will not let the government dictate to us how we should manage these most personal decisions—when you are going to have a family, how big your family is going to be. Those are decisions that are made by husbands and wives, by spouses all across this country about what their family is going to look like.

I urge all of my colleagues in this Chamber to listen to the millions of Americans, the millions of women who would like to make those decisions themselves, who would like to choose their health care, who would not like to be charged more just because they are women, who would not like to see their health care coverage dropped the minute they become pregnant, who would not like to be told: You have a preexisting condition and we will not cover you. That is what we go back to.

We have to fight for the Affordable Care Act, and we have to make sure the Supreme Court does not overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Listen to your constituents. These marches weren't just in New York; they were in every State across the country. These marches were real, they were powerful, they were determined, and these men and women want to be heard.

Members of Congress, I hope you are listening to them. That is our job, to represent our country. Their voices must be heard. We shall not ignore them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5 p.m., on Tuesday, January 24, the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of the following nominations en bloc: Executive Calendar Nos. 6 and 7; I further ask unanimous consent that there be 30 minutes of debate on the nominations en bloc, equally divided in the usual form; and that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc, with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and no further motions be in order; and that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

FUTURE OF THE EPA AND NOMINATION OF SCOTT PRUITT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, last week the Committee on Environment

and Public Works held a hearing on the nomination of Oklahoma attorney general Scott Pruitt to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. The hearing was really about the future of this Agency and how we can get it back to doing the job it was meant to do from the very beginning.

We are blessed in this country with enormous natural resources. Our goal should be to use these resources responsibly in ways that protect our environment and help make our economy strong.

Over the past 8 years, the leaders of the Environmental Protection Agency created broad and legally questionable new regulations that undermined the American people's faith in the Agency. The political leaders of this Agency have been reckless, irresponsible, and arrogant.

A course of correction is long overdue, and it is exactly what we are going to get.

If my colleagues have any doubts that the EPA lost its way, they can just look at two of the biggest environmental scandals we have seen in a long time. In the summer of 2015, there was what became known as the Gold King Mine disaster. The Environmental Protection Agency spilled 3 million gallons of toxic wastewater into a river in Colorado. This was water filled with toxic substances like arsenic and lead. It flowed to New Mexico and Utah, through the land of the Navajo Nation and the Southern Ute Indian tribe. There are 200,000 people who drink water from the river system that the EPA poisoned. Farmers and ranchers couldn't use the water for their crops or their animals.

The other disaster the Environmental Protection Agency helped to cause was what happened in Flint, MI. The EPA failed to do the proper oversight. As a result, thousands of children were exposed to high levels of lead in their drinking water. The Agency knew about the dangers to the public health and for months did nothing to warn the people.

These are just two scandals where the Environmental Protection Agency actually harmed people's health because the EPA was negligent. There are also many ways the Agency has harmed families and the American economy, not by accident but intentionally. It has issued thousands of pages of regulations trying to shut down the entire coal industry in the United States. Since 2009, the Environmental Protection Agency has come out with nearly 200 new regulations.

According to the American Action Forum, the total cost of all of this new redtape is about \$340 billion. The Agency has piled enormous new restrictions and costs onto American families and businesses, all to produce miniscule benefits.

One of them was the so-called Clean Power Plan. States sued to block this destructive bureaucratic overreach. The courts had to step in and tell Washington not so fast.

We should be looking for ways to make American energy as clean as we can, as fast as we can, without raising costs for American families. That is not what the Environmental Protection Agency did with its power regulations.

The EPA also put out a new rule that dramatically expanded its own control over what it calls waters of the United States. The Agency declared that it has control over things like irrigation ditches and backyard ponds all across America. Two different courts have blocked this rule from taking effect. Why? Because it goes far beyond the Agency's own authority.

For 8 years now, the leaders of the EPA have not had their priorities straight. They have been pursuing a political agenda instead of focusing on what should be the Agency's core mission. The Environmental Protection Agency was created for a reason. It was created because America needed someone to perform this mission. There is a right way to do the job. We can strike the right balance so we protect our environment while allowing our economy to grow.

My home State of Wyoming is one of the most pristine States in the country, one of the most beautiful places in the world, as well as one of the most energy-rich States in the country. Wyoming has struck the right balance. We have done it successfully and so have many other States. We can address threats to our environment best through the cooperation of States, towns, Indian tribes, and Washington—a cooperation.

The quality of America's air, water, and land are local concerns as much as they are national concerns. The Environmental Protection Agency should not try to dictate regulations from Washington without consulting its partners at all levels.

Much of the work of the EPA was intended to give States a chance to take action first. Federal regulators are meant to be a backstop, acting when States or communities fail to act. Restoring this proper order and restoring the partnership of States with the EPA is essential to making sure people see the Agency as legitimate once again. The Agency needs to learn to listen before it acts.

We can also restore the Environmental Protection Agency by restating its commitment to the rule of law. That is why the American people elect a Congress—because of the rule of law. The Agency must enforce the laws as they are written by Congress. The Agency cannot write the laws, cannot ignore the parts of the laws it doesn't like, although that is exactly what this EPA has been doing.

We all know the EPA used to do very good work. In the past, it protected America's environment while understanding that there need to be reasonable regulations that allow people to use our natural resources. Every American wants clean air, clean water, and

commonsense protection for our species. That will not change. We need the EPA to do its job, and we need it to do the job right.

Through 6 hours of questioning before our committee last week, Scott Pruitt showed that he understands the need to return the Environmental Protection Agency back to its proper course. He showed he is committed to working as a partner with Americans all across the country to find the best ways to address the threats to our environment. His record as the attorney general of Oklahoma showed that he is committed to restoring and maintaining the rule of law.

I am confident that Attorney General Pruitt will be able to right the ship at the EPA. I am confident that he can restore the balance between the benefits the Agency can deliver for Americans with the costs that it imposes.

As chairman of the Committee on Environment and Public Works, I am committed to making sure the Senate exercises appropriate oversight to make sure that this happens.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REPEALING THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, Republicans in Congress have been on the warpath for a long time to repeal the Affordable Care Act. In fact, in this new Congress, their first order of business has been to pave the way for dismantling this law. Despite the fact that 20 million Americans have gained health insurance coverage thanks to this law, despite people no longer being denied coverage for preexisting conditions, despite big savings in health care costs, and despite everyone with insurance being able to access important preventive health services for free, my Republican colleagues have decided to repeal it. And, after 7 years to get ready, they have no replacement, not even a path to a replacement at this point.

Yes, they are set on repealing a law that has provided both health and financial security to millions of Americans, with no replacement in sight, just at this point some empty IOU for some future piece of legislation that may or may not be any good. It is a little like being asked to jump out of an airplane without a parachute and being told: Trust us. We will build the parachute for you before you hit the ground.

We don't know what this nonexistent Republican replacement would look

like, but we sure do know what a repeal would do; it would gut health insurance premium tax credits that help millions of Americans obtain health insurance they could not otherwise afford. It would unwind an expansion of the Medicaid Program that covers millions more Americans in some 30 States that have chosen to participate, casting tens of millions of Americans—men, women, and children—out of their health insurance.

At the same time, it would deliver an enormous tax boon to millionaires and billionaires, as usual for Republicans, by repealing the revenue we used to pay for ObamaCare. This tax boon is a 16-percent reduction in the taxes owed by millionaires and billionaires on their investment income.

Republicans want to take health insurance away from tens of millions of ordinary Americans and simultaneously reward those at the very top of the income pile with a big tax benefit. So much for all the talk we have heard from Republicans about the deficit.

At least in Rhode Island, the Affordable Care Act is working. The law launched accountable care organizations that are improving care while lowering costs. In Rhode Island, Coastal Medical and Integra Community Care Network—two primary care-focused ACOs—are not only driving down per person health expenditures but achieving high marks on quality and on patient experience. In total, Coastal has saved \$24 million over 3 years and Integra has saved \$4 million in its first year as an ACO.

The Affordable Care Act also has protected seniors from the dreaded drug price doughnut hole, and I can tell you I heard a lot about the doughnut hole from seniors in Rhode Island when I was running for the Senate. The Affordable Care Act has protected families where someone had a chronic condition and couldn't get insurance, and the Affordable Care Act has prevented insurers from throwing customers off coverage when they get sick.

It is true that some of the health insurance exchanges haven't attracted enough competition. We can fix that. Indeed, to help with that issue, Senators BROWN, FRANKEN, and I are today introducing the Consumer Health Options and Insurance Competition Enhancement Act, or the CHOICE Act, to add a public health insurance option to the health insurance exchanges. This public option would guarantee that consumers always have an affordable, high-quality option when shopping for health insurance and a strong health care fallback when markets fail.

ObamaCare may not be perfect, but it has done an awful lot of good. Millions of Americans who lacked insurance now have it, and the rate of uninsured Americans has fallen to 8.6 percent, about half of what it was in 2010. Projected Federal health care costs are down nearly \$3 trillion.

Instead of demolishing a system that works well for millions of Americans

with no replacement on the horizon, let's use our proposal to make it better. Let's add a public option to our health insurance exchanges.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, if I could address another topic now and ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes in morning business.

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

NOMINATION OF SCOTT PRUITT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, the question I bring to the floor today is what is Scott Pruitt hiding? Last week, the Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing on President Trump's nominee to the Environmental Protection Agency. Today, for my 155th "Time to Wake Up" speech, I have unanswered questions about Mr. Pruitt's fitness for that role. His evasiveness at his hearing signaled nothing good about his ties to the industry he would regulate if confirmed, and the lack of curiosity about these industry ties from my Republican colleagues speaks volumes about the political clout of that industry.

One question stood out. Our new chairman, Senator BARRASSO, posed the standard question of nominees to Mr. Pruitt in our hearing: "Do you know of any matters, which you may or may not have disclosed, that might place you in any conflict of interest if you are confirmed?"

Mr. Pruitt answered: "No."

Scott Pruitt crawls with conflict of interest. He has conflicts of interest with the fossil fuel industry from his political fundraising. We just don't know how bad. He likely has conflicts of interest from confidential private meetings with fossil fuel companies at Republican Attorneys General Association get-togethers, but we just don't know how bad. There is almost certainly evidence of conflict of interest in his undisclosed emails with fossil fuel companies, but again we don't know how bad. He came clean on none of this in his confirmation hearing.

This chart is a simple, and a likely incomplete, representation of the many financial links reported between Pruitt and the fossil fuel industry. At the top are the companies and the entities that have supported Mr. Pruitt with political funding. Down below are the political organizations for which he has raised money.

Pruitt for Attorney General was his reelection campaign. The polluters gave to Pruitt for Attorney General. Oklahoma's Strong PAC was his leadership PAC, a separate political fundraising vehicle. The polluters gave to Oklahoma Strong.

There was another one here called Liberty 2.0, Mr. Pruitt's super PAC, but he closed it down so we don't list it. While it existed, his super PAC took nearly \$200,000 in fossil fuel industry contributions. Mr. Pruitt served as the chair of the Republican Attorneys General Association in 2012 and 2013 and

was a member of RAGA's executive committee through 2015. Between 2014 and 2016, RAGA received \$530,000 from Koch Industries. It received \$350,000 from Murray Energy. It received \$160,000 from ExxonMobil, and it received \$125,000 from Devon Energy.

Devon Energy, by the way, is the company whose letter Mr. Pruitt transposed virtually verbatim onto his official letterhead to send to the EPA as the official position of the Oklahoma attorney general.

During his hearing, Mr. Pruitt refused to provide details about any solicitations he made from regulated industries for the Republican Attorneys General Association. We know they got special attention from RAGA. Here is a confidential 2015 meeting agenda from RAGA when Pruitt was on its executive committee. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the meeting agenda page.

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

RAGA SUMMER NATIONAL MEETING 2015, THE GREENBRIER, WEST VIRGINIA

MEETING AGENDA

The Greenbrier; 300 West Main Street, White Sulphur Springs, WV; (855) 616-2441.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 2015

A Cyber Lounge and Hospitality Suite are provided all day for your convenience by Rent-A-Center in the Chesapeake Bay Room, 5:40 PM—Lead Shuttles for West Virginia Host Committee Dinner. Location: Front Main Entrance of the Hotel.

6:00 PM–8:00 PM—West Virginia Host Committee Reception & Dinner; Location: Kate's Mountain Lodge; Special Guest: Homer Hickam—American author; Vietnam veteran, and a former NASA engineer. His autobiographical novel Rocket Boys: A Memoir, was a No. 1 New York Times Best Seller, and was the basis for the 1999 film October Sky.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2015

A Cyber Lounge and Hospitality Suite are provided all day for your convenience by Rent-A-Center in the Chesapeake Bay Room 7:00 AM–10:30 AM—Breakfast (on your own); Location: Main Dining Room; *Breakfast is included, please provide your room key to the waiter. Please note: denim and exercise attire are not permitted.

11:00 AM–12:30 PM—AG Business Meeting; *Attorneys General and Staff Only; Location: Eisenhower A & B.

12:30 PM–2:00 PM—RAGA ERC & Capital Club Lunch: What Difference Does It Make? Measuring the Success of Republican AGs; Location: Chesapeake Room; Speaker: Attorney General Pam Bondi, Florida.

2:00 PM–5:30 PM—Private Meetings with Attorneys General and Staff; *Attorneys General and Staff Only; Location: Eisenhower A & B.

2:00 PM–2:40 PM—Private meeting with Murray Energy; *Attorneys General and Staff Only; Location: Eisenhower A & B.

2:50 PM–3:10 PM—Private meeting with Microsoft; *Attorneys General and Staff Only; Location: Eisenhower A & B.

3:15 PM–3:35 PM—Private meeting with Southern Company; *Attorneys General and Staff Only; Location: Eisenhower A & B.

3:40 PM–4:00 PM—Private meeting with American Fuel Petrochemical Manufacturers; *Attorneys General and Staff Only; Location: Eisenhower A & B.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. This confidential agenda mentions a private meeting

with Murray Energy. It mentions a private meeting with Southern Company, and it mentions a private meeting with American Fuel Petrochemical Manufacturers, which represents a lot of these characters. Murray Energy, of course, is right there. Southern Company is right there, and the American Fuel Petrochemical Manufacturers organization, I am sure, represents the others.

This confidential meeting agenda is all we have about what took place in those private meetings. I asked Mr. Pruitt in our hearings about the content of these private meetings, and he wouldn't answer any questions. He doesn't want us to know what was discussed there with the big fossil fuel polluters—companies whose pollution he will oversee as EPA Administrator.

Pruitt was also a chairman of the Rule of Law Defense Fund. The so-called Rule of Law Defense Fund is a dark money political operation that launders the identity of donors giving money to the Republican Attorneys General Association. As the New York Times said, the fund is a "legal entity that allows companies benefiting from the actions of Mr. Pruitt and other Republican attorneys general to make anonymous donations, in unlimited amounts." It is a complete black hole of political cash.

In the hearing, Pruitt refused to shine any light into the dark money he solicited or received from these fossil fuel polluters or others for the Rule of Law Defense Fund—not whom he asked for money, not who gave money, not what they gave, nothing. This is an organization that appears to have a million-dollar-a-year budget so someone was busy raising a lot of money. How much exactly, from whom, and what was the deal? Scott Pruitt doesn't want our committee or this Senate or the American people to know.

Colleagues and I sent letters to the Office of Government Ethics and to the Environmental Protection Agency's top ethics official. Their responses indicate that their ethics rules predate Citizens United and its torrent of dark political money. Their regulatory authority on government ethics has not caught up with the post-Citizens United dark money world. Since their ethics authorities have not been updated for these dark money conflicts, if Pruitt doesn't disclose any of this information before the Senate, no one will know, and even those government ethics watchdogs may end up blind to conflicts of interest.

That doesn't mean there isn't a conflict of interest here. What it means is it is a hidden conflict of interest. That makes it our duty in the Senate to examine those relationships, except for the fact that the fossil fuel industry now, more or less, runs the Republican Party, so there is a scrupulous lack of interest in this fossil fuel industry dark money.

How badly does Mr. Pruitt want to hide his dealings with his fossil fuel pa-

trons? An Open Records Act request was filed with the Oklahoma attorney general's office—Mr. Pruitt's office—for emails with energy firms, fossil fuel trade groups, and their political arms, with companies like Devon Energy, Murray Energy, and Koch Industries, and the American Petroleum Institute, which is the industry's trade association.

Let me share three facts about this Open Records Act inquiry: No. 1, the Open Records Act request was filed more than 745 days ago—over 2 years, 2 years. No. 2, Pruitt's office has admitted that there are at least 3,000 responsive documents to that Open Records Act request. Consider that fact alone for a moment. There were 3,000 emails and other documents between his office and these fossil fuel companies and front groups—3,000. No. 3, zero, exactly zero of those documents have been produced—745 days, 3,000 documents, zero produced.

Think how smelly those 3,000 emails must be when he would rather have this flagrant Open Records Act compliance failure than have any of those 3,000 emails see the light of day. Given the important financial interests of these groups before the EPA, do we really not think that 3,000 emails back and forth between him and his office and those groups might be relevant to his conflicts of interest as Administrator? Until very recently, Republicans had a keen interest in emails. Chairman BARRASSO asked that important question: "Do you know of any matters which you may or may not have disclosed that might place you in any conflict of interest if you are confirmed?" Scott Pruitt answered: "No."

On this record, there is every reason to believe that his statement is false. Might having raised significant dark money from the industry that he would regulate create a conflict of interest? Let's say that he made a call to Devon Energy and said: I slapped your letter on my letterhead and turned it in as if it were the official work of the Oklahoma attorney general's office. Now I need a million bucks. And you can give it to the Rule of Law Defense Fund as dark money, without anyone knowing that it was you.

Might such a quid pro quo create a conflict of interest in his ability to carry out the duties of EPA Administrator in matters affecting Devon Energy? It is impossible to say that it would not be a conflict of interest.

Let's say that at those confidential private meetings with Murray Energy and Southern Company, something went on. Might something that takes place in private meetings with Big Energy interests that he is going to have to regulate create a possible conflict of interest? They paid to be there. They wanted something. Might that not give rise to a conflict of interest?

And who knows what conflicts of interest would be divulged if his office were not sitting on 3,000 undisclosed emails with fossil fuel industries that

he will be regulating as EPA Administrator?

I challenge anyone to come to this Senate floor and tell me with a straight face that there is nothing that those emails could reveal that might create a conflict of interest for the man discharged with regulating the companies on the other end of those emails. "No" just doesn't cut it as an answer from Mr. Pruitt when there is still so much that he is hiding.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF BETSY DEVOS

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I rise today to speak on the nomination of Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education.

Public education is deeply personal for me. I am proud to have attended Michigan public schools, and I have three children who did so as well. I know firsthand the importance of a strong public education system. My father Herb was a proud teacher and taught English for 32 years in Rochester, MI, where I grew up.

My father was part of the "greatest generation." He fought for our country in World War II and returned home to help build America's middle class. Our Nation owes these men and women a debt of gratitude for building a country where anyone who is willing to work hard and play by the rules can find opportunity.

But too many families today feel that the American dream remains just out of reach. It seems that they can hardly get by, much less get ahead. At a time of growing income inequality, public schools can and do provide a ladder of opportunity in communities across the Nation—urban, rural, and suburban alike. Strong public schools are vital to our economy, our democracy, and to our Nation's global competitiveness.

I think we can all agree that a child's chance to succeed should not be dictated by his or her ZIP Code. While many crucial education decisions are made at the State and at the local levels, the Federal Government also has a role to play in providing the necessary educational tools and proper protections for all of our children to flourish.

We need a Secretary of Education who is dedicated to improving access to quality public education based on sound evidence and ensuring the proper implementation of Federal laws designed to protect and to help all of our children. That is why I am deeply troubled by President Trump's nomination

of Betsy DeVos of Michigan to serve as the Secretary of Education.

Mrs. DeVos, like so many recent graduates, is effectively applying for a job. And like any employer, the American people should look at her resume, her interview, and her past performance.

Mrs. DeVos's resume contains no experience in public education at any level—not as a teacher, not as an administrator, not as a student or a parent, not as a school board member, and not even as a borrower of public loans for college.

Her only experience in education is her work lobbying for the transfer of taxpayer money to private schools and the rapid expansion of charter schools without sufficient accountability to parents and to students.

So let's look at her interview. Her appearance before the Senate HELP Committee last week raised many more questions and did not provide answers. During her confirmation hearing, Mrs. DeVos showed herself to be unfamiliar with some basic educational concepts, like the debate over whether we should measure students' success by growth or proficiency. If Mrs. DeVos doesn't know how to measure success, how can she ever be expected to achieve success in our schools?

Mrs. DeVos also appeared to have never heard of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, one of the most important pieces of education and civil rights legislation in our country's history. This law has provided access to education for children with unique needs and supports their parents, who depend on the law that Mrs. DeVos will be in charge of enforcing, if confirmed. And it appeared as if this was the first time that she had ever heard of this law, just last week.

So finally, let's take a look at her past performance. I am particularly troubled by Mrs. DeVos's long-time advocacy to funnel Michigan taxpayer dollars to private and charter school systems that are not held accountable for their performance.

Let me be clear. Our education system is far from perfect, and I support effective, innovative educational reforms that lift up our children. But these reforms need to be driven by facts and not ideology.

Unfortunately, in my home State of Michigan, the charter school experiment has not lived up to the promises made. In fact, 65 percent of charter schools in Michigan fail—yes, fail—to significantly outperform traditional public schools in reading outcomes. In Detroit, 70 percent of charter schools are in the bottom quartile of Michigan's schools. These are certainly not the results that we would want to replicate at the national level.

Despite these outcomes, Mrs. DeVos stated during her confirmation hearing that she did not think that public charter schools should be held to the same standards as traditional public schools.

Well, that simply doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense that many

charter schools accepting taxpayer money not only performed worse than traditional public schools in terms of academic success but also get to skirt laws that protect against discrimination and support disabled youth. We should hold all schools receiving Federal dollars to the same level of accountability.

I have reviewed her resume, her interview, and her track record, and I have no confidence that Mrs. DeVos will fully support our traditional public schools, our teachers, our parents, and, most importantly, our children, who only get one shot. They just get one shot to get an excellent K-12 education.

Her approach to education has failed the children of Michigan, and her confirmation process gives me no reason to think that she will bring a more successful approach to our Nation.

American children deserve the opportunity for a quality education no matter who they are and no matter where they live. I stand with the many educators and parents in Michigan and across the Nation when I say: Mrs. DeVos lacks the experience, qualifications, and the right vision to oversee our Nation's educational system. Simply put, our children deserve a whole lot better.

I cannot and will not support Betsy DeVos's nomination to serve as the Secretary of Education, and I hope my colleagues will join me in unity against her nomination.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

COMMERCE COMMITTEE AGENDA AND NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it is hard to believe, but the Internet as we know it is already in its third decade. While it is no longer novel, this essential technology continues to transform the world around us in often very unexpected ways. Just a few short years ago, the idea of the Internet being built into farm equipment would have been unthinkable. Yet, today, wireless Internet in tractors and combines is making agriculture more and more efficient. This is just one small example of how new information technologies have become a fundamental part of our economy. There isn't a job creator in America who doesn't have a story to tell about how or when he or she realized the Internet had become a critical part of his or her business.

But while the digital economy is creating massive opportunities, our Na-

tion's laws are not keeping pace. Over the past several years, Netflix and Amazon have completely disrupted the video world. The iPhone, which redefined personal computing and connectivity, just celebrated its 10th anniversary. Yet most of the government policies dealing with video, wireless, and Internet platforms were written for a world where none of these things existed. It is a testament to the ingenuity of American businesses and entrepreneurs that they have been able to adapt and succeed with laws that are increasingly out of date. While I don't doubt that they will continue to work around these challenges, American companies and consumers deserve better.

It is past time to modernize our communication laws to facilitate the growth of the Internet, and it is high time to update government policies to better reflect the innovations made possible by digital technologies. As the chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, I have committed to modernizing government policies for the digital age, and that will be one of our top priorities in the Commerce Committee this year.

One way the government can boost investment in our digital infrastructure is by finding ways to make it cheaper and easier to build broadband networks. At the Commerce Committee, I introduced legislation called the MOBILE NOW Act to ensure that huge swaths of wireless spectrum are made available for use by the year 2020. By then, we hope to see the next generation of ultra-high speed services known as 5G, which will need more spectrum than is available today. The MOBILE NOW Act will also cut through much of the bureaucratic red tape that makes it difficult to build wireless infrastructure on Federal property.

I am happy to report that the Commerce Committee passed the MOBILE NOW Act earlier today, but this legislation is just the start. The Commerce Committee will continue to develop legislative proposals to spur broadband deployment, make more spectrum available for the public, and improve connectivity throughout rural America.

Good Internet infrastructure policies and investments matter very little, however, if government bureaucrats can overregulate the digital world. The Federal Communications Commission has long been the main government regulator for telecommunications. As we have turned away from traditional telecom services and toward new technologies, the FCC has found its role gradually diminishing. This is inevitable and a good byproduct of technological innovation. But instead of accepting this, over the last several years the FCC has aggressively pushed for government interference in the Internet. Speaking about new economic opportunities on the Internet, the last FCC Chairman declared: "Government

is where we will work this out.” The government is where we will work this out? Well, I believe consumers and job creators should be the ones deciding about new technologies, not the government. I think most Americans would agree.

Right now, Internet providers are offering innovative service plans that allow you to stream video, music, or other content for free. These innovative offers are a sign of strong competition in the marketplace. Yet, 2 weeks ago, the outgoing FCC issued a report raising what it called “serious concerns” that such practices “likely . . . harm consumers.” That is right, it seems the FCC thinks that being able to do more online for less money is somehow bad for consumers. Meanwhile, consumers themselves seem to strongly disagree because a lot of these free data offerings are turning out to be quite popular.

One of the most important takeaways from the last election is that people are tired of bureaucrats trying to micromanage their lives. One way we can address this concern is to see how the FCC operates and reform what it is allowed to do. The FCC should be focused on fixing fundamental problems in the marketplace, not dictating the direction of technological progress. The last time Congress passed meaningful laws affecting the FCC was when the Internet was in its infancy. It is clearly time for the FCC’s reform once again.

At the Commerce Committee, we have had many conversations about improving this agency, and I believe this year presents a real opportunity to turn those conversations into solutions. I am confident that we can attract the bipartisan support that is needed to move legislation modernizing the FCC across the Senate floor.

Another area where I would like to achieve bipartisan agreement is on legislation to protect the open Internet. We need clear and reasonable rules for the digital road that everyone can understand. Complex and ambiguous regulations that shift with the political winds aren’t in anyone’s best interests. For Americans to get the maximum benefit from the Internet, they need certainty about what the rules are and, most importantly, what the rules will be in the coming years. The only way to achieve that is for Congress to pass bipartisan legislation. I have been working with my colleagues to find a legislative solution. While we are not there yet, I am committed to getting there.

The Commerce Committee was incredibly productive last year, with 60 measures enacted into law. We made real progress on Internet-focused legislation, including committee approval of the MOBILE NOW Act that I mentioned earlier. We will build on that foundation in this Congress. I look forward to taking advantage of the good ideas of our committee members on both sides of the aisle.

At the end of the day, it is not, as I said, Congress that is going to come up with the best solutions. It will be American innovators and entrepreneurs who will determine what the digital future holds, not us here in Washington, DC. Government should focus on facilitating their success while making sure that we are not accidentally standing in their way.

I am excited to see how the Internet and other emerging technologies will continue to change our world in the coming years, and I am eager to do my small part to ensure that all Americans benefit from these amazing advances.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF SCOTT PRUITT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I was not preparing to come down to speak today, but I just want to make a few comments because I have been listening to what is going on in one of the other rooms out there. Everyone is zeroing in and targeting a guy named Scott Pruitt, who they don’t think should be confirmed to be the Administrator of the EPA. I know Scott Pruitt very well, and he happens to be the attorney general for my State of Oklahoma. In fact, I recruited him to run for the State legislature many years ago, and he is someone I know very well. He resides in my city of Tulsa, OK, and he is eminently qualified for this position. I would just like to make a couple of comments in response.

I chaired the Environment and Public Works Committee for some number of years, and during that timeframe, we started considering his nomination. I heard all kinds of criticism. I say to the Chair that they talk about the fact that he has sued the EPA and how can a person who has sued the EPA be qualified to serve as the Administrator of the EPA? Well, I think that is a pretty good qualification, considering what the EPA was doing during the Obama administration. Look at some of the lawsuits he has been involved with.

“WOTUS” is the acronym for “waters of the United States.” Of the many regulations they have come up with, this is one of the most onerous. In fact, I would say that probably in all States—Louisiana, Oklahoma, and the rest of them—they gave the same response as the farm girl gave when we asked the question—I asked the question: What is the worst thing that could happen or has happened to the farmers and ranchers of America—not just in Oklahoma but throughout

America? And they said it is not anything that is in the Agriculture bill, it is the overregulation of the EPA. When we ask the question “Which of all the overregulations of the EPA is the worst one?” according to farmers, it is the WOTUS regulation, the waters of the United States.

For as long as I can remember, liberals have tried to get the jurisdiction of water away from the States and give it to the Federal Government. I mean, that is the general philosophy of someone who is liberal—they want the power of the United States to be concentrated in Washington. So this is a part of that effort. As a matter of fact, it was 6 years ago that there was a House Member and a Senate Member who introduced a bill to take the word “navigable” out of our laws. State governments have control of all water rights except for navigable waters. If they had taken the word “navigable” out, the Federal Government could have taken over the entire jurisdiction. The two who were doing that were Senator Feingold from Wisconsin and Congressman Oberstar from Minnesota. Not only did we defeat both of those pieces of legislation 6 years ago, but they were both defeated at the polls afterward. So if this is an issue, it is an issue that has been around for a long time.

So yes, in fact, Scott Pruitt, as the attorney general of Oklahoma, from Tulsa, joined 15 other States, including the State of Louisiana, in suing to stop the rule that the Obama administration had put through in WOTUS, the water resources. To show how he was on sound ground, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals has since that time said that, yes, he was right. They put a stay on it.

The next bill, the next of the regulations—I just did a TV thing where they were asking about the most onerous of regulations. It is kind of hard to answer that question because they are all so bad—they all inflict such a hardship on the business community throughout America—but the Clean Power Plan, let’s go back and look at the history of that.

The Clean Power Plan all started back in about 2002, when at that time they wanted to do it when they first started talking about global warming so they were going to somehow do away with the emissions of CO₂. So they tried to do it with legislation in 2002, and then again in 2004, again in 2005, and about every other year since then, and it has always been rejected by the Senate. It has been rejected by the Senate by an increased margin each time. Yet they keep saying, no, we are going to have some type of cap-and-trade legislation. We calculated what that would cost. It is between \$300 billion and \$400 billion a year, and frankly it wouldn’t accomplish anything.

The first administrator for the EPA under Obama was Lisa Jackson. I enjoyed her. I asked her the question: If

we were to do away with CO₂ altogether in the United States, would this have the effect of reducing it worldwide, and she said: No, because this isn't where the problem is. The problem is in China, India, and in Mexico. So the more we chase our ability to generate electricity to those areas, the more—and they don't have any restrictions on CO₂ emissions—then that is going to increase, not decrease.

They were not able to pass it legislatively. So along comes President Obama, and he said: Well, we can't do it through legislation, we will do it through regulation, so they had the Clean Power Plan. The Clean Power Plan was essentially the same thing as the legislation we defeated.

So Scott Pruitt, the attorney general from Oklahoma, came along, and he filed a lawsuit against the EPA, and this worked out really pretty well. It had a lot of support behind it. It wasn't the Sixth Circuit, it was the U.S. Supreme Court that stayed this. So what I am saying is, sure, he has had the occasion, along with some 26 other States, in the case of the Clean Power Plan, of filing a lawsuit against the EPA, but he has been successful in doing that.

Let me clarify another thing that has been misrepresented on this floor several times. They referred to a characterization I gave about 4 or 5 years ago called the hoax. The hoax is not climate change. We all know the climate is constantly changing. All the evidence is there. There is scriptural evidence, historical evidence. It has always been there. The climate has always changed. The hoax is that the world is coming to an end because of manmade gases. That is the clarification that needs to be made if we are going to be completely honest.

By the way, when they criticized Scott Pruitt for suing the EPA, I am reminding them that he also has sued several oil companies, including ConocoPhillips—he had a lawsuit against them for alleged double dipping—as well as BP and Chevron, so it is not just as if he is somehow owned by the oil companies. I always have to say, when people say the oil companies contribute to campaigns, not anything like the far left environmentalists do.

I remember Tom Steyer. Tom Steyer said before the 2014 elections: I am going to put \$100 million of my money to elect people who go along with all of these far-left programs. Of course, it didn't work in 2014. He actually at that time spent \$75 million. This is one individual we are talking about. So those guys over there, they are the ones who are putting money into campaigns, and I understand that.

The last thing I want to correct—and I wish more people would talk about this. Frankly, I wish President Trump would say more about this because they always talk about how 97 percent of the scientists go along with the global warming thing. That isn't true at all. In fact, if you go to my Web site,

you will find a piece that was in the Wall Street Journal that makes it very clear that isn't true and documents that case. The scientists who have been saying this are one group that is called the IPCC, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. That is the United Nations, in case there is someone who doesn't understand that. They are the ones who have provided all the credibility in terms of the science that backs up all the statements that are made about global warming.

I had the occasion—some people are not aware that once every December, now for 21 years, the United Nations has had the biggest party of the year. It is always in some exotic place. I remember in 2009 it was in Copenhagen. We had all the people—several friends I love dearly here in the U.S. Senate and in the House went over there to tell 192 countries that we were going to pass legislation that would have cap and trade. I went over as the truth squad of one person to tell them what had been represented to them was, in fact, not going to happen.

Well, right before going, Lisa Jackson was the first nominee, or the first confirmed Administrator of the EPA. I asked her the question on the record, live on TV, in the committee room, on the committee that I chaired, I said: I am going to be going over to Copenhagen to tell them the truth over there, and, in the meantime, you are going to take over jurisdiction so you can try to do this with a regulation. To do that, you have to have an endangerment finding. To have an endangerment finding, you have to have science behind that. She was smiling. She is a very honest person.

I asked her: What science are you going to use for your endangerment finding that gives you the opportunity to do what you couldn't do with legislation that you think you can do with regulation? She said: The IPCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

As luck would have it, it was a matter of days after that that climategate came about. How many people remember climategate? They never talk about it. Let me just tell you how it was characterized. Climategate was those individuals who were at the top of the IPCC had gotten together and tried to alter the science to support their point of view, and they got caught doing it. The world responded to it. Newsweek: "Once celebrated climate researchers feeling like the used car salesman."

"Some of the IPCC's most quoted data and recommendations were taken straight out of unchecked activist brochures. . . ."

The U.N. scientist Dr. Philip Lloyd said: "The result is not scientific."

They were all talking about climategate. They were talking about how the IPCC rigged the science.

A guy that was an IPCC physicist said that "Climategate was a fraud on a scale I've never seen."

Clive Crook of the Financial Times said that "the stink of intellectual corruption is overpowering."

Christopher Booker with the UK's Telegraph—that is one of the largest in London—said it is the "worst scientific scandal of our generation."

They are talking about the science that is behind the accusations they have made.

So if anyone hears these claims repeated, or even if it has been repeated, saying that at least 97 percent of the scientists agree, they are not right.

My time has expired, but I just wanted to clarify that so people know—because one thing I know that is going to happen is, Scott Pruitt, the attorney general of the State of Oklahoma, will be confirmed by a good margin—I think by a party margin—to be the Administrator of the EPA. It will be a great change.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Nikki R. Haley, of South Carolina, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations; and Nikki R. Haley, of South Carolina, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 30 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, today I stand in support of my good friend and Governor, Nikki Haley, who has been nominated for the position of Ambassador to the United Nations. Simply put, Governor Haley is the right choice, and I could not be prouder to support her nomination. She has shown amazing leadership during very trying times in South Carolina, and I know that she will bring the same strength and resolve in reinforcing and

strengthening our relationships with our allies.

As she showed through her confirmation hearing, Nikki is a strong, principled leader. During a time with so much international instability, we need a decisive and compassionate leader like Governor Haley representing our Nation. She is the type of visionary leader who will help turn the diplomatic tide of the past few years and reassure our allies that the United States stands in strong support of them.

Nikki has served the people of South Carolina very well, and she will be missed. But now, I look forward to addressing her by her new title—Ambassador.

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

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I know we are going to vote here fairly soon, but I just want to address the body before the vote.

Nikki Haley is soon to be the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, I believe with a very strong vote in the committee, 19 to 2. Senators CORKER and CARDIN did an excellent job of running the hearing. Governor Haley conducted herself very well. I know that, as Governor of South Carolina, she has brought us together at home.

She has dealt with some things that are incredibly difficult for any State. We had a thousand-year flood, and we had the tragedy in Charleston, with Dylann Roof shooting nine parishioners praying at Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston. She handled these historic crises with dignity and grace. She was able to rally the State and remove the Confederate battle flag from the capitol grounds.

All I can say is that the skill set she has of bringing people together I have seen. As she goes into this new job, she can learn the nuances of foreign policy, but diplomacy is something you either have or you don't. She is tough and determined, and I think she is very capable of being the United States' voice in the United Nations. As a matter of fact, I think she will represent us extremely well.

The bottom line is that her story is a uniquely American story—immigrant parents coming to a small town in South Carolina. She said very pointedly: I was too light to be African American or Black, and I was too dark to be White. She is Indian American. She and her family have contributed greatly to our State.

I think all of us can be proud that Nikki Haley will soon be our voice and America's face in the United Nations. I think President Trump chose wisely. I

look forward to helping her in her new job. I urge this body to support her nomination because I have seen her in action. I think she will represent us all very well.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it has become fashionable, particularly among supporters of the Trump administration, to accuse the United Nations of just about everything. This is, however, nothing new. The U.N. has been an easy target, especially for some Republicans, for a long time, because like any unwieldy international organization comprised of member states with very different priorities and interests it will probably never be as efficient or effective as we would like.

But there is simply no question that the U.N. serves many vital functions that are fully consistent with key U.S. interests and values. For that reason, it is essential that the U.S. continues to play a leadership role in the U.N., which we were instrumental in creating seven decades ago, in a manner that strengthens the institution.

At times, I have expressed my own frustrations with the U.N. It wastes inordinate amounts of time debating and adopting redundant resolutions that accomplish next to nothing. It has suffered from personnel policies that make it difficult if not impossible to fire underperforming employees. It pays its officials at rates that dwarf what many could earn in their own countries. It has been too slow to implement procedures to ensure transparency and accountability, including for whistleblowers who have suffered retaliation for exposing corruption and other misconduct.

So there is no dispute that the U.N. needs to do better. The new Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, knows this as well as anyone and he has made clear that he is going to do his best to put the institution on a road to real reform.

But, of course, he cannot do that by himself. He is empowered only to the extent that the U.N. member states, and particularly the permanent members of the Security Council, support him.

Attempts by past the Secretary Generals to implement reforms have been partly stymied by resistance from governments that prefer the status quo. While I believe the prospects for U.N. reform have never been better, that will not be possible without the active leadership and skillful diplomacy of the United States.

And that is where our U.N. Ambassador comes in.

I have known many of them, although I was only 7 years old in 1947 when Warren Austin of Vermont, nominated by President Truman, became our third U.N. Ambassador.

The position of U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. has also been held by such accomplished people as Henry Cabot Lodge, Adlai Stevenson, George H.W. Bush, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Thom-

as Pickering, and Madeleine Albright. Each was recognized and widely admired across the political spectrum for his or her depth of foreign policy experience and wisdom.

Today we are considering the nomination of Nikki Haley to be the next U.S. Ambassador. Governor Haley's record as Governor of South Carolina was decidedly mixed, and I will not take time today to discuss that record. What is most relevant here, however, is her dearth of experience for the job she has been selected for. That is not so much a criticism of Governor Haley as it is of President Trump, as there are certainly well qualified, seasoned diplomats in the Republican Party who would be well received by members of both parties.

Instead, we are asked to support a nominee who will no doubt be confirmed but will be starting from square one. If there ever were a case of having to learn on the job, this will be it. That might not concern me if it were not for the indispensable role of the United Nations in an increasingly dangerous and polarized world, the importance of this position, and the complex challenges the next U.S. Ambassador will face on her first day on the job.

It was painfully apparent during her confirmation hearing that virtually everything Governor Haley said in her opening remarks and in her responses to questions of Senators, she had learned in the previous 2 months since she was chosen for the job. Her answers largely parroted popular Republican talking points with little substance to back up her response and revealed only an elementary understanding of how the U.N. functions. Her stated interest in U.N. reform is well placed, but it did not appear that she grasps what U.N. reform entails or what it takes to build the necessary support for reform.

Again, I do not blame her for that. Her career has focused entirely on issues relevant to the State of South Carolina. But that does not make her qualified to be our Ambassador to the U.N.

As Governor, she jumped on the politically expedient bandwagon and opposed the resettlement of any Syrian refugees in her State over "security concerns," although it being a Federal decision some Syrians have been resettled there. In other words, she supported a blanket prohibition against an entire nationality of people—men, women, and children—regardless of the merits of their individual status as refugees fleeing war.

She stated, in spite of the fact that all of our major European allies supported the nuclear agreement with Iran, that Russia's and China's support was a "red flag," without acknowledging the reality that without their support it would be impossible to achieve an agreement to halt Iran's nuclear weapons program or any of our other key objectives at the U.N.

She condemned the U.S. abstention on U.N. Security Council Resolution

2334 regarding Israeli settlements and incorrectly implied that it is inconsistent with longstanding U.S. policy and interests. In fact, she insisted that the resolution, not settlements themselves, makes peace negotiations more difficult—a view with which I disagree. She seemed to acknowledge that the U.S. does not support settlement construction, but stated that the U.S. should have vetoed the resolution anyway.

She mischaracterized U.S. law regarding our share of dues in support of U.N. peacekeeping missions that the U.S.—Republican and Democratic administrations—voted for, failing to acknowledge that we have a treaty obligation to pay 28.5 percent of U.N. peacekeeping costs. She made little mention of and gave little if any credit to the troop-contributing countries themselves, other than to highlight incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse. This is a critical issue that I and others here have been working with the U.S. Mission to the U.N. to address, and progress is being made in developing meaningful accountability procedures.

She stated that the cut-off of U.S. funding for UNESCO as a result of the vote of a majority of its members to accept Palestine as a member state, which led to our loss of influence, is a “good thing” and that she would continue to support the cut-off of funding. She and I disagree about that and what it could mean for the future. I think even the Israeli Government has come to recognize that it is better for the U.S. to be at the table, using our influence to deflect attempts to unfairly target Israel, than on the sidelines.

Governor Haley suggested that the U.S. may want to reconsider participation in and funding for the U.N. Human Rights Council, despite overwhelming evidence that our role serves to protect our interests and has reduced substantially the council’s disproportionate and wasteful focus on Israel. At no time did she acknowledge the many council resolutions that are fully consistent with U.S. interests or that the influence lost by the U.S. is simply ceded to the very governments she opposes having a say in the council.

On the other hand, Governor Haley did repeatedly reject what she described as “slash and burn” tactics when it comes to budget cutting, and on that, I fully agree with her.

She said she supports moving our embassy to Jerusalem, although there is no compelling need to do so, it is strongly opposed by our ally Jordan, would likely incite a violent reaction in Arab countries, and could do more to drive a nail in the coffin of what little remains of the Middle East peace process than anything else.

In responses to written questions she betrayed a serious lack of understanding about Cuba, its economy, and the failures of the 55-year-old U.S. embargo. Indeed, if she were to apply her answers regarding Cuba to other coun-

tries with repressive governments, we would have to close dozens of U.S. Embassies, end diplomatic relations, and impose ineffective, unilateral sanctions against each of them.

I urge Governor Haley, as our U.N. Ambassador, to listen to the overwhelming majority of Americans and Cubans, including many Republican Members of Congress, who support a policy of engagement. I urge her to travel to Cuba and see and hear for herself, unlike those who continue to favor a Cold War embargo that has been exploited by the Cuban Government to justify its repressive policies and that has hurt the Cuban people.

I have been a congressional delegate to the United Nations three times, after being nominated by Presidents of both Republican and Democratic parties. I appreciated that opportunity because I have long believed that it is in the strong interest of the United States to play an active, leadership role in the U.N.

That is only possible if we, by far the world’s wealthiest country, meet our financial commitments. And it is only possible if we build coalitions through skillful diplomacy and refrain from the tactics that some critics of the U.N. advocate, such as bullying and ultimatums, which are often self-defeating.

I recognize that Governor Haley will be confirmed, and I wish her the best. I hope she becomes a great U.S. Ambassador. I urge her to seek out and listens to a wide range of views, particularly on controversial issues like the Middle East, Iran, and how the U.S. can best help make the U.N. work better for everyone.

I will do everything I can to support Secretary General Guterres, the budget of the U.S. Mission to the U.N., and funding for U.N. agencies like the World Food Program, the U.N. Development Program, UNICEF, the U.N. Environment Program, the U.N. Population Fund, U.N. Women, the U.N. Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, and so many others that carry out lifesaving humanitarian and development programs around the world.

And if there are other ways that I can help soon-to-be Ambassador Haley to defend the values and effectively advance the interests of the United States at the U.N. and to bring about needed reforms I will gladly do so.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, in 1945, at the close of World War II, the 50 Allied nations formed the United Nations to help prevent another world war. Since its founding, the U.N. has grown to 193 nations. While it has many serious flaws, it has been an important tool for promoting peace, protecting human rights, providing humanitarian assistance, and safeguarding the environment.

U.S. Ambassadors to the U.N. have included some of America’s leading figures, including Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., Adlai Stevenson, Arthur Goldberg, George H.W. Bush, Daniel Patrick

Moynihan, Andrew Young, Madeleine Albright, Bill Richardson, and John Danforth. President Eisenhower raised the ambassadorship to cabinet rank. Although both Presidents Bush removed the position from Cabinet level, President Obama restored it to that level. I am pleased that President Trump has decided to keep it there.

The U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. must advance principles that the United States has promoted over the years—the rule of law, individual liberties, and human rights. Our ambassador must not only maintain, but strengthen our relationships with our allies.

Unlike many past ambassadors to the U.N., Governor Nikki Haley has little experience in foreign policy. But as Governor, she developed important experience building coalitions, and that skill should serve her well as ambassador to the U.N.

Some positions that Governor Haley took during her confirmation hearing give me pause. For example, Governor Haley made some statements about the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement that indicated unfamiliarity with the joint comprehensive plan of action. I am pleased, however, that Governor Haley distanced herself from some of President Trump’s most divisive positions, and I will support her nomination.

Mr. GRAHAM. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, shortly we will be voting on the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley. She went through her confirmation hearings at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and I had a chance during those confirmation hearings to ask her a series of questions. I have also had an opportunity to meet with her and talk personally about her vision of the United Nations and the United States’ role in how she would conduct her leadership at the United Nations.

I must say, originally there was some concern because of her lack of foreign policy experience, but I must tell you, I was extremely impressed about her competency as Governor of South Carolina—the work that she did, dealing with some very difficult issues, including a tragedy that occurred in her State, as well as dealing with the Confederate flag and removing it from the State Capitol.

She handled these issues with real professionalism and sensitivity to all communities, and during her confirmation hearing, she displayed a willingness to reach out, to understand more about world affairs, and to become fully knowledgeable in these areas. She

exercised, I thought, a commitment and passion for the commitments that are important to this country—good governance, human rights, and democracy.

I was impressed during the confirmation hearing about her commitment to the importance of the United Nations and the important work that it does. The United Nations, as we all know, does do work as peacekeepers to try to avoid conflicts but also does an incredible job on humanitarian needs with refugee assistance, as well as the sustainable development goals that provide help to people around the world, increasing maternal health, reducing infant mortality, dealing with women's education needs. These original Sustainable Development Goals—originally the Millennium Development Goals, now the Sustainable Development Goals—have saved millions of lives.

I must tell you, Governor Haley was very mindful of this and very committed to the United Nations and the work that it does and the U.S. participation in the United Nations. She recognized that it is important that we engage the international community in the work that is done within the United Nations.

When she was questioned about whether she thought it was a good idea to slash funds to the United Nations in order to make a point about votes that we thought were unpopular, she said no. She opposed that slash-and-burn strategy; we need to engage and find ways to leverage our participation to get more favorable results.

I might tell you, she was very strong about her sensitivity that the United Nations has not been fair to one of our key allies, Israel, and she would be a strong voice to make sure those types of issues are dealt with and the United States uses all the tools at its disposal to fight against those types of bias and prejudice within the United Nations.

We have talked a great deal in our committee about moral clarity from our nominees, so there is no misunderstanding anywhere in the world that the United States stands for human rights, that the United States stands against abuses that take place around the world, and that it will fight for democracy in all parts of the world and support those causes through our diplomacy, through our development assistance, through our tools.

She was very clear about the moral certainty issue. Just to give a few examples, we talked a great deal about Russia and its conduct and what it is doing in the United States about the attack on our free election system. She was very clear about how outraged she was with that type of conduct—what Russia has done in Ukraine, its occupation of Crimea. She acknowledged that Crimea is not Russian, that it belongs to Ukraine, and she spoke very strongly about defending Ukraine's rights and sovereignty.

We talked specifically about what was happening in Syria and Russia's

support for the Assad regime and the atrocities that have taken place in that country, most recently in Aleppo. When we asked if she would characterize that type of conduct as war crimes, without any equivocation she said: Absolutely—that this was a matter that required international accountability.

I also brought up with her what was happening in the Philippines, one of our allies, where the President of the Philippines, Mr. Duterte, has done extrajudicial killings and how she would characterize that as gross violations of human rights. She agreed that type of conduct cannot be tolerated, that we need to speak to whether they are friend or foe when they commit this type of conduct, that this is wrong and the United States must stand up for our principles. I was impressed by the way that she spoke to those types of issues.

One of the more telling questions that we asked was whether she would support any registry for any subgroup of ethnic or religious Americans, and she said: Absolutely not.

We had, I thought, moral clarity in her response to some of the most important questions. I think all of us feel that she has the passion to represent the United States and our views well at the United Nations.

What was particularly important to us is how she would speak out to power within the United Nations; that she had no problem in dealing with Mr. Putin and calling his conduct exactly what it was and would not be intimidated by Mr. Putin saying “Well, you need me for some other issue”; that we have to be clear that we will not tolerate that type of conduct that violates basic human rights.

She gave us confidence that, on behalf of the American people, she would speak up in the Cabinet room with Mr. Trump and the Cabinet as to these values. For all those reasons, it was a comfortable vote for me to support her nomination and confirmation.

I do want to relay the fact that she does represent the American story. She is a daughter of immigrants who came to this country at great risk in order to seek a better life for their children. She experienced some of the discrimination against immigrant communities as she grew up in this country and tried to participate in the business and political sphere. She overcame all of those types of challenges and is extremely sensitive, I think, to all the needs of Americans.

For all those reasons, I am proud to recommend her to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I hope we will support her confirmation. I think she is the right person now to represent us at the United Nations. For all those reasons, I will support her nomination.

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

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

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I am going to speak only for a few minutes so that we can have the vote occur at 5:30, on time. I wanted to say that I am pleased to be here to support Governor Nikki Haley as our Ambassador to the United Nations.

The United Nations is at a crossroads and really needs someone who is very reform-minded for the United States to lead our efforts in that regard. That not only would benefit U.S. interests, but candidly it would benefit the world. She is someone who has shown that ability as Governor of South Carolina.

She also has a clarity about her as it relates to representing U.S. interests. People on both sides of the aisle in our committee were able to recognize that her instincts relative to where the United States needs to be on certain issues—I think most of us understand that the United States leading on issues of human rights, leading on issues of conscience, that the American values we all hold dear and want to promote around the world are things that she has the ability to communicate and cares deeply about, and I think people were very impressed.

The United Nations has multiple issues relative to peacekeeping that have not been addressed. Sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers have been rampant, and things have not been done in that regard to curtail that activity or at least not in the ways that they should, and I know she is very passionate about that issue.

There is no question that she is not the most adept person at foreign policy. She would be the first person to say that. She has spent most of her time out of the country solely on economic development trips. I think where the United Nations is today is at a place where we need a really driven person who cares about our own U.S. national interests but also has the ability to break through the clutter and reform.

She has worked with legislators to bring people together, to make that happen in her own State. She has had an exemplary record in that regard. My guess is that is really the first effort that needs to take place. Over time, through the relationships she develops there, the travel that will take place, I am absolutely certain—especially with the drive that she has—she will develop some of the other capacity that I know she will want to utilize there at the United Nations.

I am here to recommend her. I look forward to supporting her. Our committee did so in a voice vote with only two dissents.

In spite of the fact that I am disappointed that we are handling our Secretary of State in a manner that is not in keeping with bipartisan precedent, and in spite of the fact that we

are not going to handle that in a way that we should and could today, through a vote on that, I am appreciative of the minority leader allowing this vote to take place today, and I am glad she is going to be confirmed overwhelmingly as our United Nations Ambassador.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Haley nominations en bloc?

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 33 Ex.]

YEAS—96

Alexander	Flake	Murphy
Baldwin	Franken	Murray
Barraso	Gardner	Nelson
Bennet	Gillibrand	Paul
Blumenthal	Graham	Perdue
Blunt	Grassley	Peters
Booker	Harris	Portman
Boozman	Hassan	Reed
Brown	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cantwell	Heller	Rounds
Capito	Hirono	Rubio
Cardin	Hoeven	Sasse
Carper	Inhofe	Schatz
Casey	Isakson	Schumer
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott
Cochran	Kaine	Sessions
Collins	Kennedy	Shaheen
Corker	King	Shelby
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Leahy	Tester
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Manchin	Tillis
Daines	Markey	Toomey
Donnelly	McCain	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	McConnell	Warren
Enzi	Menendez	Whitehouse
Ernst	Merkley	Wicker
Feinstein	Moran	Wyden
Fischer	Murkowski	Young

NAYS—4

Coons	Sanders
Heinrich	Udall

The nominations were confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 2, Rex Tillerson to be Secretary of State.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Rex W. Tillerson, of Texas, to be Secretary of State.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Rex W. Tillerson, of Texas, to be Secretary of State.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Richard Burr, Tom Cotton, Jerry Moran, Pat Roberts, James Lankford, Johnny Isakson, Bob Corker, Orrin G. Hatch, Thom Tillis, Dan Sullivan, David Perdue, James M. Inhofe, Deb Fischer, Cory Gardner, John Barrasso.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture motion be waived.

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

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 12 noon on Tuesday, January 30, the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 4. I further ask that there be 20 minutes of debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form, and that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for consideration of the Chao nomination be modified to occur on Tuesday, January 31.

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

REPLACING OBAMACARE

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, in 2010, when I ran for Congress, all the questions circled around the Affordable Care Act. Every townhall meeting, every conversation, everyone who caught me in the grocery store, everywhere I went there was a conversation about the Affordable Care Act. What is going to happen? Where are things going to go? And there was a lot of concern about it.

The President promised at the time that if you liked your insurance, your doctor, and your hospital, you would keep it, and it would just get better. Prices would go down; options for insurance would go up. There would be marketplaces where more and more companies would rush in, and that would drive the prices down.

Now, 7 years later, the greatest fears of a lot of the Oklahomans I am around all the time have come true. Here is the crisis in Oklahoma dealing with health care: We have the highest rate increase in the entire Nation. Last year, our rates went up in Oklahoma 76 percent; the year before that, they went up 35 percent. That is an 111-percent rate increase in 2 years in my State. Over the course of the last 3 years, insurance companies have left my State. All 77 counties of Oklahoma now have one insurance carrier left. I met with that insurance carrier before, and they are seriously looking at how they stay functional in Oklahoma in the days ahead, which is a concern to me. There is a possibility that we may have zero on our marketplace in some counties and in some locations in Oklahoma.

With a 76-percent increase, I have had some folks who caught me and said: Well, your State didn't expand Medicaid. That is the problem. If you had expanded Medicaid, then it wouldn't have been an issue. Well, I will tell you that a study from HHS has now come back, and they have confirmed that it is true. If our State would have expanded Medicaid, it would have reduced our costs by 7 percent. That means instead of having a 76-percent increase, as we had, we would have had only a 69-percent increase of health care costs in our

State. Zero competition, dramatically higher deductibles, dramatically higher premiums—every hospital in my State, rural and urban, has more charity care now and more bad debt now than they had 7 years ago.

Insure Oklahoma, a program we set up a decade ago to take care of people who did not have access to insurance, continues to falter because my State is playing “Mother May I?” every year with the Federal Government on whether we can maintain a program that our State had and was growing. Small risk pools are not allowed. People still don’t know the price of their health care. Electronic health records still can’t talk to each other. There is still a rise in the cost of prescription drugs. We still have overlapping administrative costs on dual eligibles, Medicare and Medicaid, for senior adults. Compliance costs for our doctors, clinics, and hospitals have skyrocketed. Physician-owned hospitals, which we have quite a few of in Oklahoma, have been cut off and limited since 2010 and are slowly struggling just to be able to stay afloat. Fewer doctors are taking Medicare and Medicaid patients.

On the horizon, it gets even worse because most people don’t realize that the Affordable Care Act was backloaded and that the worst of the worst of it wouldn’t be for several years out. Well, guess what. It is now several years out.

Union households in my State are about to take a major hit with the Cadillac tax that is coming because union households in my State have insurance that is too good, and those individuals will face a tax increase.

The insurance company tax is coming, which is a massive tax increase on insurance companies. They will pass that cost directly down to consumers, so it will go up again. We continue to fight off the Independent Payment Advisory Board, a board specifically set up to be able to cut options for patients if they cost too much. That is still out there on the horizon, not to mention the tax penalties that go up even more next year.

People ask me: Why are you still focused on repealing ObamaCare? Why is this such a big deal? It is because the people in my State are struggling under the negative effects of this, and it has to be dealt with. Let me just give you a couple of real life stories.

An Oklahoman from Altus, OK, in the southwest part of my State wrote me and he said:

Senator Lankford, I came home tonight . . . having finished cotton harvest and looking forward to celebrating with my wife and kids. I was greeted at the supper table with somber news about our health care premiums from my distraught wife. Our premium is going from \$960 a month to \$1,755 per month! That’s with a deductible of \$6,000. I can’t even process how to handle this. I think I’m through. Done with any hope of a bright future for my family.

An Oklahoman from Poteau, OK, wrote me and said:

My husband and I have had Healthcare Marketplace health insurance for the past 3 years. The first year my monthly premium was over \$1,200.00, this year I pay \$1,923.84 monthly. Now I get a letter from [my health insurance carrier] that my monthly premium will [go up next year to] \$3,540.07. That is an increase of approx. 84%. . . . How is this possible? Why can’t anything be done about this?

When individuals ask me about ObamaCare, they say: You are just arguing about something because of disdain for the President. No, this is what we have disdain for; this is what people are frustrated about: People who work, people who pay for their health care insurance cannot pay their mortgage and their health insurance anymore because they are literally priced out of it. This is what Bill Clinton meant in October of last year when he made this statement:

So you’ve got this crazy system where all of a sudden 25 million more people have health care and then the people who are out there busting it, sometimes 60 hours a week, wind up with their premiums doubled and their coverage cut in half. It’s the craziest thing in the world.

I could not agree with Bill Clinton more on that because that is exactly what is happening in Oklahoma.

But now, here is what is happening because for years Americans and Oklahomans have said: We have to do something to stop this. It is choking out my family.

We are finally at a point we are going to do something about it, but I have colleagues who are now spreading fear all over the country that suddenly everyone is going to be thrown off their insurance and we are going to have people living out on the streets without coverage.

I have heard on the floor of this Senate that 30 million people could die if we repeal ObamaCare. I have heard 20 million people will lose their insurance. I have heard there is no replacement plan, and people will get sick because their coverage will be gone.

Well, let me just go through a couple of those because there are people calling my office and writing me who are very concerned. They are cancer patients, they are diabetics, they are people with long-term blood diseases, they are people who have difficulty getting insurance, and they are being told: All those mean Republicans up there don’t like you and don’t care about you, and all they want to do is throw you out on the street. When people say that, it couldn’t be further from the truth. It may make for good politics, but it is using people who are in a very vulnerable spot in a negative way.

First, let me get a couple of facts straight. This “30 million” number that is being thrown around—even past President Obama doesn’t agree with that. It is not 30 million; in fact, it is not 20 million. It is 14 million people who gained access to health care coverage, if you count the people who have actually gained coverage and paid for their premiums through the course of

the year or have been a part of the expansion of Medicaid. Of those 14 million people, 11.8 million gained additional coverage from Medicaid, not from the exchanges, and, of that, almost 12 million people got expanded coverage from Medicaid. Jonathan Gruber, as one of the architects of ObamaCare, made the statement that from their own studies, the vast majority of those people who were added to Medicaid weren’t added to Medicaid because of expanded coverage; they were added to Medicaid because of promotions through advertising. They were already eligible for Medicaid.

So we are talking about 6 million people or so that have been added to it. I am not belittling those 6 million people; that is a lot of people. But it is not 20 million, and it is not 30 million.

So now what? As people address this to me, they ask about what just happened on January 6 when the Senate and later when the House voted to start the legislative process to repeal ObamaCare. What happened was we just actually started the process. It wasn’t a total repeal. No one has been thrown out. It starts a legislative process.

As we start that legislative process of what is called reconciliation and as we work through that process, it is a very simple process. It starts the opening conversation to work through committees, to work through debate on the floor so that in the days ahead we will bring a full repeal of ObamaCare and a replacement. But that replacement is not going to be a 2,700-page bill to replace the previous 2,700-page bill. It will be a series of solutions, and it will deal with things on a long-term basis.

There was no vote to suddenly end people’s health care in one day. This begins a transition point to make sure that we are watching out for those individuals, such as those cancer patients, diabetics, and individuals who are in very vulnerable situations and over the next couple of years will be able to transition to other care. We are watching to make sure this is not some sudden shift for those individuals. There are very vulnerable people who are in health care options right now and need to know that there is still that safety net there for them and that moving forward, we will continue to be able to watch for them.

We want to be able to move a lot of those decisions back to the States. Quite frankly, that is where those decisions were before. And we want to be able to allow those individuals who are in very vulnerable situations to seek out the doctor they want, to get the options for health care coverage they want, and to have greater access to health insurance, not less.

The people in my State who had been added and who received those subsidies are grateful to be able to have health care, but there are also individuals in my State who can now literally no longer afford to have health care because they have been priced out of the

market, and they are stuck. ObamaCare moved the system from one uninsured group of people to now another uninsured group of people.

Let me read a statement coming from a person from Oklahoma who said:

My wife and I will be going without health insurance next year! I do not resent anyone who is able to afford healthcare, I just resent a government system that causes [us] to be priced out of the reach of working people.

Why is it we can argue about ObamaCare and people can say those individuals got coverage and people are not paying attention to a whole new group of Americans who no longer have coverage because they literally have been priced out of the market?

Why is it that for the sake of 6 million people, we have affected the cost of health care for millions and millions of other Americans?

We can do this transition. We will do this transition. It will take a couple of years. It is not going to be rapid, and there will be a large debate that will happen nationally in the process. That is appropriate, but allow us to be able to walk through this process together.

One quick illustration and then I will be done. I have a friend who discovered last year that she had mold in her house. Initially, there were some treatments that were done. She had been very sick for a while and didn't know why. They did treatments to the house and such and thought that would settle it. It didn't. Eventually, she had to move out of her own home.

Now they have had to actually strip out the walls and take out all the sheetrock. They are literally replacing studs and everything in the house. It will be a long-term issue to be able to get it all right.

I tell that simple story to say that anyone who says replacing health care is going to be some simple "spray everything down and that will fix it" strategy just doesn't understand the difficulties of the American health care system. This will be much like my friend who is having to do a pretty radical transition that is going to take a long time, but that will actually get her house whole and healthy again.

If we want to have a healthy nation again with people who have access to health care, regardless of what class they are in, it is going to take a while to make this transition, and it will be difficult in the process. But I can assure my colleagues that this Congress is watching out for all people, of all ethnicities, of all neighborhoods, of all diseases, to make sure that we are paying attention to this one simple thing: When ObamaCare was put into place, it punished people. We should encourage people to be able to get health care, and we should be able to walk through it with people in their most vulnerable moments and make sure they are able to make personal decisions, have access to their own doctors, have access to hospitals that can afford to stay afloat, and to provide the ability for

people to choose their own health care. Why is that so radical? It used to not be.

There are things that need to be fixed, but it begins with giving the power of the decision back to the patient and back to people, where it needs to be.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MCCARTER, JR., AND SHIRLEY ANN JACKSON

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to recognize two exceptional members of the Smithsonian Institution's board of regents: John W. McCarter, who has served as chair of the board, and Shirley Ann Jackson, who has served as the vice chair. I have had the honor of serving with both of them and believe that their dedication and leadership have greatly benefitted the Smithsonian. Both are stepping down from their roles, and while John will continue to serve on the board, Shirley will be moving on to dedicate her considerable talents to other initiatives.

John W. McCarter, Jr., of Illinois has had a long and distinguished career. He was first appointed as a regent in 2009 and was elected chair in 2013. In addition, John has lent his expertise and wisdom to a number of the regents' other committees.

During his tenure, John has overseen a number of important strategic initiatives, including the search for the Smithsonian's 13th secretary; the development of the Institution's relationship with the Victoria & Albert Museum in London; the reopening of the Arts and Industries Building to the American public; and most recently, the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. These opportunities will help to ensure the Smithsonian's continued success.

John also led the charge in reopening the historic Arts and Industries Building on the National Mall to the public. The building, shuttered since 2004, was reopened to the public for the secretary's installation ceremony in October 2015 and was the site of a very successful pop-up cultural exhibition over Memorial Day weekend in May 2016. John's vision and leadership have made this national treasure available to the American people once more.

A tireless advocate for the Smithsonian in his home State of Illinois, John

has raised the institution's profile across the Nation and around the world. Thanks to his recruitment efforts, the Smithsonian advisory boards are more diverse, more dynamic, and more engaged than ever before. Through all of these initiatives, John has pushed the Smithsonian to be more ambitious and to renew its commitment to "the increase and diffusion of knowledge."

I want to thank John for his exceptional leadership as chairman of the board of regents, and I look forward to working with him through the remainder of his term as a regent.

Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson of New York is the president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She was appointed as a regent in 2005 and has served as board and executive committee vice chair since 2013.

Shirley was the regents' representative for the successful events that opened the Smithsonian's 19th museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, in September 2016. Alongside other notable guests, Shirley helped inaugurate the newest Smithsonian museum by delivering remarks at the museum's dedication ceremony. As she noted during her speech, the museum furthers "the Smithsonian's founding mission, to promote 'the increase and diffusion of knowledge,' by opening a museum dedicated to the African-American experience in the United States, and its crucial place in the American experience."

Shirley has a remarkable life story: She was the first African-American woman to earn a doctorate from MIT, and since 1999, she has served as the president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute—marking the first time an African-American woman has led a top research university. She was also the first woman and the first African-American to serve as chair of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Shirley is emblematic of everything the Museum was founded to celebrate about the African-American experience, and we were proud to have her serve as the board's representative at all of the opening ceremonies.

The Smithsonian has also benefitted from Shirley's demonstrated commitment to the sciences. As a trained physicist, she is particularly passionate about inspiring the next generation of scientists and conservationists. As vice chair, she has been a staunch advocate for the Smithsonian's scientific researchers, trumpeting their successes and inviting them to speak at Rensselaer. She has made a point of going beyond the brick and mortar of the Smithsonian museums to visit the Smithsonian's many research centers, including the Smithsonian Tropical Research Center in Panama.

This past year, Secretary David Skorton tapped into Shirley's extensive leadership and management experience, asking her to cochair the institution's initiative to create a new strategic plan for 2017–2022. Shirley has

rolled up her sleeves, asking tough questions and meeting with a variety of stakeholders regarding the institution's priorities for the next 5 years. As a chief architect of this plan, Shirley will be instrumental in charting the future of the institution long after she has left the board of regents.

As a member of the board of regents, it has been my honor to serve alongside Shirley. I believe her contributions to the Smithsonian community will be witnessed and appreciated by generations to come.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 115th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, on behalf of myself and Senator BROWN, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the RECORD.

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE COM- MITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

[Amended February 24, 2009]

RULE 1.—REGULAR MEETING DATE FOR COMMITTEE

The regular meeting day for the Committee to transact its business shall be the last Tuesday in each month that the Senate is in Session; except that if the Committee has met at any time during the month prior to the last Tuesday of the month, the regular meeting of the Committee may be canceled at the discretion of the Chairman.

RULE 2.—COMMITTEE

[a] Investigations.—No investigation shall be initiated by the Committee unless the Senate, or the full Committee, or the Chairman and Ranking Member have specifically authorized such investigation.

[b] Hearings.—No hearing of the Committee shall be scheduled outside the District of Columbia except by agreement between the Chairman of the Committee and the Ranking Member of the Committee or by a majority vote of the Committee.

[c] Confidential testimony.—No confidential testimony taken or confidential material presented at an executive session of the Committee or any report of the proceedings of such executive session shall be made public either in whole or in part or by way of summary, unless specifically authorized by the Chairman of the Committee and the Ranking Member of the Committee or by a majority vote of the Committee.

[d] Interrogation of witnesses.—Committee interrogation of a witness shall be conducted only by members of the Committee or such professional staff as is authorized by the Chairman or the Ranking Member of the Committee.

[e] Prior notice of markup sessions.—No session of the Committee or a Subcommittee for marking up any measure shall be held unless [1] each member of the Committee or the Subcommittee, as the case may be, has been notified in writing via electronic mail or paper mail of the date, time, and place of such session and has been furnished a copy of the measure to be considered, in a searchable

electronic format, at least 3 business days prior to the commencement of such session, or [2] the Chairman of the Committee or Subcommittee determines that exigent circumstances exist requiring that the session be held sooner.

[f] Prior notice of first degree amendments.—It shall not be in order for the Committee or a Subcommittee to consider any amendment in the first degree proposed to any measure under consideration by the Committee or Subcommittee unless fifty written copies of such amendment have been delivered to the office of the Committee at least 2 business days prior to the meeting. It shall be in order, without prior notice, for a Senator to offer a motion to strike a single section of any measure under consideration. Such a motion to strike a section of the measure under consideration by the Committee or Subcommittee shall not be amendable. This section may be waived by a majority of the members of the Committee or Subcommittee voting, or by agreement of the Chairman and Ranking Member. This subsection shall apply only when the conditions of subsection [e][1] have been met.

[g] Cordon rule.—Whenever a bill or joint resolution repealing or amending any statute or part thereof shall be before the Committee or Subcommittee, from initial consideration in hearings through final consideration, the Clerk shall place before each member of the Committee or Subcommittee a print of the statute or the part or section thereof to be amended or repealed showing by stricken-through type, the part or parts to be omitted, and in italics, the matter proposed to be added. In addition, whenever a member of the Committee or Subcommittee offers an amendment to a bill or joint resolution under consideration, those amendments shall be presented to the Committee or Subcommittee in a like form, showing by typographical devices the effect of the proposed amendment on existing law. The requirements of this subsection may be waived when, in the opinion of the Committee or Subcommittee Chairman, it is necessary to expedite the business of the Committee or Subcommittee.

RULE 3.—SUBCOMMITTEES

[a] Authorization for.—A Subcommittee of the Committee may be authorized only by the action of a majority of the Committee.

[b] Membership.—No member may be a member of more than three Subcommittees and no member may chair more than one Subcommittee. No member will receive assignment to a second Subcommittee until, in order of seniority, all members of the Committee have chosen assignments to one Subcommittee, and no member shall receive assignment to a third Subcommittee until, in order of seniority, all members have chosen assignments to two Subcommittees.

[c] Investigations.—No investigation shall be initiated by a Subcommittee unless the Senate or the full Committee has specifically authorized such investigation.

[d] Hearings.—No hearing of a Subcommittee shall be scheduled outside the District of Columbia without prior consultation with the Chairman and then only by agreement between the Chairman of the Subcommittee and the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee or by a majority vote of the Subcommittee.

[e] Confidential testimony.—No confidential testimony taken or confidential material presented at an executive session of the Subcommittee or any report of the proceedings of such executive session shall be made public, either in whole or in part or by way of summary, unless specifically authorized by the Chairman of the Subcommittee and the Ranking Member of the Sub-

committee, or by a majority vote of the Subcommittee.

[f] Interrogation of witnesses.—Subcommittee interrogation of a witness shall be conducted only by members of the Subcommittee or such professional staff as is authorized by the Chairman or the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee.

[g] Special meetings.—If at least three members of a Subcommittee desire that a special meeting of the Subcommittee be called by the Chairman of the Subcommittee, those members may file in the offices of the Committee their written request to the Chairman of the Subcommittee for that special meeting. Immediately upon the filing of the request, the Clerk of the Committee shall notify the Chairman of the Subcommittee of the filing of the request. If, within 3 calendar days after the filing of the request, the Chairman of the Subcommittee does not call the requested special meeting, to be held within 7 calendar days after the filing of the request, a majority of the members of the Subcommittee may file in the offices of the Committee their written notice that a special meeting of the Subcommittee will be held, specifying the date and hour of that special meeting. The Subcommittee shall meet on that date and hour. Immediately upon the filing of the notice, the Clerk of the Committee shall notify all members of the Subcommittee that such special meeting will be held and inform them of its date and hour. If the Chairman of the Subcommittee is not present at any regular or special meeting of the Subcommittee, the Ranking Member of the majority party on the Subcommittee who is present shall preside at that meeting.

[h] Voting.—No measure or matter shall be recommended from a Subcommittee to the Committee unless a majority of the Subcommittee are actually present. The vote of the Subcommittee to recommend a measure or matter to the Committee shall require the concurrence of a majority of the members of the Subcommittee voting. On Subcommittee matters other than a vote to recommend a measure or matter to the Committee no record vote shall be taken unless a majority of the Subcommittee is actually present. Any absent member of a Subcommittee may affirmatively request that his or her vote to recommend a measure or matter to the Committee or his vote on any such other matters on which a record vote is taken, be cast by proxy. The proxy shall be in writing and shall be sufficiently clear to identify the subject matter and to inform the Subcommittee as to how the member wishes his or her vote to be recorded thereon. By written notice to the Chairman of the Subcommittee any time before the record vote on the measure or matter concerned is taken, the member may withdraw a proxy previously given. All proxies shall be kept in the files of the Committee.

RULE 4.—WITNESSES

[a] Filing of statements.—Any witness appearing before the Committee or Subcommittee [including any witness representing a Government agency] must file with the Committee or Subcommittee [24 hours preceding his or her appearance] 75 copies of his or her statement to the Committee or Subcommittee, and the statement must include a brief summary of the testimony. In the event that the witness fails to file a written statement and brief summary in accordance with this rule, the Chairman of the Committee or Subcommittee has the discretion to deny the witness the privilege of testifying before the Committee or Subcommittee until the witness has properly complied with the rule.

[b] Length of statements.—Written statements properly filed with the Committee or

Subcommittee may be as lengthy as the witness desires and may contain such documents or other addenda as the witness feels is necessary to present properly his or her views to the Committee or Subcommittee. The brief summary included in the statement must be no more than 3 pages long. It shall be left to the discretion of the Chairman of the Committee or Subcommittee as to what portion of the documents presented to the Committee or Subcommittee shall be published in the printed transcript of the hearings.

[c] Ten-minute duration.—Oral statements of witnesses shall be based upon their filed statements but shall be limited to 10 minutes duration. This period may be limited or extended at the discretion of the Chairman presiding at the hearings.

[d] Subpoena of witnesses.—Witnesses may be subpoenaed by the Chairman of the Committee or a Subcommittee with the agreement of the Ranking Member of the Committee or Subcommittee or by a majority vote of the Committee or Subcommittee.

[e] Counsel permitted.—Any witness subpoenaed by the Committee or Subcommittee to a public or executive hearing may be accompanied by counsel of his or her own choosing who shall be permitted, while the witness is testifying, to advise him or her of his or her legal rights.

[f] Expenses of witnesses.—No witness shall be reimbursed for his or her appearance at a public or executive hearing before the Committee or Subcommittee unless such reimbursement is agreed to by the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee.

[g] Limits of questions.—Questioning of a witness by members shall be limited to 5 minutes duration when 5 or more members are present and 10 minutes duration when less than 5 members are present, except that if a member is unable to finish his or her questioning in this period, he or she may be permitted further questions of the witness after all members have been given an opportunity to question the witness.

Additional opportunity to question a witness shall be limited to a duration of 5 minutes until all members have been given the opportunity of questioning the witness for a second time. This 5-minute period per member will be continued until all members have exhausted their questions of the witness.

RULE 5.—VOTING

[a] Vote to report a measure or matter.—No measure or matter shall be reported from the Committee unless a majority of the Committee is actually present. The vote of the Committee to report a measure or matter shall require the concurrence of a majority of the members of the Committee who are present.

Any absent member may affirmatively request that his or her vote to report a matter be cast by proxy. The proxy shall be sufficiently clear to identify the subject matter, and to inform the Committee as to how the member wishes his vote to be recorded thereon. By written notice to the Chairman any time before the record vote on the measure or matter concerned is taken, any member may withdraw a proxy previously given. All proxies shall be kept in the files of the Committee, along with the record of the rollcall vote of the members present and voting, as an official record of the vote on the measure or matter.

[b] Vote on matters other than to report a measure or matter.—On Committee matters other than a vote to report a measure or matter, no record vote shall be taken unless a majority of the Committee are actually present. On any such other matter, a member of the Committee may request that his or her vote may be cast by proxy. The proxy

shall be in writing and shall be sufficiently clear to identify the subject matter, and to inform the Committee as to how the member wishes his or her vote to be recorded thereon. By written notice to the Chairman any time before the vote on such other matter is taken, the member may withdraw a proxy previously given. All proxies relating to such other matters shall be kept in the files of the Committee.

RULE 6.—QUORUM

No executive session of the Committee or a Subcommittee shall be called to order unless a majority of the Committee or Subcommittee, as the case may be, are actually present. Unless the Committee otherwise provides or is required by the Rules of the Senate, one member shall constitute a quorum for the receipt of evidence, the swearing in of witnesses, and the taking of testimony.

RULE 7.—STAFF PRESENT ON DAIS

Only members and the Clerk of the Committee shall be permitted on the dais during public or executive hearings, except that a member may have one staff person accompany him or her during such public or executive hearing on the dais. If a member desires a second staff person to accompany him or her on the dais he or she must make a request to the Chairman for that purpose.

RULE 8.—COINAGE LEGISLATION

At least 67 Senators must cosponsor any gold medal or commemorative coin bill or resolution before consideration by the Committee.

EXTRACTS FROM THE STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE

RULE XXV, STANDING COMMITTEES

1. The following standing committees shall be appointed at the commencement of each Congress, and shall continue and have the power to act until their successors are appointed, with leave to report by bill or otherwise on matters within their respective jurisdictions:

* * * * *

[d][1] Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, to which committee shall be referred all proposed legislation, messages, petitions, memorials, and other matters relating to the following subjects:

1. Banks, banking, and financial institutions.
2. Control of prices of commodities, rents, and services.
3. Deposit insurance.
4. Economic stabilization and defense production.
5. Export and foreign trade promotion.
6. Export controls.
7. Federal monetary policy, including Federal Reserve System.
8. Financial aid to commerce and industry.
9. Issuance and redemption of notes.
10. Money and credit, including currency and coinage.
11. Nursing home construction.
12. Public and private housing [including veterans' housing].
13. Renegotiation of Government contracts.
14. Urban development and urban mass transit.

[2] Such committee shall also study and review, on a comprehensive basis, matters relating to international economic policy as it affects United States monetary affairs, credit, and financial institutions; economic growth, urban affairs, and credit, and report thereon from time to time.

COMMITTEE PROCEDURES FOR PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES

Procedures formally adopted by the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and

Urban Affairs, February 4, 1981, establish a uniform questionnaire for all Presidential nominees whose confirmation hearings come before this Committee.

In addition, the procedures establish that: [1] A confirmation hearing shall normally be held at least 5 days after receipt of the completed questionnaire by the Committee unless waived by a majority vote of the Committee.

[2] The Committee shall vote on the confirmation not less than 24 hours after the Committee has received transcripts of the hearing unless waived by unanimous consent.

[3] All nominees routinely shall testify under oath at their confirmation hearings.

This questionnaire shall be made a part of the public record except for financial information, which shall be kept confidential.

Nominees are requested to answer all questions, and to add additional pages where necessary.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND SUBCOMMITTEE JURISDICTION

Mr. CRAPO. I ask unanimous consent that the subcommittee membership and subcommittee jurisdiction of the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, which was approved by the committee at today's executive session, be printed in the RECORD.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE JURISDICTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

115TH CONGRESS

Any subcommittee issue is available at any time for full Committee consideration where appropriate, as determined by the Chairman in consultation with the other members of the Committee. All mark-ups of legislation and consideration of nominations would take place at the full Committee level.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECURITIES, INSURANCE, AND INVESTMENT

Securities, annuities, and other financial investments; SEC: SIPC: CFTC (single stock futures and other financial instruments within CFTC jurisdiction); Government securities; Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac; Financial exchanges and markets; Financial derivatives; Accounting standards; Insurance.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Banks, savings associations, credit unions, and other financial institutions; Deposit Insurance; Federal Home Loan Bank System; Regulatory activities of the Federal Reserve System; OCC, FDIC, NCUA; E-commerce; Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE

Export and foreign trade promotion; Export controls; Export financing; International economic policy; International financial and development institutions; Export-Import Bank; International Trade Administration; Bureau of Export Administration; Defense Production Act.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC POLICY

Economic growth, employment and price stability; Monetary policy, including monetary policy functions of the Federal Reserve

System; Financial Stability Oversight Counsel; Office of Financial Research; Council of Economic Advisors; Money and credit, including currency, coinage and notes; Control of prices of commodities, rents and services; Economic stabilization; Financial aid to commerce and industry; Loan guarantees; Flood insurance; Disaster assistance; Small Business Lending.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Urban mass transit, urban affairs and development; Federal Transit Administration; HUD; Affordable Housing; Foreclosure Mitigation; Mortgage Servicing; HAMP; FHA; Senior Housing; Nursing home construction; Rural Housing Service; Indian Housing.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Unless otherwise noted, Mike Crapo, Chairman, and Sherrod Brown, Ranking Democratic Member, serve on all subcommittees as ex-officio, non-voting members.

HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Tim Scott, SC, Chairman;
Robert Menendez, NJ, Ranking Democratic Member.

Richard C. Shelby, AL; Dean Heller, NV; Mike Rounds, SD; Thom Tillis, NC; Joe Kennedy, LA; Jack Reed, RI; Heidi Heitkamp, ND; Brian Schatz, HI; Chris Van Hollen, MD.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Patrick J. Toomey, PA, Chairman;
Elizabeth Warren, MA, Ranking Democratic Member.

Richard C. Shelby, AL; Bob Corker, TN; Dean Heller, NV; Tim Scott, SC; Ben Sasse, NE; Tom Cotton, AR; David Perdue, GA; John Kennedy, LA; Jack Reed, RI; Jon Tester, MT; Mark Warner, VA; Joe Donnelly, IN; Brian Schatz, HI; Chris Van Hollen; Catherine Cortez Masto, NV.

SECURITIES, INSURANCE, AND INVESTMENT

Dean Heller, NV, Chairman;
Mark Warner, VA, Ranking Democratic Member.

Richard C. Shelby, AL; Bob Corker, TN; Patrick J. Toomey, PA; Tim Scott, SC; Ben Sasse, NE; Mike Rounds, SD; Thom Tillis, NC; Jack Reed, RI; Robert Menendez, NJ; Jon Tester, MT; Elizabeth Warren, MA; Chris Van Hollen, MD; Catherine Cortez Masto, NV.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE

Ben Sasse, NE, Chairman;
Joe Donnelly, IN, Ranking Democratic Member.

Bob Corker, TN; Tom Cotton, AR; Mike Rounds, SD; David Perdue, GA; Mark Warner, VA; Heidi Heitkamp, ND; Brian Schatz, HI.

ECONOMIC POLICY

Tom Cotton, AR, Chairman;
Heidi Heitkamp, ND, Ranking Democratic Member.

Patrick J. Toomey, PA; David Perdue, GA; Thom Tillis, NC; John Kennedy, LA; Robert Menendez, NJ; Elizabeth Warren, MA; Joe Donnelly, IN.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 115th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, para-

graph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the rules for the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be printed in the RECORD.

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

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

115TH CONGRESS

RULE I—MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

1. IN GENERAL.—The regular meeting dates of the Committee shall be the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairman as the Chairman may deem necessary, or pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 3 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

2. OPEN MEETINGS.—Meetings of the Committee, or any subcommittee, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public, except that a meeting or series of meetings by the Committee, or any subcommittee, on the same subject for a period of no more than 14 calendar days may be closed to the public on a motion made and seconded to go into closed session to discuss only whether the matters enumerated in subparagraphs (A) through (F) would require the meeting to be closed, followed immediately by a record vote in open session by a majority of the members of the Committee, or any subcommittee, when it is determined that the matter to be discussed or the testimony to be taken at such meeting or meetings—

(A) will disclose matters necessary to be kept secret in the interests of national defense or the confidential conduct of the foreign relations of the United States;

(B) will relate solely to matters of Committee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure;

(C) will tend to charge an individual with crime or misconduct, to disgrace or injure the professional standing of an individual, or otherwise to expose an individual to public contempt or obloquy, or will represent a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual;

(D) will disclose the identity of any informer or law enforcement agent or will disclose any information relating to the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense that is required to be kept secret in the interest of effective law enforcement;

(E) will disclose information relating to the trade secrets of, or financial or commercial information pertaining specifically to, a given person if—

(1) an Act of Congress requires the information to be kept confidential by Government officers and employees; or

(2) the information has been obtained by the Government on a confidential basis, other than through an application by such person for a specific Government financial or other benefit, and is required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the competitive position of such person; or

(F) may divulge matters required to be kept confidential under other provisions of law or Government regulations.

3. STATEMENTS.—Each witness who is to appear before the Committee or any subcommittee shall file with the Committee, at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing, a written statement of the witness's testimony in as many copies as the Chairman of the Committee or subcommittee prescribes. In the event a witness fails to file a timely written statement in accordance with this rule, the Chairman of the Committee or sub-

committee, as applicable, may permit the witness to testify, or deny the witness the privilege of testifying before the Committee, or permit the witness to testify in response to questions from members without the benefit of giving an opening statement.

4. FIELD HEARINGS.—Field hearings of the full Committee, and any subcommittee thereof, shall be scheduled only when authorized by the Chairman and ranking minority member of the full Committee.

RULE II—QUORUMS

1. BILLS, RESOLUTIONS, AND NOMINATIONS.—A majority of the members, which includes at least 1 minority member, shall constitute a quorum for official action of the Committee when reporting a bill, resolution, or nomination. Proxies may not be counted in making a quorum for purposes of this paragraph.

2. OTHER BUSINESS.—One-third of the entire membership of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business as may be considered by the Committee, except for the reporting of a bill, resolution, or nomination or authorizing a subpoena. Proxies may not be counted in making a quorum for purposes of this paragraph.

3. TAKING TESTIMONY.—For the purpose of taking sworn testimony a quorum of the Committee and each subcommittee thereof, now or hereafter appointed, shall consist of 1 member of the Committee.

RULE III—PROXIES

When a record vote is taken in the Committee on any bill, resolution, amendment, or any other question, the required quorum being present, a member who is unable to attend the meeting may submit his or her vote by proxy, in writing or through personal instructions.

RULE IV—CONSIDERATION OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

It shall not be in order during a meeting of the Committee to move to proceed to the consideration of any bill or resolution unless the bill or resolution has been filed with the Clerk of the Committee not less than 48 hours in advance of the Committee meeting, in as many copies as the Chairman of the Committee prescribes. This rule may be waived with the concurrence of the Chairman and the ranking minority member of the full Committee.

RULE V—SUBPOENAS; COUNSEL; RECORD

1. SUBPOENAS.—The Chairman, with the approval of the ranking minority member of the Committee, may subpoena the attendance of witnesses for hearings and the production of memoranda, documents, records, or any other materials. The Chairman may subpoena such attendance of witnesses or production of materials without the approval of the ranking minority member if the Chairman or a member of the Committee staff designated by the Chairman has not received notification from the ranking minority member or a member of the Committee staff designated by the ranking minority member of disapproval of the subpoena within 72 hours, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, of being notified of the subpoena. If a subpoena is disapproved by the ranking minority member as provided in this paragraph, the subpoena may be authorized by vote of the Members of the Committee, the quorum required by paragraph 1 of rule II being present. When the Committee or Chairman authorizes a subpoena, it shall be issued upon the signature of the Chairman or any other Member of the Committee designated by the Chairman. At the direction of the Chairman, with notification to the ranking minority member of not less than 72 hours, the staff is authorized to take depositions

from witnesses. The ranking minority member, or a member of the Committee staff designated by the ranking minority member, shall be given the opportunity to attend and participate in the taking of any deposition. Witnesses at depositions shall be examined upon oath administered by an individual authorized by law to administer oaths, or administered by any member of the Committee if one is present.

2. COUNSEL.—Witnesses may be accompanied at a public or executive hearing, or the taking of a deposition, by counsel to advise them of their rights. Counsel retained by any witness and accompanying such witness shall be permitted to be present during the testimony of the witness at any public or executive hearing, or the taking of a deposition, to advise the witness, while the witness is testifying, of the witness's legal rights. In the case of any witness who is an officer or employee of the government, or of a corporation or association, the Chairman may rule that representation by counsel from the government, corporation, or association or by counsel representing other witnesses, creates a conflict of interest, and that the witness may only be represented during testimony before the Committee by personal counsel not from the government, corporation, or association or by personal counsel not representing other witnesses. This paragraph shall not be construed to excuse a witness from testifying in the event the witness's counsel is ejected for conducting himself or herself in such manner as to prevent, impede, disrupt, obstruct, or interfere with the orderly administration of a hearing or the taking of a deposition. This paragraph may not be construed as authorizing counsel to coach the witness or to answer for the witness. The failure of any witness to secure counsel shall not excuse the witness from complying with a subpoena.

3. RECORD.—An accurate electronic or stenographic record shall be kept of the testimony of all witnesses in executive and public hearings and depositions. If testimony given by deposition is transcribed, the individual administering the oath shall certify on the transcript that the witness was duly sworn in his or her presence and the transcriber shall certify that the transcript is a true record of the testimony. The transcript with these certifications shall be filed with the chief clerk of the Committee. The record of a witness's testimony, whether in public or executive session or in a deposition, shall be made available for inspection by the witness or the witness's counsel under Committee supervision. A copy of any testimony given in public session, or that part of the testimony given by the witness in executive session or deposition and subsequently quoted or made part of the record in a public session, shall be provided to that witness at the witness's expense if so requested. Upon inspecting the transcript, within a time limit set by the Clerk of the Committee, a witness may request changes in the transcript to correct errors of transcription and grammatical errors. The witness may also bring to the attention of the Committee errors of fact in the witness's testimony by submitting a sworn statement about those facts with a request that it be attached to the transcript. The Chairman or a member of the Committee staff designated by the Chairman shall rule on such requests.

RULE VI—BROADCASTING OF HEARINGS

Public hearings of the full Committee, or any subcommittee thereof, shall be televised or broadcast only when authorized by the Chairman and the ranking minority member of the full Committee.

RULE VII—SUBCOMMITTEES

1. HEARINGS.—Any member of the Committee may sit with any subcommittee during its hearings.

2. CHANGE OF CHAIRMANSHIP.—Subcommittees shall be considered de novo whenever there is a change in the chairmanship, and seniority on the particular subcommittee shall not necessarily apply.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 115th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, on behalf of myself and Senator TESTER, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the RECORD.

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

RULES OF PROCEDURE

115TH CONGRESS

I. MEETINGS

(A) Unless otherwise ordered, the Committee shall meet on the first Wednesday of each month. The Chairman may, upon proper notice, call such additional meetings as deemed necessary.

(B) Except as provided in subparagraphs (b) and (d) of paragraph 5 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public. The Committee shall prepare and keep a complete transcript or electronic recording adequate to fully record the proceedings of each meeting whether or not such meeting or any part thereof is closed to the public.

(C) The Chairman of the Committee, or the Ranking Majority Member present in the absence of the Chairman, or such other Member as the Chairman may designate, shall preside over all meetings.

(D) Except as provided in rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no meeting of the Committee shall be scheduled except by majority vote of the Committee or by authorization of the Chairman of the Committee.

(E) The Committee shall notify the office designated by the Committee on Rules and Administration of the time, place, and purpose of each meeting. In the event such meeting is canceled, the Committee shall immediately notify such designated office.

(F) Written or electronic notice of a Committee meeting, accompanied by an agenda enumerating the items of business to be considered, shall be sent to all Committee Members at least 72 hours (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) in advance of each meeting. In the event that the giving of such 72-hour notice is prevented by unforeseen requirements or Committee business, the Committee staff shall communicate notice by the quickest appropriate means to Members or appropriate staff assistants of Members and an agenda shall be furnished prior to the meeting.

(G) Subject to the second sentence of this paragraph, it shall not be in order for the Committee to consider any amendment in the first degree proposed to any measure under consideration by the Committee unless a written or electronic copy of such

amendment has been delivered to each Member of the Committee at least 24 hours (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) before the meeting at which the amendment is to be proposed. This paragraph may be waived by a majority vote of the Members and shall apply only when 72-hour written notice has been provided in accordance with paragraph (F).

II. QUORUMS

(A) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (B), eight Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the reporting or approving of any measure or matter or recommendation. Five Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for purposes of transacting any other business.

(B) In order to transact any business at a Committee meeting, at least one Member of the minority shall be present. If, at any meeting, business cannot be transacted because of the absence of such a Member, the matter shall lay over for a calendar day. If the presence of a minority Member is not then obtained, business may be transacted by the appropriate quorum.

(C) One Member shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of receiving testimony.

III. VOTING

(A) Votes may be cast by proxy. A proxy shall be written and may be conditioned by personal instructions. A proxy shall be valid only for the day given.

(B) There shall be a complete record kept of all Committee actions. Such record shall contain the vote cast by each Member of the Committee on any question on which a roll call vote is requested.

IV. HEARINGS AND HEARING PROCEDURES

(A) Except as specifically otherwise provided, the rules governing meetings shall govern hearings.

(B) At least one week in advance of the date of any hearing, the Committee shall undertake, consistent with the provisions of paragraph 4 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, to make public announcements of the date, place, time, and subject matter of such hearing.

(C)(1) Each witness who is scheduled to testify at a hearing of the Committee shall submit 40 copies of such witness' testimony to the Committee not later than 48 hours (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) before the witness' scheduled appearance at the hearing.

(2) Any witness who fails to meet the deadline specified in paragraph (1) shall not be permitted to present testimony but may be seated to take questions from Committee members, unless the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member determine there is good cause for the witness' failure to meet the deadline or it is in the Committee's interest to permit such witness to testify.

(D) The presiding Member at any hearing is authorized to limit the time allotted to each witness appearing before the Committee.

(E) The Chairman, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee, is authorized to subpoena the attendance of witnesses and the production of memoranda, documents, records, and any other materials. If the Chairman or a Committee staff member designated by the Chairman has not received from the Ranking Minority Member or a Committee staff member designated by the Ranking Minority Member notice of the Ranking Minority Member's non-concurrence in the subpoena within 48 hours (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) of being notified of the Chairman's intention to subpoena attendance or production, the Chairman is authorized following the end of the 48-hour

period involved to subpoena the same without the Ranking Minority Member's concurrence. Regardless of whether a subpoena has been concurred in by the Ranking Minority Member, such subpoena may be authorized by vote of the Members of the Committee. When the Committee or Chairman authorizes a subpoena, the subpoena may be issued upon the signature of the Chairman or of any other Member of the Committee designated by the Chairman.

(F) Except as specified in Committee Rule VII (requiring oaths, under certain circumstances, at hearings to confirm Presidential nominations), witnesses at hearings will be required to give testimony under oath whenever the presiding Member deems such to be advisable.

V. MEDIA COVERAGE

Any Committee meeting or hearing which is open to the public may be covered by television, radio, and print media. Photographers, reporters, and crew members using mechanical recording, filming, or broadcasting devices shall position and use their equipment so as not to interfere with the seating, vision, or hearing of the Committee Members or staff or with the orderly conduct of the meeting or hearing. The presiding Member of the meeting or hearing may for good cause terminate, in whole or in part, the use of such mechanical devices or take such other action as the circumstances and the orderly conduct of the meeting or hearing may warrant.

VI. GENERAL

All applicable requirements of the Standing Rules of the Senate shall govern the Committee.

VII. PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS

(A) Each Presidential nominee whose nomination is subject to Senate confirmation and referred to this Committee shall submit a statement of his or her background and financial interests, including the financial interests of his or her spouse and of children living in the nominee's household, on a form approved by the Committee, which shall be sworn to as to its completeness and accuracy. The Committee form shall be in two parts:

(1) Information concerning employment, education, and background of the nominee, which generally relates to the position to which the individual is nominated and which is to be made public; and

(2) Information concerning the financial and other background of the nominee, to be made public when the Committee determines that such information bears directly on the nominee's qualifications to hold the position to which the individual is nominated.

(B) At any hearing to confirm a Presidential nomination, the testimony of the nominee and, at the request of any Member, any other witness shall be under oath.

(C) Committee action on a nomination, including hearings or a meeting to consider a motion to recommend confirmation, shall not occur until at least five days (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) after the nominee submits with respect to the currently pending nomination the form required by this rule unless the Chairman, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member, waives this waiting period.

VIII. NAMING OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES

It is the policy of the Committee that a Department of Veterans Affairs facility may be named only after a deceased individual and only under the following circumstances:

(A) Such individual was:

(1) A veteran who (i) was instrumental in the construction or the operation of the fa-

cility to be named, or (ii) was a recipient of the Medal of Honor or, as determined by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, otherwise performed military service of an extraordinarily distinguished character;

(2) A Member of the United States House of Representatives or Senate who had a direct association with such facility;

(3) An Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, a Secretary of Veterans Affairs, a Secretary of Defense or of a service branch, or a military or other Federal civilian official of comparable or higher rank; or

(4) An individual who, as determined by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, performed outstanding service for veterans.

(B) Each Member of the Congressional delegation representing the State in which the designated facility is located must indicate in writing such Member's support of the proposal to name such facility after such individual. It is the policy of the Committee that sponsoring or cosponsoring legislation to name such facility after such individual will not alone satisfy this requirement.

(C) The pertinent State department or chapter of each Congressionally chartered veterans' organization having a national membership of at least 500,000 must indicate in writing its support of such proposal.

IX. AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES

The rules of the Committee may be changed, modified, amended, or suspended at any time provided, however, that no less than a majority of the entire membership so determine at a regular meeting with due notice or at a meeting specifically called for that purpose. The rules governing quorums for reporting legislative matters shall govern rules changes, modification, amendments, or suspension.

NOMINATION OF REX W. TILLERSON

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter from Lee Boothby be printed in the RECORD in support of the nomination of Rex Tillerson as Secretary of State of the United States.

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

NEWFIELD EXPLORATION COMPANY,
The Woodlands, Texas, January 11, 2017.

Hon. JAMES M. INHOFE,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JAMES LANKFORD,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS INHOFE AND LANKFORD: As leader of Oklahoma's third largest producer of crude oil and natural gas, I write to urge your vote to confirm Rex Tillerson as U.S. Secretary of State.

Mr. Tillerson has been rightly lauded for his effective stewardship of one the world's largest and most successful companies, his deep exposure to and knowledge of both foreign and domestic public policies impacting our nation and his extensive global experience. He is intelligent, highly regarded and has accomplished many achievements in the private sector through vision, hard work and sound judgment. He is extremely qualified to lead U.S. foreign policy.

Over the past several years, I have had the privilege of working with Rex professionally and I've also had the opportunity to get to know him personally. His personal attributes are equally as impressive as his professional characteristics. He is a man of integrity and strong moral character.

We both share a fondness for the outdoors and regularly have found ourselves discussing not the day-to-day happenings in our industry, but rather his love for the United States of America—an affection deepened by his exposure to countries where democracy and human rights do not exist.

I am proud to call Rex Tillerson a friend, and I am confident our nation will benefit from his service and the many attributes he will contribute as U.S. Secretary of State.

Sincerely,

LEE K. BOOTHBY.

CONFIRMATION OF MICHAEL POMPEO

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I oppose Mr. POMPEO's confirmation to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency because I believe he will take the CIA in a dangerously wrong direction.

America needs a CIA Director who will uphold American values by resolutely condemning torture and mass surveillance. Mr. POMPEO's last-minute attempt to walk back his opposition to torture is very disturbing and suggests the Trump administration is readying to abandon our commitment to international human rights.

Second, Mr. POMPEO's enthusiasm for bringing back programs that sweep up massive amounts of Americans' private information is deeply troubling. I have no confidence that Donald Trump would sufficiently protect the private emails of Americans if he had access to them, and Mr. POMPEO's support for large-scale data collection programs is inconsistent with the bipartisan reforms of the PATRIOT Act that passed in the last Congress.

Third, I am very worried that Mr. POMPEO, as CIA Director, will continue the trend of covert agencies usurping the power of the State Department and the Defense Department. Mr. POMPEO, under questioning, refused to acknowledge the longstanding precedent of diplomatic embassies having primary authority for final signoff on overseas operations. This suggests Mr. POMPEO could lead a rogue agency that will frustrate rather than aid our diplomatic objectives overseas.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS D. HOMAN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize Thomas D. Homan, who will step down this month as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Executive Associate Director for Enforcement and Removal Operations. Mr. Homan has served in law enforcement for 36 years, including 33 years enforcing our Nation's border and immigration laws. He began his career in 1981 as a police officer in New York. In 1984, he became a U.S. Border Patrol agent with his first assignment in the San Diego sector. In 1988, he became a special agent with the former U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service in Phoenix, AZ. There, he climbed through the ranks, first to supervisory special agent, and later to deputy assistant director for investigations.

In 1999, Mr. Homan became the assistant district director for investigations in San Antonio, TX. Upon the creation of ICE in 2003, Mr. Homan was named as the assistant special agent in charge in Dallas, TX. He was later promoted to deputy special agent in charge. In March 2009, Mr. Homan accepted the position of Assistant Director for Enforcement at ICE headquarters in Washington, DC. He was subsequently promoted to Deputy Executive Associate Director in 2010 and was again promoted in May 2013 to lead ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations as its Executive Associate Director.

In December 2015, Mr. Homan was awarded the Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Service. He has served this country for many years and has had a notable career in helping to protect the homeland.

I ask that my colleagues join me in offering our appreciation for his service and congratulations on his retirement.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING AARON E. BAER

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I would like to pay tribute to a dear friend, the Honorable Aaron A. Baer, who died yesterday, just 2 days shy of what would have been his 103rd birthday. He was the oldest living judge in Maryland.

Judge Baer was known to his family as the “centennial cowboy” who had “a great ride,” as his family put it. He was a Baltimore native, the son of a Russian immigrant who worked in a clothing factory and became a tailor. Judge Baer graduated from the University of Baltimore Law School in 1937. He supported himself and paid for law school by repairing and replacing tar roofs.

Judge Baer practiced real estate law for several years before becoming an assistant Baltimore City solicitor, an assistant attorney general, and a State senator for the 5th District in 1959. He was appointed to the Municipal Court of Baltimore City in 1961 by then-Governor J. Millard Tawes. In 1971, he was appointed to the newly created District Court of Maryland by then, Governor Marvin Mandel. He retired as a district court judge in 1981 at the age of 67.

Judge Baer was married to Judy Weinberg for 66 years before her passing in 2007. He and his wife had two daughters. The older daughter is Susan Reichmister, who is married to Dr. Jerome Reichmister. They have two children: Beth, who is married to Bart Casper, and Jodi, who is married to Craig Kessler. The younger daughter is the Honorable Barbara Baer Waxman, who is administrative judge of the District Court of Maryland for Baltimore City. She is married to Dr. Carl Waxman. Judge Baer had four great-grandchildren: Nicole, Sloane, Mitchell, and

Blair, and numerous nieces and nephews.

The Cardin family is friends with many members of the Baer family. Judge Baer and my parents were close friends. It has been a great privilege to know Judge Baer, to receive his counsel, and to count him not just as a close friend of my father's, but as my close friend, too.

Judge Baer lived an exemplary life devoted to public service, the community, and to his family. He started riding Indian motorcycles as a youth and then became an avid horseback rider until he turned 100, which is how he earned the nickname “centennial cowboy.” He did have “a great ride,” and I am grateful for having been along for some of it. My wife, Myrna, and I send our deepest condolences and prayers to his family.●

TRIBUTE TO BELLE WENDELBURG

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the distinct honor of recognizing Mrs. Belle Wendelburg for her continued work in serving her community all the way to the age of 95. Belle retired from Dahl Memorial Nursing Home in Ekalaka, MT, in July of 2016 after working there for more than 20 years. She loved the residents and enjoyed the opportunity to work and serve others.

Belle was born on May 3, 1921, on a family homestead near Westmore, MT. She was the youngest of three children. Growing up around Westmore, Belle attended Spring Hill Grade School where she had to ride a horse 7 miles to get to school.

Belle enrolled in the “Green Thumb” program, a government work program, and then began working in activities for Dahl Memorial Nursing Home. While her primary job was to work in activities, Belle wasn't afraid to work wherever she was needed. She helped make meals, set up for meals, wash dishes, read to residents, and work with Alzheimer's patients. She continued to work at the nursing home even after she was diagnosed with cancer. Her family reports that she is still as fit as ever and can probably outrun most people much younger than she.

Belle also worked every Christmas at the home, ensuring the residents got the presents they were supposed to get and helping them write thank you letters for the gifts. She was involved with the spiritual health of the residents by reading devotionals to them. Belle worked at the home every Sunday when extra staff were needed to help residents attend chapel services. Through her giving spirit, she provides residents encouragement and inspiration every day. To her coworkers, she is also an inspiration. The nursing home CEO, Nadene Elmore says, “Whenever I see Belle, I tell her I want to be just like her when I grow up.” Belle entertains staff at lunches with stories and endless knowledge of the community's history.

Throughout the past 20 years, Belle has remained faithful in her love for her home and the eastern Montana prairie. I want to express my deep gratitude to Mrs. Belle Wendelburg for her dedication and service to her community, Montana, and our country.●

130TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LONGMONT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

• Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks to the Longmont Chamber of Commerce on its 130th anniversary. The material follows:

REMARKS TO THE LONGMONT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

I rise today to honor the Longmont Chamber of Commerce on its 130th anniversary. For more than 100 years, this chamber of commerce has been an important resource for businesses of all sizes in the Longmont area.

Colorado's Northern front range has experienced significant growth within the past few years, with an influx of residents moving to this region. Longmont, which sits in Weld and Boulder counties, is now home to nearly 100,000 people. The community's strong manufacturing, agriculture, and innovative technology companies have all contributed to Longmont's development.

The Longmont Chamber of Commerce has been an active participant in helping all industries succeed and grow. Annual events, like the “Unity in the Community” event, draw more than 1,000 representatives from business, government, and nonprofit organizations. In addition, Longmont has received multiple recognitions for its ability to problem solve, and make their community a better place to live for all residents. In 2006, Longmont received the All-America City Award from the National Civic League, and in 2008, was named as one of the Top 100 Best Places to Live by Money Magazine.

The Chamber of Commerce will continue to play a critical role in the growth and development of Longmont, as the Front Range sees an increase in population and business endeavors. Longmont is fortunate to have a dedicated organization like the Chamber helping its residents grow their businesses. Congratulations to the Longmont Chamber of Commerce on reaching this significant milestone.●

STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST FINALISTS

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD some of the finalist essays written by Vermont high school students as part of the seventh annual State of the Union essay contest conducted by my office.

The material follows:

EMMA CARLSON, ST JOHNSBURY ACADEMY JUNIOR (FINALIST)

America is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Home to world-leading companies in technology, consumer goods, pharmaceutical, and financial industries, the U.S. has a gross domestic product of 18.56 trillion dollars. And yet, poverty impacts people in both rural and urban areas who are working for minimum wage, elderly people who must live on a fixed income, and those who have lost their jobs. For a country as rich and resourceful as ours, we have the ability to solve the complex situation of poverty if we work together as a nation to find a solution.

Despite all of our wealth, we still have nearly 15% of people living below the poverty line. In 2016, the poverty threshold for a family of four is \$24,036 per year. These individuals are forced to make difficult choices between paying for food, medicine, heat, gas, or rent. Today we are seeing increase in the loss of manufacturing jobs, causing many additional people to become unemployed and drop below the poverty line. We are losing these jobs due to technological advances that have replaced a lot of workers, while other jobs have been moved to lower-cost countries because the labor to perform those jobs is much cheaper. Another cause of long term poverty is the lack of access to high-quality early education. In addition, children of families in poverty do not consistently receive a college education, and therefore, lack the skills and opportunities to acquire a well-paying job in today's economy.

Poverty in America needs to be solved for every individual to receive opportunities to live a quality life. There are several political debates as to how we can most effectively reduce poverty, and as a result, very little gets accomplished toward achieving this goal and poverty continues to be on the rise. The first step toward helping to lower poverty rates is to create more jobs in America. The majority of companies in the U.S. are small businesses. If the government can help small businesses thrive, it can create more jobs for those in poverty. By pulling families out of poverty, it gives their children better opportunities to receive a quality education, making it easier for them to get jobs to support their future families. This can help to break the vicious cycle of children being born into poverty without any control over it. In addition, we need to make a basic college education available and affordable to any citizen who is willing to obtain one. Without addressing the fundamental needs of education and jobs, the cycle of poverty in America will not be resolved.

Our politicians need to recognize that poverty is a serious problem, and must work together on common goals towards defeating it. There are many solutions and sometimes there will need to be compromises as to what the best solution may be. If we do not solve this poverty problem, our nation will continue to decline and overall living conditions will become worse for a lot more people.

MASON CHARLEBOIS, VERGENNES UNION HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR (FINALIST)

We do not live in a democracy anymore. We live in an oligarchy obscured by the word democracy. For too long our country, a nation established upon ideals of impeccable freedoms and liberties, has discarded the will and determination of the American people. The rich get richer while the poor grow poorer and there seems to exist no hope, no persistence, and no optimism in the people, but instead there resides feelings of despair and anguish. Why would I blame them? Today in our nation's capital, almost every bill that is made, every law that is passed, every donation given proclaims in a final respect, a refusal to aid the poor and middle class of the United States. The loyalties, affairs, and interests of our government no longer lie with the American populace, but with immense multinational corporations and the wealthy who value profit over people.

If you don't believe me, allow me to introduce some daunting numbers. According to Inequality.org, "Income disparities have become so pronounced that America's top 10 percent now average nearly nine times as much income as the bottom 90 percent." But wait, there's more. They also mention "Americans in the top 1 percent tower stunningly higher. They average over 38 times more income than the bottom 90 percent."

Citizens of the United States, this is the most critical issue of the century and possibly the history of America. This is not something that can be disregarded as irrelevant because this not only hurts you, it hurts every aspect that makes this country for the people.

So, what can we, the American people, do to vanquish this unjust society that we find ourselves giving in? First, we start by establishing a tax on institutions that make more than \$1,000,000 a year. For years, these monarchs of trade and commerce have sneaked through loopholes in legislation and haven't been paying their taxes. This is unacceptable in the country this great nation of America. Secondly, we dissolve major institutions or establishments that are taking advantage of Americans every single day. Wells Fargo, Capital One and Citigroup are just some of the financial institutions paying their fair share. Finally, it is vital for Americans to be educated on these issues in the first place. That is why I support a universal childcare schooling program where no one will be denied access to education based on their annual income. When we have an informed public, we will be one step closer to "the people's" victory: your victory.

To close, I would like to introduce a quote from the late Thomas Jefferson who said "Experience demands that man is the only animal which devours his own kind, for I can apply no milder term to the general prey of the rich on the poor." Change never takes place from the top down. It takes place when people, just like you and me, rise up in peaceful protest and say we want a different America. We want change.

RAINBOW CHEN, WINOOSKI HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR (FINALIST)

The "American Dream" states that every American has the opportunity to become successful if they work hard. In reality, the American Dream is a blatant lie that falsely guides citizens on an idealistic path. If our country truly wants to make the American Dream a reality, we must provide citizens with the opportunity to best change their lives: a new education system. Education will help us give the poor what they need, help vulnerable children from birth to five, and create a meaningful life for our citizens.

Right now, a poor citizen has a slim chance of rising to middle or upper-middle class. A study from the Pew Charitable Trust says that 70% of lower income households stay in the lower income bracket; only 30% rise to middle class or high-income status. In 2015, nearly 48% of Americans live in low-income and impoverished situations, including my own family. Vermont may only have a 12% poverty rate, but disadvantages in resources, opportunities, and financial support have prevented me from reaching the same level of achievement and opportunity as my middle class peers. We need to readjust food stamp and welfare programs to support low-income families. Educational opportunities for the poor must become equitable so that low-income students can perform as well as their middle-class peers. If education becomes equitable, we may see more people working and fewer children suffering.

A study from Concordia University showed that "... high-quality education early in a child's life leads to continued success later in school, at work ... spending resources toward education earlier in life is much more fiscally responsible than paying later to help a struggling child catch up." Our country tends to take early childhood for granted, ignoring the benefits of early education. If we increased paid maternity/paternity leave, children could engage with their families for a longer part of their childhood, helping them become the strong leaders of the future

throughout early education and their futures.

A flaw in the education system consistently prevents all students from achieving their potential. Schools need to push away from what a Purdue University study calls the "superchicken" model, which studies the "best chickens of the coop". This study showed that after separating the superchickens from the normal chickens, the superchickens pecked each other to death while the regular chickens proved successful regardless of productivity rates. In our educational system, we cannot place the "smartest kids" in one system, as it will damage all children's education.

Overall, education must be changed. Everyone needs access to learning opportunities, an equitable education for the poor and the average, and revitalize public school funding to ensure that all schools receive a fair share of distributed money. Fixing education will allow America to fix poverty, improve early childhood development, and allow more citizens to reach the American Dream. As the best country in the world, we need to create a possible dream, which means fixing the broken rungs in society's "ladder of success".

JESSICA DAIGLE, OXBOW HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR (FINALIST)

My fellow Americans, I have one question for you. How do we, the United States of America, have the best economy in the world, yet can't afford to give our people basic necessities? We're one of the richest countries in the world, but we can't feed our population, or give them healthcare? Why are so many people living without a roof over their head? We can't run from these problems; we must face them and find a solution.

First and foremost, we must address our food problem. In 2015 alone, 42.2 million Americans lived in food insecure households; 13.1 million were children. How are we supposed to build a strong future if we can't feed our children? In fact, one in five children are at risk of hunger. In Latino and African American societies, it's one in three. This is an urgent problem we must fix. We must stop throwing away edible food and find a way to give it to those without. Every year in the US, 40% of food is thrown away. This equates to \$165 billion's worth. All of this uneaten food could feed 25 million Americans. In order to feed those in need, we must stop wasting resources. We cannot keep throwing away perfectly edible food.

Healthcare is another demanding issue. In 2014, 29 million Americans didn't have health insurance; that's ten percent of our population. And, in that 29 million, 4.5 million were children. Those statistics are unacceptable. We must find a solution. In 2010, President Obama tried with the Affordable Care Act—commonly known as Obamacare. This worked well, as 20 million people were able to get insurance. Yet, Presidential Elect Donald Trump wants to repeal it. If he does, he must instate a new and more affordable healthcare system. We cannot go without it. What would those 29 million people do? They're relying on Obamacare, and can't afford to be without it.

Homelessness is defined as a social crisis in the United States today, as it should be, considering this fact: on any given night, about half a million Americans experience homelessness. Out of those people, 15% have been homeless for over a year, 50% are over the age of fifty, and 8% are veterans. Not to mention the 1.14 million veterans who are at risk of homelessness. Again, we're one of the richest countries in the world, yet we can't afford to house our population? We can't house those who fought for our country, for

our freedom? We must do something. We must create more safe havens or emergency shelters. We can't allow so many Americans to be living in such horrible conditions.

Clearly, these tasks will be difficult to take on. If we want to boast about our prestigious economy and wealth, we must first fix our problems with poverty in the lower class. We cannot be considered an esteemed country until every last one of us has food, healthcare, and a roof over our heads.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:41 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 290. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide for greater transparency and efficiency in the procedures followed by the Federal Communications Commission, and for other purposes.

H.R. 423. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to expand and clarify the prohibition on provision of misleading or inaccurate caller identification information, and for other purposes.

H.R. 460. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure the integrity of voice communications and to prevent unjust or unreasonable discrimination among areas of the United States in the delivery of such communications.

H.R. 511. An act to provide for consideration of the extension under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of nonapplication of No-Load Mode energy efficiency standards to certain security or life safety alarms or surveillance systems, and for other purposes.

H.R. 518. An act to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to exclude power supply circuits, drivers, and devices designed to be connected to, and power, light-emitting diodes or organic light-emitting diodes providing illumination from energy conservation standards for external power supplies, and for other purposes.

H.R. 555. An act to direct the Federal Communications Commission to amend its rules so as to prohibit the application to amateur stations of certain private land use restrictions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 582. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require multi-line telephone systems to have a configuration that permits users to directly initiate a call to 9-1-1 without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix, and for other purposes.

H.R. 587. An act to amend the Federal Power Act to provide that any inaction by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that allows a rate change to go into effect shall be treated as an order by the Commission for purposes of rehearing and court review.

H.R. 588. An act to direct the Federal Communications Commission to conduct a study on network resiliency during times of emergency, and for other purposes.

H.R. 590. An act to foster civilian research and development of advanced nuclear energy technologies and enhance the licensing and commercial deployment of such technologies.

H.R. 599. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to consolidate the reporting obligations of the Federal Communications Commission in order to improve congressional oversight and reduce reporting burdens.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 603 of the Depart-

ment of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-323), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Minority Leader appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission: Mr. Sam Farr of Carmel, California.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 553 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-328), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Minority Leader appoints the following individual to the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service: Mr. Edward T. Allard III of Los Angeles, California.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 290. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide for greater transparency and efficiency in the procedures followed by the Federal Communications Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 423. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to expand and clarify the prohibition on provision of misleading or inaccurate caller identification information, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 460. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure the integrity of voice communications and to prevent unjust or unreasonable discrimination among areas of the United States in the delivery of such communications; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 511. An act to provide for consideration of the extension under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of nonapplication of No-Load Mode energy efficiency standards to certain security or life safety alarms or surveillance systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 518. An act to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to exclude power supply circuits, drivers, and devices designed to be connected to, and power, light-emitting diodes or organic light-emitting diodes providing illumination from energy conservation standards for external power supplies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 555. An act to direct the Federal Communications Commission to amend its rules so as to prohibit the application to amateur stations of certain private land use restrictions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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H.R. 590. An act to foster civilian research and development of advanced nuclear energy technologies and enhance the licensing and commercial deployment of such technologies; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 599. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to consolidate the reporting obligations of the Federal Communications Commission in order to improve congressional oversight and reduce reporting burdens; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-577. A communication from the Secretary of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to violations of the Antideficiency Act that occurred in the Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Chief Information Officer, Treasury Symbol 7012/140113; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-578. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Implementation of the February 2016 Australia Group (AG) Intersectoral Decisions and the June 2016 AG Plenary Understandings" (RIN0694-AH14) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-579. A communication from the Program Specialist of the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Community Reinvestment Act Regulations" (RIN1557-AE11) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 18, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-580. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Addition of Certain Entities to the Entity List" (RIN0694-AH27) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 18, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-581. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revisions to the Export Administration Regulations (EAR): Control of Spacecraft Systems and Related Items the President Determines No Longer Warrant Control Under the United States Munitions List (USML)" (RIN0694-AG59) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 18, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-582. A communication from the Regulatory Affairs Specialist, Bureau of Ocean

Energy Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Oil and Gas and Sulphur Operations in the Outer Continental Shelf—Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustments" (RIN1010-AD95) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-583. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulations and Reports Clearance, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revisions to Rules Regarding the Evaluation of Medical Evidence" (RIN0960-AH51) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 18, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-584. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Health Care Programs: Fraud and Abuse: Revisions to the Office of Inspector General's Exclusion Authorities" (42 CFR Parts 1000, 1001, 1002, and 1006) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 18, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-585. A joint communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Attorney General, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program for fiscal year 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-586. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "2016 Actuarial Report on the Financial Outlook for Medicaid"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-587. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Bureau of the Fiscal Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulations Governing Retirement Savings Bonds" (RIN1530-AA13) (31 CFR Part 347) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-588. A communication from the Acting Director, Employee Services/Recruitment and Hiring, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Veterans' Preference" (RIN3206-AN47) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-589. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Financial Report of the United States Government for Fiscal Year 2016"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-590. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2016 through September 30, 2016 and the Semi-Annual Report of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-591. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability by Public Accommodations—Movie Theaters; Movie Captioning and Audio Description" (RIN1190-AA63) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-592. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program: Revisions to the Vaccine Injury Table" (RIN0906-AB01) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 18, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-593. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a performance report relative to the Animal Drug User Fee Act for fiscal year 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-594. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a performance report relative to the Animal Generic Drug User Fee Act for fiscal year 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-595. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects" (RIN0937-AA02) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 18, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-596. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities and the Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities Program; Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities" (RIN1820-AB74) received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-597. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-598. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Report to Congress: Indian Health Prescription Drug Monitoring"; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC-599. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "2015 Annual Report of the National Institute of Justice"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-600. A communication from the Director, Office of Information Policy, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revision of Department of Justice Freedom of Information Act Regulations" (RIN1105-AB51) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 18, 2017; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-601. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" (RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0143) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-602. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal

Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" (RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2015-3631) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-603. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" (RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-7425) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-604. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" (RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-6894) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-605. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" (RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9057) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-606. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" (RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-7424) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-607. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters" (RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2015-3929) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-608. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters" (RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2015-5807) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-609. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Helicopters" (RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-5247) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-610. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal

EC-632. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Kahului, HI"

((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2014-1068)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-633. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Class E Airspace; Healy, AK" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9159)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-634. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Extension of the Prohibition Against Certain Flights Within the Damascus (OSTT) Flight Information Region (FIR)" ((RIN2120-AK93) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0708)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-635. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of an Air Traffic Service (ATS) Route; Western United States" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2015-1345)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-636. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revocation of Offshore Airspace Areas; Control 1154H, Control 1173H, Control 1154L, and Control 1173L, California" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9263)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-637. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (62); Amdt. No. 3725" (RIN2120-AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-638. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (80); Amdt. No. 3723" (RIN2120-AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-639. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Red Grouper Management

Measures" (RIN0648-BG12) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-640. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries Off West Coast States; Coastal Pelagic Species Fisheries; Multi-Year Specifications for Monitored and Prohibited Harvest Species Stock Categories" (RIN0648-XC808) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-641. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Modifications to Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements" (RIN0648-BF83) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-642. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Chinook Salmon Bycatch Management in the Gulf of Alaska Trawl Fisheries; Amendment 103" (RIN0648-BF84) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-643. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Re-allocation of Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area" (RIN0648-XF012) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-644. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Groundfish Fishery by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Gulf of Alaska" (RIN0648-XE990) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-645. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Pacific Ocean Perch in the Bering Sea Subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area" (RIN0648-XE950) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-646. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revision of Airworthiness Standards for Normal, Utility, Acrobatic, and Commuter Category Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AK65) (Docket No. FAA-2015-1621)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of

the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-647. A communication from the Assistant Chief Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Pipeline Safety: Safety of Underground Natural Gas Storage Facilities" (RIN2137-AF22) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-648. A communication from the Chairman of the Office of Proceedings and the Office of Economics, Surface Transportation Board, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Civil Monetary Penalty Inflation Adjustment Rule" (Docket No. EP 716 (Sub-No. 1)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 18, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-649. A communication from the Chairman of the Office of Proceedings, Surface Transportation Board, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "United States Rail Service Issues—Performance Data Reporting" (Docket No. EP 724 (Sub-No. 4)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 18, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-650. A communication from the Trial Attorney, Federal Railroad Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Monetary Threshold for Reporting Rail Equipment Accidents/Incidents for Calendar Year 2017" (RIN2130-ZA14) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-651. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2015-5816)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-652. A communication from the Deputy Chief of the Disability Rights Office, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Transition from TTY to Real-Time Text Technology; Petition for Rulemaking to Update the Commission's Rules for Access to Support the Transition from TTY to Real-Time Text Technology, and Petition for Waiver of Rules Requiring Support of TTY Technology" ((FCC 16-169) (CG Docket No. 16-145 and GN Docket No. 15-178)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, without amendment:

S. Res. 20. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. GRASSLEY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, without amendment:

S. Res. 21. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CRAPO, from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, without amendment:

S. Res. 22. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. ISAKSON, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, without amendment:

S. Res. 24. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CRAPO for the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

*Benjamin S. Carson, Sr., of Florida, to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

By Mr. THUNE for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*Wilbur L. Ross, Jr., of Florida, to be Secretary of Commerce.

*Elaine L. Chao, of Kentucky, to be Secretary of Transportation.

By Mr. CORKER for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*Nikki R. Haley, of South Carolina, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

*Nikki R. Haley, of South Carolina, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

*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. FLAKE:

S. 195. A bill to expedite the deployment of highway construction projects; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. COONS):

S. 196. A bill to provide for a Public Health Emergency Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. UDALL, Mr. RISCH, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 197. A bill to amend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to improve compensation for workers involved in uranium mining, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. Kaine, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr.

PERDUE, Mr. NELSON, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. HATCH):

S. 198. A bill to require continued and enhanced annual reporting to Congress in the Annual Report on International Religious Freedom on anti-Semitic incidents in Europe, the safety and security of European Jewish communities, and the efforts of the United States to partner with European governments, the European Union, and civil society groups, to combat anti-Semitism, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. ENZI):

S. 199. A bill to authorize the use of the active capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 200. A bill to prohibit the conduct of a first-use nuclear strike absent a declaration of war by Congress; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 201. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that new wind turbines located near certain military installations are ineligible for the renewable electricity production credit and the energy credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. MORAN, Mr. HELLER, Mr. HATCH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 202. A bill to amend the Social Security Act relating to the use of determinations made by the Commissioner; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. HELLER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. DONNELLY):

S. 203. A bill to reaffirm that the Environmental Protection Agency may not regulate vehicles used solely for competition, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KING, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MURKOWSKI, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SASSE, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 204. A bill to authorize the use of unapproved medical products by patients diagnosed with a terminal illness in accordance with State law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HELLER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. LEE, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MORAN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 205. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the estate and

generation-skipping transfer taxes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. Kaine (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 206. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to allow the Secretary of Education to award job training Federal Pell Grants; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 207. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act relating to controlled substance analogues; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KING (for himself and Mr. BURR):

S. 208. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit fully refundable, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself and Mr. RISCH):

S. 209. A bill to authorize an additional district judgeship for the district of Idaho; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. COONS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. Kaine, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. NELSON, Mr. CASEY, and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 210. A bill to prohibit the application of certain restrictive eligibility requirements to foreign nongovernmental organizations with respect to the provision of assistance under part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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

S. 211. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit the Governor of a State to reject the resettlement of a refugee in that State unless there is adequate assurance that the alien does not present a security risk, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. 212. A bill to provide for the development of a United States strategy for greater human space exploration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 213. A bill to designate the wilderness within the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve in the State of Alaska as the Jay S. Hammond Wilderness Area; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 214. A bill to authorize the expansion of an existing hydroelectric project; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 215. A bill to authorize the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to issue an order continuing a stay of a hydroelectric license for the Mahoney Lake hydroelectric project in the State of Alaska, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 216. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to submit to Congress a report on the efforts of the Bureau of Reclamation to manage its infrastructure assets; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 217. A bill to amend the Denali National Park Improvement Act to clarify certain provisions relating to the natural gas pipeline authorized in the Denali National Park and Preserve; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. GARDNER:

S. 218. A bill to restrict the inclusion of social security account numbers on documents sent by mail by the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. SHELBY, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 219. A bill to provide the force and effect of law for certain regulations relating to the taking of double-crested cormorants to reduce depredation at aquaculture facilities and protect public resources; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SASSE (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BURR, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 220. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. LEE, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 221. A bill to allow a State to submit a declaration of intent to the Secretary of Education to combine certain funds to improve the academic achievement of students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 222. A bill to repeal provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and provide private health insurance reform, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. CASEY, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. HELLER, Mr. KING, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 223. A bill to provide immunity from suit for certain individuals who disclose potential examples of financial exploitation of senior citizens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 224. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit taking minors

across State lines in circumvention of laws requiring the involvement of parents in abortions decisions; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 225. A bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to modify provisions relating to certain land exchanges in the Mt. Hood Wilderness in the State of Oregon; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 226. A bill to exclude power supply circuits, drivers, and devices to be connected to, and power, light-emitting diodes or organic light-emitting diodes providing illumination or ceiling fans using direct current motors from energy conservation standards for external power supplies; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 227. A bill to impose nonnuclear sanctions with respect to Iran, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 228. A bill to ensure that small business providers of broadband Internet access service can devote resources to broadband deployment rather than compliance with cumbersome regulatory requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. REED):

S. 229. A bill to provide for the confidentiality of information submitted in requests for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. 230. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for facilities using a qualified methane conversion technology to provide transportation fuels and chemicals; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. THUNE, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 231. A bill to implement equal protection under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States for the right to life of each born and preborn human person; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 232. A bill to terminate the EB-5 Visa Program and to reallocate the employment creation visas to the other employment-based visa classifications; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BURR, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TESTER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. NELSON, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. KING, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BENNET, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 233. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out certain major medical facility leases of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 234. A bill to provide incentives for businesses to keep jobs in America; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCOTT (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr.

CORNYN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. HATCH, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 235. A bill to expand opportunity through greater choice in education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S.J. Res. 7. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States requiring that the Federal budget be balanced; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. TESTER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. CARDIN):

S.J. Res. 8. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. THUNE:

S. Res. 20. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. Res. 21. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on the Judiciary; from the Committee on the Judiciary; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. CRAPO:

S. Res. 22. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. Res. 23. A resolution establishing the Select Committee on Cybersecurity; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. ISAKSON:

S. Res. 24. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. UDALL, Mr. RISCH, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. BENNET):

S. Res. 25. A resolution designating January 27, 2017, as a national day of remembrance for people of the United States who, during the Cold War, worked and lived downwind from nuclear testing sites and were adversely affected by the radiation exposure generated by the above ground nuclear weapons testing; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCOTT (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CASSIDY,

Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. HATCH, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. ENZI, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. Res. 26. A resolution designating the week of January 22 through January 28, 2017, as "National School Choice Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. GARDNER):

S. Res. 27. A resolution honoring the life and achievements of Eugene A. "Gene" Cernan; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. Con. Res. 6. A concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 21

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) were added as cosponsors of S. 21, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

S. 26

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 26, a bill to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to require the disclosure of certain tax returns by Presidents and certain candidates for the office of the President, and for other purposes.

S. 27

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 27, a bill to establish an independent commission to examine and report on the facts regarding the extent of Russian official and unofficial cyber operations and other attempts to interfere in the 2016 United States national election, and for other purposes.

S. 47

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 47, a bill to prevent proposed regulations relating to restrictions on liquidation of an interest with respect to estate, gift, and generation-skipping transfer taxes from taking effect.

S. 54

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 54, a bill to prohibit the creation of an immigration-related registry program that classifies people on the basis of religion, race, age, gender, ethnicity, national origin, nationality, or citizenship.

S. 56

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 56, a bill to require each agency to repeal or amend 2 or more rules before issuing or amending a rule.

S. 80

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 80, a bill to protect the right of individuals to bear arms at water resources development projects.

S. 81

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 81, a bill to establish an advisory office within the Bureau of Consumer Protection of the Federal Trade Commission to prevent fraud targeting seniors, and for other purposes.

S. 86

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 86, a bill to amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the termination date for the Veterans Choice Program.

S. 104

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 104, a bill to provide for the vacating of certain convictions and expungement of certain arrests of victims of human trafficking.

S. 139

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 139, a bill to implement the use of Rapid DNA instruments to inform decisions about pretrial release or detention and their conditions, to solve and prevent violent crimes and other crimes, to exonerate the innocent, to prevent DNA analysis backlogs, and for other purposes.

S. 143

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 143, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for amounts paid by a spouse of a member of the Armed Forces for a new State license or certification required by reason of a permanent change in the duty station of such member to another State.

S. 145

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 145, a bill to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to more efficiently develop domestic sources of the minerals and mineral materials of strategic and critical importance to the economic and

national security and manufacturing competitiveness of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 166

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 166, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Muhammad Ali.

S. 168

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S. 168, a bill to amend and enhance certain maritime programs of the Department of Transportation.

S. 169

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) were added as cosponsors of S. 169, a bill to counter anti-Semitism at the United Nations, and for other purposes.

S. 170

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) were added as cosponsors of S. 170, a bill to provide for nonpreemption of measures by State and local governments to divest from entities that engage in commerce-related or investment-related boycott, divestment, or sanctions activities targeting Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 179

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 179, a bill to expand the use of E-Verify, to hold employers accountable, and for other purposes.

S. 184

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 184, a bill to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions.

S.J. RES. 5

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 5, a joint resolution removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment.

S.J. RES. 6

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of

S.J. Res. 6, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to equal rights for men and women.

S. CON. RES. 4

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 4, a concurrent resolution clarifying any potential misunderstanding as to whether actions taken by President-elect Donald Trump constitute a violation of the Emoluments Clause, and calling on President-elect Trump to divest his interest in, and sever his relationship to, the Trump Organization.

S. RES. 6

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 6, a resolution objecting to United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 and to all efforts that undermine direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians for a secure and peaceful settlement.

S. RES. 9

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 9, a resolution honoring in praise and remembrance the extraordinary life, steady leadership, and remarkable, 70-year reign of King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand.

S. RES. 15

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 15, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Mexico City policy should be permanently established.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. FLAKE:

S. 195. A bill to expedite the deployment of highway construction projects; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise to speak of legislation I am introducing today—the Transportation Investment Recalibration to Equality Act, or the TIRE Act. The TIRE Act would suspend the Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirement on all transportation-related infrastructure contracts. This would free up billions more in taxpayer dollars to be spent on jobs and on projects.

For those who are not familiar, Davis-Bacon is a Depression-era law that requires contractors on Federal construction projects to pay workers no less than the so-called local prevailing wage. Now, since its enactment over 80 years ago, the Department of Labor has been unable to devise an effective system for determining prevailing wages.

In fact, a 2004 Department of Labor inspector general report revealed that

Federal wage reporting surveys, which are a key metric used to determine prevailing wages, are fundamentally flawed. Of all the wage report surveys reviewed by the IG, 100 percent contained flaws. Let me say that again: 100 percent of all the surveys were flawed.

In addition, some of the wage surveys have not been updated since the 1980s. The bottom line is that every time Davis-Bacon applies to a Federal project, less money is going to construction and more money is going to meet onerous wage requirements. According to the Beacon Hill Institute, Davis-Bacon forces taxpayers to pay 22 percent above the market rate for labor on Federal infrastructure projects.

This is largely the result of disproportionate union participation in flawed wage surveys that skew Federal decisionmaking. Now, despite representing only 4 percent of the construction industry, unions are able to leverage their clout with Federal bureaucrats to inflate more than 60 percent of prevailing wages—talk about benefitting a few at the expense of the many.

Here is some perspective on what it means in real dollars. In 2016, the Federal Government spent \$23 billion on Federal construction projects, and 2.1 billion of these dollars was spent on above-rate labor costs.

Again, \$2.1 billion of the \$23 billion spent was on above-market-rate labor costs. This means that nearly 10 percent of all Federal construction spending last year went to inflated contracts. Not only does this translate into less construction funding going to actual construction, but according to George Mason University, it results in roughly 30,000 lost construction jobs.

So we lose both on the projects and the jobs that are created. More broadly, it discriminates against small businesses that don't have the resources to meet onerous Federal reporting and compliance requirements. Now, while it may be well-intentioned, Davis-Bacon ends up eliminating decent-paying construction jobs and hampering infrastructure spending.

I have often talked to State and local officials who will say that if you have two bridges across the same river, even if they are just 100 yards or 200 yards or a mile apart with the same underlying costs—or what should be the same underlying costs—if there are Federal moneys involved in one and no Federal moneys involved in the other, the one with Federal moneys will cost significantly more, and a big portion of that is because of Davis-Bacon requirements.

Now, in this body, we have to look for issues to bridge the partisan divide. It turns out that one of these issues is bridges, roads, dams, and other infrastructure projects. Fixing our Nation's crumbling infrastructure is a top priority for many in Congress, and the new administration has touted a large infrastructure package as one of its agenda items.

However, despite the bipartisan consensus on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue for infrastructure investment, visions for the road ahead actually diverge. With a projected pricetag north of \$800 billion for highways and bridges alone, every Federal dollar needs to be spent as efficiently as possible.

The TIRE Act will return wage determinations for Federal transportation projects where they belong, and that is the market.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 201. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that new wind turbines located near certain military installations are ineligible for the renewable electricity production credit and the energy credit; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 201

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 "Protection of Military Airfields from Wind Turbine Encroachment Act".

SEC. 2. NEW WIND TURBINES LOCATED NEAR CERTAIN MILITARY INSTALLATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1) of section 45(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking "Such term" and all that follows through the period and inserting the following: "Such term shall not include—

"(A) any facility with respect to which any qualified small wind energy property expenditure (as defined in subsection (d)(4) of section 25D) is taken into account in determining the credit under such section, or

"(B) any facility which is originally placed in service after the date of the enactment of the Protection of Military Airfields from Wind Turbine Encroachment Act and is located within a 30-mile radius of—

"(i) an airfield or airbase under the jurisdiction of a military department which is in active use, or

"(ii) an air traffic control radar site, weather radar site, or aircraft navigation aid which is—

"(I) owned or operated by the Department of Defense, and

"(II) a permanent land-based structure at a fixed location.".

(b) QUALIFIED SMALL WIND ENERGY PROPERTY.—Paragraph (4) of section 48(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D), and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

"(C) EXCEPTION.—The term 'qualifying small wind energy property' shall not include any property which is originally placed in service after the date of the enactment of the Protection of Military Airfields from Wind Turbine Encroachment Act and is located within a 30-mile radius of any property described in clause (i) or (ii) of section 45(d)(1)(B)."

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to property placed in service after the date of the enactment of this Act.

By Mr. Kaine (for himself and Mr. Portman):

S. 206. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to allow the Secretary of Education to award job training Federal Pell Grants; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, by 2020, it is estimated that 65 percent of all jobs will require at least some form of postsecondary education and training. The National Skills Coalition estimates that nearly half of all job openings between now and 2022 will be middle skill jobs that require education beyond high school, but not a four-year degree. While the number of students pursuing postsecondary education is growing, the supply of skilled workers still falls short of industry demand. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 5.5 million U.S. jobs are currently vacant, in part, because of a shortage of qualified workers.

Our current Federal higher education policy must be improved to help solve this problem. Pell Grants, needs-based grants for low-income and working students, can only be awarded towards programs that are over 600 clock hours or at least 15 weeks in length. These grants cannot be used to support many of the short-term occupational training programs at community and technical colleges and other institutions that provide skills and credentials employers need and recognize. When it comes to higher education, Federal policies need to support the demands of the changing labor market and support career pathways that align with industry demand. According to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, shorter-term educational investments pay off—the average postsecondary certificate holder has 20 percent higher lifetime earnings than individuals with only a high school diploma.

Today, I am pleased to introduce with my colleague, Senator Portman, the Jumpstart Our Businesses by Supporting Students or JOBS Act. The JOBS Act would close the “skills gap” by expanding Pell Grant eligibility to cover high-quality and rigorous short-term job training programs so workers can afford the skills training and credentials that are in high-demand in today’s job market. Since job training programs are shorter and less costly, Pell Grant awards would be half of the current discretionary Pell amount. The legislation defines eligible job training programs as those providing career and technical education instruction at an institution that provides at least 150 clock hours of instruction time over a period of at least 8 weeks and that provides training that meets the needs of the local or regional workforce. These programs must also provide students with licenses, certifications, or credentials that meet the hiring requirements of multiple employers in the field for which the job training is offered.

The JOBS Act also ensures that students who receive Pell Grants are earn-

ing high-quality postsecondary credentials by requiring that the credentials meet the standards under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, are recognized by employers, industry, or sector partnerships, and align with the skill needs of industries in the States or local economies. In Virginia, the Virginia Community College System has identified approximately 50 programs that would benefit from the JOBS Act including in the fields of manufacturing, architecture/construction, energy, health care, information technology, transportation, and business management and administration.

The JOBS Act is a commonsense, bipartisan bill that would help workers and employers succeed in today’s economy. As Congress works to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, I hope that my colleagues ensure that Pell Grants are accessible for individuals participating in high-quality, short-term occupational training programs that are leading to industry-recognized credentials and certificates.

By Mr. Cornyn:

S. 212. A bill to provide for the development of a United States strategy for greater human space exploration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. Cornyn. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 212

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 “Mapping a New and Innovative Focus on Our Exploration Strategy for Human Spaceflight Act of 2017” or the “MANIFEST for Human Spaceflight Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. REAFFIRMATION OF POLICY AND FINDINGS.

(a) REAFFIRMATION OF POLICY.—Congress reaffirms that the long-term goal of the human space flight and exploration efforts of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration shall be to expand permanent human presence beyond low-Earth orbit and to do so, where practical, in a manner involving international partners, as stated in section 202(a) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18312(a)).

(b) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) In accordance with section 204 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-267; 124 Stat. 2813), the National Academy of Sciences, through its Committee on Human Spaceflight, conducted a review of the goals, core capabilities, and direction of human space flight, and published the findings and recommendations in a 2014 report entitled “Pathways to Exploration: Rationales and Approaches for a U.S. Program of Human Space Exploration”.

(2) The Committee on Human Spaceflight included leaders from the aerospace, scientific, security, and policy communities. With input from the public, the Committee

on Human Spaceflight concluded that many practical and aspirational rationales together constitute a compelling case for human space exploration. These rationales include economic benefits, national security, national prestige, inspiring students and other citizens, scientific discovery, human survival, and a sense of shared destiny.

(3) The Committee on Human Spaceflight affirmed that Mars is the appropriate long-term goal for the human space flight program.

(4) The Committee on Human Spaceflight recommended that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration define a series of sustainable steps and conduct mission planning and technology development as needed to achieve the long-term goal of placing humans on the surface of Mars.

SEC. 3. HUMAN EXPLORATION STRATEGY.

(a) HUMAN EXPLORATION OF MARS.—Section 202(b) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18312(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(5) to achieve human exploration of Mars, including the establishment of a capability to extend human presence to the surface of Mars.”.

(b) EXPLORATION STRATEGY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with this subsection, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration shall submit an interim report and final report setting forth a strategy to achieve the objective in paragraph (5) of section 202(b) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010, as amended by subsection (a) of this section, through a series of successive, sustainable, free-standing, but complementary missions making robust utilization of cis-lunar space and employing the Space Launch System, Orion crew capsule, and other capabilities provided under titles III, IV, V, and IX of that Act (42 U.S.C. 18301 et seq.).

(2) STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS.—In developing the strategy under paragraph (1), the Administrator shall include—

(A) the utility of an expanded human presence in cis-lunar space toward enabling missions to various lunar orbits, the lunar surface, asteroids, Mars, the moons of Mars, and other destinations of interest for future human exploration and development;

(B) the utility of an expanded human presence in cis-lunar space for economic, scientific, and technological advances;

(C) the opportunities for collaboration with—

(i) international partners;

(ii) private industry; and

(iii) other Federal agencies, including missions relevant to national security or scientific needs;

(D) the opportunities specifically afforded by the International Space Station (ISS) to support high priority scientific research and technological developments useful in expanding and sustaining a human presence in cis-lunar space and beyond;

(E) a range of exploration mission architectures and approaches for the missions identified under paragraph (1), including capabilities for the Orion crew capsule and the Space Launch System;

(F) a comparison of architectures and approaches based on—

(i) assessed value of factors including cost effectiveness, schedule resiliency, safety, sustainability, and opportunities for international collaboration;

(ii) the extent to which certain architectures and approaches may enable new markets and opportunities for United States private industry, provide compelling opportunities for scientific discovery and technological excellence, sustain United States competitiveness and leadership, and address critical national security considerations and requirements; and

(iii) the flexibility of such architectures and approaches to adjust to evolving technologies, partners, priorities, and budget projections and constraints;

(G) measures for setting standards for ensuring crew health and safety, including limits regarding radiation exposure and countermeasures necessary to meet those limits, means and methods for addressing urgent medical conditions or injuries, and other such safety, health, and medical issues that can be anticipated in the conduct of the missions identified under paragraph (1);

(H) a description of crew training needs and capabilities (including space suits and life support systems) necessary to support the conduct of missions identified under paragraph (1);

(I) a detailed plan for prioritizing and phasing near-term intermediate destinations and missions identified under paragraph (1);

(J) an assessment of the recommendations of the report prepared in compliance with section 204 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-267; 124 Stat. 2813), including a detailed explanation of how the Administrator has ensured such recommendations have been, to the extent practicable, incorporated into the strategy under paragraph (1); and

(K) technical information as needed to identify interest from potential stakeholder or partner communities.

(3) INDEPENDENT REVIEW.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academy of Sciences to review and comment on each interim report pursuant to paragraph (1). Under the arrangement, the National Academy of Sciences shall review each interim report on the strategy described in paragraph (1) and identify the following:

(i) Matters in such interim report agreed upon by the National Academy of Sciences.

(ii) Matters in such interim report raising concerns for the National Academy of Sciences.

(iii) Such further recommendations with respect to matters covered by such interim report as the National Academy of Sciences considers appropriate.

(B) TIMING OF REVIEW AND COMMENT.—The Administrator shall ensure that the review and comment on an interim report provided for pursuant to subparagraph (A) is conducted in a timely manner to comply with the requirements of this subsection and, to the maximum extent practicable, to facilitate the incorporation of the comments of the National Academy of Sciences pursuant to subparagraph (A) into the applicable final report required by this subsection.

(4) DEADLINES.—

(A) INTERIM REPORTS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less than every five years thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the National Academy of Sciences an interim report on the strategy required by paragraph (1) in order to facilitate the independent review and comment on the strategy as provided for by paragraph (3).

(B) FINAL REPORTS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less than every five years thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a final report on the strategy re-

quired by paragraph (1), which shall include and incorporate the response of the National Academy of Sciences to the most recent interim report pursuant to paragraph (3).

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. LEE, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 221. A bill to allow a State to submit a declaration of intent to the Secretary of Education to combine certain funds to improve the academic achievement of students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, as a fifth-generation Montanan and product of Montana public schools from kindergarten through college, husband to an elementary school teacher, and father of four children, I understand how important a first rate education is to our kids' future. That is why I am reintroducing the Academic Partnerships Lead Us to Success, or A-PLUS, Act this Congress. This measure will help expand local control of our schools and return Federal education dollars where they belong: closer to the classrooms. By shifting control back to the States, individual and effective solutions can be created to address the multitude of unique challenges facing schools across the country. Through these "laboratories of democracy," Americans can watch and learn how students can benefit when innovative reforms are implemented on the local level. This bill would give states greater flexibility in allocating federal education funding and ensuring academic achievement in their schools. With A-PLUS, States would be freed from Washington-knows-best performance metrics and failed testing requirements. Should this legislation be adopted, states would need to adhere to all civil rights laws and work towards advancing educational opportunities for disadvantaged children as well. States would be held accountable by parents and teachers because a bright light would shine directly on the decisions made by State capitals and local school districts. With freedom from Federal mandates comes more responsibility, transparency, and accountability on States. It would also reduce the administrative and compliance burdens on state and local education agencies, and ensure greater public transparency in student academic achievement and the use of federal education funds. Increasing educational opportunity in Montana and across the country isn't going happen through federal mandates or one-size-fits-none regulations. We need to empower our States, our local school boards, our teachers, and parents to work together to develop solutions that best fit our kids' unique needs. That is precisely what my A-PLUS Act does. Washington is the problem—and we have the solutions in Montana and in states across the country. The A-PLUS Act goes a long ways towards returning the responsibility for our kids' education closer to home and reduces the influence of the Federal Govern-

ment over our classrooms. I want to thank Senators CRUZ, PERDUE, JOHNSON, LEE, and RUBIO for helping reintroduce the A-PLUS Act this Congress. I ask my other Senate colleagues to join us in empowering our schools to serve their students, not DC bureaucrats, and support this important piece of legislation.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mrs. McCASKILL, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. CASEY, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. HELLER, Mr. KING, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 223. A bill to provide immunity from suit for certain individuals who disclose potential examples of financial exploitation of senior citizens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, as Chairman of the Senate Aging Committee, I am delighted to introduce, with my good friend and former ranking member, Senator CLAIRE McCASKILL, the SeniorSafe Act of 2017, a bill that would help protect American seniors from financial fraud. I'm pleased that Senators ISAKSON, CASEY, TILLIS, KLOBUCHAR, WICKER, SHAHEEN, CAPITO, TESTER, BARRASSO, DONNELLY, HELLER, and KING have joined us in sponsoring this bill.

According to the GAO, financial fraud targeting older Americans is a growing epidemic that costs seniors an estimated \$2.9 billion annually. Stopping this tsunami of fraud is one of the top priorities of the Aging Committee. Last Congress, we held several hearings examining an endless variety of financial abuses targeting our nation's seniors. These range from the notorious IRS phone scam that burst onto the scene in 2015, to the incredible "drug mule" scam, where trusting seniors have been tricked by international narcotics traffickers into unwittingly serving as drug couriers, and then find themselves arrested and locked-up in foreign jails. The common denominator in these schemes involves innocent seniors falling prey and being tricked out of their hard-earned savings.

Sadly, not all scammers are strangers to their victims, in too many cases, seniors are exploited by someone they know well. Sometimes, that abuse is perpetrated by "friends" or family members who are handling the victim's affairs informally. Other times, the abuse is committed under color of a fiduciary relationship, such as a Power of Attorney or guardianship.

No matter the scheme, one factor is common to all—the fraudsters need to gain the trust and active cooperation of their victims. Without this, their schemes would fail. That is why it is so important that seniors recognize as quickly as possible the red flags that signal potential fraud.

Unfortunately, many seniors do not see these red flags. Sometimes they are

too trusting or are suffering from diminished capacity, but, just as often, they miss the signs because the swindlers who prey on them are extremely crafty and know how to sound convincing. Whatever the reason, a warning sign that can slip by a victim might trigger a second look by financial service representatives trained to spot common scams, who know enough about a senior's habits to question a transaction that doesn't look right. In our work on the Aging Committee, we have heard of many instances where quick action by bank and credit union employees has stopped a fraud in progress, saving seniors untold thousands of dollars.

Let me give you an example. Last year, an attorney in the small coastal city of Belfast, ME, was sentenced to 30 months in prison for bilking two elderly female clients out of nearly a half a million dollars over the course of several years.

The lawyer's brazen theft was uncovered when a teller at a local bank noticed that he was writing large checks to himself on his clients' accounts. When confronted by authorities, he offered excuses that the prosecutor later described as "breathtaking." For example, according to press reports, he put one of his clients into a nursing home to recover from a temporary medical condition, and then kept her there for four years until the theft of her funds came to light. Meanwhile, he submitted bills for "services," sometimes totaling \$20,000 a month, including charging her \$250 per hour for 6 to 7 hours to check on her house, even though his office was just a one-minute drive down the road.

In another example, in 2015, a senior citizen in Vassalboro, Maine, was looking to wire funds from his account at Maine Savings Federal Credit Union to an out-of-state location, supposedly to bail out a relative who was in jail. Something about this transaction did not sound right to the credit union employee. She asked the customer, and he said he had received a call from an "official" at the jail—but that "official" had instructed him not to speak to anyone about this. The "official," of course, turned out to be a con artist.

Fortunately, the credit union worker recognized this as a scam, and her quick thinking saved her customer from falling victim and losing his savings.

These stories demonstrate the critical nexus that financial institutions occupy between fraudsters and their victims. Their employees, if properly trained, can be the first line of defense protecting our seniors from these criminals. Regrettably, various state and federal laws can inadvertently impede efforts to protect seniors, because financial institutions that report suspected fraud can be exposed to litigation. The SeniorSafe Act encourages financial institutions to train their employees, and shields them from lawsuits when they make good faith, rea-

sonable reports of potential fraud to the proper authorities.

There is no doubt that financial fraud and scams targeting seniors is a growing problem that we must act on. Last November, the Aging Committee heard testimony from Jaye Martin, the Executive Director of Maine Legal Services for the Elderly, who told the Committee that her organization has seen a 24 percent increase in reports of elder abuse in just one year. Many of these cases involve financial fraud.

In a letter describing her support for the SeniorSafe Act, Ms. Martin says that:

In a landscape that includes family members who often wish to keep exploitation from coming to light because they are perpetrating the exploitation, the risk of facing potential nuisance or false complaints over privacy violations is all too real. This is a barrier that must be removed so that financial institutions will act immediately to report to the proper authorities upon forming a reasonable belief that exploitation is occurring. These professionals are on the front lines in the fight against elder financial exploitation and are often the only ones in a position to stop exploitation before it is too late.

Our bill is based on Maine's innovative SeniorSafe program, a collaborative effort by Maine's regulators, financial institutions, and legal organizations to educate bank and credit union employees on how to identify and help stop financial exploitation of older Mainers. This program, pioneered by Maine Securities Administrator Judith Shaw, also serves as the template for model legislation developed for adoption at the state level by the North American Securities Administrators Association, or NASAA. The SeniorSafe Act and NASAA's model state legislation are complementary efforts, and I am pleased that NASAA has endorsed our bill.

I am pleased that our bill has received bipartisan support in both houses of Congress. Last year, the House Financial Services Committee approved a version of the SeniorSafe Act by a vote of 59 to zero, and it passed the full House by voice vote in July. In the Senate, the SeniorSafe Act was cosponsored by a quarter of the Members of this body, balanced nearly evenly on both sides of the aisle, and was discharged out of the Banking Committee. Unfortunately, just one member of this body blocked it and prevented it from becoming law.

Besides receiving broad support in Congress, our bill has the support of a wide range of stakeholders, ranging from the State securities administrators and insurance commissioners to advocates for seniors.

Combating financial abuse of seniors requires regulators, law enforcement and social service agencies at all levels of government to work collaboratively with the private sector. The SeniorSafe Act encourages financial institutions to train their employees, and shields them from lawsuits when they make good faith, reasonable reports of potential fraud to the proper authorities.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that letters of support be printed in the RECORD.

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

LEGAL SERVICES
FOR THE ELDERLY,

Augusta, ME, December 5, 2016.

Re SeniorSafe (S. 2216).

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
Chair, Senate Special Committee on Aging,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR COLLINS: I want to thank you for inviting me to speak with the Senate Special Committee on Aging about the serious problem of financial exploitation of seniors by guardians and others in a position of power. I also want to thank you for your leadership in working to ensure there is training of financial institution employees in reporting elder abuse and an improvement in the timely reporting of financial exploitation when it is suspected through passage of the SeniorSafe Act. I strongly support this legislation that is based upon work done here in Maine.

I served for over two years on the working group that developed Maine's SeniorSafe training program for financial institution managers and employees. It is a voluntary training program. Through that work I came to fully appreciate the very real concerns of the financial industry regarding the consequences of violating, or being perceived as violating, the broad range of state and federal privacy laws that apply to their industry. I also came to appreciate that absent broad immunity for reporting of suspected financial exploitation, privacy regulations would continue to be a barrier to good faith reporting of suspected financial exploitation. In a landscape that includes family members who often wish to keep exploitation from coming to light because they are perpetrating the exploitation, the risk of facing potential nuisance or false complaints over privacy violations is all too real.

This is a barrier that must be removed so that financial institution employees will act immediately to make a report to the proper authorities upon forming a reasonable belief that exploitation is occurring. These professionals are on the front lines in the fight against elder financial exploitation and are often the only ones in a position to stop exploitation before it is too late.

I want to add that tying the grant of immunity to required training for not just supervisors, compliance officers, and legal advisors, but to all who come in contact with seniors as a part of their regular duties, will have the direct result of bringing more cases of exploitation to the timely attention of the proper authorities because it will significantly increase the knowledge and awareness in the industry of the red flags for elder abuse. In Maine, where our training program is entirely voluntary and carries no legal status or benefit, we have already seen what a difference training can make.

SeniorSafe is a much needed step in the fight against financial exploitation of seniors and there is no doubt it will make our nation's seniors safer. I thank you again for your leadership in this important area.

Sincerely,

JAYE L. MARTIN,
Executive Director.

NORTH AMERICAN SECURITIES
ADMINISTRATION ASSOCIATION, INC.,
Washington, DC, January 24, 2017.

Re The SeniorSafe Act of 2017.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
Chair, U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR COLLINS: On behalf of the North American Securities Administrators Association ("NASAA"), I am writing to express strong support for your work to better protect vulnerable adults from financial exploitation through the introduction of the SeniorSafe Act of 2017. Your legislation will better protect persons aged 65 and older from financial exploitation by increasing the likelihood it will be identified by financial services professionals, and by removing barriers to reporting it, so that together we as state securities regulators and other appropriate governmental authorities can help stop it.

Senior financial exploitation is a growing problem across the country. Many in our elderly population are vulnerable due to social isolation and distance from family, caregiver, and other support networks. Indeed, evidence suggests that as many as one out of every five citizens over the age of 65 has been victimized by a financial fraud. To be successful in combating senior financial exploitation, state and federal policymakers must come together to weave a new safety net for our elderly, breaking down barriers for those who are best positioned to identify red flags early on and to encourage reporting and referrals to appropriate local, county, state, and federal agencies, including law enforcement.

The SeniorSafe Act consists of several essential features. First, to promote and encourage reporting of suspected elderly financial exploitation by financial services professionals, who are positioned to identify and report "red flags" of potential exploitation, the bill would incentivize financial services employees to report any suspected exploitation by making them immune from any civil or administrative liability arising from such a report, provided that they exercised due care, and that they make these reports in good faith. Second, in order to better assure that financial services employees have the knowledge and training they require to identify "red flags" associated with financial exploitation, the bill would require that, as a condition of receiving immunity, financial institutions undertake to train certain personnel regarding the identification and reporting of senior financial exploitation.

The SeniorSafe Act's objectives and benefits are far-reaching. Older Americans stand to benefit directly from such reporting, because early detection and reporting will minimize their financial losses from exploitation, and because improved protection of their finances ultimately helps preserve their financial independence and their personal autonomy. Financial institutions stand to benefit, as well, through preservation of their reputation, increased community recognition, increased employee satisfaction, and decreased uninsured losses.

In conclusion, state securities regulators strongly support passage of the SeniorSafe Act of 2017. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or Michael Canning, NASAA Director of Policy, if we may be of any additional assistance.

Sincerely,

MIKE ROTHMAN,
NASAA President and Minnesota,
Commissioner of Commerce.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and
Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 228. A bill to ensure that small business providers of broadband Inter-

net access service can devote resources to broadband deployment rather than compliance with cumbersome regulatory requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, small businesses are the backbone of America. They generate more than half of the country's private GDP and support millions of families. In Montana, small businesses are innovating, offering new products and services, and creating jobs.

The business community relies on the Internet to access the global marketplace. In rural states like Montana where it is costly to provide internet access, consumers and businesses depend on small businesses to provide connectivity. Without small broadband providers, many Montanans would not have the internet access that most of us take for granted.

Burdensome regulations like the FCC's net neutrality rules are strangling our small businesses and preventing growth and investment. The enhanced transparency requirements in particular require small businesses to disclose an excess amount of information including network packet loss, network performance by geographic area, network performance during peak usage, network practices concerning a particular group of users, triggers that activate network practices, and the list goes on. Small companies operate with a small team of employees and do not have a team of attorneys dedicated to regulatory compliance. Small businesses simply do not have the bandwidth to take on additional regulatory burdens.

That is why I am proud to introduce the Small Business Broadband Deployment Act of 2017 with my colleague Senator MANCHIN. The bill provides a temporary small business exception to the net neutrality enhanced transparency requirements. There is broad support in the record for this exception, including support from the American Cable Association, Rural Wireless Association, Competitive Carriers Association, Wireless Internet Service Providers Association, CTIA—The Wireless Association, Rural Broadband Provider Coalition, WTA—Advocates for Rural Broadband.

Providing relief from burdensome disclosure rules will allow small businesses to focus on deploying infrastructure and serving their customers rather than spending time on regulatory compliance. I ask my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this much needed legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 228

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 "Small Business Broadband Deployment Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. SMALL BUSINESS EXEMPTION.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and
(B) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives;

(2) the term "broadband Internet access service" has the meaning given the term in section 8.2 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations;

(3) the term "Commission" means the Federal Communications Commission; and

(4) the term "small business" means any provider of broadband Internet access service that has not more than 250,000 subscribers.

(b) EXCEPTION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES.—The enhancements to the transparency rule of the Commission under section 8.3 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, as described in paragraphs 162 through 184 of the Report and Order on Remand, Declaratory Ruling, and Order of the Commission with regard to protecting and promoting the open Internet (adopted by the Commission on February 26, 2015) (FCC 15-24), shall not apply to any small business.

(c) SUNSET.—Subsection (b) shall not have any force or effect after the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(d) REPORT BY FCC.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that contains the recommendations of the Commission, and data supporting those recommendations, regarding whether—

(1) the exception provided under subsection (b) should be made permanent; and

(2) the definition of the term "small business" for the purposes of the exception provided under subsection (b) should be modified from the definition in subsection (a)(4).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 20—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. THUNE submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 20

Resolved, That, in carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under Rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized from March 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017, October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018, and October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. (a) The expenses of the committee for the period from March 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017, under this resolution shall not exceed \$3,879,581, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended); and

(2) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946).

(b) For the period October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018, expenses of the committee under this resolution shall not exceed \$6,650,710, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultations, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended); and

(2) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946).

(c) For the period October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, expenses of the committee under this resolution shall not exceed \$2,771,129, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended); and

(2) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946).

SEC. 3. The committee shall report its findings, together with such recommendations for legislation as it deems advisable, to the Senate at the earliest practicable date, but not later than February 28, 2019.

SEC. 4. Expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee, except that vouchers shall not be required—

(1) for the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(2) for the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper, United States Senate;

(3) for the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery, United States Senate;

(4) for payments to the Postmaster, United States Senate;

(5) for the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper, United States Senate;

(6) for the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(7) for the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper, United States Senate.

SEC. 5. There are authorized such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee from March 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017, October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018, and October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019.

SENATE RESOLUTION 21—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. GRASSLEY submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on the Judiciary; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 21

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on the Judiciary (in this resolution referred to as the “committee”) is authorized from March 1, 2017 through February 28, 2019, in its discretion, to—

(1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this resolution shall not exceed \$5,461,388, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$116,667 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i)); and

(2) not to exceed \$11,667 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018 under this resolution shall not exceed \$9,362,379, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i)); and

(2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this resolution shall not exceed \$3,900,991, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$83,333 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i)); and

(2) not to exceed \$8,333 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. REPORTING LEGISLATION.

The committee shall report its findings, together with such recommendations for legislation as it deems advisable, to the Senate at the earliest practicable date, but not later than February 28, 2019.

SEC. 4. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for “Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations” of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017;

(2) for the period October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019.

SENATE RESOLUTION 22—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. CRAPO submitted the following resolution; which was referred from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 22

Resolved, That, in carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized from March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018, and October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, in its discretion (1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate, (2) to employ personnel, and (3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2(a). The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017, under this resolution shall not exceed \$3,119,153 of which amount (1) not to exceed \$8,370 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended), and (2) not to exceed \$503 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946).

(b) For the period October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018, expenses of the committee under this resolution shall not exceed \$5,347,119 of which amount (1) not to exceed \$14,348 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended), and (2) not to exceed \$861 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946).

(c) For the period of October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, expenses of the committee under this resolution shall not exceed \$2,227,966 of which amount (1) not to exceed \$5,978 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, as amended), and (2) not to exceed \$358 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946).

SEC. 3. The committee shall report its findings, together with such recommendations for legislation as it deems advisable, to the Senate at the earliest practicable date, but not later than February 28, 2017.

SEC. 4. Expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the Chairman of the committee, except that vouchers shall not be required (1) for the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate, or (2) for the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper, United States Senate, or (3) for the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery, United States Senate, or (4) for payments to the Postmaster, United States Senate, or (5) for the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper, United States Senate, or (6) for the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services, or (7) for payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper, United States Senate.

SEC. 5. There are authorized such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee from March 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017; October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018; and October 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, to be paid from the Appropriations account for "Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations."

SENATE RESOLUTION 23—ESTABLISHING THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON CYBERSECURITY

Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. COONS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 23

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SELECT COMMITTEE ON CYBERSECURITY.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term "cybersecurity" means the protection or defense of cyberspace from cyberattacks;

(2) the term "cybersecurity breach" means an attack via cyberspace, targeting an enterprise's use of cyberspace for the purpose of—

(A) disrupting, disabling, destroying, or maliciously controlling a computing environment or infrastructure; or

(B) destroying the integrity of data or stealing controlled information; and

(3) the term "cyberspace" means the global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent network of information systems infrastructures (including the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers).

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a select committee of the Senate to be known as the Select Committee on Cybersecurity (in this resolution referred to as the "select committee")—

(1) to oversee and make continuing studies of and recommendations regarding cybersecurity threats to the United States; and

(2) which may report by bill or otherwise on matters within its jurisdiction.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The select committee shall be composed of 21 members as follows:

(A) The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Appropriations.

(B) The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Armed Services.

(C) The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

(D) The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

(E) The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Foreign Relations.

(F) The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

(G) The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence.

(H) The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

(I) Five members who shall be appointed from the Senate at large.

(2) MEMBERS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES.—If the Chairman or Ranking Member of a committee named in subparagraphs (A) through (H) of paragraph (1) chooses not to serve on the select committee, the Chairman or Ranking Member of such committee, respectively, shall appoint 1 member of such committee to the select committee.

(3) APPOINTMENT OF OTHER MEMBERS.—The Majority Leader shall appoint 3 of the members under paragraph (1)(I) and the Minority Leader shall appoint 2 of the members under paragraph (1)(I).

(4) EX OFFICIO MEMBERS.—The Majority Leader and Minority Leader shall serve as ex officio, nonvoting members of the select committee.

(5) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—At the beginning of each Congress, the Majority Leader shall select a chairperson of the select committee and the Minority Leader shall select a vice chairperson for the select committee.

(d) SUBCOMMITTEES AUTHORIZED.—The select committee may be organized into subcommittees. Each subcommittee shall have a chairperson and a vice chairperson who are selected by the chairperson and vice chairperson of the select committee, respectively.

(e) JURISDICTION.—There shall be referred to the select committee all proposed legislation, messages, petitions, memorials, and other matters relating to the following:

(1) Domestic and foreign cybersecurity risks (including state-sponsored threats) to the United States, including to—

(A) the computer systems of the United States;

(B) the infrastructure of the United States;

(C) citizens of the United States;

(D) corporations and other businesses in the United States; and

(E) the commerce of the United States.

(2) The activities of any department or agency relating to preventing, protecting

against, or responding to cybersecurity threats to the United States, and relevant incidents or actions.

(3) The organization or reorganization of any department or agency to the extent that the organization or reorganization relates to a function or activity involving preventing, protecting against, or responding to cybersecurity threats to the United States, and relevant incidents or actions.

(4) Authorizations for appropriations, both direct and indirect, for preventing, protecting against, or responding to cybersecurity threats to the United States, and relevant incidents or actions.

(f) AUTHORITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For the purposes of this resolution, the select committee is authorized in its discretion—

(A) to make investigations into any matter within its jurisdiction;

(B) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(C) to employ personnel;

(D) to hold hearings;

(E) to sit and act at any time or place during the sessions, recesses, and adjourned periods of the Senate;

(F) to require, by subpoena or otherwise, the attendance of witnesses and the production of correspondence, books, papers, and documents;

(G) to take depositions and other testimony and authorize employees of the select committee to take depositions and other testimony;

(H) to procure the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof, in accordance with section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i));

(I) with the prior consent of the government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency;

(J) to make recommendations and report legislation on matters within its jurisdiction; and

(K) permit any personal representative of the President, designated by the President to serve as a liaison to the select committee, to attend any closed meeting of the select committee.

(2) OATHS.—The chairperson of the select committee or any member thereof may administer oaths to witnesses.

(3) SUBPOENAS.—

(A) AUTHORIZATION OF SUBPOENAS.—The issuance of a subpoena may only be authorized by the select committee upon an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the select committee, which vote may not be held before the time that is 48 hours after notice of the request to authorize the issuance of the subpoena is provided to each member of the select committee, absent unanimous consent.

(B) ISSUANCE.—A subpoena authorized by the select committee—

(i) may be issued under the signature of the chairperson, the vice chairperson, or any member of the select committee designated by the chairperson; and

(ii) may be served by any person designated by the chairperson, the vice chairperson, or other member signing the subpoena.

(g) OBTAINING INFORMATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The select committee shall obtain from the President and the heads of departments and agencies the information relevant to cybersecurity risks and threats required to ensure that the members of the select committee have complete and current information relating to cybersecurity activities and threats, which may include obtaining written reports reviewing—

(A) the activities carried out by the department or agency concerned to prevent, protect against, or respond to cybersecurity threats;

(B) the cybersecurity threats from within the United States and from foreign countries that are directed at the United States or its interests;

(C) previously conducted or anticipated covert actions relating to cybersecurity; and

(D) any significant cybersecurity breaches that could—

(i) affect the diplomatic, political, economic, or military relations of the United States with other countries or groups; or

(ii) impose a major financial cost on the Federal Government, citizens of the United States, corporations or other businesses in the United States, or the commerce of the United States.

(2) ACCESS OF MEMBERS TO INFORMATION.—Each member of the select committee shall have equal and unimpeded access to information collected or otherwise obtained by the select committee.

(3) CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—No employee of the select committee or any person engaged by contract or otherwise to perform services for or at the request of the select committee shall be given access to any classified information by the select committee unless the employee or person has—

(i) agreed in writing and under oath to be bound by the rules of the Senate (including the jurisdiction of the Select Committee on Ethics) and of the select committee as to the security of such information during and after the period of the employment or contractual agreement with the select committee; and

(ii) received an appropriate security clearance, as determined by the select committee, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence.

(B) TYPE OF CLEARANCE.—The type of security clearance to be required in the case of any employee or person described in subparagraph (A) shall, within the determination of the select committee, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, be commensurate with the sensitivity of the classified information to which the employee or person will be given access by the select committee.

(4) PROVISION OF INFORMATION BY DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The head of each department and agency shall keep the select committee fully and currently informed with respect to cybersecurity activities and threats, including activities to prevent, protect against, or respond to cybersecurity threats and any significant anticipated activities relating to cybersecurity which are the responsibility of or engaged in by the department or agency.

(B) INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS.—The head of any department or agency involved in any cybersecurity activities shall furnish any information or document in the possession, custody, or control of the department or agency, or person paid by the department or agency, whenever requested by the select committee with respect to any matter within the jurisdiction of the select committee.

(C) ANNUAL REPORTS TO SELECT COMMITTEE.—The Director of National Intelligence, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Secretary of Commerce shall each submit to the select committee an annual report on cyber threats.

(h) PERSONNEL PROVISIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In addition to other committee staff selected by the select com-

mittee, the select committee shall hire or appoint 1 employee for each member of the select committee to serve as the designated representative of the member on the select Committee. The select Committee shall only hire or appoint an employee chosen by a member of the select committee for whom the employee will serve as the designated representative on the select committee.

(2) SUPPLEMENT TO BUDGET.—The select committee shall be afforded a supplement to its budget, to be determined by the Committee on Rules and Administration, to allow for the hire of each employee who fills the position of designated representative to the select committee. The designated representative shall have office space and appropriate office equipment in the select committee spaces. Designated personal representatives shall have the same access to committee staff, information, records, and databases as select committee staff, as determined by the chairperson and vice chairperson.

(3) REQUIREMENTS FOR DESIGNATED EMPLOYEES.—Each designated employee shall meet all the requirements of relevant statutes, Senate rules, and committee security clearance requirements for employment by the select committee.

(4) DIVISION OF FUNDS.—Of the amounts made available to the select committee for personnel—

(A) not more than 60 percent shall be under the control of the chairperson; and

(B) not less than 40 percent shall be under the control of the vice chairperson.

(i) COMMITTEE RULES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The select committee shall adopt rules (not inconsistent with the rules of the Senate and in accordance with rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate) governing the procedure of the select committee, which shall include addressing how often the select committee shall meet, meeting times and location, type of notifications, notices of hearings, duration of the select committee, and records of the select committee after committee activities are complete.

(2) UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED.—The select committee may only adopt rules under paragraph (1) by a unanimous vote of the voting members of the select committee.

SENATE RESOLUTION 24—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. ISAKSON submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 24

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs (in this resolution referred to as the "committee") is authorized from March 1, 2017 through February 28, 2019, in its discretion, to—

(1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and

the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 under this resolution shall not exceed \$1,283,522, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$2,900 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$1,750 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018 under this resolution shall not exceed \$2,200,323, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$5,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$3,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2019.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019 under this resolution shall not exceed \$916,801, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$2,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$1,250 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. REPORTING LEGISLATION.

The committee shall report its findings, together with such recommendations for legislation as it deems advisable, to the Senate at the earliest practicable date, but not later than February 28, 2019.

SEC. 4. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for "Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations" of the Senate such sums as may

be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017;

(2) for the period October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019.

SENATE RESOLUTION 25—DESIGNATING JANUARY 27, 2017, AS A NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES WHO, DURING THE COLD WAR, WORKED AND LIVED DOWNWIND FROM NUCLEAR TESTING SITES AND WERE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE RADIATION EXPOSURE GENERATED BY THE ABOVE GROUND NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING

Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. UDALL, Mr. RISCH, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. BENNET) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 25

Whereas, on January 27, 1951, the first of years of nuclear weapons tests was conducted at a site known as the Nevada Proving Ground, located approximately 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas, Nevada;

Whereas the extensive testing at the Nevada Proving Ground occurred just years after the first nuclear weapon test, which was conducted on July 16, 1945, at what is known as the Trinity Atomic Test Site, located approximately 35 miles south of Socorro, New Mexico;

Whereas many people of the United States who, during the Cold War, worked and lived downwind from nuclear testing sites (referred to in this preamble as the “downwinders”) were adversely affected by the radiation exposure generated by the above ground nuclear weapons testing, and some of the downwinders sickened as a result of the radiation exposure;

Whereas the downwinders paid a high price for the development of a nuclear weapons program for the benefit of the United States; and

Whereas the downwinders deserve to be recognized for the sacrifice they have made for the defense of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates January 27, 2017, as a national day of remembrance for people of the United States who, during the Cold War, worked and lived downwind from nuclear testing sites and were adversely affected by the radiation exposure generated by the above ground nuclear weapons testing; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to support and participate in appropriate ceremonies, programs, and other activities to commemorate that national day of remembrance.

SENATE RESOLUTION 26—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF JANUARY 22 THROUGH JANUARY 28, 2017, AS “NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK”

Mr. SCOTT (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. HATCH, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. RUBIO,

Mr. DAINES, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. JOHN-SON, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. ENZI, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 26

Whereas providing a diversity of choices in K–12 education empowers parents to select education environments that meet the individual needs and strengths of their children;

Whereas high-quality K–12 education environments of all varieties are available in the United States, including traditional public schools, public charter schools, public magnet schools, private schools, online academies, and home schooling;

Whereas talented teachers and school leaders in each of the education environments prepare children to achieve their dreams;

Whereas more families than ever before in the United States actively choose the best education for their children;

Whereas more public awareness of the issue of parental choice in education can inform additional families of the benefits of proactively choosing challenging, motivating, and effective education environments for their children;

Whereas the process by which parents choose schools for their children is non-political, nonpartisan, and deserves the utmost respect; and

Whereas hundreds of organizations, more than 9,000 schools, and millions of individuals in the United States celebrate the benefits of educational choice during the 7th annual National School Choice Week, held the week of January 22 through January 28, 2017: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of January 22 through January 28, 2017, as “National School Choice Week”;

(2) congratulates students, parents, teachers, and school leaders from K–12 education environments of all varieties for their persistence, achievements, dedication, and contributions to society in the United States;

(3) encourages all parents, during National School Choice Week, to learn more about the education options available to them; and

(4) encourages the people of the United States to hold appropriate programs, events, and activities during National School Choice Week to raise public awareness of the benefits of opportunity in education.

SENATE RESOLUTION 27—HONORING THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF EUGENE A. “GENE” CERNAN

Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. GARDNER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 27

Whereas Gene Cernan was born on March 14, 1934, in Chicago, Illinois, was raised in the suburban towns of Bellwood and Maywood, and graduated from Proviso Township High School;

Whereas Gene Cernan began his career as a basic flight trainee in the United States Navy;

Whereas Gene Cernan was one of fourteen astronauts selected by NASA in October 1963 to participate in the Gemini and Apollo programs;

Whereas Gene Cernan was the second American to have walked in space having spanned the circumference of the world twice in a little more than 2 and a half hours in 1966 during the Gemini 9 mission;

Whereas Gene Cernan served as the lunar module pilot for Apollo 10 in 1969, which was referred to as the “dress rehearsal” for Apollo 11’s historic landing on the Moon;

Whereas Gene Cernan was commander of Apollo 17 in 1972, during the last human mission to the Moon;

Whereas Gene Cernan maintains the distinction of being the last man to have left his footprints on the surface of the Moon;

Whereas Gene Cernan was one of the three men to have flown to the Moon on two occasions;

Whereas Gene Cernan logged 566 hours and 15 minutes in space, of which more than 73 hours were spent on the surface of the Moon;

Whereas Gene Cernan and the crew of Apollo 17 set records that still stand today, for longest manned lunar landing flight, longest lunar surface extra vehicular activities, largest lunar sample return, and longest time in lunar orbit;

Whereas Gene Cernan retired from the Navy after 20 years and ended his NASA career in July 1976; and

Whereas on January 16, 2016, Gene Cernan passed away in Houston, Texas, leaving behind a vibrant history of space exploration and advocacy for NASA, a legacy of inspiring young people to “dream the impossible”, and a documentary that encourages continual human space exploration:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate honors the life of Gene Cernan, a Naval aviator, fighter pilot, electrical engineer, and the last astronaut to walk on the Moon.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 6—SUPPORTING THE LOCAL RADIO FREEDOM ACT

Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. CON. RES. 6

Whereas the United States enjoys broadcasting and sound recording industries that are the envy of the world due to the symbiotic relationship that has existed among those industries for many decades;

Whereas for nearly a century, Congress has rejected repeated calls by the recording industry to impose a performance fee on local radio stations for simply playing music on the radio, as such a fee would upset the mutually beneficial relationship between local radio and the recording industry;

Whereas local radio stations provide free publicity and promotion to the recording industry and performers of music in the form of radio air play, interviews with performers, introduction of new performers, concert promotions, and publicity that promotes the sale of music, concert tickets, ring tones, music videos, and associated merchandise;

Whereas committees in the Senate and the House of Representatives have previously reported that “the sale of many sound recordings and the careers of many performers have benefitted considerably from airplay and other promotional activities provided by both noncommercial and advertiser-supported, free over-the-air broadcasting”;

Whereas local radio broadcasters provide tens of thousands of hours of essential local news and weather information during times of national emergencies and natural disasters, such as on September 11, 2001, and during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as well as

public affairs programming, sports, and hundreds of millions of dollars worth of time for public service announcements and local fund raising efforts for worthy charitable causes, all of which are jeopardized if local radio stations are forced to divert revenues to pay for a new performance fee;

Whereas there are many thousands of local radio stations that will suffer severe economic hardship if any new performance fee is imposed, as will many other small businesses that play music, including bars, restaurants, retail establishments, sports and other entertainment venues, shopping centers, and transportation facilities; and

Whereas the hardship that would result from a new performance fee would hurt businesses in the United States and ultimately the consumers in the United States who rely on local radio for news, weather, and entertainment, and such a performance fee is not justified when the current system has produced the most prolific and innovative broadcasting, music, and sound recording industries in the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress should not impose any new performance fee, tax, royalty, or other charge—

(1) relating to the public performance of sound recordings on a local radio station for broadcasting sound recordings over the air; or

(2) on any business for the public performance of sound recordings on a local radio station broadcast over the air.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I have ten requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 24, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 24, 2017, at 10 a.m.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 24, 2017, at 10:15 a.m., in room SR-253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 24, 2017, in room SD-215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 24, 2017, at 12 p.m.

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 January 24, 2017, at 2:30 p.m.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 24, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 24, 2017, at 10:30 a.m. in room 428A of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled "Nomination of Linda E. McMahon to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration."

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 24, 2017, at 3 p.m. in room SR-418 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 24, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. in room SH-219 of the Senate Hart Office Building.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Christopher Friese, from my staff, be granted floor privileges for the duration of today's proceedings.

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Patrick Reilly, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of this Congress.

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

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 26, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 26) designating the week of January 22 through January 28, 2017, as "National School Choice Week."

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 26) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

APPOINTMENTS AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the upcoming adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President pro tempore, and the majority and minority leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences, or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses, or by order of the Senate, and that they be printed in the RECORD.

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

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2017, AND MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. on Friday, January 27, for a pro forma session only, with no business being conducted; further, that when the Senate adjourns on Friday, January 27, it next convene on Monday, January 30, at 3 p.m.; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; further, that at 5 p.m. on Monday, January 30, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of Calendar No. 2, Rex W. Tillerson to be Secretary of State, and that there be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form; finally, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the cloture vote on the Tillerson nomination occur at 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators SCHATZ and SULLIVAN.

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

The Senator from Hawaii.

MEDICAID

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, more than 50 years ago, when Medicaid was

created, Congress made a smart decision. Lawmakers designed a program so that if health care costs rise, if the economy starts to struggle, Medicaid would be there for the American people, no matter what.

A couple of days ago, the counselor to the President said that, as part of the replacement plan for the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid will be converted to block grants. Let's be clear about what this means.

People like grants, and they like Medicaid. Maybe they are not sure about whether they like block grants. Whether intentional or not, this kind of technocratic, bureaucratic language can trick people. It sounds fine. Maybe it is even the smart thing to do.

Let me be totally explicit about what block granting Medicaid actually means. It means cutting Medicaid. It means less money for Medicaid. It means less health care for people. It is a euphemism. It is not quite a lie, but it is a way of describing something so that you don't know exactly what it is. They are calling it a block grant because they don't want to say that they are cutting Medicaid.

These cuts are going to hurt millions of people. They will hurt working families who rely on Medicaid to pay for nursing home care for their families. We have to be pretty out of touch to not know anyone who at some point in their life will rely on nursing home subsidies from Medicaid. It is happening in my extended family right now.

It is important to remember that Medicaid certainly helps children. Medicaid certainly helps people who are economically disadvantaged. It helps poor people. But it also helps middle-class families, because at the end of a family member's life, who can pay for nursing home care out-of-pocket? You may have saved all of your life, but, for instance, in Hawaii a nursing home costs around \$10,000 a month. So it is a rare family who can pay \$10,000 a month for a grandmother or a great-grandmother or a father or a mother. Nobody can do that. This is going to harm middle-class families.

It is also going to hurt women in particular. Women need Medicaid for maternal health services and for family planning. These cuts are going to hurt seniors and people with disabilities. These people have nowhere else to turn. That is the point of Medicaid. Medicaid is their only option.

Now, I have heard some people say: Well, this is going to expand local control. That is preposterous. The truth is that block granting Medicaid, which is the same thing as cutting Medicaid and giving a fixed amount to the States, gives States less control, not more control. They force States to choose between seniors and kids, between people with disabilities and women, or between health care and education.

Look, it does not matter whom you voted for. American voters—left, right, and center—have this sense that what

we do in Washington is that we run for office saying one thing and then we get in office and we do exactly the opposite. Frankly, the Congress has earned that reputation. This is another instance where a party has promised to not cut Medicaid, but here we are—week 1, day 5—debating cuts on this important program.

This is a deal breaker for me and many of my colleagues, and it will be a disaster for millions of Americans.

I call on everyone on both sides of the aisle to stand up for seniors, to stand up for women, to stand up for children, and to fight any cuts to Medicaid.

I yield the floor.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO) The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to the provisions of 20 U.S.C., sections 42 and 43, reappoints the Senator from Arkansas, Mr. BOOZMAN as a member of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to the order of the Senate of January 24, 1901, appoints the Senator from Nebraska, Mr. SASSE, to read Washington's Farewell Address on Monday, February 27, 2017.

The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO EILEEN DUBOWSKI

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, Alaska is a beautiful State—the mountains, the seas, the glaciers, the wildlife. Most in this room and many watching on TV have seen my State on TV shows, on reality shows. Almost everybody talks about at least someday coming to visit. We love tourists, like the Presiding Officer does. So please come. You will have a great experience, guaranteed.

But what makes my State particularly special is the people—kind people, tough people, generous of heart, and, yes, people with a lot of opinions. My State is filled with people who are strong-willed and strong-hearted, creating caring communities in some of the harshest environments in the world.

As part of an initiative that I am doing to highlight some of these great Alaskan citizens, I would like to recognize this afternoon Eileen Dubowski as the Alaskan of the Week. She is someone of a strong mind and a strong heart, and she has helped to make her community and our State a better place.

Eileen lives with her husband in a cabin in Salcha, AK, near the Fairbanks area. This year, this area of my State has experienced some brutally dangerous cold temperatures. Recently, it was 59 degrees below zero near Salcha. That is cold, 59 below zero. Yet, in my State, people work in such weather, they give to their communities, they reach out and watch over their neighbors.

Eileen has been both a special education and regular education teacher for almost 40 years. She is currently at University Park Elementary School. To better communicate with her students, she went to night school to learn American Sign Language. She is active in her church and particularly active in Interior Alaska high school wrestling helping dozens and dozens of students. She has been so involved over the past 40 years in this important activity that she was recently elected into the State of Alaska Wrestlers Hall of Fame. An article in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner quotes her as saying: "Wrestling can take any sized kid and they can be successful."

Congratulations, Eileen, for helping dozens and dozens of kids of all sizes in Alaska and making them successful.

She stated: "When you help each other it makes living up here easier," in the colds of Alaska. The same could be said about anywhere in America.

So thanks, Eileen, for helping make life easier, for your service, and for being this week's Alaskan of the Week.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I wish to talk a little bit this afternoon about the way my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are, unfortunately—and with no reason—delaying and delaying the confirmation of heads of critically important agencies, Cabinet Secretaries, for our country.

Now, we have differences of opinion in this body. That is often a good thing. We debate, we share ideas, we agree, we disagree, we give the voters the very best we have, and then we let them make their own decisions, which they do at the ballot box.

On election day, the American people chose President Trump and Vice President PENCE. The American people did so knowing they would appoint a new Cabinet and be focused on the issues they ran on, but the American people did not vote for delay and they did not vote for obstruction. They voted for action and they voted for a smooth transition, which is what this body has traditionally done.

It has been a longstanding tradition of the U.S. Senate, working hard, to confirm Cabinet nominees of a newly elected President in a timely fashion, particularly when it comes to the President's national security team.

For example, in 2009, upon the election of President Obama, 7 of his Cabinet members were sworn into office on the first day, 5 more were confirmed by the end of the first week—14 Cabinet officials inside of a week.

Where are we right now? Two Cabinet officials and one CIA Director. That is not what the American people expect. That is not the tradition in the Senate. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have a responsibility to the American people to put a government in place and to treat the confirmation process with the same courtesy and seriousness the Senate gave to President

Obama's Cabinet-level nominees, and that is not happening right now. This is serious business, particularly on national security issues.

I am hopeful my colleagues on the other side of the aisle can start getting serious and show this administration the same courtesy that Republicans showed President Obama's administration when he came into office.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL FRIDAY,
JANUARY 27, 2017, AT 10 A.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. on Friday, January 27.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:44 p.m., adjourned until Friday, January 27, 2017, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate January 24, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

NIKKI R. HALEY, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY, AND THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

UNITED NATIONS

NIKKI R. HALEY, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS DURING HER TENURE OF SERVICE AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS.