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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LUTHER STRANGE, a Senator from the State of Alabama.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Rev. Adrian Brooks, senior pastor at Memorial Baptist Church in Evansville, IN.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, we first thank You for another day of life. We thank You for another chance to bring joy and opportunity to someone else's journey. Lord, guide these public servants within the United States Senate. Please lead them as they lead us to a better and more peaceful landscape. Create, O God, within all of us, the zeal to make our communities around this country more stable. Remove from us any personal animosity that might prevent us from acting as my brother and sister's keeper. We ask Your healing on those Members of this legislative body who are injured or sick.

We ask, O Lord, that You would extend comfort and peace to those families who have been affected by the tragedy in Sutherland Springs, TX. Even in the midst of this tragedy, we thank You, O God, that those 26 fellow sojourners are in Your loving presence, a celestial place where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary always find rest.

Lord, bless our President. Give him, O God, the wisdom and insight to move us toward a more unified and loving Union. May we become, O God, more united in the things that bring us together and reject the smaller things that drive us apart. Help us to catch the spirit of those who wrote the Declaration of Independence. They knew then, and we know now, that this was something splendid and august and powerful.

O God, You have brought us to this critical moment. Let us not lean on our own understanding, but help us, O God, to let Your Spirit take the reins of our hearts and minds. Make us more innovative and less reactive. Let the creative genius that is part of the American fabric take over the urban and rural American landscape. We pray now, O God, that the diversity and inclusion of people and ideas become our strength and not our wedge.

Now, Lord, help us to live by our faith and not by our fears. Help us to face the future with a trust in You and confidence in America's bright, glad tomorrow. Lord, we know that if we trust You, our best days as a nation are waiting on us.

It is in Your powerful and majestic Name that we pray. 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 16, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LUTHER STRANGE, a Senator from the State of Alabama, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, during the past decade, many in the middle class struggled to make ends meet. The economy was sluggish, paychecks were often stagnant, and jobs for many were too hard to find—perhaps not on the coasts, where the well-to-do were able to flourish under the Obama economy—but in middle America, in States like Kentucky, the pain was real.

Hard-working families across the country deserved better. They continue to deserve an economy that reaches for its true potential, one in which more Americans can find a good job to support their families and achieve the American dream.

So now this is our chance to set a new course. This is our opportunity to jump-start the economy and boost job growth. Passing tax reform is the single most important thing we can do right now to support those left behind by the Obama economy.

Though obvious, it is worth repeating: Our Nation's Tax Code is broken. First, the rates are too high. Americans are sending too much of their hard-earned money to Uncle Sam. Second, the structure is too complicated for most Americans to understand, and it is too easy for the wealthy and well-connected to exploit. Third, the incentives are often outdated or simply make no sense at all—like those that actually encourage American jobs and companies to move overseas. That is bad for our country, bad for the middle class, and bad for small business.

In my home State of Kentucky, a small business CEO wrote a column in a publication about her experiences with our broken tax system, calling for

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



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tax reform to fix it. Here is what she said:

The federal government takes too much. Our small businesses—which according to the U.S. Small Business Administration total 96.5 percent of Kentucky's employers—often face the greatest tax burden.

This Kentuckian continued:

If we want better lives for the nearly 700,000 employees across the [C]ommonwealth who work for small enterprises, we must lift this weight off their backs.

Small businesses deserve a tax code that works for them. Middle-class families and individuals deserve the same. That is why we are working so hard to enact tax reform. Over in the Senate Finance Committee, Chairman HATCH has laid down a tax reform proposal that is premised on a single idea; that we should take more money out of Washington's pockets and put more money in the pockets of the middle class.

It cuts taxes for middle-class families. It doubles the child tax credit. This plan does a lot of things, including providing relief for businesses so they can create more jobs here in America and then keep them here. The Nation's leading small business advocacy organization endorsed this legislation, saying that it "will provide much needed tax relief to enable small businesses to grow and create jobs."

There is another important provision of the Finance Committee's tax reform proposal as well. It will deliver relief to low- and moderate-income families by repealing ObamaCare's individual mandate tax. In other words, we can deliver even more relief to the middle class by repealing an unpopular tax from an unworkable law. It just makes sense.

I would like to once again thank Chairman HATCH for his commitment to an open process and regular order. The Finance Committee will report a bill soon. Before it does, however, it will continue to consider a number of amendments from both sides of the aisle. In fact, the chairman's modified mark already incorporated amendments from both Republican and Democratic members of the committee.

I look forward to the Finance Committee completing its work on this crucial legislation very soon. As it does, our colleagues in the House will continue working on their own tax reform legislation. I commend Chairman BRADY and the members of the Ways and Means Committee for their efforts. I look forward to the full House passing their bill.

Once both Chambers pass their tax reform bills, we will keep working together to get a bill to President Trump's desk for his signature.

I am also grateful to Chairman MURKOWSKI and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee for reporting bipartisan legislation yesterday to secure our Nation's energy future. By further exploring the responsible development of Alaska's re-

sources, this bill can help grow our economy, support high-paying jobs, and strengthen our national security. I look forward to promoting American energy independence through this legislation.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. On another matter, today, the Senate will continue to fulfill its important responsibility of providing advice and consent on President Trump's nominations. So far this week, we have confirmed talented individuals to important positions in the Departments of Transportation, Labor, and Defense.

Yesterday, the Senate advanced the nomination of Joseph Otting to serve as Comptroller of the Currency. Mr. Otting's experience as a leader in various financial agencies has helped prepare him to serve in this new role. I look forward to voting to confirm him later today.

Next, the Senate will consider two well-qualified nominees to serve on Federal district courts. Donald Coggins and Dabney Friedrich both have the experience and temperament to excel as judges. Both of these individuals have stellar legal credentials. Their careers demonstrate a serious commitment to the law, and by confirming them both, the Senate will continue to ensure the Federal judiciary fulfills its particular role in our constitutional system.

I would like to thank Chairman GRASSLEY for his leadership of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which reported both of these nominees on a voice vote. I look forward to advancing their nominations very soon.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Otting nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Joseph Otting, of Nevada, to be Comptroller of the Currency for a term of five years.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

AMENDING THE FEDERAL FOOD, DRUG, AND COSMETIC ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous

consent that, notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4374, which was received from the House. I further ask consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; further, that at a time to be determined between the majority leader and the Democratic leader, the Chair lay before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 2810, and the Senate vote on the adoption of the conference report with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 4374) to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to authorize additional emergency uses for medical products to reduce deaths and severity of injuries caused by agents of war, and for other purposes, was considered, ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDER—Continued

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, as the Senate Finance Committee continues to mark up the Senate Republican tax bill, the House will take a vote this afternoon on their version of the bill.

There are plenty of reasons for House Republicans to vote against this bill. For those who care about deficits, you should vote no because the bill increases deficits by over \$1.5 trillion, likely more. Any deficit hawk should be against this increase.

Any defense hawk should be wary of this bill for the same reason. High deficits make it harder to fund important priorities like the military. This morning, three former Defense Secretaries—Leon Panetta, Chuck Hagel, and Ash Carter—penned a letter warning that the Republican tax plan could result, in their words, in a "hollowed-out military force" wracked by cuts to training, maintenance, flight missions, and other vital military programs.

I spoke to General Mattis yesterday. He is definitely afraid of a CR because a CR is at sequestration levels. If we pass this tax bill with its huge deficit, we will have no choice but to go back to sequestration, and the fears of our defense leaders that they cannot fund the military adequately will be very real. So my shout-out is to all of those who care about defense, particularly our defense hawks: If you vote for this bill, you are going to be voting for a "hollowed out military force," as three former defense secretaries have written to us this morning.

For those House Republicans who represent middle and upper class suburban districts, you should vote no because this bill will raise taxes on a

high number of your constituents. Members of Congress from New York, New Jersey, Washington, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Virginia know that State and local deductibility is crucial to working families in their districts. Today, House Republicans in many districts will take a vote to raise taxes on their constituents. And the compromise—the first three-quarters of the break is rescinded even with the compromise over in the House, but, second, the Senate, so desperate for money, has not even included the compromise here. You can be sure when it comes back, that compromise will not be in the bill—certainly not as generous as it is now. It was not very generous to begin with.

According to the New York Times, the House bill would raise taxes on a third of middle-class taxpayers next year and almost half by 2027. The rich, meanwhile, will do just fine.

The Senate bill, similarly, would raise taxes on 20 million middle-class Americans by 2027. Meanwhile, folks making over \$1 million will get an average cut of \$50,000. People say: Well, they have more money; they should get a bigger tax cut. No. The wealthy are doing great. They don't need any tax cut. Give the money to the middle class.

The number of middle-class families who would lose money from this bill may even be higher now, considering the 10-percent increase in premiums that will occur as a result of the Republican plan to repeal the individual mandate. That 10-percent increase in health premiums could more than wipe out the tax cuts received by some folks in the middle. All the while, 13 million fewer Americans get health insurance.

My friend, Senator GRAHAM, recently said: "I hope every Republican knows that when you pass a repeal of the individual mandate . . . [healthcare] becomes your problem." LINDSEY GRAHAM is very politically pressured. He is telling his Republican colleagues that if they do this, every problem in healthcare will be on their backs.

The whole idea of taking money from the pockets of hard-working Americans, of taking money out of their healthcare and giving it to big corporations and those at the very top is so backward, so wrong, that the American people will reject it, and the blame will fall on Republican shoulders. If the Republican tax bill should pass, it would make our economy, so unfairly tilted toward the top as it already is, even more unbalanced and unfair.

Over the past three decades, as technology has changed our economy and our world has become ever more interdependent, our economy has grown. Yes, it has grown; there is a lot of growth. But that growth, more than at any time in history, has been captured entirely, almost, by big corporations and the top 1 percent and particularly the top 0.1 percent of our country. We don't begrudge them. We are glad people work hard. With new ideas and hard

work, people should become wealthy, but they don't need a tax break.

At the same time, middle-class families have muddled along. Median income has barely nudged up in three decades. The costs of college, healthcare, prescription drugs, cable, and the internet have skyrocketed as corporations have consolidated in their industries, reducing competition and driving up prices.

For the middle-class families in the suburbs, for the working parent in the city, for the young millennials just setting off into the workforce after college, for the single mom raising two children, it is about as hard as ever to balance your income with ever-rising costs. In such an economy, tax reform could really matter to those folks, but only if it is done right.

Instead of focusing all their efforts on improving the condition of those working Americans, Republicans have directed the lion's share of the benefits to the already wealthy, the already powerful—corporate America and the very rich.

There is perhaps no better example than President Trump and his family, for whom this bill would be an express mail gift from Heaven: Repealing the estate tax, they have a big one; repealing the alternative minimum tax—the Trumps pay a lot of alternative minimum tax; dropping the rate on pass-through entities like the Trump Organization, a huge tax break for Donald Trump.

So scrapping middle-class deductions while maintaining loopholes for real estate businesses, golf course owners—who do you think came up with this plan? Not the average middle-class guy or gal. All of these things contained in the House Republican bill would likely pile more on top of President Trump's fortune while millions and millions of middle-class families end up paying more.

I am not sure any family in America feels it is right to subsidize tax cuts for folks like President Trump and his family, and their voices will be heard during the debate on this bill and afterward.

This bill will be a huge burden for Republicans to carry on their backs over the next year, make no mistake about it. So we hope they will vote down the bill in the House and in the Senate. I want to assure my friends in the Senate on the other side of the aisle that if the bill goes down, Democrats are ready, willing, able, and eager to work with Republicans on a bipartisan reform.

DACA

Mr. President, before I yield the floor, seeing my friend Senator DURBIN here, I would like to address one final issue—the Dreamers.

My dear friend Senator DURBIN has an uncommon eloquence. He speaks with eloquence and yet with Midwestern common sense. He speaks with persuasiveness and ease on a great number of subjects. He is a great asset

to our Democratic caucus and to the Senate as a whole, but there is no doubt that the Dreamers are at the top of his list. They are near and dear to his heart. He is one of the chief architects of DACA and has labored on their behalf for as long as I can remember.

Every Dreamer should thank Senator DURBIN. He is their sponsor, their champion, and their staunchest advocate.

This morning I would like to join him in recognizing the contributions of a Dreamer in my State—a reminder of the glaring need to pass the Dream Act, since President Trump so misguidedly terminated the program a few months ago.

Zuleima Dominguez is a DACA recipient who lives in the Bronx. Zuleima was brought to the United States from Mexico when she was 7 years old. She has grown up in the United States and has gone to school here; she went to her first dance in the United States and knows no other country as her home.

Like so many other Americans, Zuleima is working her way through college—Hunter College, part of City University on the Upper East Side—but because of her legal status, she has been unable to access enough help to afford her tuition. So what does Zuleima do? She works 45 hours a week at a homeless shelter, giving back to her fellow New Yorkers while saving up for her next semester.

She is studying to be a social worker. Isn't Zuleima what we hope an American citizen would be like? Wouldn't we all be proud to call her our neighbor, our friend, our daughter?

She is someone who works hard and feels a calling to give back to her community. Zuleima has the quintessential American spirit, as had millions who came to this country before her, through the centuries.

She is part of that long and grand tradition of immigration in this country, of folks coming from all over the world to find a better life here, build strong families and communities, and make indelible contributions to our society, our economy, and our culture.

Zuleima and her two children are part of that American tradition. They, with all of us, are what makes America great.

There are many more Dreamers just like Zuleima who came to this country through no fault of their own as very young kids. They study at our schools; they work in our companies; they serve in our military. They are American in every single way but one—their paperwork.

We must fix that now and forever by passing the Dream Act through Congress and giving folks like Zuleima and her kids a chance to live and thrive in the only country they have ever known.

I know my entire caucus supports the bill. I know how many of my friends on the other side of the aisle support it as well. So what are we waiting for? Let's put the bill on the floor and pass it.

I yield to my friend and colleague from Illinois, Senator DURBIN.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to thank the Democratic leader. His strong support of the Dream Act encourages me but, more importantly, gives hope to the Dreamers across America: young men and women, just like the one he described, who are living in fear, fear that their time in America is coming to an end.

This is the only country they have ever known. They have stood in classroom after classroom and pledged allegiance to the American flag, the only flag they have ever known. They sing the national anthem. They believe they are part of America, but as Senator SCHUMER has reminded us, they are missing the paperwork. Their parents brought them here as infants, toddlers, children and never filed the paperwork, never made them legal, and here they are in this country, searching for an answer, searching for some hope.

My best basic question to the U.S. Senate and to my colleagues is: Why do we make this so hard? Why is this so difficult? Don't we all fundamentally agree on the premise that no young person should be held responsible for the actions or decisions of their parents? That is what is happening here. These young people didn't make the key decisions in their lives; their parents did.

Let me quickly add, because many of the Dreamers say: Senator DURBIN, understand that our parents were doing everything they could to help us. I couldn't agree more. From a moral viewpoint, their parents were determined to help their children and were prepared to incur great risk, even legal risk, to do it. I understand that. I would do the same thing, and I am not being critical or negative. But the simple fact and reality is that these young people, because they don't have the paperwork, don't have a future in America.

The circumstances they face are bleak. Imagine, if you will, the challenge of college, the challenge of going from high school on to an education at a university, with no help whatsoever from the Federal Government. You don't qualify for a penny in Pell grants; you don't qualify for any help when it comes to government loans. Think about the challenge of college and higher education without that help, without the fundamental assistance that millions of young Americans count on. Dreamers get no help—none. They have to fight their way forward on their own, and they do it in remarkable and heroic ways.

Over the last break, I was down at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale—deep southern Illinois, 300 miles or more away from the city of Chicago—and I sat down with a group of these Dreamers who were at the university. One young woman had worked so hard to get through community col-

lege and now through the university at Carbondale and still had two semesters left before graduation. She was telling me about her struggles—taking time off to work a job, save the money, go back to school, and here she was where she could see the finish line. As she sat there and described it to me, she stopped and broke down in tears. She said to me: Why am I doing this? Because of the announcement by President Trump, I don't have any future in this country. After all these years and all this effort, I really don't have a future here.

I don't believe that, and I begged her not to believe it either. She has a future, an important future in the United States and in the State of Illinois. She has proved through her determination and hard work that she is an extraordinary young woman. She is going to get that bachelor's degree, and I pray that we in the Senate and the House—with the President—will give her a chance to be part of America.

President Obama did. He created DACA. I had introduced the DREAM Act years and years ago—16 years ago—when President Obama was my colleague in the Senate from Illinois. He was the cosponsor. I joined with Senator Lugar, a Republican Senator from Indiana, writing to President Obama, saying: Find a way, if you can. Find a way to protect these Dreamers from deportation until we pass a law that needs to be passed. And he did it. He created the DACA Program, where young people could come forward, pay the fine and fee of almost \$500 or \$600, submit themselves to a criminal background check to make sure there were no problems in their background, show proof that they had graduated from high school, and then—only then—would they be allowed to stay in the United States for 2 years and not be deported and legally be allowed to work.

Well, President Obama created by executive order the DACA Program. At the end of the day, 780,000 of these young people stepped forward. It was a leap of faith on their part. Each and every one of them had been raised in America by their parents and carefully schooled in this belief: Don't raise your head. Don't let this government see us. As long as we can live in the shadows, as long as we are not confronted with the legal system, we have a chance to stay. They lived with that looming over their heads every single day. Then, when President Obama said to them: Come forward, tell us who you are, where you live; tell us about your family; and we will give you a chance to stay here legally under this Executive order, they did it. They trusted in their leaders. They trusted in their government. They were prepared to make that leap of faith, at great risk, on the chance that this might be the ticket they were looking for to a life in America, to be part of America's dream and America's future.

Then, on September 5, President Trump came forward and announced

that he would abolish this program created by President Obama and that it would end on March 5, 2018. He established a standard and said: We will allow those who have to renew during this period of time—their 2-year DACA protection had expired, and they would have to renew—until November 5 to file and to qualify for a renewal period. He picked November 5. For many of them, it was a surprise and a challenge to come up with the filing fee and to get the papers in on time so that their protection would continue until March 5, 2018, or beyond. Some of them did everything they could think of. Some went to attorneys, for example, to make sure they got this renewal of DACA completed successfully and accurately.

Now we have learned that something terrible happened in the meantime. They relied on the Federal Government—particularly, they relied on our Postal Service—to mail in their applications for renewal. Who would have argued that that was not a responsible thing to do? I can tell my colleagues that practicing attorneys across the United States use our Postal Service regularly.

One attorney sent the renewal to Washington by certified mail so that there would be proof that it was mailed. He mailed it on October 21. The problem was that the Postal Service lost the application. It didn't arrive until a day later, a day past the deadline established by the President.

That young person has lost the right to renew unless the Department of Homeland Security comes up with a new ruling on the subject. That is the complexity of the life of these young people who are simply asking for a chance to be part of America's future. That is what that young applicant faced. That is what hundreds of others faced. We believe that some 8,000 were not able to renew in time and lost their protected status.

I can't tell you what their future is, but I pray that the Senate, before we leave this year, will decide the right thing for their future.

I have come to the floor over 100 times to tell the personal stories of these young people who are asking for a chance to have the Dream Act become the law of the land. Some Republican Senators have joined me in this effort. Notably, LINDSEY GRAHAM, the Republican Senator from South Carolina, has been a cosponsor. Three other Republican Senators have joined in sponsoring the Dream Act, and more are interested in helping. The conversations continue on the floor and give me some hope that, at the end of the day, we will do the right thing, before the end of this year.

Let me add, too, that having served in the Senate—it has been my honor to be here for some years—I know the calendar determines your fate many times in the Senate. The calendar we face could determine the fate of these Dreamers.

Here is what it boils down to. If we don't renew the Dream Act before the end of this year, then it has to be done in January or February. January and February are well known to be months of little activity in the Senate and in the House. So if we wait until then, it is not likely it is going to happen. That is why I am pleading with my colleagues and the leadership of the Senate: We can't go home for the holidays until we do this. We can't talk about dreaming of a white Christmas until we face the Dreamers and the bleak Christmas they face if we fail to act. I am begging my colleagues on both sides to roll up their sleeves and join me, sit at the table, and let's get this job done.

There are specific reasons why we should, and I want to tell one of those stories today, as I have done more than 100 times in the past.

This young lady's name is Priscilla Aguilar. Priscilla was 5 years old when her family brought her to the United States from Mexico. She grew up in Brownsville, TX. She was a great student. In high school she joined a medical magnet program and graduated in the top 10 percent of her class.

Priscilla was a member of the Health Occupations Students of America, where she participated in regional and State competitions in biomedical debate and medical reading. This experience sparked her love for science.

Priscilla went off to the University of Texas at Brownsville. She graduated with honors in the winter of 2012 with a bachelor's degree in biological sciences. Remember, as a Dreamer, she didn't qualify for any Federal assistance going to school. She had to work at jobs and borrow money from others to finish her education.

After graduation, Priscilla was accepted into Teach for America, a national nonprofit organization that places talented college graduates in urban and rural schools where there are special challenges and shortages of teachers. It is interesting, isn't it, that this young woman who was brought here at the age of 5 not only worked so hard for her own education but was then willing to give 2 years of her life in the schools of America to help less fortunate students. Do you think you have an insight into who she is and what her values are?

Priscilla is not alone. Twenty thousand DACA Dreamers are currently teaching across the United States of America, including 190 in the Teach for America Program.

Priscilla now teaches biological and medical microbiology at Mercedes High School in Mercedes, TX. She is the head of the Science Department. She oversees a team of nine science teachers. She teaches students of all grade levels and coaches the school's debate team. The team won the district championship last year and participated in the State championship.

In 2013, a tragedy struck Priscilla's family. Her mother died unexpectedly.

Currently, Priscilla is caring for her three younger siblings, all of whom were born in the United States and are U.S. citizens. In fact, almost 75 percent of Dreamers have a U.S. citizen spouse, child, or sibling.

Priscilla wrote me a letter, which I will read into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Science and learning are my biggest passions and I want to keep pushing myself forward so that I can be better equipped to serve my community and my students. I want to inspire and encourage all students to pursue careers in science. I want to be a role model and mentor to students by succeeding in a science career myself. If I can do it, so can they!

But without DACA, and without the Dream Act, Priscilla and 20,000 other teachers just like her will lose their jobs in America. I am not exaggerating. DACA gives Priscilla the legal right to work in America. If she loses that DACA protection on the March 5 deadline, or whenever her renewal comes up, at that point she can no longer work in the United States.

This is not an isolated case. I have told the story many times about 28 students at the Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago. They are all protected by DACA. They came to that medical school in open competition—no quotas, no special slots. They are the best and brightest. They came from all over the United States because Loyola University—thank goodness—decided they deserved a chance. Young people like them all across America who had given up on a medical education because they were undocumented finally had their chance under DACA. Twenty-eight of them now are dedicated to becoming doctors.

They can't borrow money from our Federal Government, as I mentioned before. The State of Illinois, under both a Democratic and Republican Governor, have created loan programs for them in medical school with one condition: For every year the State of Illinois helps to pay for their medical education, they have to pledge 1 year when they finish their medical degrees in service to our State, in areas where we have shortages of doctors—medically underserved areas.

So 28 of them now have their fate hanging in the balance, depending on the fate of the Dream Act. Why? Because to become a doctor, you need a residency. A residency is a job. A residency means legally working. If these young people lose the DACA and Dreamer protection, they have to drop out of medical school. They cannot continue their residency and pursue a specialty that they have had their heart set on.

That is the reality of our failure to act. That is the reality of losing Priscilla Aguilar as an inspiring science teacher in Texas, of losing 28 doctors who are on their way to graduation at Loyola University, and of literally thousands of others who could make America a better, more prosperous, and a more just Nation.

Why do we make this so hard? Why do we make it so difficult for these young people? They have overcome the odds. They have shown their determination. They have shown their love for this country. Many of these DACA Dreamers are begging to serve in our military, to risk their lives for America. Yet we have failed to act. The President draws a deadline and says: After this point, there will be no more protection for these young people. That isn't what America stands for. That does not reflect our values.

I stand here today honored to be the son of an immigrant to this country. My mother was brought here at the age of 2 from Lithuania. That immigrant family fought hard when they arrived, as most immigrant families do. By fate, my mother became a naturalized citizen and her son became a U.S. Senator. That is my story. That is my family's story, but it is America's story. It is a story that has been repeated millions of times over and over. People come here begging for a chance—a chance for a better life, a chance to make this a better nation.

These young people and their parents, I might add, deserve that kind of consideration. What we are considering today doesn't affect their parents and the Dream Act, but certainly we should give these young people a chance. I think their parents deserve it, too, but that is a debate for another day, perhaps. We will see.

In the meantime, I beg my colleagues to join us. Let's do something right this year, before the end of the year, that reflects our values of who we are. Let's acknowledge the obvious. Justice demands us to step up and stand behind these Dreamers.

The moment is about to arrive. Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, my Republican cosponsor of the bill, said that a moment of reckoning is coming. He is right. It is a moment of reckoning as to who we are in the Senate and in the Congress and in the White House. It is a reflection on our view of America as a nation—a nation of immigrants that has embraced diversity and become all the stronger because of it.

I yield the floor.

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. BLUMENTHAL. 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.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, unlike past occasions when I have spoken on the topic of gun violence prevention, I am actually pleased to talk about some good news. A powerful alliance across the aisle has enabled us this morning to introduce a measure that will be a modest but significant breakthrough. It is a breakthrough in

hopefully providing better data, more complete information for the database that provides for background checks. It is essential that more accurate and thorough data be provided in the database because background checks are no better than the information provided to them, as we have seen again and again, in Sutherland Springs most recently but also Charleston and Blacksburg, where individuals legally barred from accessing firearms were permitted to do so because of gaps in the NICS system. Each of those killers walked out of a gun store having purchased firearms from a federally licensed dealer, even though they should have been ineligible, because of gaps in the reporting system; that is, the information reported to the national system that collects that data and provides the underpinning for this program.

We are a bipartisan group that says, in effect, enforcement must be rigorous, as complete and effective as possible. New laws may be sought, and we will continue to seek a broader background check law, as well as a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. We in this coalition may be divided on those issues, but at the very least, we can join arms and link together on this measure.

These provisions will help enforce public safety protections that could mean the difference between life and death. Nonreporting now puts people at lethal risk, riddling with gaping holes a system that should keep guns away from killers. The Federal background check system is only as good as the information provided to it.

I am proud to be part of this alliance. I look forward to the next steps—the prompt passage of this legislation and other measures that perhaps will evoke the same kind of bipartisan spirit across the aisle.

I am working with a number of my Republican colleagues on a measure relating to military reporting, particularly as it concerns domestic violence. All of us who have been attorneys general, as the Presiding Officer has been, know the scourge of domestic violence and how much more dangerous it is—five times more lethal—when there is a gun in the house. More than half of the homicides in this country occur as a result of domestic violence. More effective enforcement requires steps that enable resources as well as awareness in the military and in our civilian courts.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, on the topic of effective enforcement of the law, I rise today on a related topic, which is the quality of our judiciary. Our laws are only as effective as the judges who implement them.

I rise with regret because the administration is attempting to radically reshape our judiciary, to remake the bench in the image of a far-right dogma that basically contravenes what we are and where we are as a nation.

This administration has proposed extreme nominees who will seek to undo

decades of critically important progress in recognizing and protecting reproductive rights, LGBT rights, voting rights, workers' rights, environmental protections, and more.

For the last 10 months, this administration has tried its level best to move our country backward by implementing its destructive, deeply unpopular agenda. They want to dismantle the Affordable Care Act. They want to abandon LGBT Americans. They want to make it harder to vote, harder to organize, harder to breathe clean air and drink clean water.

If they fall short in carrying out this cruel agenda through Executive action and legislation, this administration has looked to the courts to do its dirty work. The Trump administration seeks to flood the Federal judiciary with judges—appointed for life—who will defend their indefensible goals. This plot is not hidden. It is not secret. It is out in the open. President Trump has made it clear. He claims to have a litmus test for Supreme Court nominees—he will nominate someone who will “automatically” overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Just last month, the Senate voted to confirm two circuit court nominees—Allison Eid and Joan Larsen—who had been listed by then-Candidate Trump as potential Supreme Court nominees, indicating that they have passed that litmus test. When I asked both of these nominees whether their records would lead someone to believe that they would “automatically” reverse *Roe v. Wade*, they both demurred. They said they did not know why they were selected for President Trump's Supreme Court short list—no idea. I don't believe it. Then-Candidate Trump laid out his Supreme Court selection criteria in clear, unambiguous terms.

Yesterday we heard testimony from a circuit court nominee, Justice Don Willett, of the Texas Supreme Court, who proudly described himself in 2012 as the “consensus, conservative choice from every corner of the conservative movement: pro-life, pro-faith, pro-family, pro-liberty, pro-Second Amendment, pro-private property rights, and pro-limited government.” That is the way that he described himself.

When I asked him what he meant by tying himself to these labels, he refused to give me a straight answer. In fact, he said, in effect, that he was just pandering to the public for votes, that that was part of his reelection pitch. Maybe he didn't believe it, but we have all been around long enough to know what these terms mean to voters and what they mean to the President of the United States. They aren't dog whistles, literally, but they represent specific ideologies. They are shorthand for specific dogma.

I have no confidence that Justice Willett will be an impartial and objective implementer of the law and enforcer of the measures that we pass here.

Just last week, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted to advance Brett

Talley. He is someone who wrote that the solution to the Newtown shooting—he wrote it 3 days after that massacre—is to “stop being a society of pansies and man up.” He is someone who has written that the country “overreacted” and that “the Second Amendment suffered” after the murder of 20 children and 6 adults in Newtown.

After one of the great tragedies of this country in recent years, his reaction was that the Second Amendment suffered. He is someone who has disingenuously written that Democrats want to take away everyone's guns. Even setting aside the fact that he has never tried a case in his career, he is someone who should be nowhere near the bench, at least not as a judge.

I hope my Republican colleagues will revisit their decision to support him.

I want to emphasize that the compromise that we have reached today and that we are introducing in this bipartisan group takes away no one's guns if one is law-abiding and otherwise complies with the law. In fact, it provides incentives and rewards to States that do better reporting. It makes sure that a robust reporting system prevents the sales of firearms to people who are a danger to themselves or others, including convicted domestic abusers.

This exaggeration, distortion, misinformation from Mr. Talley is, I think, emblematic of what kind of judge he would be.

Let us not forget that we are, in fact, judged by the company that we keep. President Trump is willing to nominate someone like Jeff Mateer to a lifetime appointment on the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Texas. He was not on the docket this week, but he could well come before the Senate Judiciary Committee for a hearing in the coming weeks.

This is someone who has called transgender children “Satan's plan.” He has proudly said: “On the basis of sexual orientation, we discriminate.” He has advocated conversion therapy for LGBT children.

With these nominations, President Trump has shown the type of people he is willing to propose for lifetime appointments on the district court, as well as the court of appeals. As someone who has practiced in the district courts of Connecticut and others around the country, as well as in courts of appeals in the Second Circuit and elsewhere, these appointments have a special meaning to me and to others who are well versed in the way our justice system works.

For many people in this country, the U.S. district court is the first place they seek justice. They rely on Federal judges to be above politics and to be above personal ideology and dogma of the right or the left wing. The U.S. district court is the first place they seek justice, and, for many, it is the last place. Adverse rulings for them are often the end of the line because they lack the resources to pursue appeals to

the circuit court. Our district court judges are often the voices and faces of justice that the people of the United States most trust and rely on.

What we see in these nominees is a pattern. They have clearly demonstrated through their actions, their statements, their temperaments, and their characters that they are, simply, unfit and unable to serve as impartial judges, especially when it comes to our Nation's most vulnerable communities. Our Nation's most vulnerable communities are often the ones who rely the most on those Federal courts.

There can be no benefit of the doubt for nominees when they articulate the kinds of beliefs and dogma that these individuals have in their pasts and that they refuse to disavow in the present. I will oppose them, and I hope my colleagues will join me. I believe that on both sides of the aisle, we share a commitment to the credibility and trust of our judiciary.

As I have said before on the floor, our judges do not have armies; they do not have police forces. The enforceability of their rulings really depends on the credibility and trust that the people of our Nation have in them as individuals who put on robes, because they are supposed to put aside their personal prejudices and beliefs and fairly, impartially, and objectively enforce the law.

I fear that these nominees lack these qualities, and that is a tragedy for our Nation, whatever your politics. Someday, you will likely be before a judge—maybe not all, but many of you will—and you will want that judge to look at both sides of the courtroom and say that they both have an equal chance to make their cases, not tilt one way or the other because of the judge's personal beliefs. I hope that my colleagues will send a message to the President of the United States that one cannot politicize the American judiciary.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

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

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

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the nomination of Mr. Joseph Otting to be Comptroller of the Currency. The OCC's mission is to ensure that the financial institutions it oversees operate in a safe and sound manner, provide fair access to financial services, treat customers fairly, and comply with the applicable laws and regulations.

The OCC is responsible for overseeing the supervision of all national banks and Federal savings associations as well as Federal branches and agencies of foreign banks. The OCC also plays an important role in identifying and re-

sponding to emerging threats in our financial system.

Mr. Otting is exceptionally qualified to lead the OCC as its comptroller. His unique expertise and understanding of the banking sector has been shaped by over three decades of firsthand industry experience. Mr. Otting has held positions at large regional and community financial institutions, including key leadership positions. In fact, he has touched virtually every segment of the industry, working in consumer services, business services, human resources, compliance, audit, and many others.

His understanding of how banks work and knowledge of the laws and regulations governing the financial sector was evident throughout his nomination hearings. I was also encouraged by Mr. Otting's statements about the importance of ensuring that all Americans have access to banking products and services. Mr. Otting also reaffirmed his commitment to honor the OCC's mission and cooperating with the work of Congress.

I am confident Mr. Otting will bring strong leadership to the OCC, given his extensive experience in the financial industry. I urge my colleagues to support Mr. Otting's nomination today and vote for his confirmation in the future.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding rule XXII, at 1:30 p.m. today, the Senate proceed to legislative session and the Chair lay before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 2810, as under the previous order, and that there be 15 minutes of debate equally divided between the managers or their designees prior to the vote on the adoption of the conference report; further, that following disposition of the conference report, the Senate resume executive session and all postcloture time on the Coggins and Friedrich nominations be yielded back and the Senate vote on confirmation of the Coggins nomination immediately, and that the confirmation vote on the Friedrich nomination occur at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 27; finally, that if the nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the Senate be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the votes following the first vote in this series be 10 minutes in length.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I yield back the time on the Otting nomination, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

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

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Otting nomination?

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 277 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Perdue
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Capito	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cassidy	Heller	Rounds
Cochran	Hoeben	Rubio
Collins	Inhofe	Sasse
Corker	Isakson	Scott
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Strange
Crapo	Lankford	Sullivan
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Daines	Manchin	Tillis
Enzi	McCain	Toomey
Ernst	McConnell	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	Young

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Harris	Reed
Bennet	Hassan	Sanders
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Stabenow
Carper	Klobuchar	Tester
Casey	Leahy	Udall
Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	McCaskill	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Murphy	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Feinstein	Nelson	
Gillibrand	Peters	

NOT VOTING—3

Booker	Franken	Menendez
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The nomination was confirmed.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Donald C. Coggins, Jr., of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

Mitch McConnell, John Hoeven, Thom Tillis, Tom Cotton, Cory Gardner, Jerry Moran, John Barrasso, Luther Strange, Mike Crapo, John Cornyn, Richard Burr, Mike Rounds, Orrin G. Hatch, David Perdue, Marco Rubio, John Thune, John Boozman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Donald C. Coggins, Jr., of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 96, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 278 Ex.]

YEAS—96

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

NAYS—1

Hirono

NOT VOTING—3

Booker Franken Menendez

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 96, the nays are 1.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Donald C.

Coggins, Jr., of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Dabney Langhorne Friedrich, of California, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

Mitch McConnell, John Hoeven, Thom Tillis, Tom Cotton, Cory Gardner, Jerry Moran, John Barrasso, Luther Strange, Mike Crapo, John Cornyn, Richard Burr, Mike Rounds, Orrin G. Hatch, David Perdue, Marco Rubio, John Thune, John Boozman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Dabney Langhorne Friedrich, of California, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 93, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 279 Ex.]

YEAS—93

Alexander	Feinstein	Murphy
Baldwin	Fischer	Murray
Barrasso	Flake	Nelson
Bennet	Gardner	Paul
Blumenthal	Graham	Perdue
Blunt	Grassley	Peters
Boozman	Harris	Portman
Brown	Hassan	Reed
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Cantwell	Heinrich	Roberts
Capito	Heitkamp	Rounds
Cardin	Heller	Rubio
Carper	Hoeven	Sanders
Casey	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Isakson	Schatz
Cochran	Johnson	Schumer
Collins	Kaine	Scott
Coons	King	Shaheen
Corker	Klobuchar	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Strange
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Manchin	Tester
Cruz	Markey	Thune
Daines	McCain	Tillis
Donnelly	McCaskill	Toomey
Duckworth	McConnell	Udall
Durbin	Merkley	
Enzi	Moran	
Ernst	Murkowski	

Van Hollen
Warner

Whitehouse
Wicker

Wyden
Young

NAYS—4

Gillibrand
Hirono

Kennedy
Warren

NOT VOTING—3

Booker

Franken

Menendez

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 93, the nays are 4.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Dabney Langhorne Friedrich, of California, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to legislative session.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 2810, which will be stated by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2810), to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agreed to the same with an amendment, and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of November 9, 2017.)

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today the Senate will vote on the conference report for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018. This legislation is the culmination of months of bipartisan work. I want to thank my friend, the Senator from Rhode Island, as well as our colleagues in the House of Representatives, MAC THORNBERRY and ADAM SMITH, and the

dozens of members who served on the conference committee for their hard work and collaboration during this process. Together, we worked hard to negotiate the differences between the House and Senate versions of this bill, and the result is a piece of legislation that should make all Senators—and all Americans—proud.

The fundamental purpose of the National Defense Authorization Act is to provide our Armed Forces with the resources, training, and equipment they need to keep us safe. We should consider this our highest duty and our greatest honor, to keep faith with the brave Americans who serve and sacrifice on our behalf.

To do that, the NDAA authorizes funding, advances policies, and requires reforms that will support our men and women in uniform, but before I discuss the many laudable aspects of this legislation, let me lament for a moment the developments that have unfolded in recent days and delayed this important legislation.

This delay concerns a provision in the defense bill to get our military emergency approval to use new lifesaving medicines on the battlefield. This provision was included in the original Senate version of this legislation that has been publicly available for several months, and it was included in this conference report with strong bipartisan and bicameral support. For years, the Department of Defense has struggled in vain to gain approval by the Food and Drug Administration for certain vital medical products, such as freeze-dried plasma, for use by our troops on the battlefield. Because the FDA failed to act time and again, the Senate Armed Services Committee did, and we received strong support from our House colleagues.

It is outrageous that the National Defense Authorization Act has been held hostage by the desire to pass a separate piece of legislation to address this issue differently than this conference report. That separate legislation was the product of a compromise between the DOD and the FDA, to which neither the Senator from Rhode Island nor I was a party. Our preferred solution remains our original one.

Yesterday, the Senator from Rhode Island and I received a letter from the FDA Commissioner, Dr. Scott Gottlieb, expressing his personal commitment to approve the use of freeze-dried plasma for battlefield use by our troops. He has also pledged to establish a new process for expedited consideration of the DOD's future emergency medical requests. This did not happen by accident. It happened because we acted and because we exposed the unacceptable ways in which the FDA has been failing our men and women in uniform for far too long.

Dr. Gottlieb was only confirmed as FDA Commissioner in May, and we intend to hold him fully accountable for making good on his commitment, including through continued oversight by

the Senate Armed Services Committee. However, if we are not satisfied that this new DOD-FDA compromise has fixed the problem, the Senate Armed Services Committee will take action through the NDAA next year. I know that the chairman and ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee have expressed that same commitment. We owe nothing less to our men and women in uniform, who deserve our help in saving lives on the battlefield.

Ultimately, that is the goal of every provision of the National Defense Authorization Act—to protect our brave servicemembers, here at home and around the world. The NDAA authorizes funding to rebuild our military and allow the Defense Department to embark on an ambitious program of modernization that is desperately needed and long overdue. The NDAA authorizes the acquisition of ships, aircraft, and equipment above and beyond the administration's request. It provides funding for an increase in end strength across all services, laying the groundwork for a total force, ready and capable of rising to the challenges of a world where threats are on the rise.

The NDAA builds on the reforms this Congress has passed in recent years, continuing efforts to reorganize the Department of Defense, spur innovation in defense technology, and improve acquisition and business operations to strengthen accountability and streamline the process of getting our warfighters what they need to succeed. It prioritizes accountability from the Department and demands the best use of every taxpayer dollar.

This legislation also authorizes funding for our missile defense systems to protect against rising threats. It makes important efforts to correct the dangerous lack of an effective strategy and policy for the information domain, including cyber, space, and electronic warfare.

The NDAA authorizes a 2.4 percent pay raise for our troops, which is the largest in many years, and it includes several provisions to improve quality of life for our men and women in uniform. In particular, the legislation continues committee's efforts to protect our servicemembers from sexual assault and sexual harassment. There is more work to be done, and the committee will continue to conduct oversight and hold hearings to address these important issues.

In total, the National Defense Authorization Act supports a defense budget of \$700 billion for fiscal year 2018. This exceeds the administration's request by \$26 billion. It also exceeds the defense spending caps in the Budget Control Act by \$85 billion.

Earlier this week, 356 Members of the House of Representatives voted in favor of this spending level. This afternoon, an overwhelming majority of this body will do the same. Let this serve as a reminder of the troubling state of our military today and an ac-

knowledge that the Budget Control Act-level of defense spending is insufficient and unacceptable.

My friends, for too long, our Nation has asked our men and women in uniform to do too much with far too little. Our military's job is hard enough, but we are making it harder through continuing resolutions, unpredictable funding, and arbitrary spending caps that were put into law 6 years ago—before the rise of ISIS, before the current crisis with North Korea, before Russia's return to aggression on the world stage, and before so many other dangerous developments.

We have been warned that we cannot go on like this. Earlier this year, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Joseph Dunford, warned us, "In just a few years if we don't change the trajectory, we will lose our qualitative and our quantitative competitive advantage, [and] the consequences will be profound." Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis also warned us, saying, "We are no longer managing risk; we are now gambling."

We are gambling with risk, and we are gambling with lives. Today more of our men and women in uniform are being killed in totally avoidable training accidents and routine operations than by our enemies in combat.

My friends, it doesn't have to be this way. The NDAA shows us what we could do with an adequate level of defense spending, what we could provide for our men and women in uniform, but this legislation is only part of the solution. As of yet, we still have no path to actually appropriate the money that we are about to authorize. That requires a bipartisan agreement to adjust the spending caps in the Budget Control Act.

As we join our colleagues in the House in voting to support \$700 billion for defense, let this serve as a guidepost for our leaders in Congress and the White House as they negotiate a budget deal. This is the spending level that an overwhelming majority of both the House and the Senate believes is necessary to meet current threats and to keep faith with our men and women in uniform. After we vote to authorize these vital, additional resources for our military, we must all demand a bipartisan agreement so that we can appropriate those resources.

This will require hard work and tough choices, and it will demand that we have the courage of our convictions, but in the end, this will require much less of us than what we ask of from our men and women in uniform. As they so dutifully sacrifice for us every day, let us do our part and fulfill our duties to them and to the Nation they serve.

Mr. LEAHY Mr. President, the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act, while laudable in its goals, does not comport with reality. At roughly \$700 billion, the proposed base funding in this bill is \$85 billion above budget caps that are set in law for Fiscal Year 2018 in the Budget Control

Act, BCA, and \$31 billion above the administration's budget request. If the authorized funding level were to be appropriated, without changing the caps, it would trigger a 12-percent across-the-board sequester of Defense programs to bring spending levels back to the Fiscal Year 2018 levels contained in the Budget Control Act. A sequester of this size would hit us in readiness. It would hamper our day-to-day operations and maintenance. It would hurt our troops. Our military leaders do not support such a sequester.

If we really want to support our military and the men and women in uniform, we must immediately reach a bipartisan budget deal to lift the artificial and unrealistically low budget caps that were set in law in 2011. It is hard to get every Member of this Chamber to agree on anything, but on this, we can agree: Sequester has had a negative impact on our country that will impact a generation. We need to have an honest conversation about what the needs of our country are, both in military and domestic spending, and draft our spending bills accordingly.

I do appreciate the work that Senator McCAIN and Senator REED have put into this massive legislation. While my concerns with the funding levels authorized in this bill prevent me from supporting it, I do believe it reflects a strong commitment to the programs and policies that support our service members and their families. That must always be our goal.

I am pleased that the conferenced bill maintains support for medical research that matter so much to our servicemembers and to all Americans who benefit from the lifesaving results made possible through these programs. I am also grateful for the inclusion of language I authored that would pave the way for piloting a preventative mental health program for our National Guard and Reserve. Like physical health, we know that, with particular training and mental preparation, a person can be more resilient mentally when faced with challenges, and building that readiness is necessary to maintain the all-volunteer force. Progress is already being made with shifting to a preventative model in the Special Forces community. I hope to soon see similar progress in developing models for the members of our Guard and Reserve.

This final bill also includes several amendments I proposed to make sure U.S. efforts, especially in Afghanistan, are consistent with U.S. values. These include a provision aimed at improving the way the Departments of Defense and State provide human rights training to partner forces, and a requirement to establish a plan on how to improve our ability to help foreign governments protect civilians. The final bill also authorizes establishment of a position in the Department of Defense to oversee its implementation of and coordination with the Department of State on the Leahy law for human

rights vetting for Afghan security forces.

In 3 weeks and 1 day, the current resolution funding our government will expire; yet, instead of sitting down with Democrats to work together, just as we did earlier this year to enact the fiscal year 2017 omnibus spending bill, to find a path forward to raise the budget caps and fund our government for the rest of the fiscal year, Republicans are focused on a tax cut bill that will add \$1.5 trillion to the debt. Instead of acting responsibly and in the greatest traditions of the Senate, the majority is marching towards another partisan fight on the floor on a deeply flawed tax bill that will impact every corner of our economy.

Let's get to work for the American people. For months, have been calling for a bipartisan budget deal to lift the caps on both sides for both defense and nondefense programs based on parity. It is time to complete those negotiations. We owe it to the men and women who serve. We owe it to the American people.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be considered yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is on agreeing to the conference report.

The conference report was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume executive session.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time on the Coggins and Friedrich nominations is yielded back.

VOTE ON COGGINS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Coggins nomination?

Mr. WICKER. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 280 Ex.]

YEAS—96

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

NOT VOTING—4

Booker	McCain
Franken	Menendez

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is 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 to 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. 481, Gregory Katsas.

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 bill clerk read the nomination of Gregory G. Katsas, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

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 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 Gregory G. Katsas, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Rounds, Chuck Grassley, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis, John Hoeven, Ben Sasse, Roy Blunt, Johnny Isakson, Tom Cotton, Ron Johnson, Mike Lee, James Lankford, Jerry Moran, Lindsey Graham, Roger F. Wicker, Bob Corker.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, just a moment ago, the Senate acted to send the President one of the most important policy bills we consider each year—the National Defense Authorization Act.

Not only will this legislation authorize the resources, capabilities, pay, and benefits our men and women in uniform need to perform their missions, but this year's bill also goes further. It takes a notable step toward authorizing the resources needed to start rebuilding our military and restoring combat readiness.

It will help improve our missile defense capabilities and better prepare us to deal with cyber threats. It will authorize a well-deserved pay raise for our men and women in uniform while providing for continued reform of the benefits they and their families rely upon, and it will support the thousands of military servicemembers and families serving at military installations in Kentucky and in the Kentucky National Guard.

Further, this bill strives to bring reform to the Pentagon. As Senator McCain said of the NDAA a few months ago, it will “[build] upon the sweeping reforms that Congress has passed in recent years.” He is right, and none of this would have been possible without him, without his leadership.

I think I can speak for everyone in this Chamber when I say that our friend Senator McCain has served with distinction as chairman of the Armed Services Committee. I know the ranking member on his committee, Senator REED, thinks so as well. I know a lot of Members on both sides of the aisle do too.

Senator MCCAIN's commitment to our men and women in uniform is obvious, and it is unwavering. He respects these brave Americans immensely; he cares about them deeply; and he understands better than just about anyone how important a bill like this is to them, not only on a policy level but on a personal level as well.

The NDAA he worked so hard to pass has now cleared both Chambers. It is headed to the President's desk. Soon, it will become law. When it does, it will stand as yet another testament to the hard work, dedication, and unflappable determination of our colleague and friend Senator JOHN MCCAIN—truly, an American hero.

TRIBUTE TO BRIAN FOREST

Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, I would like to say a few words today about Brian Forest, a key member of my legislative office team, who is leaving the Senate after several years of outstanding work in the Senate.

Throughout his time in my office, Brian has been an invaluable asset, taking on the daily challenges and countless responsibilities which come with the territory for my staff, but Brian did not just handle it all—he excelled. Regardless of the pressures, the deadlines, or the obstacles—and, believe me, there were many—Brian always came through.

Now, regretfully, he has decided to take on a whole new set of challenges. I am confident he will continue to show the same skill, friendship, and good humor that endeared him to many in the Senate because that is who Brian is.

I know I speak for all of those on my staff when I say I am really sorry to see him go. I wish Brian well in his new adventures, and I thank him for his service to our Nation, to the Senate, and to me.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized as in morning business for such time as I shall consume.

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

MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, this week, after 3 years of planning and construction, we now will be dedicating tomorrow and officially opening the Museum of the Bible.

This is led by Steve Green of Hobby Lobby. We all remember Hobby Lobby of Oklahoma. Steve has been a friend of mine and his parents have been friends of mine for a long period of time. He is the chairman of the board of directors for this long-awaited museum that will allow visitors from not just this country but from all over the world—they will be coming here to see what it is all about and how this plays a pivotal role in our country's history. There is no better place than Washington, DC, in our Nation's Capitol, to remind us of the scope of the Bible's impact on our history and our narrative. It has been long-awaited.

Indeed, one of our Founding Fathers, Patrick Henry, was renowned for his readings of the Bible. He said at the end of his life: “This book is worth all the books that ever were printed, and it has been my misfortune that I never found time to read it with the proper attention and feeling till lately.”

He is the one—and not many people are aware that historians are relooking at the history of this country, and they are saying we could not have won that war. I mean you have to sometimes close your eyes and envision the greatest army on the face of this Earth com-

ing down with thundering marches, going through Boston, and going up to Lexington and Concord. There is no way in this world that a handful of trappers and hunters could have won that thing. Yet we know why, and he knew why, when you talk about Patrick Henry. They said: We are not strong enough. It can't be done.

There is one thing they overlooked, and that is the strength that comes from God that we had, and they didn't have. He said:

We are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. . . . armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who [reigns] over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us.

And he did, and they fired that shot heard around the world.

I think that is really important today to think about because people come to this country and they want to know what makes America work.

I have been privileged to sponsor the African dinner every February, and people come in from all over Africa. They are always surprised when they come and they find out walking through the Capitol what real significance God and the Bible has to the history of this country. We are the largest Christian community in the world. We cannot and should not deny the role our Judeo-Christian values played in the formation of this country.

Our first President, George Washington, was steadfast in his belief of God, His law, and that liberty is God's gift. Washington's leadership was based on the conviction that Americans are entrusted by God to preserve basic freedoms established in the Constitution.

In a letter, Washington wrote, “We should be very cautious of violating the rights of conscience in others, ever considering that God alone is the judge of the hearts of men and to Him only in this case they are answerable.”

It is clear our Founding Fathers recognized and enshrined the importance of religious liberty, one of our most precious and foundational religious freedoms that allowed them to live their lives according to the teaching of the Bible.

The Bible's role in the founding of America is just one remarkable example of how the Bible has profoundly shaped world history. It has influenced cultures in every corner of the globe, and the Museum of the Bible, which is going to be opening tomorrow, pays tribute to its impact and intersectionality with the world religions.

Whether considering the Bible through a secular or faith-based lens, it is impossible to deny its impact on individuals, countries, and, indeed, all world history. The Museum of the

Bible is the first educational experience I have encountered that truly appreciates the full magnitude of the Bible's role throughout history.

The six exhibits, curated by a panel of faith leaders that span religious and geographic divides, truly bring the Word of God to life in a way that positively educates, informs, and encourages people of all faiths and beliefs to learn more about the Bible.

General Washington reminded us in his Farewell Address: "Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion."

Steve Green's father David founded Hobby Lobby. I remember this so well because I was in the State legislature at the time this happened. They started in their garage making frames for pictures. It turned out to be this giant, worldwide corporation, the largest arts and crafts retailer in the history of America, currently or in the past.

Remember Hobby Lobby, when ObamaCare required that all employers provide free access to the pills that terminate pregnancies, David clearly recognized this as a violation of his faith. That is what America is all about. If you believe in it, you do it, you take a risk. He was risking millions of dollars, but the morality was so significant from the teachings of the Bible that he went ahead and did it. He took the challenge all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and won in a split decision. He successfully argued the importance to maintain the fundamental freedom of religion to apply his faith convictions to how he operates his private business.

David won his case, but his family understood we needed to do more. So he started the Museum of the Bible. I actually was there last June, when it was under construction at the time, as we walked through and visualized what it was going to look like later on. It is magnificent.

They have a stage, and you live on the stage. He is going to have performances there. I am so anxious to be there tonight, the night before the official opening, to see now what it looks like.

I am so grateful David's son Steve and his entire family are leading this effort to make the Bible and its impact more accessible to the whole world. I am especially honored that the museum will open on my birthday tomorrow. I am not sure they really knew that when they made the decision, but somebody knew it.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

Mr. President, let me turn to another topic that I think is very important right now; that is, our energy independence. It is a huge issue. People are not aware, while we may have talked about the importance of the budget reconciliation process to set up and to pass the historic and much needed tax cuts for our individuals and small businesses, the process also allowed the Senate to use reconciliation for some-

thing equally as valuable—to allow energy exploration in Alaska.

Yesterday the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee met to consider legislation to open up a very small part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for responsible energy development. This bill was successfully passed by the committee, and I look forward to helping it continue to move through Congress.

I have long been an advocate for this to happen. It is interesting, the people in Alaska all want it. The polling is something like 96 percent of the people really want this to happen. They know the benefits that will come to Alaska, the money that will be there. People talk about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as if it is this great big thing. It is the size of South Carolina. It is a very small thing. Right now, we are going to be able to go up there to create jobs and opportunities and authorize the leases in Alaska. We will also increase revenue to the United States.

It is estimated that the energy production in Alaska could lead to over \$1 trillion in revenue. Responsible management will have a positive impact on reducing our national debt and most significantly opening ANWR is allowing Alaska to do what they want to do.

We are so good in this body thinking that we know more about what is good for Alaska and what is good for Oklahoma and what is good for Georgia than they do in their own States. One of few things we do right around this place is how we do our highway bill. In the highway bill, we get the priorities from the States when they come in, and they decide what it is they want to do in their States.

Remember the issue about the "bridge to nowhere." Everybody was concerned about this. All the talk shows jumped on it without realizing, until it was too late, it had already gotten committed.

Here was something that happened right for a change. I was chairman of the committee at that time. The "bridge to nowhere" in Alaska didn't go "nowhere," it went somewhere. The problem was, there weren't any people there once you got there, and the reason is you couldn't get there. On their list of 100 priorities, No. 4 was to build that bridge, but we, in our infinite wisdom here, said: No, you can't do that. Somehow the public didn't know what they were talking about. Well, that is kind of the same situation we have right now. We have something in Alaska that was their No. 1 priority to develop, and for years and years we have stopped them from being able to do with their land what they wanted to do with their land. The Federal Government has been keeping Alaskans from acting in their own best interest.

Finally, increasing energy production in Alaska is a key part of making the United States not only energy independent but energy dominant. We are on the verge of doing just that. Earlier this week, the Executive Direc-

tor of the International Energy Agency, Fatih Birol, said the United States "will become the undisputed global oil and gas leader for decades to come" and that "the growth in production is unprecedented, exceeding all historical levels." ANWR could be and should be a part of that story.

Energy independence is vital to our national security. How many of these countries over there that have been part of the old Soviet Union want their allegiance to us, and yet they are forced to buy their oil and gas from Russia and from Iran and they don't want to do it. Now we are taking them off the hook.

I had a great experience not long ago. I was invited by the President of Lithuania to come and open up their first terminal. Now we are changing all that.

We have a guy named Harold Hamm, an Oklahoman who is the chairman and CEO of Continental Resources in Oklahoma. He announced they would begin exporting oil to China. Exporting to China is kind of a big deal. He talks about how we are going to become undeniably a leader in exporting energy that will have an impact on the rest of the world.

President Trump has been clear that he intends to make the United States a net energy exporter, something we haven't been since 1953. Opening up the National Wildlife Refuge, which just took place this last week, will be a big step toward this initiative, and I applaud the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee for helping the administration make this happen.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. President, the leader of the Senate, a few minutes ago, talked about the NDAA and JOHN MCCAIN's role in that. JOHN MCCAIN, of course, has been and is an American hero. Everybody knows his past and knows what he did and the suffering he went through.

He was very instrumental—sure, we had some disagreements on some of the finer parts of the bill—but this is one that had to be done. All of a sudden we are changing what happened, unfortunately, in the past.

I can remember about 3 years ago we got all the way to December before we voted this out. We have now voted. This is the 55th year in a row that we have passed a Defense authorization bill. If we didn't by the end of December, then our kids wouldn't be getting hazard pay or pilots wouldn't be getting flight pay, and it would be an absolute disaster. Of course, it didn't happen because we are now doing it.

I have to say this. One thing that hasn't been said enough is what Senator MCCAIN and a lot of his supporters were able to do; that is, reprioritize what defending America is about.

Read the Constitution. Look at the history of this country. I always say people should sometime get out that old document that nobody reads anymore, the Constitution, and see what we are supposed to be doing around here.

Do you know that what we are supposed to be doing in this body primarily is defending America, No. 1, and they called them post roads, back then, building roads and transportation. That is what we are supposed to be doing, but what has happened in our military is something people don't know about. I applaud our military in uniform now because they are saying it for the first time in my memory that we are in the most threatened position this country has ever been in. We have adversaries out there. Some are somewhat mentally deranged. They are rapidly getting or already have the capability of hitting an American city with a weapon. As tragic as it was when we went through 9/11, what a lot of people don't realize is, if that were to happen, a whole city could be wiped out.

The problem is that we have gotten away from prioritizing the fact that the No. 1 concern should be and the mission should be for us to defend America. To give an example, up through the 1960s, we spent over 50 percent of all the revenue that came into the Federal Government on defending America. Do you know what it is today, Mr. President? It is 15 percent. So we have gone from 50 percent down to 15 percent. What does that tell you? It tells you that the priorities aren't right.

So we have looked at this, and this is a first step. This MCCAIN-led NDAA is the first step in reprioritizing where we are. If anyone questions this, if you look at the Obama administration, when we were trying to recover on sequestration, he had a policy. He said: For every dollar we put in, we are going to have to put an equal amount into social programs. That shows you the lack of priority. All that is being changed.

About 10 minutes ago when I started, I quoted Patrick Henry. You stop and think about the courage it took at one time to get to the point that we are going to be progressing to, starting with this bill, when he said: There is a just God who reigns over the destinies of nations and who will raise up friends to fight our battles with us. The battle is not to the strong alone but to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Gentlemen may cry "peace," but there is no peace. Why stand we idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, is peace so sweet, it must be bought at the price of chains and slavery?

That is what it used to be. That was the priority. And this bill reestablishes that priority as the No. 1 priority, as our history reflects we should be doing, as our Constitution has charged us with doing, and we are doing it with the passage of the national defense authorization bill. We are on the road to recovery, and I am very excited about it.

I yield the floor and 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. PETERS. 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.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to make a simple request of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. When it comes to the tax legislation that Republican colleagues are rushing through Congress, please stop, slow down, and let's start over together.

We need real tax reform with clear policy goals that will make our Nation more competitive, not a partisan attempt to pass something—anything—that can get 51 Republican votes in the Senate. Our shared policy goals should be making the Tax Code fairer, simpler, and fiscally responsible. If we can achieve these goals, that would be real tax reform.

If we worked together, we could take long overdue steps and build a tax code that lets working families in Michigan and across the country keep more of their hard-earned money, levels the playing field for our small businesses, and keeps good jobs here at home in the United States. Fairer, simpler, responsible—those are three key points making a tax code that works. If we don't start over, I am afraid the current tax legislation will fail on all three accounts.

First, this tax legislation is not fair. It dramatically moves toward benefiting the wealthiest people in this Nation, with only a little sliver of the benefits going to working-class families.

The Republican tax bill was clearly written to cut rates for CEOs and large corporations and treats the middle class like an afterthought. I would argue that working Americans who are struggling with stagnant wages—while the cost of prescription drugs, college, and housing continue to rise—need tax cuts that are built around them.

Instead, we are looking at a Republican tax plan that repeals the alternative minimum tax—a fail-safe designed specifically to make sure that wealthy Americans cannot deduct their way to paying nothing in taxes. From what little we have seen of President Trump's tax returns, we know that the AMT—the alternative minimum tax—is the only reason he paid income taxes at all. The Republican bill will eliminate the AMT, and President Trump and folks like him will receive a huge windfall and may not have to pay any taxes at all—zero.

Wall Street loves this bill, too, because hedge funds will continue to be taxed at lower rates than small businesses in our local communities. This means many hedge fund managers making millions of dollars will have a lower tax rate than an office assistant working at their firm. Simply put, this

proposal fails on the test of making the Tax Code fairer.

I also believe this effort fails on the test of making the code simpler. For small business owners back in Michigan, they want to spend their time doing what they know best, which is running their business, not spending days or weeks trying to figure out the taxes they owe. But, as many of my colleagues in the Finance Committee have pointed out throughout this week, the provisions for a small business passthrough serve only to make a complicated tax code even more complicated—yes, even more complicated.

Expert analysis says that the passthrough provisions will require years of rulemakings and thousands of pages of additional rules and regulations. As a small business owner, unless your hobby is studying the Internal Revenue Code, this bill is going to make your life a whole lot more difficult.

Finally, on the last test, the test of whether or not this bill is responsible, this proposal fails miserably. Writing responsible tax legislation means making hard choices—closing loopholes and balancing out the pros and cons of any action.

Congress has the responsibility to take seriously the threat of a growing national debt, and we have to think about this when changing our Tax Code. But instead of working to reduce our debt, which we are passing on to our children and grandchildren, this proposal actually adds more than \$1 trillion to our deficit. And it would be even more expensive, but in a haphazard attempt to limit the cost, the majority has put forward a bill where hundreds of millions of dollars of provisions that middle-class families could use to reduce their taxes expire at random times over the next few years.

When you add it all up and factor in the additional interest costs to carry this new debt, you have a proposal that adds over \$2 trillion to the Federal debt, according to the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. It is wildly irresponsible to pile on this debt to finance a tax break for the wealthiest people in this country, but it doesn't have to be that way.

Tax reform can be bipartisan. The goal of tax reform must be fairer, simpler, and responsible. This isn't just idealism or wishful thinking. We have seen it happen before. When Ronald Reagan worked with Congress to pass tax reform in 1986, the bill received 97 votes in the U.S. Senate—yes, 97 votes. That is the sort of bipartisan approach we need, and we need to start working on that now.

Michiganders—and all Americans—deserve a tax code that is fairer, simpler, and more responsible, not more multinational corporate giveaways and more debt.

I will not stop fighting for hard-working American families and small businesses who deserve to see more take-home pay, and I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will join me.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon the conclusion of my remarks, the Senator from Rhode Island be recognized.

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

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep concern with the tax reform bill that the Senate Finance Committee is likely to approve later this week. The latest version of this massive tax bill, which will impact every single American, was only released to the public late Tuesday night. Less than 48 hours later, the Finance Committee is ramming through this bill on a party-line vote without any hearings and without a thorough review of the bill.

I strongly disagree with the closed-door process of developing the substance of a bill which skews the benefits to the wealthy at the expense of middle-class families and with this bill's irresponsible cost of \$1.7 trillion over 10 years. I also want to tell my colleagues and the President that there is still an opportunity for us to do the right thing and to work together on tax reform.

We should follow the example of the last time there was successful tax reform enacted by Congress. This was led by Republican President Ronald Reagan, Democratic Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, and Members of Congress from both parties, who worked together back in 1986 to pass major tax reform legislation. Sure, they had strong disagreements, but they held lengthy public debates, compromised on both sides of the aisle, and eventually passed a major tax reform bill that was bipartisan, was fair, and did not add to our deficits and national debt.

For some reason, my Republican colleagues seem to have forgotten the example of the last time the Congress actually passed tax reform. It happened because both parties worked together. It happened because both parties compromised. And while I believe there is still time for us to undertake this approach, what we are seeing right now is the exact opposite. I think that is a big mistake.

When I am on the train back to Wilmington or when I am at home in my State of Delaware hearing from my constituents, my message about this bill is simple: I am worried what this bill will do to our fiscal health as a country and the middle class, and you should be too.

Let me start by quoting a story from the Washington Post today whose

headline reads "Senate tax bill cuts taxes of wealthy and hikes taxes on families earning under \$75,000 over a decade." Let me repeat that. The Senate tax bill cuts the taxes of the wealthy and hikes taxes on families earning under \$75,000. The story is based on a report from the nonpartisan Joint Commission on Taxation which shows that the claims from President Trump and my Republican colleagues that this bill is all about tax relief for the middle class are simply wrong.

I will quote from this story:

By the year 2027, Americans earning \$30,000 to \$75,000 a year—

Solidly middle-class folks—

would also be forced to pay more in taxes even though people earning over \$100,000 would continue to get substantial tax cuts.

Unfortunately, though, that is not the end of my concerns with this legislation. I am also alarmed by how much this bill would add to our Nation's budget deficits and by the long-term impacts it would have on our debt.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, this tax bill—this Republican-only tax bill—will cost over \$1.7 trillion over 10 years. That is \$1.7 trillion with a "t." What happened to my colleagues who spent years talking about the danger posed by a growing national debt? Now these very same Senators and Representatives are willing to put almost \$2 trillion on our Nation's credit card. It is an astounding figure—more than twice as large as the emergency stimulus package Congress passed in 2009 to prevent the next Great Depression. It is more than twice as much as the much maligned so-called bailout that Congress authorized to prevent the collapse of the financial system.

What does \$1.7 trillion buy us? What is the great return on investment that would justify borrowing \$1.7 trillion—mostly from China—in a time of near record-low unemployment? The Speaker of the House, PAUL RYAN, publicly bragged that their tax plan would produce 1 million jobs. That sounds good but not when you consider the cost. My math may not be great, but if you spend \$1.7 trillion to get 1 million jobs, that is \$1.5 million per job. That is not a great return on investment.

To add insult to injury, the majority believes they can use this bill to also cut access to healthcare for millions of Americans because they have decided at the last moment to include a repeal of the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate—a critical part of that bill—law, which helps ensure a healthy risk pool, which, in turn, lowers premiums.

Those who actually work in healthcare know this is a bad idea. That is why the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Hospital Association, and America's Health Insurance Plans have all come out against the inclusion of the individual mandate repeal in this bill, saying that "eliminating the individual mandate by itself likely will result in a

significant increase in premiums, which would substantially increase the number of uninsured Americans."

The nonpartisan CBO agrees. They found that repealing the mandate will cause 13 million people to lose their healthcare by 2027, and average premiums would increase about 10 percent each year.

The inclusion of the mandate repeal to pay for corporate tax cuts will hurt middle-class families across our country. It is politics at its worst, throwing aside the needs of our constituents to ensure that a small group of the wealthy get wealthy. That is because the core of this bill is based on a promise proven false time and again—that tax cuts for the richest Americans and most profitable corporations will somehow trickle down to help the majority of working Americans. We know that is not how our economy has actually worked. Even President Reagan's own budget director, David Stockman, said yesterday that this bill isn't going to increase wages for the middle class.

The Senate bill proposes we cut the top corporate rate nearly in half; exempt more wealthy individuals from the estate tax, which impacts only the top 0.2 percent of Americans; repeal the alternative minimum tax, which affects those making hundreds of thousands annually; and cut tax rates for those earning over \$1 million.

Altogether, the core elements of this plan amount to \$1.7 trillion in tax cuts, and my Republican colleagues are simply asking us to trust them that the benefits will somehow reach the middle class.

If that isn't enough to prove that this bill being rushed through in today's markup is bad policy, my colleagues in the majority went one step further in this latest version by eliminating all tax breaks for middle-class families in 8 years while making the tax cuts for corporations permanent. This means that millions of middle-class families will see a tax hike in the future in order to fund permanency for corporate tax breaks. That is just not right.

So here is what I think we should do. Let's slow down. Let's work together, Republicans and Democrats, to pass a bill that is actually good for all Americans. I believe we can get that done. I think it is our job and our duty. We don't have to start from scratch. There are bipartisan ideas. There are introduced, bipartisan tax bills that could make our code simpler and fairer and more effective.

I will mention two examples of bills I have introduced—one with Republican Senator SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO and another with Republican Senator PAT ROBERTS—that encourage manufacturers to use made-in-America parts and incentivize companies that invent something here to make it here. I have introduced another bill with Republican Senator JERRY MORAN—it has eight bipartisan cosponsors—and with Republican Congressman TED POE that would alter the Tax Code to boost

every aspect of the American energy industry, from oil and gas to the latest renewable and clean energy technologies. These are just a few ideas, but they represent a simple truth: that we can and should work together on tax reform instead of making this one more pointless, partisan battle.

The same thing is true for our healthcare system. The American people have overwhelmingly said they want a bipartisan and open process to fix healthcare, not a one-party scheme by either party that throws our system into chaos with no plan to replace it.

I encourage President Trump and Republican leaders to stop trying to pass tax reform with only Republicans and to reach across the aisle to work with Democrats and pass something we can all get behind.

TRIBUTE TO MEGAN O'NEILL

Mr. President, while I appreciate the opportunity to talk today about the very real need for bipartisan tax reform that helps working families, grows the economy, and doesn't increase our debt, I wish to turn to another important topic—the impending departure from my office of Megan O'Neill, my director of scheduling.

Megan has been a part of our office for more than 5 years. She leaves later this month for an exciting new opportunity in New York City.

Megan is quite simply one of the most capable, resourceful, intelligent, effective, and kind people I have ever had the honor of knowing or working with. One of the most well-worn sayings here in Washington is that “everyone is replaceable.” While that may be true for me, and it may be true for the Acting President *pro tempore*, and it may be true for many others here, it is simply not true of Megan. She is truly irreplaceable. I owe Megan a huge debt of gratitude for her years of service to my office, to Delaware, and to our country.

Many of us who have worked with her will gather to thank her and wish her well, but I also wanted to take a few minutes to talk about—and probably embarrass—this remarkable woman.

Megan is from nearby Chevy Chase, MD, but more important, at least in my opinion, is that she graduated from the University of Delaware as a “Fighting Blue Hen” with a degree in economics and international relations. She interned in my Wilmington office during her senior year at UD and quickly became a staff favorite.

Upon graduating, Megan moved to Washington, and I hired her as a staff assistant, working at the front desk in my DC office. It is a particularly demanding job—juggling visiting constituents, constant phone calls, and supervising interns. She proved herself to be mature and capable. I promoted her several times in quick succession until she took over as my director of scheduling in August of 2015.

Over the course of her time in my office, I have come to deeply respect her as a professional, but more impor-

tantly, I have come to admire her as a person. In addition to being incredibly competent, strategic, and quick on her feet, it is Megan's boundless patience and optimism I will most miss. Regardless of how stressful, jam-packed, and uncertain a day may be, Megan is always able to ensure that everything gets done; that every constituent is heard, every important issue is raised, and that this Senator doesn't lose his mind.

Megan is also famous for her seemingly permanent smile and sunny disposition. Some of her colleagues in my office chimed in with a few anecdotes. Oftentimes, I was told, throughout the day, Megan will announce she is off to get a “fun drink,” which might sound like a Margarita but is, in fact, always a raspberry lemonade-flavored Dasani sparkling water. When something comes up—whether it is a favorite TV show, album, or new restaurant, she exclaims: “That's my jam!” She also loves to travel, but one thing that makes her different is that when she has an upcoming trip, she is just as excited to plan it out minute by minute as she is to actually go.

I can't talk about Megan without mentioning her family. She speaks frequently and lovingly about her parents Michael and Donna O'Neill and her younger brother Matt. As anyone who knows Megan is well aware, each summer, she is a key part of O'Neill week when she joins her parents, brother, cousins, and extended family in beautiful Bethany Beach, DE, to play Olympic-style beach games, eat, drink, and enjoy each other's company.

Anyone who understands the Senate knows how essential schedulers are to everything that goes on here. No staffer has a more challenging, demanding, or complex role. We Senators have big vocabularies for our long-winded speeches, but the most important word a scheduler says is “no,” and Megan mastered the art of saying no in a firm, professional, appropriate way, even when this Senator seems to always want to say yes.

Schedulers wear too many hats to count. They are field generals, firefighters, political advisers, logisticians, psychologists, diplomats, managers, and air traffic controllers. They work as hard or harder than anyone else here but so often go unseen or unheard. Maybe that is why Senate schedulers are a very tight-knit group. Megan often speaks with great fondness and respect for her counterparts in other Senate offices, and it does not surprise me that they think highly of her.

One of Megan's counterparts said she is “always quick to share advice and ideas, and has been a great source of support when any [of] her colleagues need some kind words. She is efficient and effective while also being so nice and compassionate.”

Megan's compassion is, at the end of the day, what makes her such an incredible person and an irreplaceable

part of our team. Regardless of who someone may be, when they work with Megan, they are treated with dignity and respect. Time and again, I have heard from people who are so grateful for her generosity, patience, and kindness. I have seen her help and stick up for her colleagues, even when that was difficult to do.

Let me close by simply saying to my friend and colleague Megan O'Neill: Thank you. Thank you for everything you have done for me, for your colleagues, for your friends in the Senate, for the State of Delaware, and our country. The Senate is a place full of amazing, talented people, but even among them, you have stood out in your time here, and we will all miss you dearly. Thank you.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

Mr. REED. Mr. President, it is our responsibility to ensure that future generations will have greater opportunity and greater security than we inherited from our parents and our forebears. To accomplish this, we must put aside political expedience and take a sober look at the health of our national economy and our ability to keep our commitments at home and around the world. With this in mind, I rise to urge my colleagues to reject the partisan and fiscally irresponsible Republican tax proposals in the so-called Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. When we strip away the rosy, but false, economic projections and ideologically motivated economic theories the Republicans have been using to hype this bill, it is clear this bill trades away our nation's long-term economic health and the well-being of working Americans, the poor, the sick, and the old in order to benefit the wealthy. Moreover, this bill will take us trillions of dollars deeper into debt at a time when the costs of 16 years of debt-financed wars continue to mount. Republicans owe it to our country and to future generations who will be stuck with the multi-trillion-dollar cost of this bill to go back to the drawing board and produce a balanced and permanent bipartisan path forward on our Nation's broken Tax Code.

It does not take an economist to see that the Republican tax bill is a historic \$1.5 trillion transfer of wealth from poor and working Americans to the very wealthiest among us, but a few of its glaring injustices are worth mentioning. According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, it gives over twice as much tax relief to millionaires as it does to Americans making under \$50,000. Just 5,000 of the wealthiest American families will receive hundreds of billions of dollars over a decade in the form of estate tax breaks at a time when income and wealth inequality in this country are at historic highs. This transfer of wealth through estate tax repeal alone requires us to go back to the drawing board. On the other hand, the bill

raises taxes on 19.4 million households earning under \$200,000 by as much as \$500. Forty-six percent of households making under \$100,000 and 50 percent of households making under \$75,000 will either see their taxes go up over the next decade or see no change at all, and that is just the tip of the iceberg. While tax cuts for big corporations are made permanent, the Republican bill plans to claw back what little it gives to everyone else after a few years, setting up even bigger tax hikes for the middle class down the line. This does not even begin to cover the return of TrumpCare that has been added to this bill, which would take healthcare coverage away from 13 million Americans and drive up costs substantially for the poor, the sick, and the elderly.

This bill is a bad investment and, frankly, it is one we can ill afford. According to the Penn Wharton Budget Model provided by the University of Pennsylvania, the bill will reduce Federal revenue by as much as \$1.7 trillion and increase our national debt by \$2 trillion in the 10-year budget window. By 2040, this becomes \$3.6 trillion in lost Federal revenue and up to \$6.9 trillion in debt. We would take on all this debt for an estimated 0.4 to 0.9 percent boost in GDP. For \$1.5 trillion, we could make needed repairs to our streets and highways across America—creating tens of thousands of jobs in the process. We could pay off every American's credit card or student loan, or lift every American above the poverty line for years. Instead, this bill would put yet another massive charge on America's credit card that will not create jobs, will not trickle down, and most certainly will not pay for itself. We still have a \$5.6 trillion in deficits and interest payments from the Bush tax cuts to prove it. With over \$20 trillion in national debt, it is long past time to stop experimenting with people's lives and livelihoods to prove yet again there are no merits to supply-side economics. America has pressing needs and very real bills coming due.

Mr. President, I would like to spend the remaining time of my remarks addressing something about which we have heard far too little in this debate, and that is the impact on our national economic health of the unavoidable and compounding cost of 16 years of military conflict paid for almost entirely through debt. For the first time in our history, the United States reduced revenue—in the form of the Bush tax cuts—rather than the usual pay-as-you-go approach to financing the post-9/11 wars. While we debate potentially adding trillions of dollars to the debt for an ill-conceived tax bill, the costs of war are coming due.

According to calculations in the thorough report by the Costs of War Project by the Watson Institute at Brown University, “[e]ven if the U.S. stopped spending on war at the end of this fiscal year, interest costs alone on borrowing to pay for the wars will continue to grow apace . . . [f]uture inter-

est costs for overseas contingency operations spending alone are projected to add more than \$1 trillion to the national debt by 2023. By 2056, a conservative estimate is that the interest costs will be about \$8 trillion, unless the U.S. changes the way it pays for the wars.”

In a sense, what we are doing is mortgaging the future of our children and grandchildren as we continue to add debt, and this is unavoidable debt in so many cases. We know we cannot immediately stop our engagement in countries throughout the world—in Afghanistan, in the Middle East and other areas. And, frankly, we are facing tremendous challenges in the Korean Peninsula. The approximate combined President's budget request for the Departments of Defense, State, and USAID for fiscal year 2018 is \$14 billion for Iraq and Syria, and \$48.9 billion for Afghanistan.

Furthermore, these costs do not account for much needed maintenance and modernization of our military assets. For example, modernizing, operating, and sustaining our nuclear triad—which includes submarines, bombers, and ICBMs—is projected to cost \$1.2 trillion in 2017 dollars over the next 30 years. We are debating taking \$1.5 trillion and giving it to the wealthiest Americans when we know that we need an additional \$1.2 trillion over 30 years to secure the safety of the United States and the civility of the world through nuclear deterrence. This begs the very simple question: If we want to borrow \$1.5 trillion, why don't we invest it in a cost we know will come due—protecting our country and the world through the renovation and reinvigoration of our nuclear triad.

The Navy recently validated a requirement for 355 ships. This would require the Navy to purchase around 329 new ships over 30 years—an average cost of \$102 billion per year through 2047, which is 13 percent more than the \$90 billion needed to build and operate the current 254-ship fleet envisioned in the Navy's 2017 plan. Once again, we are committing ourselves to billions of dollars of costs to our Navy shipbuilding program while we are entertaining a 1.5 or more trillion-dollar tax giveaway to the wealthiest Americans. We know these costs are coming due, but we are fooling ourselves into thinking we can continue spending on credit forever.

We can expect even greater costs if our military increases end strength, as so many on both sides of the aisle are proposing. This is because of high operational tempo, which is not likely to diminish. For every additional 10,000 servicemembers, it costs roughly \$1.8 billion per year for pay and benefits, and to train and equip these personnel. If the Army grows to 580,000 personnel, it will cost an additional \$18 billion per year, but we are taking that money, and we are giving it in tax cuts, the prominent amount of which is going to the wealthiest Americans. We are not

investing it now in increasing our military forces. If the Air Force grows by 30,000 personnel, it will cost an additional \$6 billion per year. If the Marine Corps grows by 20,000 personnel, it will cost an additional \$3.6 billion per year. If you talk to the Commandant or Chief of Staff of the Air Force, they will tell you they have to increase the size of their force because of the operational tempo. Indeed, if you talk to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, he will tell you they are in a desperate situation maintaining sufficient pilots to fly our aircraft. So we could be buying hundreds of new F-35 aircraft at a significant cost and watch them parked because we can't afford the flight crews to fly them and to maintain them. We know these costs are coming, and we are ignoring them until they come due. We are ignoring them now for the benefit of these tax cuts.

If we do not chart a responsible path forward on economic policy, we will leave all these costs to the next generation, to the detriment of our children, our national security, and our position of world leadership. Frankly, it might not be even that long before serious issues materialize. Once the markets determine that \$1.5 trillion is just a small fraction of what we still must pay to protect ourselves; to continue our commitment in Afghanistan, to continue to support allies across the globe, markets may learn very quickly that the deficit is beginning to devour us. The markets will react, as they have in the past. So we could see a serious problem long before even our children confront these debts.

That is why earlier today former Secretaries of Defense Leon Panetta, Chuck Hagel, and Ash Carter sent a letter to congressional leadership and the House and Senate Armed Services Committee leadership that warned us that the fiscal irresponsibility of the Republican tax proposal will contribute to a growing budget crisis. The letter urges Congress to instead address the sequester that threatens to “hollow out” our military's ability to sustain the commitments of its global missions.

Mr. President, tax policies have real consequences. We can debate the value of one tax proposal over another, but that is not the debate before us. The simple facts are that this tax bill will give breaks to the people who need them the least, take money from working Americans, leave millions of Americans sicker and worse off, and further strain our ability to keep America safe from growing and changing threats across the globe. It also threatens expenditures on healthcare, education, infrastructure, and other vital domestic needs as the debt balloons due to this bill's unaffordable tax breaks for corporate titans. This is not what we owe the next generation. It is not even what we owe our children today. I urge my colleagues across the aisle to consider our Nation's future and join us in opposing this legislation.

Like so many here, I was here in 2001 when President George W. Bush proposed his tax cuts, which I opposed, and assured us that our economy would grow, that jobs would multiply, that we would be fine. Let me remind my colleagues that he said this after we had made the tough decisions in the Clinton Administration that led to a projected surplus in the billions of dollars. The mantra from many people at the time was, let's give the money back to the American people.

We don't have a surplus today. We have a significant deficit. It will grow with this bill because this bill says that we are going to increase it by \$1.5 trillion at a minimum, and it will not be just \$1.5 trillion.

I suggest that, unless we abandon our commitments to the men and women of our Armed Forces, unless we decide to disengage from the deterrent that we must have to defend the Nation from a nuclear Armageddon, unless we decide to leave Afghanistan—after the President announced that no longer are we basing our decisions on time but on conditions—there will continue to be trillions and trillions of dollars of unavoidable costs that should be included in this debate.

This is not the time to take trillions of dollars and give a disproportionate share to the wealthiest Americans. This is the time for us to work together, to provide the resources for our military, to provide investments for our people, and to deal with the issue of inequality between the wealthiest 1 percent and everybody else. None of that is accomplished by this bill. In fact, this bill will complicate, compound, and make even more difficult the problems we face in defending the Nation and giving people a chance at having better futures.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

BLUE SLIPS AND THE NOMINATIONS OF DAVID STRAS AND KYLE DUNCAN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, earlier this week, I spoke about the history of the blue-slip courtesy. I hope my colleagues will read that history as well. I explained in that speech earlier this week that in my nearly four decades in the Senate, I have regularly returned my blue slip even when I would have preferred that the President had nominated someone else.

Today, I am announcing that the Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing for two circuit court nominees, each of whom has one home State Senator who has not returned a blue slip containing a positive endorsement.

The hearing for Justice David Stras, nominee to the Eighth Circuit, and Kyle Duncan, nominee to the Fifth Circuit, will take place on November 29. Both of these nominees appear to be very well qualified, and they deserve the Judiciary Committee's further consideration. I would therefore like to offer an explanation as to why I am choosing to proceed on these nomina-

tions and allow the hearing despite the lack of two positive blue slips.

As I explained earlier this week, the blue-slip courtesy is just that—a courtesy. For 100 years, the Judiciary Committee chairmen have asked for the views of home State Senators on judicial nominees via the blue-slip process. The blue slip is meant to solicit insights into nominees and ensure that the White House is adequately consulting with home State Senators as the advice part of the advice and consent would apply.

Let me be very clear. I will maintain the blue-slip courtesy, but some of my Democratic colleagues and leftwing outside groups mistakenly assert that the blue slip affords a home State Senator veto power over a nominee. That is not true. Only 2 out of the 18 previous chairmen of this committee in the last 100 years allowed a single Senator to wield veto power over a nominee.

Senator Joe Biden, when he was the Judiciary Committee chairman, articulated what I consider to be a sensible policy with regard to the blue slip. He said that a negative blue slip will be a "significant factor" for the committee to weigh, but "it will not preclude consideration of a nominee" unless the administration were to fail to consult with the Senator. I intend to follow this practice for negative and unreturned blue slips. This practice is consistent with the vast majority of the blue slip's history.

I will add that I am less likely to proceed on a district court nominee who does not have two positive blue slips from home State Senators, but circuit courts, as we know, cover multiple States. There is less reason to defer to the views of a single State's Senator for such nominees when that nominee is going to serve several States in a circuit.

It is important to remember that the judicial confirmation process has changed over the last several years. Previously, when home State Senators did not return a positive blue slip, their colleagues often defeated that very same nomination on the floor but not in committee.

When President Bush nominated Carolyn Kuhl to the Ninth Circuit, her home State Senators did not return positive blue slips. Chairman HATCH, nevertheless, held a hearing and a vote for that nominee. Her home State Senators, however, convinced their colleagues to filibuster the nominee on the Senate floor. Carolyn Kuhl was never confirmed.

A few years ago, as we know—I think it was in 2013—Democrats abolished the filibuster for nominees to the lower courts. They argued that a minority of Senators should not be allowed to block nominees who had majority support.

Our colleague, the Senator from Oregon, said: "‘Advice and consent’ was never envisioned as a check that involved a minority of the Senate being

able to block a Presidential [nomination]." Well, now that Senator is withholding his blue slip for a nominee to the Ninth Circuit. If he did not believe that 41 Senators should be able to block a nominee, he surely wouldn't believe that a single Senator would have that right.

I think the Democrats now seriously regret that they abolished the filibuster, as I warned them about at that particular time when they were trying to add a lot of people who were not needed on the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, as an example—packing the court, in other words. They cannot veto it because there is not a filibuster, so they want to use the blue slip for that purpose. It is very clear from the history of the blue slip that that is not what the blue slip was meant for.

On the other hand, some have argued that the blue-slip courtesy has no place in modern judicial confirmations. The LA Times recently suggested getting rid of the blue slip, as did the New York Times several years ago. Even our committee's ranking member, Senator FEINSTEIN, once advocated for abolishing the blue slip.

I disagree that we should abolish the blue slip. The blue slip serves the important purpose of encouraging consultation between the White House and the Senate. Otherwise, the constitutional provision of advice and consent is just consent. But there is opportunity to advise ahead of time. That is what the blue slips help to do. The blue slip serves the important purpose of encouraging consultation between the White House and the Senate. The White House has an obligation to engage in good-faith consultation with home State Senators for the purpose of advice.

I will not allow the White House to just steamroll home State Senators, but, as I have said all along, I will not allow the blue-slip process to be abused. Ever since last November, when the press had asked me about the blue slip, I have said that we are going to honor the blue-slip process but that there are always exceptions. I am not going to allow Senators to prevent a committee hearing for political or ideological reasons. Those are the least reasons not to have a hearing. Using the blue slip for these purposes is not consistent with historical practice.

This brings me to one of the two nominations we are having on November 29, that of Justice David Stras of Minnesota.

Justice Stras appears to be exceptionally well qualified. He graduated first in his class from the University of Kansas Law School. He clerked for both the Ninth Circuit and the Fourth Circuit and then for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. After several years in private practice in Minnesota, Justice Stras joined the faculty of the University of Minnesota Law School. He remained there until his appointment to the Minnesota Supreme Court in 2010. In 2012, he was

elected to a full 6-year term on the court by 56 percent of Minnesota voters. Think about one's not returning a blue slip when somebody gets 56 percent of the vote to be returned to the court.

Justice Stras was raised by a single mother in Kansas. He is the grandson of Holocaust survivors. He carries the lessons passed down by his grandparents with him each day.

I want to refer to a writing he just submitted to a leading newspaper. Writing recently about their survival in Auschwitz and then immigrating to the United States, he recalled that his grandfather had "the uncommon gift of being able to see the light of human generosity in the midst of near-total darkness."

He wrote that his grandparents embraced "a message of optimism, intended to ensure that their children and grandchildren were able to lead a life free from the atrocities that they had witnessed."

Justice Stras has an impeccable reputation in the Minnesota legal community.

His former colleagues at the University of Minnesota Law School describe him as a person who "engaged in debate respectfully, listening to opposing ideas while backing up his own views with facts and arguments" and who "wanted our students to be exposed to a wide range of beliefs."

Another group of colleagues of Justice Stras from his days in private practice describe this justice as the type of attorney who "never talked down to people" and "there was never any hint that he felt himself superior to anyone." Instead, Justice Stras "listened to others' views, and worked to find an approach to legal problems that was both effective and acceptable to everyone on the team." They also note in that letter his dedication to mentoring young lawyers.

Despite these accomplishments and accolades, one Senator has withheld his blue slip. Evidently, my colleague from Minnesota believes that Justice Stras has not even earned a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee. But the reasons given for withholding the blue slip are not consistent with the blue slip's purposes and history.

Justice Stras was nominated to the Eighth Circuit on May 8, more than 6 months ago. After many months, my colleague formally announced that he would not return a blue slip. He cited Justice Stras's "deeply conservative judicial philosophy," as well as his admiration for Justice Thomas and Justice Scalia. To me, this amounts to an ideological litmus test: Admirers of Justice Thomas and Justice Scalia need not ever apply for being on a circuit court.

The Minnesota StarTribune's editorial board summed it up. They said the Senator from Minnesota "rejected Stras for one reason: the justice's conservative views."

The editorial board of the largest newspaper in Minnesota echoed the retired justice, Paul Anderson:

While Stras is more conservative than I would like, that is not the point. The question is whether Stras is qualified to serve on the Eighth Circuit. And he is.

My colleague later claimed that he was not adequately consulted by the White House, which would be a legitimate reason for withholding a blue slip, as I hope I have implied several times during my remarks today and before. So I looked into this by reviewing the records of consultation—and thank God the White House keeps pretty good records. It is clear the White House earnestly and repeatedly attempted to work with both home State Senators. The White House reached out to my colleague from Minnesota several times between January and May of this year to discuss the Eighth Circuit vacancy that Minnesota supplies a member for.

It wasn't until May 2 that my colleague suggested alternatives to Justice Stras. That was more than 3 months after initial contact by the White House. Nevertheless, the White House did what they should under the Constitution by listening to Senators. They considered my colleague's two suggested nominees. I am satisfied that the White House adequately tried to consult with both home State Senators as the Constitution requires under advice and consent. Therefore, I am not going to deny Justice Stras a hearing.

I would like to say a brief word about Justice Stras's supposedly rigid conservative views. The Judiciary Committee has received numerous letters attesting to Justice Stras's intellectual honesty and, probably more importantly, open-mindedness. It is clear that he has great respect for the rule of law, and his tenure on the Minnesota Supreme Court demonstrates that, like any good judge, he is able to put aside his personal views and apply the law faithfully.

One letter, written by a bipartisan group of attorneys from Justice Stras's former firm, noted that they "never doubted for a minute that he reached his decisions based on his well-considered view of the law, and not personal, political, or ideological considerations."

They went on to note:

The lawyers whose names appear at the bottom of this letter span the political spectrum, from Democrat to Republican, liberal to conservative. We differ in our political views, but we are united in our support of Justice Stras's nomination to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

There are all kinds of people writing that letter—Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives. Why is a Senator concerned about the justice's ideological views when people who know him well seem to think that is not a consideration because he is going to make a good judge?

A group of former colleagues at the University of Minnesota agree. They

wrote a letter to the committee stating:

We are Minnesota law professors with diverse political views ranging from very conservative to very progressive. Some of us have appeared before Justice Stras as advocates, and all of us are familiar with his academic and judicial track records.

Now as I continue the quote, I want to say to everybody, get this:

He is no extremist, and he has approached his academic and judicial work without bias or favoritism.

This support is echoed by his colleagues in my State of Iowa. The committee has received several letters of support from the faculty at the University of Iowa College of Law where Justice Stras teaches as an adjunct professor. Among his supporters are the dean of the law school, Gail Agrawal, and Professor Sheldon Kurtz, a self-described "life-long liberal."

Justice Stras is a widely respected jurist, and he should have a hearing. Ideological differences should not prevent the committee from moving forward.

I would also like to address my decision to hold a hearing for Kyle Duncan, a nominee for the Fifth Circuit. He also has not had two positive blue slips returned. He is a widely respected appellate lawyer who has litigated over 30 cases in Federal and State appellate courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court.

My friend and colleague, Senator KENNEDY of Louisiana, has declined to return a positive blue slip. However, Senator KENNEDY expressed that while he is undecided on Mr. Duncan's nomination, he does not oppose a hearing for Mr. Duncan. This seems to me to be a very sensible approach. It is the correct distinction that a Senator should make when deciding whether to return a blue slip. The blue slip is not meant to signify the Senator's ultimate support or opposition to the nominee. It only expresses a Senator's view about whether the nominee should have a hearing.

Senator FEINSTEIN made this precise distinction in 2003 for Carolyn Kuhl's nomination. I referred to that nomination earlier in my remarks. Senator FEINSTEIN returned a blue slip which noted that she "reserved judgment" on Carolyn Kuhl. She also supported holding a hearing for Judge Kuhl. Ultimately, after Judge Kuhl's hearing, Senator FEINSTEIN decided to oppose confirmation.

Evidently, the hearing served a useful purpose, and Senator FEINSTEIN was able to distinguish between allowing a hearing and supporting a nominee. Senator KENNEDY has shown that he understands this distinction as well.

I look forward to hearing from Justice Stras and Mr. Duncan at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on November 29.

I think that all 100 Senators ought to look at the advice and consent clause. We have an opportunity to give advice to a President. We have an opportunity then, if that nominee comes up here, to vote for that nominee.

Do we want to preserve the “advice” part of advice and consent? If we do, I would suggest that we look at the blue slip as a useful tool for accomplishing a very important part of the process. If it is abused—at least while I am chairman, you don’t have to worry about it going away. But if it is abused, someday it will go away, and then all we are going to have, when it is all said and done, is consent.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I listened carefully to the excellent remarks of the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, outlining the history of the blue slip. I am going to say to the chairman that he has outlined a sensible use of the blue slip, which involves consultation but does not lead to a one-Senator veto of a nominee.

I thank the chairman for the history lesson. It is a history lesson that the Senate needed to hear.

I also thank the chairman for the spectacular job that he has done all year long with this new administration in processing and bringing forward highly qualified nominees. For generations to come, Americans who follow the third branch will be indebted to the chairman for the way he has handled these nominations, processed them, moved them out on to the floor, and given the Senate the opportunity to express its will.

I wish every Member of the Senate had been able to hear the chairman’s remarks, but I am certainly going to call these remarks to the attention of our Members every opportunity I get, and I thank the Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I thank the leader.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The Senator from Nebraska.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the National Defense Authorization Act. The process of negotiating the annual defense bill is one that has a long and important history on Capitol Hill.

This afternoon, the Senate voted to pass a conference report, continuing a tradition of 55 consecutive years in which the National Defense Authorization Act has been a must-pass bill for the Congress. People have a habit these days of assuming that Congress cannot pass major legislation, but this bill is a testament to the fact that when it comes to supporting our men and women in uniform, we work together to provide them with the support they need. I am happy to say that this year, we are carrying on this proud tradition.

This year’s National Defense Authorization Act was passed by overwhelming bipartisan majorities in both the Senate and the House. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I have been proud to do my part to help craft this bill and to be a part of the process.

We live in a rapidly changing world, and, unfortunately, one that presents a

growing number of threats and challenges that our military must face. Across the globe, we have witnessed the rise of dangerous new threats that make the mission of our warfighters even more challenging. In Europe, Vladimir Putin has shown a complete disregard for international law and order and threatens key allies and democracies that underpin the democratic backbone of Europe. In the Pacific, we face a nuclear-armed dictator in North Korea who murders his own people while threatening mass death and destruction to the United States and to our allies. In the Middle East, we have witnessed the rapid and fearsome emergence of radical extremist groups like ISIS, whose barbarism shocks the world. Their horrific acts of bloodshed show just how dangerous this warped ideology is, and the efforts of the men and women in uniform have played a critical role in the fight to stem this dark tide.

Unfortunately, this same ideology of radical extremism is finding new followers in Europe, Africa, and Asia. These threats demand that we be ready. The fact is that the United States has faced challenges before, and if one thing holds true throughout history, it is that our Armed Forces will be called upon to defeat the enemies of freedom and safeguard this Nation. For them to succeed, the Congress must provide the men and women in uniform the support they need to execute their missions. That is why I am so proud to stand before you today and speak about the National Defense Authorization Act.

This legislation sends a clear message: Now is the time that we begin to rebuild our military. Contained in this bill is the necessary funding to start filling the gaps and ensuring our force remains the best in the world. This includes increases to the size of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Reserves, and our National Guard. It also means that new, battle-ready systems are going to get the funding they need to be put in the field as quickly as possible. On land, the NDAA authorizes funding for 85 Abrams tank upgrades and 93 Bradley fighting vehicles. At sea, it revitalizes our fleet, authorizing 13 new ships for our Navy. In the air, it provides 90 new F-35 aircraft and 53 UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters.

Across all of these domains, the fiscal year 2018 NDAA authorizes funding for critical modernization priorities to help ensure that on every battlefield the men and women of America’s Armed Forces have the resources they need to complete the missions they are given.

I serve as chair of the Armed Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, and my top priority has been the modernization of our nuclear forces and the Department of Energy’s nuclear weapons complex.

This bill strongly supports nuclear modernization and makes a number of other key investments within the sub-

committee’s jurisdiction. First, the conference report builds on important provisions included in the versions that passed both the House and the Senate this year, and it includes the administration’s request for additional missile defense funding, submitted earlier this month. In total, the bill authorizes an additional \$4.4 billion above the level requested by the President when the budget was initially submitted to improve our missile defense systems. This includes a significant expansion of our Ground-based Midcourse Defense system and authorizes resources to begin construction of another 20 interceptor silos at Fort Greely, AK. To further enhance the system’s effectiveness, the bill makes valuable investments in the network of radars and other sensors that support the system’s operations. The bill also contains reasonable reforms to our military space enterprise that are designed to achieve a more streamlined and agile system that is more responsive to the needs of our warfighters.

Furthermore, the bill improves the oversight and management of our nuclear command and control architecture. Often overlooked, these programs form the connective tissue between our national leadership and our nuclear forces. Their reliability and resilience are vital to the effectiveness of our nuclear deterrent.

As the specter of great power conflict returns and the threat from a nuclear-armed North Korea continues to grow, our missile defense and nuclear capabilities will play an increasingly important role in protecting our homeland. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to further modernize and strengthen these vital capabilities to ensure that we stay ahead of the threats that our Nation faces.

Beyond the strategic forces portfolio, this bill recognizes that we must also rebuild our readiness and military infrastructure here at home, which is why we have included funding increases in the bill to support 90 percent of the requirements for facilities sustainment, as well as a significant increase for facilities restoration and modernization. This means newly authorized funding to restore and modernize facilities and infrastructure ranging from barracks and hospitals to runways and hangers.

But let’s not forget the most important part of our effort in crafting this bill, and that is providing for the one asset we can never replace: our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. The people who wear the uniform are more valuable than any weapons system. The dedication, sacrifice, and honor they exemplify every day is why we stand here today and enjoy the freedoms this country has to offer. For that reason, included in this bill is the largest pay raise for our troops in 8 years.

We have also permanently preserved special survivor indemnity allowance

payments to surviving military spouses. There are more than 60,000 Americans whose spouses have died on Active Duty or during retirement and, as a result of this legislation, this important payment will no longer exist on a year-by-year basis, but it will be preserved indefinitely.

Make no mistake, these are challenging times for our Nation as the world is becoming an increasingly complex place. Now more than ever, we are asking our military to tackle difficult problems and to face adversaries who consistently seek new ways to do us harm.

No matter the day, no matter the situation, America's Armed Forces stand ready to answer the call and protect our Nation. We need to uphold our solemn duty as Members of the Senate and keep faith with those who wear the uniform by giving them the tools they need.

The 55-year legacy of passing the National Defense Authorization Act did not happen by accident. It has happened because Members of this body know and Members of this body recognize that this bill represents a promise to our servicemembers. It is a promise that, as you stand in harm's way, far from your families and loved ones, we stand with you. When you are deployed during a holiday or a special occasion, as many members of our own Nebraska National Guard will be this Thanksgiving, we stand with you. During late nights and early mornings in the cold, in the heat, in battle, and in peacetime, we stand with you.

Passing the National Defense Authorization Act means keeping our end of the promise to those who serve. As a Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, it has been my honor to play a part in helping to craft this year's bill, and I would like to thank our chairman, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, for his leadership in guiding the committee through the process. I would also like to thank America's men and women in uniform for all that they do to keep us safe.

I yield the floor.

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. SASSE. 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.

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, the consideration of Federal judges with lifetime appointments is perhaps the most important and long-lasting work this body will do between now and the end of the year.

Every Senator—Republican and Democrat—took an oath to perform this duty. Nobody took an oath to outsource this duty to any outside organization. Unfortunately, some of my

colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee are apparently willing to hand over their voting cards to the American Bar Association, based on the claim that the ABA is an unbiased, indifferent umpire that just calls balls and strikes.

The American Bar Association is not neutral. The ABA is a liberal organization that has publicly and consistently advocated for left-of-center positions for more than two decades now. The ABA has no right to special treatment by Members of this body.

It is pretty simple. If you are playing in the game, you don't get to cherry-pick who the referees are.

Take, for just a moment, a look at the amicus briefs they have filed in recent years.

In the District of Columbia v. Heller, the ABA supported denying an individual their constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

In Christian Legal Society v. Martinez, the ABA supported forcing Christian organizations on campuses to accept members that reject their faith.

In Medellin v. Texas, the ABA supported forcing States to recognize the judgments of the world court in order to stop the execution of a gruesome murderer.

In United States v. Windsor, the ABA supported the recognition of same-sex marriage through judicial fiat rather than through legislative debate.

In Arizona v. United States, the ABA supported a constitutional ban on State and local law enforcement assisting in enforcing Federal immigration laws.

The list goes on. In each of these cases, the ABA decided to weigh into divisive and contentious issues. This is their right, indeed, but it is definitely not neutral. In each of these cases, and many more, the ABA took what can only be described as a left-of-center position. In each of these cases, the ABA was picking a side.

Again—to be clear—they are absolutely allowed to do this. It is what makes this country great. But it is laughably naive to suggest that they are an objective and neutral organization. They are not.

The ABA cannot make liberal arguments to the nine members of the Supreme Court, and then walk across the street and seriously expect that the 100 Members of this body in the Senate will be treating them like unbiased appraisers. That is essentially what Attorney General Bill Barr said in 1992 when the ABA first began to openly take pro-abortion positions—which, by the way, led to thousands of members quitting in protest because those members knew that the ABA claims to neutrality about political issues were no longer even possibly defensible.

Then—U.S. Attorney General Bill Barr commented on the ABA's pro-abortion advocacy at the time by saying: "By adopting the resolution and thereby endorsing one side of this debate, the ABA will endanger the perception that

it is an impartial and objective association."

Twenty-five years later, Barr's words were right. His words ring true.

Again, I want to be perfectly clear. The ABA is allowed to have any view that its members want to have, and they are allowed to advocate and to protest on behalf of those views and on behalf of their members. This is America, and that is exactly what the First Amendment is about. That is fine. But what is not fine is that the ABA, which is a liberal advocacy organization, would masquerade as a neutral and objective evaluator of judicial candidates.

The ABA cannot take blatantly liberal positions on the one hand, and then masquerade as a neutral party on the other, and then demand a special seat at the table in the Senate Judiciary Committee and in the Senate—in this body—to try to tell us who is and isn't supposedly qualified to be a judge.

Just as the ABA has every right to advance its liberal policy positions, every Senator has the right—and indeed, the duty—to give our advice and consent on judicial nominees. If Senators decide that they like and value the ABA's policy positions and they like and value the ABA's rating, they are free to give them due deference and consideration, but don't hide behind it.

Don't pretend that the ABA is something that it is not. Do not ignore the facts of what the ABA has become. The American people deserve honesty, not thinly veiled partisanship.

Thank you.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act.

After several months of negotiations, the House and Senate Armed Services Committees have arrived at a completed conference agreement. Earlier today, we passed the NDAA for the 56th consecutive year.

Let me highlight some of the important issues that we addressed in this agreement. This conference agreement authorizes a total of \$692 billion, which includes \$626.4 billion in base budget funding for the Department of Defense and certain security activities of the Department of Energy and \$65.8 billion in overseas contingency operations, or OCO, funding.

Of course, we could not have done it without the cooperation of all the members of the committee, including the Presiding Officer, and I thank him for his contribution and his service.

This includes the administration's \$5.9 billion budget amendment we received earlier this month, which seeks an additional \$4.7 billion in base budget funding to bolster missile defense and to repair two Navy ships after recent collisions, as well as \$1.2 billion in OCO funding for operations in Afghanistan and for additional capabilities in the Central Command area of operations.

The conference agreement includes significant increases in additional resources aimed at restoring full spectrum readiness, as soon as possible, across the military services. Specifically, operation and maintenance funding, widely known as the lifeblood readiness, was increased by \$1.16 billion for the Army, \$277.9 million for the Navy, \$82.3 million for the Marine Corps, and \$1 billion for the U.S. Air Force.

This conference agreement supports the topline of \$700 billion for national defense, or 050, activities, which is roughly \$150 billion over the Budget Control Act cap. If the cap is not adjusted and if this amount is fully funded by the appropriators, then we would trigger the harmful across-the-board cuts of sequestration, just at the time when we are trying to restore readiness.

I want to be clear. I agree that the DOD needs additional resources. But we must address the caps for both defense and nondefense activities.

I remind my colleagues that under the Budget Control Act, or BCA, national defense activities include certain programs at the FBI and the Coast Guard, while nondefense activities include the State Department, veterans' care, Customs and Border Protection, and the TSA. We need to look at our Nation's needs holistically, and we must remain vigilant over the amount of money the DOD can effectively utilize. We have to look at national security, and that includes both sides and both caps.

With regard to our overseas operations, the conference report authorizes the entirety of the funding request for our efforts in Afghanistan, including \$1.7 billion to invest in critical aviation capabilities, such as close air support platforms and modernized rotary wing assets, and to continue to sustain and train the existing fleet.

The report also authorizes 3,500 special immigrant visas to continue to uphold our commitments to the many brave Afghans who have provided critical support to the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. In this regard, let me thank Chairman MCCAIN and Senator SHAHEEN, without whose efforts this provision would not have been included, I believe, in the final conference.

The conference report continues robust support for our counterterrorism efforts against ISIS, al-Qaida, and the other violent extremist groups, including approximately \$1.8 billion for the Train and Equip Programs in Iraq and Syria. It also fully funds the Department's budget request for U.S. Special Operations Command.

With this bill, we will enhance public transparency and congressional oversight of military operations and the policies that underpin them. Most notably, it requires a public articulation of the legal and policy frameworks governing the use of military force outside of declared war zones, as well as additional reporting on civilian casualty

incidents and DOD efforts to prevent them.

The conference report includes a requirement for the Secretary of Defense to appoint a senior official in the Department to lead an effort to harness and integrate all of the Department's capabilities to confront and defeat the kind of strategic influence operations that Russia has conducted against us and our allies over the last 2 years. It is vital that the Defense Department integrate its cyber capabilities with its information warfare experts to provide capabilities and options in time for next year's election cycle in the United States and to support our allies in Europe against Russian operations directed against them.

Additionally, the conference report includes a requirement for the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State to develop and report to Congress on a comprehensive, whole-of-government strategy to counter the Russian malign influence threat. Such a detailed strategy must include measures to defend against and deter Russian activities related to national security, including hybrid warfare, cyber attacks, and information operations.

The 2018 NDAA also authorizes the Secretary of Defense to establish the Indo-Asia-Pacific Stability Initiative, which will be used to improve our posture in the Asia-Pacific region and provide additional resources to increase partner capacity and multilateral exercises in the region.

The Chief of Naval Operations' Force Structure Assessment from last winter identified a goal of 355 ships, including 66 attack submarines. This bill makes a good downpayment on that goal by adding five ships to the budget, including one DDG-51 destroyer, two littoral combat ships, one LX(R) amphibious ship, and one expeditionary sea base.

Perhaps not as dramatic, but no less important, is the addition of \$698 million in the budget request to allow the Navy to begin expanding the submarine industrial base. Achieving the CNO's force structure goal will require adding 18 attack submarines to the previous force structure goal of 48 boats.

This will be no small challenge since retirement of older submarines will exceed deliveries of new submarines. During the 10-year period of 1991 to 2000, we ordered only four attack submarines—Connecticut, Jimmy Carter, Virginia, and Texas—so we have to do some catching up.

Providing the resources for the Navy to expand the submarine industrial base in an orderly fashion will be a critical element of efficiency and a critical element in building up our fleet.

The conference fully supports the budget requests for the modernization of the triad and its nuclear command and control to ensure we can deter existential threats to our homeland. Our triad of submarines, ICBMs, and bombers have been in service for decades and must be replaced.

Secretary Ash Carter put the situation eloquently when he said that a failure to do so, in his words, "would mean losing confidence in our ability to deter, which we can't afford in today's volatile security environment."

In the area of technology and acquisition, I am pleased that this bill shows strong support for the Department's network of labs and test ranges, which help drive efforts to maintain our battlefield technological superiority. In particular, I think this bill makes significant strides in enabling DOD to develop and buy the modern software and IT systems that are integral to every system, platform, and business system in the Department of Defense. Additionally, it reauthorizes the Defense Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research to expand the number of universities capable of working with the Pentagon on advanced research.

The bill also pushes DOD to make use of advanced "Big Data" techniques to manage its business functions and processes. New ways of collecting, analyzing, and applying the lessons of data are revolutionizing the commercial world. It is time that DOD applied these same techniques to lower costs and save money and time.

The conference report also includes a provision that would allow the Army to transfer all excess firearms no longer actively issued for military service to an organic facility for the purpose of melting and repurposing. This provision not only allows the Army to divest itself of these weapons, but it will also provide a steady stream of work to our organic foundries. These are an important part of our arsenal system.

Furthermore, the provision will authorize the Secretary of the Army to annually designate additional excess firearms that are no longer in military use to be repurposed. This common-sense approach will allow the Army to save money on storage costs, as well as repurposing these excess weapons for higher priority needs identified by the Army.

I am also pleased that the conference report builds on a markup amendment by Senator NELSON that directs the Department to conduct a threat assessment and deliver a master plan for climate change adaptation.

The conference report includes House language from my colleague Congressman JIM LANGEVIN that codifies several findings related to climate change and expresses the sense of Congress that climate change is a threat to our national security.

In the area of military personnel, the conference agreement accomplishes much on behalf of our servicemembers and the Department of Defense. The bill authorizes a 2.4-percent across-the-board pay raise for our troops and extends authority to pay over 30 bonuses and special pays to encourage recruitment, retention, and continued services.

It also includes authority for service Secretaries to extend by an additional year the time that the recruits may remain in the Delayed Entry Program to ensure that background checks are completed, so that they are not unnecessarily separated due to the fault of government. These are individuals who are here illegally. Their status is a result of their joining the MAVNI Program. If this program were terminated, we would lose their service to our military forces and they would be forced to leave the country.

Additionally, the bill permanently extends the special survivor indemnity allowance under the Survivor Benefit Plan, which was due to expire early next year. This ensures that widows of our veterans and servicemembers who die of service-connected causes will continue to receive their monthly benefit and authorizes annual cost-of-living adjustments to this benefit going forward.

With regard to military family care, the report authorizes \$50 million for impact aid, including \$40 million in supplemental impact aid and \$10 million—twice the usual amount—for military children with severe disabilities. For military families and for local school systems all across this country, this impact aid is absolutely essential. Furthermore, it requires the Department to improve pediatric care and related services for children of members of the military.

This bill will also improve military family readiness by addressing the shortage of qualified childcare workers, requiring that the realities of military life be considered in setting the operating hours of childcare centers, and by increasing flexibility for families when the military requires them to move.

Let me conclude by stating the obvious. The reason this bill passed was because of the extraordinary bipartisan leadership of Senator JOHN MCCAIN and also because of the extraordinary bipartisan leadership of Chairman MAC THORNBERRY of the House Armed Services Committee and Ranking Member ADAM SMITH. I look forward to working with them in the future.

Finally, the conference agreement would not have been possible without the hard work of the entire committee staff, who worked diligently to help finalize this agreement. I thank Chris Brose, Eric Swabb, and all the majority committee staff for their hard work this past year. On the minority side, I thank my staff director, Elizabeth King. I also thank Gary Leeling, Creighton Greene, Carolyn Chuhta, Maggie McNamara, Jonathan Clark, Jonathan Epstein, Jorie Feldman, Ozge Guzelsu, Jody Bennett, Kirk McConnell, Bill Monahan, Mike Noblet, John Quirk, Arun Seraphin, and Jon Green.

Let me state the obvious: They do the work. Sometimes we get the credit, but the work is theirs. I am deeply appreciative of all of their efforts.

Again, let me indicate what is obvious to all our colleagues. Without the

inspirational, practical, dynamic, and unrelenting leadership of Chairman MCCAIN, we would not be at this moment today—the 56th consecutive passage of the National Defense Authorization Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUNT). The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, before addressing the topic that I want to take up—and I know it is one that is near and dear to the Presiding Officer's heart—which is rural healthcare, I want to express my admiration and thanks to Senator REED, the Senator from Rhode Island, and Senator MCCAIN for their incredible leadership of the Armed Services Committee. They show us what it is like to lead. They show us what it is like to take on difficult issues and to work out difficult problems, and I would like to express my appreciation to them for that.

I see the Senator—

Mr. SASSE. Will the Senator from Maine yield for 30 seconds?

Mr. KING. Absolutely.

Mr. SASSE. I would just like to associate myself with your comments, sir, in praising the ranking member.

Senator REED went through a long list of people who have gotten the NDAA across the finish line for more than half a century in a row.

As a newbie rookie in this body, I have to say that serving with the two of you on the Armed Services Committee is a real privilege and honor. Much of the body doesn't work very well right now, but that committee works incredibly well.

So I want to agree with the Senator from Maine that the ranking member is a huge part of why the Armed Services Committee works so well.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. KING. I thank the Senator.

I say to Senator REED, I appreciate your leadership.

Mr. REED. I thank the Senator from Maine and the Senator from the great State of Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. I thought you were buying time.

Mr. REED. No. Once again, we have been following Senator MCCAIN, and he took us all the way. Thank you.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I did a mathematic calculation a couple of years ago, and it resulted in an interesting conclusion. The Senate is a rural body. Eighteen Members of the U.S. Senate represent a majority of Americans. That means 82 percent—or 82 out of 100 Senators—represent smaller States, more rural communities.

Today, I want to talk about a disastrous development that is headed for our rural communities that we have the capability to fix, and it is one we should fix sooner rather than later. I am talking about Federal funding for federally qualified health centers, which expired on October 1. Seventy percent of the funding for the FQHCs expired on October 1. One hundred per-

cent of the National Health Service Corps funding expired on October 1.

These are vital programs that serve rural America and provide incredibly important healthcare services. They are an overlooked part of our national healthcare system, in part because they are traditionally in rural and out-back locations.

In Maine, we have 20 centers and 70 facilities scattered all over our State, and they are providing services every day to over 200,000 people. This is a vital part of our healthcare system. Yet the funding expired at the end of September, and so far nothing has been done.

How important is it? In Maine, there are 1,700 employees at these facilities; a total economic impact of over \$300 million a year; \$8 million in State and local tax revenue and \$32 million in Federal tax revenue. They provide \$16 million worth of uncompensated care that goes to Maine people who need the help. They are efficient. In Maine, they have saved Medicaid over \$100 million, and \$257 million is the estimate for what they have saved the overall healthcare system. Again, FQHCs provide 1,700 jobs and support another 1,000 jobs in their communities.

But this isn't only about economics and economic development and jobs; it is about healthcare. One in six people in Maine gets their healthcare from FQHCs—210,000 people. They accept everybody who comes to their door. I have been to them all over the State. They use a sliding-fee scale for people who are low income, who don't have insurance, and they provide all manner of services. It depends on the center; different centers have different services. They have medical, behavioral health, dental, substance abuse treatment and support, case management, optometry, podiatry, OB/GYN, prescription assistance, outreach and enrollment, pharmacy, radiology, and school-based healthcare services. These are the healthcare providers for rural America. And it is not only Maine; it is across the country. There are 10,000 sites across the United States. Some 26 million patients are at risk.

Well, what is the big deal? The big deal is that people are going to lose their healthcare services. We estimate that in Maine, we are going to lose about 400 clinicians and administrative and support staff who will have to be laid off at the beginning of the year unless we solve this problem in the immediate future. At least 25 of these sites will be forced to close, and we believe there will be almost 30,000 Maine residents who will lose access to their healthcare system.

Most of the FQHCs—federally qualified health centers—are getting by on their funding from last year, so the expiration of the funding hasn't hit them yet, but it will begin to hit them on January 1. That is what we have to respond to.

It is also already having an effect just by creating uncertainty. I got an

impassioned letter from the leader of one of our centers in Maine about the fact that they have been very diligently recruiting a dentist to come to their community. Dentists are very hard to come by in rural America. They had one who was ready to come, and then suddenly they heard about the uncertainty surrounding the funding—that it may or may not come through—and that dentist is now reconsidering their decision to go to this Maine community. That is a tragedy. That is a tragedy for the people of that town, where these services are literally not available.

So what does it matter? It matters because we are talking about people losing their healthcare services.

This has never been a partisan issue. I don't think there is a heck of a lot of debate around here about the importance of FQHCs and that we need to get them refunded. In fact, the Presiding Officer and Senator STABENOW have sponsored a bill, the CHIME Act, that would resolve this issue. We just need to get it on the floor and get it done.

We have proved today by the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act that we can take major issues, bring them to the floor, and move them forward, especially those that aren't particularly controversial. But my concern is that even though there doesn't seem to be controversy, it is just not happening, and now our centers are having to make plans for layoffs, for closures, and for closing their doors to the people who need the care.

This is something we can do. This is something we can resolve. It is within our power. The legislation is ready to go, and we should get this done.

We are leaving today for the Thanksgiving holiday, but if we leave at the end of the year and haven't done this, it will be a tragedy for rural America. It will be a betrayal of rural America. It will be a betrayal of our constituents.

All of us have been to these centers and seen the care that they provide, the caring that they provide, the passion that the people bring to the services in their communities, and how much they mean to their communities. This is one of the best Federal programs ever created, and it has always been supported on a bipartisan basis.

I urge my colleagues today to prepare ourselves to get this done as soon as we possibly can when we get back after Thanksgiving. We have so much to be thankful for, and I want my people in Maine to realize that they can be thankful for those health centers that are literally lifelines in their communities and mean so much to them. I believe this is something we can and should and will do.

Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for being a leader on this issue.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 461, 462, 464, 478, 479, 480, 488, and 490.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Joseph Kernan, of Florida, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; Guy B. Roberts, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense; Robert L. Wilkie, of North Carolina, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; Robert Behler, of Pennsylvania, to be Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, Department of Defense; Thomas B. Modly, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of the Navy; James F. Geurts, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy; Robert H. McMahon, of Georgia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense; and Shon J. Manasco, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Kernan, Roberts, Wilkie, Behler, Modly, Geurts, McMahon, and Manasco nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 491, 492, 493, 494, and all nominations placed on the Secretary's desk.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Rebecca Eliza Gonzales, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-

Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Lesotho; Lisa A. Johnson, of Washington, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Namibia; Irwin Steven Goldstein, of New York, to be Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy; Sean P. Lawler, of Maryland, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service; PN1199 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (169) beginning Lisa-Felicia Afi Akorli, and ending Stephanie P. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of November 1, 2017; and PN1200 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (4) beginning John R. Bass, II, and ending Sung Y. Kim, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of November 1, 2017.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gonzales, Johnson, Goldstein, and Lawler nominations and all nominations placed on the Secretary's desk in the Foreign Service en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 475, 476, and 477.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of James Thomas Abbott, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of five years expiring July 1, 2020; Colleen Kiko, of North Dakota, to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of five years expiring July 29, 2022; and Ernest W. Dubester, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of five years expiring July 1, 2019.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Abbott, Kiko, and Dubester nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 292.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Brenda Burman, of Arizona, to be Commissioner of Reclamation.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Burman nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO JACKIE DOUGAN JACKSON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in a few days, Americans will celebrate Thanksgiving, a holiday that is filled with meaning and memories and, if we are lucky, sumptuous meals shared with family and friends.

Thanksgiving began as America's national harvest festival, a day to give thanks for our rich and fertile land and the great bounty of food it produces.

On this long Thanksgiving weekend, I plan to spend a few hours reading the latest book from one of my favorite friends whose works capture in loving detail life on her family's Wisconsin dairy farm, but even more, the rock-solid values that sustained her family and her life.

The book is called "The Round Barn: Biography of an American Farm." As one reviewer wrote, reading it "is like sitting on the porch of an early 20th century dairy farm and watching an era in American history pass right before your eyes."

The Round Barn books—there are three of them now—are the creations of Jackie Dougan Jackson, a novelist, poet, professor, mentor to generations of writers, and one of the best-loved residents in my hometown of Springfield, IL.

She lives in a big, old home in Springfield which, legend has it, was once visited by another master storyteller, Abraham Lincoln.

Loretta and I are lucky to count Jackie as a dear friend of many years. She is a kind, creative soul who never fails to reach out to help others. At the age of 89, she is still filled with energy, empathy and curiosity about nearly everything.

The Round Barn books keep a promise that Jackie made to her grandfather W.J. Dougan when she was just 15 years old. She vowed then that one day she would write a history of the dairy farm that W.J. had founded in 1906, the farm on which three generations of Jackie's family lived and worked.

Jackie Jackson throws open the Round Barn doors at the Dougan family farm to tell us an American story. She gives us a rich history of farm life at the mercy of the forces of science and the market but grounded in rock-solid Midwestern values.

Some of those values were painted onto the silo of the family's round barn. W.J. titled the list "Aims for the Farm." They were: "#1. Good Crops; #2. Proper Storage; #3. Profitable Live Stock; #4. A Stable Market"—and most important of all—"#5. Life as Well as a Living."

W.J. Dougan was a deeply spiritual man and a hard worker. He struggled for years to put himself through college and became a Methodist minister, but encroaching deafness forced him to give up the religious life he loved.

In 1906, he bought a dairy farm near Beloit, WI.

The Round Barn was built in 1911. W.J. chose the unusual shape because he believed that a barn braced on a central concrete pillar was cheaper to build, more efficient for a dairy operation, and less likely to blow away in a tornado. The Round Barn quickly became a county landmark.

W.J. marketed himself as "the Babies Milk Man," and he succeeded through

hard work, dedication to his customers and community, and an unusual talent for spotting and adopting cutting-edge advances in agriculture. In 1925, he was named a "Master Farmer" by a prestigious agricultural organization, one of only 23 Midwestern farmers so honored.

Even so, the Great Depression, which destroyed so many family farms and businesses, nearly wiped out the Dougan Guernsey Dairy Farm. In 1930, bankruptcy papers were drawn up but never filed.

Jackie was born in 1928, the year before the Great Depression, one of four children of W.J.'s son Ronald and Ronald's wife, Eunice.

Jackie was a natural born writer, a prodigy. When she was 8 she wrote a short story that took first prize in a Beloit citywide contest. Her first novel was serialized in the Galesburg Post in Illinois when she was 10.

She majored in classics at Beloit College, married, and then moved with her new husband to Ann Arbor, where they both earned master's degrees.

The couple had four daughters. Jackie would go on to earn a doctorate in Latin from the University of Wisconsin.

She was teaching writing at Kent State University in Ohio in 1967 when her father suffered a heart attack. Jackie went home and sat at his hospital bedside for weeks as he recounted stories of life on the family farm.

Back in Ohio after her father's recovery, Jackie became aware of a deep longing within her to reconnect with her rural beginnings. As she described it in one of her Round Barn books:

There has been another clock within her. She didn't set it nor place it there. It's been geared not to hours but to cycles; the daily procession of milking and bottling, feeding and cleaning the yearly procession of planting, cultivating, harvesting. It's been set to sun, moon, health, cold, wet dry. But now if there's a heavy spring freeze, she puts on a coat without sensing the loss of crisp that might result from too-late planting. If the sky lowers black, she takes an umbrella without feeling the sway of the hay wagon racing to reach the barn before the cloudburst. Her dailiness is not this class, that lecture, the next trip to the stacks. . . . It was the ground she'd stood on, the air she'd breathed. She had no special moment, no epiphany to explain the realization of loss that came over her. She only knows that something elemental is gone and has been gone for some time. That it's probably irretrievable, unless she changes the path she's treading.

So that is what she did. Jackie Jackson changed her life's path. She moved to Springfield, IL, and accepted a position teaching literature and writing at an innovative university that was just opening, Sangamon State University, now the University of Illinois at Springfield.

For years, she had been collecting stories and recollections about the Round Barn, her family, the dairy's customers, and the townspeople. Her trove of tales included her own notebooks, stretching back to when she was

8, the stories her father had told her from his hospital bed, letters and notes left by her grandfather, and much more.

She became a sort of detective, finding more letters tucked into framed pictures, stuck to the attic floor in the old family home all sorts of unexpected places. Each letter or scrap of paper became a piece of the family puzzle.

In 1976, she began to fashion the notes and letters into the first Round Barn book. The book published this month, "The Round Barn: Biography of an American Farm" is the fulfillment of her promise to her grandfather, her magnum opus, a detailed and loving portrait of a way of life that no longer exists.

The Dougan Guernsey Dairy Farm ceased operating in 1967, just as agribusiness and large corporate farms were beginning to redefine American farming.

In 1979, the Round Barn was added to the National Registry of Historic Places.

By 2012, the dilapidated old structure had become a safety hazard, and it was torn down, but thanks to Jackie Jackson's beautifully detailed biography of her family's farm and the people who lived and worked there, generations from now readers will still be able to visit the magical world of the Round Barn.

As this Thanksgiving Day, this American harvest festival, approaches, I am thankful for the Round Barn books that capture a bygone day of American farming like holograms, and Loretta and I are grateful to our friend Jackie for giving the world such a gift.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 277, on the nomination of Joseph Otting, of Nevada, to be Comptroller of the Currency. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.

Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 278, on the motion to invoke cloture on Donald C. Coggins, Jr., of South Carolina, to be United States district judge for the District of South Carolina. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 279, on the motion to invoke cloture on Dabney Langhorne Friedrich, of California, to be United States district judge for the District of Columbia. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 280, on the nomination of Donald C. Coggins, Jr., of South Carolina, to be United States district judge for the District of South Carolina. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.●

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for the votes on confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 300, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 313, the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 314, and the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 313.

On vote No. 277, had I been present, I would have voted nay on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 300.

On vote No. 278, had I been present, I would have voted yea on the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 313.

On Vote No. 279, had I been present, I would have voted yea on the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 314.

On Vote No. 280, had I been present, I would have voted yea on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 313.●

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I would like to review for the Senate the status of appropriations for fiscal year 2018.

The Appropriations Committee has marked up 8 of the 12 regular appropriations bills for this fiscal year. The committee has also processed two supplemental appropriations bills and one continuing resolution.

We have little time to finalize the regular appropriations bills and to consider additional supplemental appropriations requests for defense and for natural disaster recovery.

We need a new budget deal to finish our work. Congress and the administration must reach agreement on acceptable top-line funding levels for defense and nondefense programs.

At the funding cap currently in law, the Appropriations Committee would be hard-pressed to write a 2018 Defense bill that fully meets our national security needs or reflects the priorities of the Senate.

The current continuing resolution expires on December 8. We cannot afford to extend that CR into next year.

A budget agreement is necessary for the Senate to approve responsible appropriations legislation. I urge all parties to those negotiations to redouble their efforts to reach agreement.

WORLD DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. The World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims commemorates the millions of people killed and injured on the world's roads. It is also a day to thank emergency services for their role in saving lives; to reflect on the impact of road deaths on families and communities; and to draw attention to the need for improved legislation, awareness, infrastructure, technology, and post-crash responses to save more families from the tragedy of losing a loved one.

The theme of this year's World Day of Remembrance is "2020 Target: Reduce Road Fatalities and Serious Injuries by 50%." It refers to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 3.6 which calls on governments and their stakeholders, including NGOs and private citizens, to address the personal, medical, and financial burden that road deaths and injuries cause; 1.25 million people die from road crashes every year, and tens of millions are seriously injured. Road traffic crashes are the No. 1 killer of young people aged 15 to 29 and the eighth leading cause of death among all people worldwide.

Rochelle Sobel, president of the Association for Safe International Road Travel, said, "The World Day of Remembrance is an important opportunity to stand together with the global community to commemorate road victims and call for an end to the crisis on our roads. No one should have to go through the needless, preventable loss of a child, a brother, a mother, a friend, killed in a road traffic crash. This year's theme to reduce the number of deaths by 50% by 2020, reminds us of the need to drive responsibly, educate our children, and advocate with our governments to implement and enforce policies that will protect road users and prevent more families from suffering the pain of losing a loved one on the road."

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS TERENCE PARSONS

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I wish to honor PO2 Terence Parsons of Genesee, ID, whom the United Service Organization, USO has recognized as the USO's Sailor of the Year for 2017.

Terence Parsons took action to assist two motorists involved in car accidents and marines involved in a mass casualty situation. The USO explained, "Displaying unselfish devotion and great heroism, Terence Parsons, a Navy corpsman, put himself in harm's way to assist members of the community. While off duty on two separate occasions, he witnessed car accidents that caused potentially life-threatening injuries to the victims involved. With little thought of his own safety, Parsons responded by providing life-saving treatment." The USO further commended Terence Parsons for his response to a mass casualty event of 18 marines suffering multiple injuries sustained during U.S.S. *Oak Hill* U.S.S. *Kearsarge* amphibious warfare qualifications. Terence Parsons' quick action was pivotal in preventing further injury and saved numerous lives.

Terence joined the U.S. Navy in 2011 and credits the values, including a respect for hard work and teamwork, he obtained growing up in Genesee and the support of his family, command and friends with enabling his military success. Terence Parsons has also received many other recognitions for his

distinguished service. These honors include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. Congratulations, PO2 Terrence Parsons, on receiving this recognition, and thank you for your exceptional service on behalf of our Nation. You and the outstanding servicemembers you serve alongside are true assets to our communities, State, and Nation. I commend you on your achievements and wish you continued success.●

TRIBUTE TO RAY HAGEMAN

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the distinct honor of recognizing Garfield County's fire warden, Ray Hageman, for his actions to organize and coordinate the local response to the Lodgepole Complex fire. Ray and his team worked to preserve the lives and livelihoods that were threatened by this devastating fire. Their actions exemplify the resolute character of the Treasure State.

The Lodgepole Complex fire was one of the largest fires of the 2017 wildfire season. When first responders finally defeated the flames, well over a quarter million acres of land had burned. Ray was on the frontlines of this rural fire, orchestrating the distribution of local equipment, coordinating effective initial response techniques, and helping to integrate the efforts of partner firefighting organizations from outside the county.

Effective local leaders like Ray are supported by the committed team members they lead, team members like Garfield County's Anne Miller, who was the public information officer for the Lodgepole Complex fire. Anne worked around-the-clock at the beginning of the fire to build a common understanding of a changing fire environment. By enabling open and clear lines of communication, she strengthened the team's fire response efforts and saved many Montanans from potential loss of property and life.

Ray and his team weathered one of the largest wildfires in the Nation. Their courage in the face of adversity serves as an inspiration to all Montanans. Thank you, Ray, for leading under such difficult circumstances and working hard to protect Montanans from wildfires.●

TRIBUTE TO IKE MORRIS

● Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the 80th birthday of Ike Morris, a proud honorary West Virginian, a legendary businessman, and one of the dearest friends I have ever known.

There is no better position to find yourself in than being able to give back to the community you love. I can attest my small hometown of Farmington helped mold who I am, and it brings so much joy to my life to be able to give back to the place that shaped me. Ike and I share a bond rooted in

public service. Whether supporting Glenville State College or getting the tab at the Cornerstone Cafe in Glenville, Ike enjoys every minute of it.

Ike got his start working for his father in the oil and gas business. Wanting to set out on his own, Ike moved to West Virginia in 1962 and worked servicing rigs until he established Waco Oil & Gas in 1975. No one in the north central region of the Mountain State gets confused when someone mentions "Waco." When you say "Waco" around here, people think of Ike Morris. They don't think of Texas.

It was in Glenville where Ike met the love of his life, Sue. He knew Sue was the right woman for him, and he knew that West Virginia was the right State for him. They have been married for over 50 years. As Ike can attest, once you come to West Virginia, it becomes part of you forever. The Mountain State made a lasting impact on him, and he and his family have made a lasting impact on the Mountain State. Ike is truly one of the most humble, generous and hard-working people I know.

Together, Ike and Sue have contributed to the success of many projects at Glenville State College, which is also home to the I.L. "Ike" and Sue Morris Stadium. As a lifelong educator and 1965 alumna of Glenville State, Sue knows how vital it is that our educational institutions are provided with the tools needed to keep up with ever-changing technologies. Their generous spirit and compassion extend throughout the Glenville community and beyond, touching the lives of countless West Virginia workers, students, and businessowners—all traits they have passed to their children and grandchildren.

Ike and Sue's children, Shelly and Doug, have both made Glenville their home. Ike and Sue are blessed with and immeasurably proud of their four grandchildren—Hannah, Luke, Ian, and Jordan—and their great-granddaughter, Arianna. Ike wouldn't let me stop without mentioning his beloved companion, Waco, his Labrador Retriever.

Ike, as your family and friends honor you, I know this will be a sincerely memorable occasion for you to reflect on your many accomplishments and experiences, while you enjoy the company of your loved ones. You have provided so much happiness and wisdom to the lives of those around you throughout the years. It is my wish that the memory of this special day remains with you and Sue just as your guidance and influence will remain in all the lives you have touched.

Again, it is with the greatest admiration that I send to you my best wishes on your special day. Happy Birthday.●

REMEMBERING ANNA KATHERINE DIGGS TAYLOR

● Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and honor the life and legacy of the Honorable Anna Katherine Diggs

Taylor of Detroit, MI, for her trailblazing career as the first African-American female judge appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Judge Taylor was born Anna Katherine Johnston on December 9, 1932, to parents Virginius Douglass Johnston and Hazel Bramlette Johnston in Washington, DC. Her father Virginius served as treasurer for the prestigious Historically Black College, Howard University, while her mother Hazel was a business teacher and homemaker.

In a quest to equip their daughter with the best education and set the foundation for her legal career, Virginius and Hazel Johnston enrolled Judge Taylor in the Northfield School for Girls, one of very few schools accepting African-American students. She graduated from Northfield in 1950. After graduation, she went on to attend Columbia University's Barnard College for her bachelor's degree and received her law degree from Yale in 1957.

Judge Taylor's historic career began after her graduation when she became a staff lawyer in the Solicitor's office of the U.S. Department of Labor. After her post at the Department of Labor, she moved to Michigan and became the Assistant Prosecutor for Wayne County in 1961.

The Jim Crow era of the South was a harrowing time for America, and Judge Taylor courageously fought for civil rights during the 1960s. During the historic Freedom Summer campaign in 1964, she represented civil rights workers in Mississippi that were arrested for assisting African Americans in exercising their fundamental right to vote. Upon her arrival in Mississippi, three civil rights workers—James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner—went missing. While inquiring on their disappearance at the Neshoba County courthouse, she was met with disdain and racial epithets from a crowd gathering around the courthouse.

Following the terror she witnessed in Mississippi, where she feared for her own life, Judge Taylor returned to Michigan and continued to fight for equality with an intense determination. In 1966, she served as an assistant attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan. After a brief period in the private sector, Judge Taylor joined State Senator Coleman A. Young's campaign for mayor of Detroit. Once elected mayor of Detroit, Coleman Young enlisted her help to improve racial inequality in the city.

After working on President Jimmy Carter's campaign, President Carter nominated Judge Taylor for the U.S. District Court in Detroit in 1979. Her appointment made her the first African-American woman to serve as judge in the United States Sixth Circuit Court. She went on to make groundbreaking rulings and became chief judge, serving from 1997 to 1998. After a 32-year career on the bench, Judge Diggs Taylor retired in 2011.

The Honorable Anna Katherine Diggs Taylor made a tremendous impact on America's judicial landscape. She was a formidable force on the bench, as well as gracious in character. Judge Taylor has received many recognitions throughout her impressive six-decade career and will be remembered as a champion for civil rights. Judge Taylor is survived by her husband, S. Martin Taylor, son Douglass Johnston Diggs, and daughter Carla Diggs Smith, four grandchildren, brother Lowell Douglass Johnston, as well as many relatives, friends, and colleagues. It is my hope that her legacy will inspire the next generation of leaders to follow their passion and to conquer each obstacle in front of them.●

TRIBUTE TO ROGER MEYER

● Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, today I recognize Roger Meyer for all of his hard work on behalf of myself, my staff, and the State of South Dakota while working in my Washington, DC, office.

Roger has devoted the majority of his career to public service, including working in Congress and at the Department of Energy. In addition, Roger spent time on detail at the Federal Emergency Management Agency as an adviser to the Small State and Rural Advocate.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Roger for his years in public service and wish him all the best in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO VAN PACE

● Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, today I recognize Van Pace for all of her hard work on behalf of myself, my staff, and the State of South Dakota while working in my Washington, DC, office.

Van has spent the majority of her career in public service, including time with the U.S. Department of Energy, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and most recently with the Department of Homeland Security. Immediately before her time in my office, Van was advising Federal offices and nonprofit organizations on regulatory requirements for grant awards.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Van for her years in public service and wish her all the best in the years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:12 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1207. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 306 River Street in Tilden, Texas, as the "Tilden Veterans Post Office".

H.R. 2331. An act to require a new or updated Federal website that is intended for use by the public to be mobile friendly, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2672. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 520 Carter Street in Fairview, Illinois, as the "Sgt. Douglas J. Riney Post Office".

H.R. 2873. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 207 Glenside Avenue in Wyncote, Pennsylvania, as the "Staff Sergeant Peter Taub Post Office Building".

H.R. 3369. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 225 North Main Street in Spring Lake, North Carolina, as the "Howard B. Pate, Jr. Post Office".

H.R. 3821. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 430 Main Street in Clermont, Georgia, as the "Zack T. Addington Post Office".

H.R. 3893. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 100 Mathe Avenue in Interlachen, Florida, as the "Robert H. Jenkins, Jr. Post Office".

H.R. 4174. An act to amend titles 5 and 44, United States Code, to require Federal evaluation activities, improve Federal data management, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 92. Concurrent resolution recognizing the deep and abiding friendship between the United States and Israel.

At 11:01 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agreed to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2810) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 4:28 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

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

H.R. 3949. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the designation of

State approving agencies for multi-State apprenticeship programs for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R. 4374. An act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to authorize additional emergency uses for medical products to reduce deaths and severity of injuries caused by agents of war, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the Acting President pro tempore (Mr. STRANGE).

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 1207. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 306 River Street in Tilden, Texas, as the "Tilden Veterans Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 2672. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 520 Carter Street in Fairview, Illinois, as the "Sgt. Douglas J. Riney Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 2873. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 207 Glenside Avenue in Wyncote, Pennsylvania, as the "Staff Sergeant Peter Taub Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3369. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 225 North Main Street in Spring Lake, North Carolina, as the "Howard B. Pate, Jr. Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3821. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 430 Main Street in Clermont, Georgia, as the "Zack T. Addington Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3893. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 100 Mathe Avenue in Interlachen, Florida, as the "Robert H. Jenkins, Jr. Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 4174. An act to amend titles 5 and 44, United States Code, to require Federal evaluation activities, improve Federal data management, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 92. Concurrent resolution recognizing the deep and abiding friendship between the United States and Israel; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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-3457. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Disturbance Control Standard—Contingency Reserve for Recovery from a Balancing Contingency Event Reliability Standard" (RIN1902-AF21)

(Docket No. RM16-7-000)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2017; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3458. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2017-0188-2017-0196); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3459. A communication from the Chair of the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Inspector General's Semiannual Report for the six-month period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3460. A communication from the Acting Commissioner, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3461. A communication from the Acting Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3462. A communication from the President and CEO, Inter-American Foundation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Foundation's fiscal year 2017 Annual Management Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3463. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Department of Defense Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3464. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Department of Defense Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3465. A communication from the Acting Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. CRAPO, from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1591. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and for other purposes.

By Mr. ROBERTS, from the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, without amendment:

S. 2099. A bill to provide for the management by the Secretary of Agriculture of certain Federal land, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. ROBERTS for the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

*Glen R. Smith, of Iowa, to be a Member of the Farm Credit Administration Board,

Farm Credit Administration, for a term expiring May 21, 2022.

By Mr. MCCAIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

*Anthony Kurta, of Montana, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

*Gregory E. Maggs, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces for the term of fifteen years to expire on the date prescribed by law.

*James E. McPherson, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Army.

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Scott W. Brady, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania for the term of four years.

Andrew E. Lelling, of Massachusetts, to be United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts for the term of four years.

*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.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Mr. KAINE):

S. 2136. A bill to expand the monthly payments that may be eligible for public service loan forgiveness; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 2137. A bill to amend the Rural Development Act of 1972 to improve access to grants for evidence-based substance use disorder treatment services in rural areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 2138. A bill to authorize the creation of a commission to develop voluntary accessibility guidelines for electronic instructional materials and related technologies used in postsecondary education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. CARPER, Mr. COONS, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 2139. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to address critical conservation conditions under the regional conservation partnership program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. RISCH:

S. 2140. A bill to provide for an exchange of Federal land and non-Federal land in the State of Idaho, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. PAUL, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HELLER, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms.

HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. COONS, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. UDALL, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 2141. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to reform procedures for determinations on disposition of charges and the convening of courts-martial for certain offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. KING:

S. 2142. A bill to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to establish the CHP Technical Assistance Partnership Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr.

BROWN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. UDALL, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. REED, Mr. COONS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2143. A bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to strengthen protections for employees wishing to advocate for improved wages, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment, to expand coverage under such Act, to provide a process for achieving initial collective bargaining agreements, and to provide for stronger remedies for interference with these rights, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr.

CARDIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. REED, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO):

S. 2144. A bill to provide a process for granting lawful permanent resident status to aliens from certain countries who meet specified eligibility requirements; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr.

CARDIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 2145. A bill to prohibit the United States Government from barring refugees from entering the United States based on their country of origin; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself, Mr.

TESTER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2146. A bill to extend the full Federal medical assistance percentage to urban Indian organizations; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Ms. STA-

BENOW, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. DONNELLY, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 2147. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to create a Pension Rehabilitation Trust Fund to establish a Pension Rehabilitation Administration within the Department of the Treasury to make loans to multiemployer defined benefit plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr.

BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. COONS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 2148. A bill to authorize dedicated domestic terrorism offices within the Department of Homeland Security, the Department

of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to analyze and monitor domestic terrorist activity and require the Federal Government to take steps to prevent domestic terrorism; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2149. A bill to make a technical correction to the provision of law authorizing a withdrawal and reservation of public land at Limestone Hills Training Area, Montana; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL:

S. 2150. A bill to improve requirements for entering into commerce of imitation firearms, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. HOEVEN:

S. 2151. A bill to streamline the oil and gas permitting process and to recognize fee ownership for certain oil and gas drilling or spacing units, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 2152. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for assistance for victims of child pornography, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 2153. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to establish electric vehicle weight limitations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 2154. A bill to approve the Kickapoo Tribe Water Rights Settlement Agreement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. DONNELLY, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. TESTER, Mr. WARNER, Mr. CORKER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. COTTON, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. KING, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 2155. A bill to promote economic growth, provide tailored regulatory relief, and enhance consumer protections, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. BURR):

S. 2156. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide fairness in hospital payments under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. BROWN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. HASSAN, and Ms. HARRIS):

S. 2157. A bill to require drug manufacturers to disclose the prices of prescription drugs in any direct-to-consumer advertising and marketing to practitioners of a drug; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 2158. A bill to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 to clarify and improve the procedures and accountability for authorizing certain acquisitions of foreign intelligence, to extend title VII of such Act, to ensure that the barriers to sharing critical foreign intelligence among the intelligence community that existed before September 11, 2001, are not reimposed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. HARRIS, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 2159. A bill to require covered harassment and covered discrimination awareness and prevention training for Members, officers, employees, interns, fellows, and detailees of Congress within 30 days of employment and annually thereafter, to require a biennial climate survey of Congress, to amend the enforcement process under the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights for covered harassment and covered discrimination complaints, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 2160. A bill to establish a pilot program under the Chief of the Forest Service may use alternative dispute resolution in lieu of judicial review of certain projects; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. Res. 335. A resolution designating the week of November 19 through November 25, 2017, during which the holiday of Thanksgiving is observed, as "National Family Week"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. PERDUE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. Res. 336. A resolution recognizing the seriousness of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome and expressing support for the designation of the month of September 2018 as "Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Awareness Month"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Mr. PERDUE):

S. Res. 337. A resolution designating November 26, 2017, as "Drive Safer Sunday"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. Res. 338. A resolution commending and congratulating the Houston Astros on winning the 2017 Major League Baseball World Series; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. REED):

S. Res. 339. A resolution designating November 2017 as "National Runaway Prevention Month"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. PERDUE (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. INHOFE):

S. Res. 340. A resolution commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 3d Infantry Division; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. Res. 341. A resolution designating the week beginning November 13, 2017, as "National Apprenticeship Week"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. REED):

S. Res. 342. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that States, cities, Tribal nations, businesses, and institutions of higher education in the United States should work towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. LEAHY, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. Con. Res. 30. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress with respect to United States policy toward Tibet and that the treatment of the Tibetan people should be an important factor in the conduct of United States relations with the People's Republic of China; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 58

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) were added as cosponsors of S. 58, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

S. 63

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 63, a bill to clarify the rights of Indians and Indian tribes on Indian lands under the National Labor Relations Act.

S. 91

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 91, a bill to amend the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992 to facilitate the ability of Indian tribes to integrate the employment, training, and related services from diverse Federal sources, and for other purposes.

S. 322

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 322, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 426

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 426, a bill to increase educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for education and training of physician assistants of the Department, to establish pay grades and require competitive pay for physician assistants of the Department, and for other purposes.

S. 654

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 654, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 732

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 732, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a refundable

tax credit against income tax for the purchase of qualified access technology for the blind.

S. 973

At the request of Ms. HARRIS, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 973, a bill to prohibit sale of shark fins, and for other purposes.

S. 978

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 978, a bill to direct the Secretary of Education to establish an award program recognizing excellence exhibited by public school system employees providing services to students in pre-kindergarten through higher education.

S. 1016

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1016, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand access to telehealth services, and for other purposes.

S. 1064

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1064, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to prohibit the stigmatization of children who are unable to pay for meals.

S. 1281

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1281, a bill to establish a bug bounty pilot program within the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

S. 1413

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1413, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to establish teacher leader development programs.

S. 1591

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1591, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and for other purposes.

S. 1738

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1738, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a home infusion therapy services temporary transitional payment under the Medicare program.

S. 1871

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1871, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the role of podiatrists in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1927

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1927, a bill to amend section 455(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 in order to allow adjunct faculty members to qualify for public service loan forgiveness.

S. 1962

At the request of Mr. ROUNDS, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1962, a bill to provide relief to community banks, to promote access to capital for community banks, and for other purposes.

S. 2057

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2057, a bill to prevent conflicts of interest that stem from the revolving door that raises concerns about the independence of pharmaceutical regulators.

S. 2129

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2129, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish a punitive article in the Uniform Code of Military Justice on domestic violence, and for other purposes.

S. 2135

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2135, a bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

S. RES. 291

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 291, a resolution affirming the historical connection of the Jewish people to the ancient and sacred city of Jerusalem and condemning efforts at the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to deny Judaism's millennia-old historical, religious, and cultural ties to Jerusalem.

S. RES. 319

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 319, a resolution supporting the goals, activities, and ideals of Prematurity Awareness Month.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. CAPITO,

Mr. CASEY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. CARPER, Mr. COONS, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 2139. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to address critical conservation conditions under the regional conservation partnership program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Chesapeake Bay Farm Bill Enhancements Act of 2017 to accelerate our efforts to restore the health of one of America's greatest natural treasures—the Chesapeake Bay. This legislation will strengthen our Bay clean-up program by increasing and better targeting resources under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), which is administered by the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

I have long advocated for more effective protection, preservation, and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. During the development of the Farm Bill of 2008, I worked with my colleagues to adopt the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative, which provided assistance to farmers to help them prevent the excessive runoff of nutrients and sediments into the Bay and its tributaries. As a result of that initiative, about \$50 million was invested annually in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

In the 2014 Farm Bill, the RCPP was established to expand the successful concept of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative to our vital watersheds in the country. The goal of RCPP is to encourage stakeholders to partner with agricultural producers to increase the restoration and sustainable use of soil, water, wildlife and related natural resources on regional or watershed scales.

Mr. President, while very successful nationally, the overall investment in Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts through the RCPP has been reduced relative to investments that were made under the stand-alone Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative. That is why today I am introducing the Chesapeake Bay Farm Bill Enhancements Act to make refinements to the RCPP in order to improve conservation efforts in the Chesapeake Bay—and other vital watersheds—through providing additional funding, bolstering the role of critical conservation areas, and improving technical assistance.

On funding, this bill will triple the amount of mandatory funding for RCPP available per fiscal year from \$100 million to \$300 million. The bill also allows in-kind support to count towards a partner's matching contribution to a project.

The Chesapeake Bay has already been designated as a Critical Conservation Area under the RCPP. However, my bill will make refinements to the requirements for partnership agreements awarded within Critical Conservation Areas that recognize key

strengths of the Chesapeake Bay region. For example, the bill will strengthen the definitions of a critical conservation area to include critical conservation conditions that would improve water quality and water quantity. Furthermore, the bill adds a prioritization for partnership agreement applications that implement the project consistent with multi-State watershed restoration plans and bring together a diverse array of stakeholders into a project.

I have heard from many organizations in my state and others states in the Bay watershed that there is a significant need for better technical assistance to better implement the RCPP. Therefore, my bill authorizes the USDA to advance reasonable amounts of funding to eligible partners for technical assistance. Also, the bill allows the USDA to provide written feedback to applicants throughout the application process on how the proposals can be improved.

Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined in introducing the bill by Senator CARDIN, a long-time supporter of the Chesapeake Bay. My other Bay state colleagues, Senators CAPITO, KAINE, CASEY, MANCHIN, WARNER, CARPER, COONS and GILLIBRAND are also original cosponsors of the Chesapeake Bay Farm Bill Enhancements Act. My former colleague Congressman BOBBY SCOTT is introducing a companion measure in the House of Representatives. Furthermore, I am grateful that this bill has the support of Maryland Governor Hogan, 4 other Governors within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, and the Chesapeake Bay Commission. This bill is also supported by over 70 organizations such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Choose Clean Water. Together, I look forward to working together to see the inclusion of this important legislation in the next Farm Bill.

By Mr. RISCH:

S. 2140. A bill to provide for an exchange of Federal land and non-Federal land in the State of Idaho, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Blackrock Land Exchange Act of 2017.

The legislation supports a mutually beneficial effort between the Bureau of Land Management and the J.R. Simplot Company in Idaho that began over 20 years ago. Simplot proposed an exchange of their privately owned land with superior natural resources and recreational opportunities for a similar sized parcel of BLM land adjacent to a Simplot phosphate processing facility. This facility adds significant value to the Pocatello, Idaho area as a large employer that sustains over 350 jobs with an over \$55 million annual economic impact.

In 2007, BLM issued a Final Decision Record on the Environmental Assess-

ment concluding the exchange would have no significant environmental impact, which was reaffirmed in 2009 by the Department of Interior Board of Land Appeals. However, the exchange has been held up since 2011 due to the District Court for Idaho ruling that BLM needed to prepare a full Environmental Impact Statement including detailed future use to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

This raises the possibility of a dangerous precedent for future land conveyances, as the exchange itself does not authorize further activities. Future use of the proposed adjacent land by the phosphate facility would still be subject to NEPA with opportunity for public comment. Halting the Blackrock Land Exchange for this reason could largely increase the scope, length, and cost of the NEPA process.

This bill will allow for this exchange in Idaho that has support from—State and local government as well as various land users. It will also protect future exchanges from cycles of unnecessary review and litigation. The Blackrock Land Exchange Act of 2017 is in the best interest of Idaho land users, local economies, and future utilization of government land.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. COONS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 2148. A bill to authorize dedicated domestic terrorism offices within the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to analyze and monitor domestic terrorist activity and require the Federal Government to take steps to prevent domestic terrorism; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2148

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 “Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) White supremacists and other right-wing extremists are the most significant domestic terrorism threat facing the United States.

(2) A 2009 report from the Extremism and Radicalization Branch of the Department of Homeland Security concluded “that lone wolves and small terrorist cells embracing violent right-wing extremist ideology are the most dangerous domestic terrorism threat in the United States”.

(3) An unclassified May 2017 joint intelligence bulletin from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security found that “white supremacist extremism poses [a] persistent threat of lethal violence,” and that white supremacists “were responsible for 49 homicides in 26 attacks from 2000 to 2016 . . . more than any other domestic extremist movement”.

(4) According to the New America Foundation, since September 11, 2001, 76 Americans have died in terrorist attacks by domestic extremists in the United States. 89 percent were killed by far-right-wing extremists.

(5) The fatal attacks described in paragraph (4) include—

(A) the August 5, 2012, mass shooting at a Sikh gurdwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, in which a white supremacist shot and killed 6 members of the gurdwara;

(B) the April 13, 2014, mass shooting at a Jewish community center and a Jewish assisted living facility in Overland Park, Kansas, in which a neo-Nazi shot and killed 3 civilians, including a 14-year-old teenager;

(C) the June 8, 2014, ambush in Las Vegas, Nevada, in which 2 supporters of the far right-wing “patriot” movement shot and killed 2 police officers and a civilian;

(D) the June 17, 2015, mass shooting at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, in which a white supremacist shot and killed 9 members of the church;

(E) the November 27, 2015, mass shooting at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in which an anti-abortion extremist shot and killed a police officer and 2 civilians;

(F) the March 20, 2017, murder of an African-American man in New York City, allegedly committed by a white supremacist who reportedly traveled to New York “for the purpose of killing black men”;

(G) the May 26, 2017, attack in Portland, Oregon, in which a white supremacist allegedly murdered 2 men and injured a third after the men defended 2 young women whom the individual had targeted with anti-Muslim hate speech; and

(H) the August 12, 2017, attack in Charlottesville, Virginia, in which a white supremacist allegedly killed 1 and injured 19 after driving his car through a crowd of individuals protesting a neo-Nazi rally, and of which Attorney General Jeff Sessions said, “It does meet the definition of domestic terrorism in our statute.”.

(6) The Anti-Defamation League’s Center on Extremism found that right-wing extremists were responsible for 150 terrorist acts, attempted acts, and plots and conspiracies that took place in the United States between 1993 and 2017. These attacks resulted in the deaths of 255 people and injured more than 600.

(7) According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, in 2015, for the first time in 5 years, the number of hate groups in the United States rose by 14 percent. The increase included a more than twofold rise in the number of Ku Klux Klan chapters. The number of anti-government militias and “patriot” groups also grew by 14 percent in 2015.

(8) In November 2017, the Federal Bureau of Investigation released its annual hate crime incident report, which found that in 2016, hate crimes increased by almost 5 percent, including a 19 percent rise in hate crimes against American Muslims. Similarly, the previous year’s report found that in 2015, hate crimes increased by 6 percent. Much of that increase came from a 66 percent rise in attacks on American Muslims. In both reports, race-based crimes were most numerous; more than 50 percent of those hate crimes targeted African Americans.

(9) In January 2017, a right-wing extremist who had expressed anti-Muslim views was

charged with murder for allegedly killing 6 people and injuring 19 in a shooting rampage at a mosque in Quebec City, Canada. It was the first-ever mass shooting at a mosque in North America, and Prime Minister Trudeau labeled it a terrorist attack.

(10) Between January and July 2017, news reports found 63 incidents in which American mosques were targeted by threats, vandalism, or arson.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the term “Director” means the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

(2) the term “domestic terrorism” has the meaning given the term in section 2331 of title 18, United States Code;

(3) the term “Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee” means the committee within the Department of Justice tasked with assessing and sharing information about ongoing domestic terrorism threats; and

(4) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Homeland Security.

SEC. 4. OFFICES TO COMBAT DOMESTIC TERRORISM.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF OFFICES TO MONITOR, ANALYZE, INVESTIGATE, AND PROSECUTE DOMESTIC TERRORISM.—

(1) DOMESTIC TERRORISM UNIT.—There is authorized a Domestic Terrorism Unit in the Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security, which shall be responsible for monitoring and analyzing domestic terrorism activity.

(2) DOMESTIC TERRORISM OFFICE.—There is authorized a Domestic Terrorism Office in the Counterterrorism Section of the National Security Division of the Department of Justice—

(A) which shall be responsible for investigating and prosecuting incidents of domestic terrorism; and

(B) which shall be headed by the Domestic Terrorism Counsel.

(3) DOMESTIC TERRORISM SECTION OF THE FBI.—There is authorized a Domestic Terrorism Section within the Counterterrorism Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which shall be responsible for investigating domestic terrorism activity.

(b) JOINT REPORT ON DOMESTIC TERRORISM.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and each year thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation shall submit a joint report authored by the domestic terrorism offices authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of subsection (a) to—

(A) the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Homeland Security, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives.

(2) CONTENTS.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) an assessment of the domestic terrorism threat posed by white supremacists, including white supremacist infiltration and recruitment of law enforcement officers and members of the Armed Forces;

(B)(i) in the first report, an analysis of incidents or attempted incidents of domestic terrorism that have occurred in the United States since April 19, 1995; and

(ii) in each subsequent report, an analysis of incidents or attempted incidents of domestic terrorism that occurred in the United States during the preceding year; and

(C) a quantitative analysis of domestic terrorism for the preceding year, including the number of—

(i) domestic terrorism related assessments initiated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, including the number of assessments from each classification and subcategory;

(ii) domestic terrorism related preliminary investigations initiated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, including the number of preliminary investigations from each classification and subcategory, and how many preliminary investigations resulted from assessments;

(iii) domestic terrorism related full investigations initiated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, including the number of full investigations from each classification and subcategory, and how many full investigations resulted from preliminary investigations and assessments;

(iv) domestic terrorism related incidents, including the number of incidents from each classification and subcategory, the number of deaths and injuries resulting from each incident, and a detailed explanation of each incident;

(v) Federal domestic terrorism related arrests, including the number of arrests from each classification and subcategory, and a detailed explanation of each arrest;

(vi) Federal domestic terrorism related indictments, including the number of indictments from each classification and subcategory, and a detailed explanation of each indictment;

(vii) Federal domestic terrorism related prosecutions, including the number of incidents from each classification and subcategory, and a detailed explanation of each prosecution;

(viii) Federal domestic terrorism related convictions, including the number of convictions from each classification and subcategory, and a detailed explanation of each conviction; and

(ix) Federal domestic terrorism related weapons recoveries, including the number of each type of weapon and the number of weapons from each classification and subcategory.

(3) CLASSIFICATION AND PUBLIC RELEASE.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall be—

(A) unclassified, to the greatest extent possible, with a classified annex only if necessary; and

(B) in the case of the unclassified portion of the report, posted on the public websites of the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(c) DOMESTIC TERRORISM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.—There is authorized a Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee, which shall—

(1) meet on a regular basis, and not less regularly than 4 times each year, to coordinate with United States Attorneys and other key public safety officials across the country to promote information sharing and ensure an effective, responsive, and organized joint effort to combat domestic terrorism; and

(2) be co-chaired by—

(A) the Domestic Terrorism Counsel authorized under subsection (a)(2)(B);

(B) a United States Attorney or Assistant United States Attorney;

(C) a member of the National Security Division of the Department of Justice; and

(D) a member of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(d) FOCUS ON GREATEST THREATS.—The domestic terrorism offices authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of subsection (a) shall focus their limited resources on the most significant domestic terrorism threats, as determined by the number of domestic terrorism related incidents from each category and subclassification in the joint re-

port for the preceding year required under subsection (b).

SEC. 5. TRAINING TO COMBAT DOMESTIC TERRORISM.

(a) REQUIRED TRAINING AND RESOURCES.—The State and Local Anti-Terrorism Program, funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance of the Department of Justice, shall include training and resources to assist State, local, and tribal law enforcement officers in understanding, detecting, deterring, and investigating acts of domestic terrorism. The training shall focus on the most significant domestic terrorism threats, as determined by the quantitative analysis in the joint report required under section 4(b).

(b) REQUIREMENT.—Any individual who provides domestic terrorism training required under this section shall have—

(1) expertise in domestic terrorism; and

(2) relevant academic, law enforcement, or other experience in matters related to domestic terrorism.

(c) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act and once each year thereafter, the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance shall submit an annual report to the committees of Congress described in section 4(b)(1) on the domestic terrorism training implemented under this section, which shall include copies of all training materials used and the names and qualifications of the individuals who provide the training.

(2) CLASSIFICATION.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall be unclassified, to the greatest extent possible, with a classified annex only if necessary.

SEC. 6. COMBATTING DOMESTIC TERRORISM THROUGH JOINT TERRORISM TASK FORCES AND FUSION CENTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The joint terrorism task forces of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and State, local, and regional fusion centers, as established under section 210A of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 124h), shall each, in coordination with the Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee and the domestic terrorism offices authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 4(a) of this Act—

(1) share intelligence to address domestic terrorism activities;

(2) conduct an annual, intelligence-based assessment of domestic terrorism activities in their jurisdictions; and

(3) formulate and execute a plan to address and combat domestic terrorism activities in their jurisdictions.

(b) REQUIREMENT.—The activities required under subsection (a) shall focus on the most significant domestic terrorism threats, as determined by the number of domestic terrorism related incidents from each category and subclassification in the joint report for the preceding year required under section 4(b).

SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Homeland Security such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2149. A bill to make a technical correction to the provision of law authorizing a withdrawal and reservation of public land at Limestone Hills Training Area, Montana; to the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2149

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

SECTION 1. TECHNICAL CORRECTION TO WITHDRAWAL AND RESERVATION OF PUBLIC LAND AUTHORITY, LIMESTONE HILLS TRAINING AREA, MONTANA.

Section 2931(b) of the Military Construction Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (division B of Public Law 113–66; 127 Stat. 1031) is amended by striking “18,644 acres in Broadwater County, Montana, generally depicted as ‘Proposed Land Withdrawal’ on the map entitled ‘Limestone Hills Training Area Land Withdrawal’, dated April 10, 2013” and inserting “18,964 acres in Broadwater County, Montana, generally depicted as ‘Limestone Hills Training Area Land Withdrawal’ on the map entitled ‘Limestone Hills Training Area Land Withdrawal’, dated May 11, 2017”.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. BROWN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. HASSAN, and Ms. HARRIS):

S. 2157. A bill to require drug manufacturers to disclose the prices of prescription drugs in any direct-to-consumer advertising and marketing to practitioners of a drug; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2157

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 “Drug-Price Transparency in Communications Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds as follows:

(1) Direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription pharmaceuticals is legal in only 2 developed countries, the United States and New Zealand.

(2) Direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription pharmaceuticals is designed to cause patients to pressure physicians to prescribe certain medications.

(3) In 2015, pharmaceutical companies spent more than \$100,000,000 on advertising with respect to each of 16 brand-name drugs, primarily new and expensive drugs.

(4) Prescription rates of medications advertised directly to consumers have increased by 34.2 percent compared to a 5.1 percent increase in other pharmaceuticals.

(5) Prescription pharmaceuticals cost more in the United States than they do in any other country.

(6) The American Medical Association has passed resolutions calling for the ban of direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription pharmaceuticals, and to require price transparency in any direct-to-consumer advertising.

(7) The amount of spending by pharmaceutical companies in marketing to health care providers is more than 4 times the spending for direct-to-consumer advertising.

(8) Health care providers are more likely to prescribe a certain drug if they have received payments or marketing materials from the manufacturer of that drug.

SEC. 3. PRICE DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT FOR DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER DRUG ADVERTISEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 303(g)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 333(g)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking “(A)” and inserting “(i)”;

(2) by striking “(B)” and inserting (ii);

(3) by striking “(1) With respect” and inserting “(1)(A) With respect”;

(4) by striking “this paragraph” each place it appears and inserting “this subparagraph”;

(5) by striking “No other civil monetary penalties in this Act (including the civil penalty in section 303(f)(4))” and inserting “No civil monetary penalties (including the civil penalty in section 303(f)(4)), other than the penalties under this subparagraph and subparagraph (B)”;

(6) by adding at the end the following:

“(B) With respect to a person who is a holder of an approved application under section 505 for a drug subject to section 503(b) or under section 351 of the Public Health Service Act, any such person who disseminates or causes another party to disseminate a direct-to-consumer advertisement that does not include the wholesale acquisition cost (as defined in section 1847A(c)(6)(B) of the Social Security Act) for a 30-day supply of the drug shall be liable to the United States for a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 for the first such violation in any 3-year period, and not to exceed \$5,000,000 for each subsequent violation in any 3-year period. For purposes of this subparagraph, all violations under this paragraph occurring in a single day shall be considered one violation. With respect to advertisements that appear in magazines or other publications that are published less frequently than daily, each issue date (whether weekly or monthly) shall be treated as a single day for the purpose of calculating the number of violations under this subparagraph.”.

(b) TRANSFER OF FUNDS.—For each fiscal year, there are authorized to be appropriated, and are appropriated, out of any funds not otherwise obligated, to the Director of the National Institutes of Health for purposes of carrying out medical research, an amount equal to the amount collected in penalties during the previous fiscal year for violations of section 303(g)(1)(B) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

(c) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, shall promulgate regulations to carry out subparagraph (B) of section 303(g)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 333(g)(1)), as added by subsection (a). Such regulations shall include provisions setting forth—

(1) a reasonable amount of time a manufacturer has to update any direct-to-consumer advertising of a drug in accordance with such subparagraph (B) after a change to the wholesale acquisition cost of the drug; and

(2) the specific manner in which the wholesale acquisition cost of a drug is required to be conspicuously disclosed in such direct-to-consumer advertisements in order to communicate such single price metric to the public, which shall include visual and audio (as applicable) components of the advertisement, and which may include a brief qualitative explanation of reduced cost availability for certain consumers, such as through insurance cost-sharing arrangements or patient assistance programs.

SEC. 4. DRUG MANUFACTURER DUTY TO DISCLOSE DRUG PRICES TO PRACTITIONERS.

(a) DUTY TO DISCLOSE.—Whenever a drug manufacturer, including any representative

of the manufacturer, communicates with a health care practitioner about a drug manufactured by the drug manufacturer, including through promotional, educational, or marketing communications, meetings or paid events, and the provision of goods, gifts, and samples, the drug manufacturer shall disclose to the practitioner the wholesale acquisition cost (as defined in section 1847A(c)(6)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–3a(c)(6)(B))) for a 30-day supply of the drug, which may include a brief qualitative explanation of reduced cost availability for certain consumers that is consistent with the regulations described in section 3(c)(2).

(b) ENFORCEMENT BY FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.—

(1) UNFAIR OR DECEPTIVE ACTS OR PRACTICES.—A violation of subsection (a) by a person with respect to whom the Commission is empowered under section 5(a)(2) of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 45(a)(2)) shall be treated as a violation of a rule defining an unfair or deceptive act or practice prescribed under section 18(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 57a(a)(1)(B)).

(2) POWERS OF FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Federal Trade Commission shall enforce this section in the same manner, by the same means, and with the same jurisdiction, powers, and duties as though all applicable terms and provisions of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.) were incorporated into and made a part of this Act.

(B) PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES.—Any person who violates this section shall be subject to the penalties and entitled to the privileges and immunities provided in the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.).

(c) RULEMAKING.—The Federal Trade Commission shall promulgate in accordance with section 553 of title 5, United States Code, such rules as may be necessary to carry out this section.

(d) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit, impair, or supersede the operation of the Federal Trade Commission Act or any other provision of Federal law.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 2160. A bill to establish a pilot program under the Chief of the Forest Service may use alternative dispute resolution in lieu of judicial review of certain projects; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2160

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 “Protect Collaboration for Healthier Forests Act”.

SEC. 2. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) PARTICIPANT.—The term “participant” means an individual or entity that files an objection or scoping comments on a draft environmental document with respect to a project that is subject to an objection at the project level under part 218 of title 36, Code

of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations).

(2) **PILOT PROGRAM.**—The term “pilot program” means the pilot program established under subsection (b).

(3) **PROJECT.**—The term “project” means a project described in subsection (c).

(4) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

(b) **ARBITRATION PILOT PROGRAM.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish within Region 1 of the Forest Service an arbitration pilot program as an alternative dispute resolution process in lieu of judicial review for projects described in subsection (c).

(c) **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, at the sole discretion of the Secretary, may designate for arbitration projects that—

(A)(i) are developed through a collaborative process (within the meaning of section 603(b)(1)(C) of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591b(b)(1)(C)));

(ii) are carried out under the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program established under section 4003 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C. 7303); or

(iii) are identified in a community wildfire protection plan (as defined in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511));

(B) have as a purpose—

(i) hazardous fuels reduction; or

(ii) mitigation of insect or disease infestation; and

(C) are located, in whole or in part, in a wildland-urban interface (as defined in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511)).

(2) **INCLUSION.**—In designating projects for arbitration, the Secretary may include projects that receive categorical exclusions for purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(d) **LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF PROJECTS.**—The Secretary may not designate for arbitration under the pilot program more than 2 projects per calendar year.

(e) **ARBITRATORS.**—

(1) **APPOINTMENT.**—The Secretary shall develop and publish a list of not fewer than 15 individuals eligible to serve as arbitrators for the pilot program.

(2) **QUALIFICATIONS.**—To be eligible to serve as an arbitrator under this subsection, an individual shall be—

(A) certified by—

(i) the American Arbitration Association; or

(ii) a State arbitration program; or

(B) a fully retired Federal or State judge.

(f) **INITIATION OF ARBITRATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 7 days after the date on which the Secretary issues the final decision with respect to a project, the Secretary shall—

(A) notify each applicable participant and the Clerk of the United States District Court for the district in which the project is located that the project has been designated for arbitration in accordance with this Act; and

(B) include in the decision document a statement that the project has been designated for arbitration.

(2) **INITIATION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—A participant may initiate arbitration regarding a project that has been designated for arbitration under this Act in accordance with—

(i) sections 571 through 584 of title 5, United States Code; and

(ii) this paragraph.

(B) **REQUIREMENTS.**—A request to initiate arbitration under subparagraph (A) shall—

(i) be filed not later than the date that is 30 days after the date of the notification by the Secretary under paragraph (1); and

(ii) include an alternative proposal for the applicable project that describes each modification sought by the participant with respect to the project.

(C) **NO JUDICIAL REVIEW.**—A project for which arbitration is initiated under subparagraph (A) shall not be subject to judicial review.

(3) **COMPELLED ARBITRATION.**—

(A) **MOTION TO COMPEL ARBITRATION.**—

(i) **IN GENERAL.**—If a participant seeks judicial review of a final decision with respect to a project, the Secretary may file in the applicable court a motion to compel arbitration in accordance with this Act.

(ii) **FEES AND COSTS.**—For any motion described in clause (i) for which the Secretary is the prevailing party, the applicable court shall award to the Secretary—

(I) court costs; and

(II) attorney's fees.

(B) **ARBITRATION COMPELLED BY COURT.**—If a participant seeks judicial review of a project, the applicable court shall compel arbitration in accordance with this Act.

(g) **SELECTION OF ARBITRATOR.**—For each arbitration commenced under this Act—

(1) the Secretary shall propose 3 arbitrators from the list published under subsection (e)(1); and

(2) the applicable participant shall select 1 arbitrator from the list of arbitrators proposed under paragraph (1).

(h) **RESPONSIBILITIES OF ARBITRATOR.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—An arbitrator selected under subsection (e)—

(A) shall address all claims of each party seeking arbitration with respect to a project under this Act; but

(B) may consolidate into a single arbitration all requests to initiate arbitration by all participants with respect to a project.

(2) **SELECTION OF PROPOSALS.**—An arbitrator shall make a decision with respect to each applicable request for initiation of arbitration under this Act by—

(A) selecting the project, as approved by the Secretary;

(B) selecting an alternative proposal submitted by the applicable participant; or

(C) rejecting both projects described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(3) **LIMITATIONS.**—

(A) **ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD.**—The evidence before an arbitrator under this subsection shall be limited solely to the administrative record for the project.

(B) **NO MODIFICATIONS TO PROPOSALS.**—An arbitrator may not modify any proposal contained in a request for initiation of arbitration of a participant under this Act.

(i) **INTERVENTION.**—A party may intervene in an arbitration under this Act if, with respect to the project to which the arbitration relates, the party—

(1) meets the requirements of Rule 24(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (or a successor rule); or

(2) participated in the applicable collaborative process referred to in clause (i) or (ii) of subsection (c)(1)(A).

(j) **SCOPE OF REVIEW.**—In carrying out arbitration for a project, the arbitrator shall set aside the agency action, findings, and conclusions found to be arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with law, within the meaning of section 706(2)(A) of title 5, United States Code.

(k) **DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION OF ARBITRATION.**—Not later than 90 days after the date on which a request to initiate arbitration is filed under subsection (f)(2), the arbitrator

shall make a decision with respect to the request to initiate arbitration.

(1) **EFFECT OF ARBITRATION DECISION.**—A decision of an arbitrator under this Act—

(1) shall not be considered to be a major Federal action;

(2) shall be binding; and

(3) shall not be subject to judicial review, except as provided in section 10(a) of title 9, United States Code.

(m) **ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall—

(A) be solely responsible for the professional fees of arbitrators participating in the pilot program; and

(B) use funds made available to the Secretary and not otherwise obligated to carry out subparagraph (A).

(2) **ATTORNEY'S FEES.**—No arbitrator may award attorney's fees in any arbitration brought under this Act.

(n) **REPORTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the pilot program is established, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives, and publish on the website of Region 1 of the Forest Service, a report of not longer than 10 pages describing the implementation of the pilot program for the applicable year, including—

(A) the reasons for selecting certain projects for arbitration;

(B) an evaluation of the arbitration process, including any recommendations for improvements to the process;

(C) a description of the outcome of each arbitration; and

(D) a summary of the impacts of each outcome described in subparagraph (C) on the timeline for implementation and completion of the applicable project.

(2) **GAO REVIEWS AND REPORTS.**—

(A) **INITIAL REVIEW.**—Not later than 2 years after the date on which the pilot program is established, the Comptroller General of the United States shall review the implementation by the Secretary of the pilot program.

(B) **REVIEW ON TERMINATION.**—On termination of the pilot program under subsection (o), the Comptroller General of the United States shall review the implementation by the Secretary of the pilot program.

(C) **REPORT.**—On completion of the review described in subparagraph (A) or (B), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report describing the results of the applicable review.

(o) **TERMINATION.**—The pilot program shall terminate on the date that is 5 years after the date .

(p) **EFFECT.**—Nothing in this Act affects the responsibility of the Secretary to comply with—

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

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

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 335—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 19 THROUGH NOVEMBER 25, 2017, DURING WHICH THE HOLIDAY OF THANKSGIVING IS OBSERVED, AS “NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK”

Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 335

Whereas the family is the basic strength of any free and orderly society;

Whereas it is appropriate to honor the family unit as essential to the continued well-being of the United States; and

Whereas it is fitting that official recognition be given to the importance of family loyalties and ties: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of November 19 through November 25, 2017, during which the holiday of Thanksgiving is observed, as “National Family Week”;

(2) encourages States and local governments to designate the week of November 19 through November 25, 2017, as “National Family Week”; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe “National Family Week” with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 336—RECOGNIZING THE SERIOUSNESS OF POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2018 AS “POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH”

Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. PERDUE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 336

Whereas Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (referred to in this preamble as “PCOS”) is a common health problem among women and girls involving a hormonal imbalance;

Whereas there is no universal definition of PCOS, but researchers estimate that between 5,000,000 and 10,000,000 women in the United States are affected by PCOS;

Whereas PCOS can affect women from the onset of puberty and throughout the remainder of their lives;

Whereas the symptoms of PCOS include infertility, irregular or absent menstrual periods, acne, weight gain, thinning scalp hair, excessive facial and body hair growth, numerous small ovarian cysts, pelvic pain, and mental health problems;

Whereas women with PCOS have higher rates of psychosocial disorders, including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and eating disorders, and are at greater risk for suicide;

Whereas adolescents with PCOS often are not diagnosed;

Whereas PCOS causes metabolic dysfunction and insulin resistance, which can lead to type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obstructive sleep apnea, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, and endometrial cancer at a young adult age;

Whereas PCOS is the most common cause of female infertility;

Whereas PCOS in pregnancy is associated with increased risk of gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, pregnancy-induced hypertension, preterm delivery, cesarean delivery, miscarriage, and fetal and infant death;

Whereas women with PCOS are at increased risk of developing high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke, heart disease—the leading cause of death among women—and have a 4 to 7 times higher risk of experiencing a heart attack compared to women of the same age who do not have PCOS;

Whereas women with PCOS have a more than 50 percent chance of developing type 2 diabetes or prediabetes before the age of 40;

Whereas women with PCOS may be at a higher risk for breast cancer and ovarian cancer, and have a 3 times higher risk for developing endometrial cancer, compared to women who do not have PCOS;

Whereas up to 80 percent of women in the United States with PCOS are overweight or have obesity;

Whereas an estimated 50 percent of women with PCOS are undiagnosed, and many remain undiagnosed until they experience fertility difficulties or develop type 2 diabetes or other cardiometabolic disorders;

Whereas the costs involved with the diagnosis and management of PCOS to the healthcare system of the United States is over \$4,300,000,000 per year during the reproductive years of patients;

Whereas that amount does not include the costs associated with the treatment of comorbidities, including high blood pressure, sleep apnea, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and cancer;

Whereas the cause of PCOS is unknown, but researchers have found strong links to significant insulin resistance, which affects up to 70 percent of women with PCOS, and genetic predisposition; and

Whereas there is no known cure for PCOS: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the seriousness of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (referred to in this resolving clause as “PCOS”);

(2) supports the goals of PCOS Awareness Month—

(A) to increase awareness of, and education about, PCOS among the general public, women, girls, and healthcare professionals;

(B) to improve diagnosis and treatment of PCOS;

(C) to disseminate information on diagnosis and treatment options for PCOS; and

(D) to improve the quality of life and outcomes for women and girls with PCOS;

(3) recognizes the need for further research, improved treatment and care options, and a cure for PCOS;

(4) acknowledges the struggles affecting all women and girls residing within the United States who are afflicted with PCOS;

(5) urges medical researchers and healthcare professionals to advance their understanding of PCOS in order to research, diagnose, and provide assistance to women and girls with PCOS; and

(6) encourages States, territories, and localities to support the goals of PCOS Awareness Month.

SENATE RESOLUTION 337—DESIGNATING NOVEMBER 26, 2017, AS “DRIVE SAFER SUNDAY”

Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Mr. PERDUE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 337

Whereas motor vehicle travel is the primary means of transportation in the United States;

Whereas every individual traveling on roads and highways should drive in a safe manner so as to reduce deaths and injuries that result from motor vehicle accidents;

Whereas, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, wearing a seat belt saves as many as 15,000 lives each year; and

Whereas the Sunday after Thanksgiving is the busiest highway traffic day of the year: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) encourages—

(A) high schools, colleges, universities, administrators, teachers, primary schools, and secondary schools to launch campus-wide educational campaigns to urge students to focus on safety when driving;

(B) national trucking firms—

(i) to alert employee drivers to be especially focused on driving safely on the Sunday after Thanksgiving; and

(ii) to publicize the importance of driving safely on the Sunday after Thanksgiving on the Citizens Band Radio Service and at truck stops across the United States;

(C) clergies to remind congregations to travel safely when attending services and gatherings;

(D) law enforcement personnel to remind drivers and passengers to drive safely, particularly on the Sunday after Thanksgiving;

(E) motorists to drive safely during the holiday season and throughout the rest of the year; and

(F) the people of the United States—

(i) to understand the life-saving importance of wearing a seat belt; and

(ii) to educate themselves about highway safety; and

(2) designates November 26, 2017, as “Drive Safer Sunday”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 338—COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE HOUSTON ASTROS ON WINNING THE 2017 MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL WORLD SERIES

Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 338

Whereas, on November 1, 2017, the Houston Astros won the 2017 Major League Baseball World Series (referred to in this preamble as the “World Series”) with a 5–1 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers;

Whereas the Houston Astros won the World Series in Game 7 at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles, California;

Whereas the Houston Astros overcame the home field advantage of the Los Angeles Dodgers to win the World Series;

Whereas all of the following 25 players on the World Series roster of the Houston Astros should be congratulated: Jose Altuve, Carlos Beltran, Alex Bregman, Juan Centeno, Carlos Correa, Chris Devenski, Derek Fisher, Evan Gattis, Ken Giles, Marwin Gonzalez, Luke Gregerson, Yulieski Gurriel, Will Harris, Dallas Keuchel, Francisco Liriano, Cameron Maybin, Brian McCann, Lance McCullers, Jr., Collin McHugh, Charlie Morton, Joe Musgrove, Brad Peacock, Josh Reddick, George Springer, and Justin Verlander;

Whereas, in addition to the World Series roster, all of the following Houston Astros

players who contributed to the 2017 regular season should be congratulated: Norichika Aoki, Tyler Clippard, J.D. Davis, Dayan Diaz, Michael Feliz, Mike Fiers, Reymin Guduan, Jandel Gustave, Teoscar Hernandez, James Hoyt, Jordan Jankowski, Tony Kemp, Jake Marisnick, Francis Martes, Colin Moran, David Paulino, A.J. Reed, Tony Sipp, Max Stassi, Ashur Tolliver, and Tyler White;

Whereas the front office, the clubhouse, and all of the supporting staff and team members of the Houston Astros should be congratulated;

Whereas the Houston Astros won an incredible 101 games during the regular season, which earned the team the American League West division championship;

Whereas the following 6 Houston Astros players selected to the 2017 Major League Baseball All-Star Game should be congratulated: Jose Altuve, Carlos Correa, Chris Devenski, Dallas Keuchel, Lance McCullers, Jr., and George Springer;

Whereas the Houston Astros became the first team in the history of Major League Baseball to capture both the National League Championship pennant and the American League Championship pennant;

Whereas the Houston Astros bounced back from a loss in the 2015 playoffs to win the American League Championship pennant for the first time;

Whereas Houston Astros center fielder George Springer broke the record for extra base hits in the World Series, including 5 home runs, and was named the Most Valuable Player in the World Series;

Whereas Houston Astros catcher Brian McCann, in the first year playing for the Houston Astros, hit a home run in Game 5 of the World Series, and guided the pitching staff for 7 games;

Whereas Alex Bregman is the first Jewish player to hit a World Series walk off hit, which led the Houston Astros past the Los Angeles Dodgers in a 13-12, 10-inning win in Game 5 of the World Series;

Whereas Houston Astros pitcher Justin Verlander was named the Most Valuable Player of the American League Championship Series;

Whereas Houston Astros second baseman Jose Altuve—

(1) compiled at least 200 hits for the fourth consecutive year; and

(2) won a Silver Slugger Award for best American League second baseman;

Whereas Houston Astros General Manager Jeff Luhnow joined the Houston Astros front office in 2011 and succeeded in building a World Series championship team;

Whereas the Houston Astros fell short in the 2015 American League Division Series, fueling a determination—

(1) to return to the playoffs; and

(2) to win the World Series in 2017;

Whereas Houston Astros fans followed the triumphs of the 2017 season by tuning into games called by Houston Astros television broadcasters Geoff Blum and Todd Kalas and Houston Astros radio broadcasters Robert Ford and Steve Sparks;

Whereas the Houston Astros played the following 3 excellent teams in the 2017 postseason that should be congratulated:

(1) the Boston Red Sox in the American League Division Series;

(2) the New York Yankees in the American League Championship Series; and

(3) the Los Angeles Dodgers in the World Series;

Whereas the Houston Astros won the World Series for the first time ever, filling with pride the people in the city of Houston and Houston Astros fans everywhere;

Whereas the Houston Astros showed extraordinary steadiness, teamwork, focus, and love of the game;

Whereas the Houston Astros is an organization of great character, determination, and heart, and a reflection of the city of Houston and the State of Texas;

Whereas, in the wake of Hurricane Harvey and the devastation along the entire Gulf Coast in the State of Texas, the Houston Astros as World Series champions personifies the “can do” Texas spirit and signals to the world that, even after an incredibly difficult few months, the State of Texas is coming back stronger than ever; and

Whereas the Houston Astros are the 2017 World Series champions: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the Houston Astros—

(A) for winning the 2017 Major League Baseball World Series championship title; and

(B) for an outstanding performance during the 2017 Major League Baseball season;

(2) recognizes the achievements of the players, coaches, management, and support staff of the Houston Astros, which made victory possible;

(3) recognizes the dedication, hard work, and persistence of the operations staff of Minute Maid Park in the city of Houston;

(4) congratulates—

(A) the city of Houston;

(B) Houston Astros fans everywhere;

(C) the mayor of the city of Houston, the Honorable Sylvester Turner;

(D) Houston Astros Owner and Chairman Jim Crane and the Crane family;

(E) Houston Astros President of Business Operations Reid Ryan; and

(F) Houston Astros Executive Advisor Nolan Ryan; and

(5) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) Houston Astros Owner and Chairman Jim Crane;

(B) Houston Astros General Manager Jeff Luhnow; and

(C) Houston Astros Manager A.J. Hinch.

SENATE RESOLUTION 339—DESIGNATING NOVEMBER 2017 AS “NATIONAL RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH”

Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. REED) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 339

Whereas the prevalence of runaway youth and homelessness among youth is staggering, with studies suggesting that every year, between 1,600,000 and 2,800,000 youth live on the streets of the United States;

Whereas runaway youth most often are youth who have been expelled from their homes by their families, have experienced abuse and trauma, are involved in the foster care system, are too poor to secure their own basic needs, and may be ineligible or unable to access medical or mental health resources;

Whereas youth who run away are at an increased risk for exploitation and exposure to criminal networks, such as domestic sex trafficking;

Whereas youth who run away are more likely to be recruited or coerced into participating in criminal acts, such as gangs and illegal substance abuse, that lead to a higher likelihood of involvement in the criminal justice system;

Whereas preventing youth from running away from home or from foster care and supporting youth in high-risk situations is a

family, community, and national responsibility;

Whereas the future well-being of the Nation is dependent on the value placed on youth and the opportunities provided for youth to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to help youth successfully develop into safe, healthy, and productive adults;

Whereas effective programs supporting runaway youth and assisting youth and their families in providing safe and stable homes succeed because of partnerships created among families, youth-based advocacy organizations, community-based human service agencies, law enforcement, schools, faith-based organizations, and businesses; and

Whereas the National Network for Youth and National Runaway Safeline are cosponsoring National Runaway Prevention Month in November to increase public awareness of the issues facing runaway and homeless youth and to educate the public about solutions and the role the public can play in ending youth homelessness: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates November 2017 as “National Runaway Prevention Month”; and

(2) recognizes and supports the goals and ideals of National Runaway Prevention Month.

SENATE RESOLUTION 340—COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 3D INFANTRY DIVISION

Mr. PERDUE (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. INHOFE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 340

Whereas November 21, 2017, is the 100th anniversary of the organization of the 3d Infantry Division;

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division was organized in 1917 as the 3d Division, with headquarters at Camp Greene in North Carolina, and has been on continuous duty ever since;

Whereas, from its inception, the 3d Infantry Division and the component units of the 3d Infantry Division have played a vital role in the history of the United States by serving in—

(1) World War I;

(2) World War II;

(3) the Korean War;

(4) the Cold War;

(5) Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (commonly known as “the Persian Gulf War”);

(6) Operation Enduring Freedom;

(7) Operation Iraqi Freedom;

(8) Operation Freedom’s Sentinel;

(9) Operation Resolute Support;

(10) Operation Atlantic Resolve; and

(11) a number of other named and unnamed operations around the world;

Whereas elements of the 3d Division first went into combat in March 1918 at the beginning of the German offensive efforts that were designed to end World War I;

Whereas, soon after the 3d Division was established, the division began to gain prestige for its service during World War I;

Whereas, in July of 1918, the success of the 3d Division at the Battle of Chateau-Thierry earned the division, and especially the 38th Infantry of the division, the legendary nickname “Rock of the Marne” because the division held steadfast against German soldiers who were marching toward Paris in what would be the last German offensive of World War I;

Whereas, during the Battle of Chateau-Thierry, division commander Major General

Joseph Dickman gave his famous order to hold the defensive position along the Marne River in French, stating, “Nous resterons là!”, which in English means, “We shall remain here!”, providing what would become the official motto of the 3d Division;

Whereas the 3d Division played an important role in other major campaigns of World War I, including the campaigns of—

- (1) Aisne;
- (2) Champagne-Marne;
- (3) Aisne-Marne;
- (4) Saint-Mihiel; and
- (5) Meuse-Argonne;

Whereas 2 soldiers of the 3d Division, Private First Class John L. Barkley and First Lieutenant George Price Hays, earned the Medal of Honor during World War I;

Whereas, after World War I, the 3d Division was one of only 3 divisions of the Army to remain on active duty, a strong testament to the steadfastness, combat experience, and mission success of the division;

Whereas the 3d Division was redesignated as the 3d Infantry Division in 1942;

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division was again called into action in November of 1942, entering World War II as one of the first divisions of the United States to fight the Nazi empire in north Africa;

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division made an amphibious landing in French Morocco and quickly captured the city of Casablanca, distinguishing itself as one of the premier assault units of the Army;

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division advanced through Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia before participating in the amphibious assault on Sicily;

Whereas, during the campaign to take control of Sicily, and before moving to mainland Italy, the 3d Infantry Division earned a reputation as one of the best divisions in the Seventh Army under the command of Lieutenant General George Patton;

Whereas, between January and May of 1943, the 3d Infantry Division participated in an amphibious assault operation and beachhead defense at Anzio on the West Coast of Italy, repelling multiple attacks by 3 German divisions, fighting valiantly, and, on 1 day, suffering 995 casualties, once again proving to be a steadfast “Rock”;

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division, after breaking out of the Anzio beachhead and reaching Rome, participated in Operation Dragoon, the Allied invasion of southern France;

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division, after months of intense fighting, entered Germany and crossed the Rhine River, making its way through Nuremberg, Munich, and Salzburg before assisting in the capture of Adolf Hitler’s mountain retreat near Berchtesgaden in April of 1945;

Whereas, as of the date on which Germany unconditionally surrendered in May of 1945, the 3d Infantry Division had suffered 35,000 casualties during World War II, while fighting and marching 3,200 miles from Casablanca to Salzburg;

Whereas, during World War II, the 3d Infantry Division was the only division of the United States to serve in 10 major campaigns, specifically the campaigns of—

- (1) Algeria-French Morocco;
- (2) Tunisia;
- (3) Sicily;
- (4) Naples-Foggia;
- (5) Anzio;
- (6) Rome-Arno;
- (7) southern France;
- (8) Rhineland;
- (9) Ardennes-Alsace; and
- (10) Central Europe;

Whereas, in recognition of exemplary service during World War II, the 3d Infantry Division was awarded—

(1) the French Croix de Guerre with Palm (and streamer embroidered with “Colmar”);

(2) the French Fourragere, for seizing the last Nazi stronghold in France; and

(3) the Presidential Unit Citation;

Whereas, during World War II, 39 soldiers of the 3d Infantry Division earned the Medal of Honor;

Whereas one of the most decorated soldiers of World War II, Lieutenant Audie Murphy, served in the 3d Infantry Division;

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division was again called to service in September of 1950 when the first elements of the division arrived on the Korean Peninsula in support of the Government of the Republic of Korea and its military, contributing to operations in Hamhung-Hungnam in 1950 and the recapture of the South Korean capital of Seoul in 1951, following the surge of Chinese troops;

Whereas, from November 30 to December 24, 1950, the 3d Infantry Division served as the covering force for the largest beachhead evacuation in the history of the military of the United States, facilitating the escape of 105,000 troops, 91,000 refugees, 17,500 vehicles, and 350,000 tons of cargo from Hungnam, after which the division moved from the East Coast to the West Coast of South Korea and helped to fight back the Chinese forces that had overtaken Seoul;

Whereas, in 1951, elements of the 3d Infantry Division helped to recapture Seoul and were instrumental in pushing Chinese forces back to the 38th parallel and in enduring the brunt of Chinese attempted attacks to retake Seoul, earning the division the new nickname, the “Rock of Seoul”;

Whereas, during the Korean War, the 3d Infantry Division also became known as the “Fire Brigade” for its quick responses to crises;

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division participated in 8 campaigns during the Korean War and had 13 Medal of Honor recipients as a result of that service;

Whereas, in recognition of exemplary service during the Korean War, the 3d Infantry Division and its subordinate units received—

- (1) the Presidential Unit Citation;
- (2) the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation (and streamer embroidered with “Uijongbu Corridor”);
- (3) the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation (and streamer embroidered with “Iron Triangle”); and
- (4) the Chryssoun Aristion Andrias-Bravery Gold Medal of Greece (and streamer embroidered with “Korea”);

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division returned to Germany in April 1958 to help secure Western Europe from the threat of attack by the nations, headed by the Soviet Union, that had signed the Warsaw Pact and remained stationed in Germany until 1996 to assist fellow member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (referred to in this preamble as “NATO”), directly contributing to the peaceful end of the Cold War;

Whereas, in December 1990, in response to the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein, the 3d Brigade of the 3d Infantry Division deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield;

Whereas the 3d Brigade of the 3d Infantry Division distinguished itself as the Advanced Guard Brigade leading the main attack of the 1st Armored Division and VII Corps against the Iraqi Republican Guard Forces Command as part of the 100-hour ground assault on Iraq from February 24 to 28, 1991;

Whereas, as of the date on which the Persian Gulf War ended, the 3d Brigade of the 3d Infantry Division had, during that conflict, destroyed 105 enemy tanks, 70 armored personnel carriers, and 92 artillery pieces and captured 836 prisoners;

Whereas, from 2000 to 2001, elements of the 3d Infantry Division deployed to Bosnia and Kosovo in support of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (commonly known as “UNMIBH”);

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division began its participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom on March 20, 2003, leading the coalition assault into Iraq;

Whereas, as of April 4, 2003, the 3d Infantry Division had entered the Saddam International Airport and renamed it the Baghdad International Airport;

Whereas, from April 5 to 9, 2003, the 3d Infantry Division was the vanguard unit in the march to Baghdad, leading what would become known as the “Thunder Run” into the heart of the city and effectively crippling the Iraqi regime;

Whereas, from January 2005 to January 2006, the 3d Infantry Division returned to Iraq to provide security for independent elections and the peaceful transfer of power to newly and democratically elected Iraqi officials;

Whereas the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 3d Infantry Division was the first Army brigade to serve 3 tours in Iraq;

Whereas, in March 2007, as part of Task Force Marne, the 3d Infantry Division was given a large area of responsibility in Iraq, including Multi-National Forces-Center and Multi-National Forces-West;

Whereas Sergeant First Class Paul R. Smith was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in Iraq in 2003;

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division had units in every region of Iraq;

Whereas, in November 2009, the Combat Aviation Brigade of the 3d Infantry Division deployed to Afghanistan as Task Force Falcon;

Whereas, in 2012, the 3d Infantry Division deployed to Afghanistan in support of operations in Regional Command-South, assisting with the closure of more than 60 forward operating bases and providing support to various units in the theater of operation;

Whereas, in 2015, multiple units of the 3d Infantry Division deployed to Europe in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve, training with NATO allies to remain prepared for contingency operations in Europe;

Whereas, as of 2017, a contingent of 3d Infantry Division soldiers serve in Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom’s Sentinel, taking on the train and assist mission as the United States Forces-Afghanistan’s National Support Element alongside Afghan National Security Forces;

Whereas, as of 2017, the 3d Infantry Division is still a premier fighting force with units deployed in support of contingency operations across 4 distinct combatant command areas of responsibility in more than 20 countries and under 5 separate named operations, including Operation Resolute Support in Iraq, Operation Freedom’s Sentinel in Afghanistan, and Operation Atlantic Resolve in Eastern Europe;

Whereas the 3d Infantry Division has been honorably stationed in Fort Stewart, Georgia, since fiscal year 1996; and

Whereas, since 1917, the 3d Infantry Division has—

- (1) been deployed around the world, assisting in combat and noncombat missions;
- (2) endured the loss of more than 10,000 soldiers in combat operations; and
- (3) had 55 soldiers receive the Medal of Honor, a greater number than from any other division; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commemorates the 100th anniversary of the 3d Infantry Division on November 21, 2017, and reveres its century of service to the military of the United States;

(2) applauds the 3d Infantry Division for continuing to serve with one of the most successful combat records of any division of the Army;

(3) commends the 3d Infantry Division for continuing to exemplify its motto, “Nous resterons là!”, which in English means, “We shall remain here!”;

(4) honors—

(A) the memory of the more than 10,000 soldiers of the 3d Infantry Division who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the United States; and

(B) the 55 members of the 3d Infantry Division who have received the Medal of Honor, a greater number than from any other division of the Army;

(5) expresses, on behalf of the people of the United States, gratitude, support, and commitment to all 3d Infantry Division soldiers, veterans, and families, both past and present; and

(6) recognizes the esteemed place of the 3d Infantry Division in the annals of the history of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 341—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING NOVEMBER 13, 2017, AS “NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK”

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. HOEVEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary :

S. RES. 341

Whereas a highly skilled workforce is necessary to compete in the global economy and to support economic growth;

Whereas the national registered apprenticeship system established by the Act of August 16, 1937 (29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”) (referred to in this preamble as the “national registered apprenticeship system”), which has existed for over 75 years—

(1) is an important pathway for workers of the United States;

(2) offers a combination of—

(A) academic and technical instruction; and

(B) paid, on-the-job, training;

(3) provides workers of the United States credentials that are nationally-recognized and industry-recognized;

(4) leads to higher earnings for apprentices; and

(5) develops a highly skilled workforce for the United States;

Whereas registered apprenticeships—

(1) are becoming increasingly innovative and diverse in—

(A) design;

(B) partnerships;

(C) timeframes; and

(D) use of emerging educational and training concepts; and

(2) will continue to—

(A) evolve to meet emerging skill essentials and employer requirements; and

(B) maintain high standards for apprentices;

Whereas the national registered apprenticeship system provides education and training for apprentices in—

(1) high-growth sectors, including—

(A) information technology;

(B) financial services;

(C) advanced manufacturing; and

(D) health care; and

(2) traditional industries;

Whereas, according to the Department of Labor, the national registered apprenticeship system leverages approximately \$1,000,000,000 in private investment, which re-

flects the strong commitment of the sponsors of the national registered apprenticeship system;

Whereas an evaluation of registered apprenticeship programs in 10 States conducted by Mathematica Policy Research in 2012 found that—

(1) individuals who completed registered apprenticeship programs earned over \$240,000 more over their careers than individuals who did not participate in registered apprenticeship programs;

(2) the estimated social benefits of each registered apprenticeship program (including additional productivity of apprentices and the reduction in governmental expenditures as a result of reduced use of unemployment compensation and public assistance) exceeded the costs of each registered apprenticeship program by more than \$49,000; and

(3) the tax return on every dollar the Federal Government invested in registered apprenticeship programs was \$27; and

Whereas celebration of National Apprenticeship Week—

(1) honors industries that use the registered apprenticeship model;

(2) encourages expansion of the registered apprenticeship model to prepare highly skilled workers of the United States;

(3) recognizes the role the national registered apprenticeship system has played in preparing workers of the United States for jobs; and

(4) promotes conversation about ways the national registered apprenticeship system can continue to respond to workforce challenges in the 21st century; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates the week beginning November 13, 2017, as “National Apprenticeship Week”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 342—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT STATES, CITIES, TRIBAL NATIONS, BUSINESSES, AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES SHOULD WORK TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE GOALS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. REED) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 342

Whereas 197 countries have signed the Paris Agreement, and 170 countries have joined the Paris Agreement;

Whereas the United States is the only country with the intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement;

Whereas the economy of the United States grew by 15 percent between 2005 and 2015 while net greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 11.5 percent during that period;

Whereas 30 States have adopted renewable electricity standard requirements to demand clean energy production;

Whereas 20 States have adopted greenhouse gas emissions targets;

Whereas 20 States have adopted energy efficiency resource standards;

Whereas 10 States have adopted zero-emission vehicle targets;

Whereas 9 States have implemented the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to construct a market-based system that sets a cap on emissions from the electric sector that declines by—

(1) 2.5 percent per year through 2020; and
(2) 3 percent per year from 2021 through 2030;

Whereas additional States may also soon join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative;

Whereas 11 States have approved at least 1 energy efficiency standard for appliances or equipment that are not covered by Federal standards;

Whereas 47 cities in the United States have adopted 100 percent clean and renewable energy goals;

Whereas more than 2,500,000 people in the United States work in clean energy in all 50 States, including in industries relating to—

(1) wind energy;

(2) solar energy;

(3) energy efficiency; and

(4) advanced hybrid electric vehicles;

Whereas by 2020 there will be 500,000 people in the United States working in the solar and wind industries, including roofers, electricians, and steel workers;

Whereas the majority of clean energy jobs in the United States are blue collar jobs that pay well;

Whereas the “2017 U.S. Energy and Employment Report” issued by the Department of Energy found that there are 5 times as many people in the United States working in the renewable energy sector than there are people in the United States working in fossil fuel industries;

Whereas the establishment of vehicle fuel economy emissions standards—

(1) is the single most significant action that has been taken to reduce global warming pollution;

(2) has helped create 700,000 domestic jobs in the automobile industry of the United States since 2009;

(3) will save consumers in the United States a total of \$100,000,000,000 at the gas pump; and

(4) will reduce the reliance of the United States on foreign oil by 2,500,000 barrels per day by 2030;

Whereas the States, cities, Tribal nations, businesses, and institutions of higher education of the United States that support the objectives of the Paris Agreement represent more than half of the economy of the United States; and

Whereas millions of dollars for clean energy and climate change adaptation resiliency in developing countries have been provided by the United States through contributions that are—

(1) private, public, and Federal; and

(2) made directly, bilaterally, and through multilateral institutions; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the United States—

(1) should remain a signatory to the Paris Agreement; and

(2) should support policies at the Federal, State, and local level that promote the reduction of global warming pollution and aim to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 30—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS WITH RESPECT TO UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD TIBET AND THAT THE TREATMENT OF THE TIBETAN PEOPLE SHOULD BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE CONDUCT OF UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr.

GARDNER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. LEAHY, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 30

Whereas, on October 17, 2007, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama (in this resolution referred to as the “Dalai Lama”) was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of his many enduring and outstanding contributions to peace, nonviolence, human rights, and religious understanding;

Whereas, during his Congressional Gold Medal acceptance speech, Dalai Lama stated, “The time has come for our dialogue with the Chinese leadership to progress towards the successful implementation of a meaningful autonomy for Tibet, as guaranteed in the Chinese constitution and detailed in the Chinese State Council ‘White Paper on Regional Ethnic Autonomy of Tibet’.”;

Whereas the Dalai Lama continues to advance the goal of greater understanding, tolerance, harmony, and respect among the different religious faiths of the world through interfaith dialogue and outreach to other religious leaders;

Whereas the Dalai Lama continues to use his moral authority to promote the concept of universal responsibility as a guiding tenet for how human beings should treat one another and the planet we share;

Whereas, in the ten years since the Dalai Lama accepted the Congressional Gold Medal, China has implemented increasingly repressive policies in Tibet, including—

- (1) travel restrictions against Tibetans and United States citizens;
- (2) restrictive regulations on religious affairs;
- (3) censorship of Buddhist literature and information;
- (4) demolition of Tibetan Buddhist sites;
- (5) imprisonment of Tibetan prisoners of conscience; and
- (6) declarations that “Decision-making power over the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and over the end of survival of his lineage resides with the central government of China”;

Whereas, on April 15, 2015, the Chinese State Council released a white paper entitled “Tibet’s Path of Development Is Driven by an Irresistible Historical Tide”, which stated that “there is no prospect of [a high degree of autonomy for Tibet] ever coming to pass” and furthermore stated that Tibet had been part of China “since ancient times”;

Whereas in recent years, Tibetan nomads, who have lived as nomadic herders on the Tibetan Plateau for centuries, have been banned from grazing in certain areas of the Tibetan Plateau, and hundreds of Tibetan herders have been forcibly relocated by Chinese government officials into “socialist villages”;

Whereas, in September 2017, the Government of the People’s Republic of China adopted additional restrictive regulations on governmental control over the practice of religion and expressed an intention that the government should “actively guide religion to fit within socialist society”;

Whereas these 2017 regulations state that “religious groups, religious schools, religious activity sites and religious citizens shall abide by the Constitution, laws, regulations and rules; practice the core socialist values; [and] preserve the unification of the country, ethnic unity and religious harmony and social stability”;

Whereas these 2017 regulations, scheduled for implementation by the Government of the People’s Republic of China beginning February 2018, would explicitly ban unregistered religious groups from teaching about

religion, establishing religious colleges, going abroad to take part in religious training or gatherings, or otherwise engage in activities that “endanger national security”;

Whereas the Department of State stated in the 2016 Report on Tibet Negotiations that “[t]he Dalai Lama’s representatives and Chinese officials from the United Front Work Department have not met directly since the ninth round of dialogue in January 2010”;

Whereas the 2016 International Religious Freedom Report for China published by the Department of State stated, “In the [Tibet Autonomous Region] and other Tibetan areas, authorities engaged in widespread interference in religious practices, especially in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and nunneries.”;

Whereas the 2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for China published by the Department of State stated, “Under the professed objectives of controlling border areas, maintaining social stability, combating separatism, and extracting natural resources, the government engaged in the severe repression of Tibet’s unique religious, cultural, and linguistic heritage by, among other means, strictly curtailing the civil rights of the Tibetan population, including the freedoms of speech, religion, association, assembly, and movement.”;

Whereas, since 2009, 150 Tibetans have self-immolated to protest against China’s rule in Tibet and most Tibetans publicly call for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet;

Whereas the Government of the People’s Republic of China has refused to allow an independent investigation into the causes of the self-immolations and has instead criminalized them, by imprisoning the survivors and collectively punishing the relatives, friends, and villagers of the self-immolators, as documented by the International Campaign for Tibet;

Whereas Congress has a long history of support for Tibet, including—

- (1) declaring that the United States should make the Tibet issue a higher policy priority;
- (2) declaring that the United States should urge China to establish a constructive dialogue with the Dalai Lama;
- (3) requiring Voice of America and Radio Free Asia to begin broadcasts in the Tibetan language;
- (4) mandating that Tibet be listed separately in the annual Country Reports on Human Rights published by the Department of State;
- (5) requiring a report from the Department of State on the state of negotiations between the representatives of the Tibetan people and the Government of the People’s Republic of China;
- (6) establishing educational and cultural exchange programs with Tibet;
- (7) providing humanitarian, food, medical, vocational training, primary and secondary education, and other assistance to Tibetan refugees;
- (8) funding programs to promote and preserve Tibetan culture and the resilience of Tibetan communities in India and Nepal;
- (9) funding a scholarship program for Tibetan refugees to study in the United States;
- (10) providing assistance to non-governmental organizations working to preserve the Tibetan environment and cultural traditions; and
- (11) appropriating funds for National Endowment for Democracy programs related to Tibet;

Whereas section 901(b)(6) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991 (Public Law 101-246; 104 Stat. 80) stated that United States policy toward China should be explicitly linked with the situation in Tibet, specifically including —

(1) lifting martial law in Lhasa and other parts of Tibet;

(2) opening Tibet to foreigners, including the press and international human rights organizations;

(3) releasing Tibetan political prisoners; and

(4) conducting negotiations between representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Government of the People’s Republic of China;

Whereas the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (subtitle B of title VI of Public Law 107-228; 22 U.S.C. 6901 note), signed into law on September 30, 2002—

(1) established United States principles with respect to human rights, religious freedom, political prisoners, and economic development projects in Tibet;

(2) established in statute the position of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues in the Department of State;

(3) established annual reporting requirements on Sino-Tibetan negotiations and safeguarding Tibet’s distinct cultural identity, both by the Secretary of State and by the congressionally established Congressional-Executive Commission on China;

(4) mandated the provision of Tibetan language training to interested foreign service officers;

(5) required Federal officials to raise issues of religious freedom and political prisoners; and

(6) urged the Secretary of State to seek establishment of an office in Lhasa; and

Whereas it is in line with United States national security interests and values to oppose China’s increasingly repressive policies toward Tibet and work towards a negotiated solution: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring). That it is the sense of Congress that it should be the policy of the United States to—

(1) make the treatment of the Tibetan people an important factor in the conduct of United States relations with the People’s Republic of China;

(2) consistent with the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (subtitle B of title VI of Public Law 107-228; 22 U.S.C. 6901 note)—

(A) encourage the Government of the People’s Republic of China to enter into a dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives leading to a negotiated agreement with respect to Tibet;

(B) publicly call for the immediate and unconditional release of all those held prisoner for expressing their political or religious views in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas; and

(C) establish an office in Lhasa, Tibet, to assist visiting United States citizens and to monitor political, economic, and cultural developments in Tibet;

(3) appoint the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues at the rank of Under Secretary of State;

(4) revoke appropriate privileges of any Chinese official found to be responsible for impeding access of United States citizens, including Tibetan-Americans, to Tibet and ensure that reciprocal visa processing measures are occurring in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Department of State;

(5) continue to designate China as a country of particular concern pursuant to section 402 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6442(b)); and

(6) engage with appropriate officials of the Government of the People’s Republic of China to—

(A) stop the demolition of Tibetan Buddhist religious institutions;

(B) revise religious and travel regulations to conform with international human rights standards; and

(C) ensure that Tibetan nomads are allowed to continue their way of life on the Tibetan Plateau, which they have helped to preserve for centuries, and are not forcibly relocated into "socialist villages".

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1586. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. McCain) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 279, reaffirming the commitment of the United States to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Cambodia.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1586. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. McCain) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 279, reaffirming the commitment of the United States to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Cambodia; as follows:

In the preamble, strike the tenth *whereas* clause and insert the following:

Whereas the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and other nongovernmental organizations that advance United States policy objectives abroad have a long history in Cambodia and respect unique cultural, historical, and religious differences when promoting policies, engaging local partners, and building capacity for civil society, democracy, and good governance;

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I have 6 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 AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 16, 2017, at 12 p.m., in SR-216 to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 16, 2017, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: John C. Rood, of Arizona, to be Under Secretary for Policy, and Randall G. Schriver, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary, both of the Department of Defense.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 16, 2017, at 10 a.m., in SH-216 to conduct a hearing on the bill entitled "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act."

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November

16, 2017, at 10 a.m., in SD-226 to conduct a hearing on S. 2070 and the following nominations: Leonard Steven Grasz, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, Terry A. Doughty, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana, Terry Fitzgerald Moorer, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Alabama, Mark Saalfeld Norris, Sr., to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee, and Scott W. Brady, to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania, and Andrew E. Lelling, to be United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts for the term of four years, both of the Department of Justice.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 16, 2017, at 2 p.m., in SH-219 to conduct a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS, ATMOSPHERE, FISHERIES, AND COAST GUARD

The Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, November 16, 2017, at 10 a.m., in SR-253 to conduct closed hearing entitled "Coast Guard Readiness: How Far Can We Stretch Our Nation's Only Multi-Mission, Military."

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Abby Hollenstein and Laura Nowell, law clerks at the Judiciary Committee, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the day.

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

REAFFIRMING THE COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE RULE OF LAW IN CAMBODIA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 257, S. Res. 279.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 279) reaffirming the commitment of the United States to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Cambodia.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment to strike all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in *italic*, and with an amendment to strike the preamble and insert the part printed in *italic*, as follows:

S. RES. 279

Whereas Prime Minister Hun Sen has been in power in Cambodia since 1985 and is the longest-serving leader in Southeast Asia;

Whereas the Paris Peace Accords in 1991 provided a vital framework, supported by the international community, intended to help Cambodia undertake a transition to democracy, including through elections and multiparty government;

Whereas the United States Government, for more than 25 years, has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in development aid and other types of assistance to the people of Cambodia and funded work in areas including civil society, capacity building for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), global health, and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal;

Whereas, despite decades of international attention and assistance to promote a pluralistic, multi-party democratic system in Cambodia, the Government of Cambodia continues to be undemocratically dominated by the ruling Cambodia People's Party (CPP), which controls every agency and security apparatus of the state;

Whereas the leadership of Cambodia's security forces, including all of its top military and police commanders, sit on the Central Committee of the Politburo of the CPP;

Whereas the CPP controls Cambodia's parliament and can pass legislation without any opposition, and has often passed laws that benefit its rule and weaken the capacity of the opposition to challenge it;

Whereas each of the five elections that have taken place in Cambodia since 1991 were not conducted in circumstances that were free and fair, and each were marked by fraud, intimidation, violence, and the government's misuse of legal mechanisms to weaken opposition candidates and parties;

Whereas, in 2015, the CPP-controlled parliament passed the "Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations", known as LANGO, which gave the government sweeping powers to revoke the registration of NGOs found to be operating with a political bias in a blatant attempt to restrict the legitimate work of civil society;

Whereas, since the passage of LANGO, the Interior Ministry has announced that it was surveilling several civil society organizations and their employees for allegedly aiding Cambodia's opposition party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP);

Whereas both the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) have a long history in Cambodia, engaging local partners and building capacity for civil society, democracy, and good governance;

Whereas, on August 23, 2017, Cambodia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordered the closure of NDI and the expulsion of its foreign staff on allegations that it had violated LANGO and was conspiring against Prime Minister Hun Sen;

Whereas, on September 15, 2017, Prime Minister Hun Sen called for the withdrawal of all volunteers from the United States Peace Corps, which has operated in Cambodia since 2006 with 500 United States volunteers providing English language and healthcare training;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia in 2016 arrested four senior staff members of the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC), as well as a former ADHOC staff member and official on the National Election Committee (NEC), and held them in pre-trial detention for 427 days until released on bail on June 29, 2017, in the wake of sustained international pressure;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia arrested activist and women's rights defender Tep Vanny in August 2016 and has kept her in prison for over a year;

Whereas the prominent Cambodian political commentator Kem Ley was assassinated on July

10, 2016, five days after a senior Cambodian general publicly called on the Cambodian Armed Forces to “eliminate and dispose of” anyone “fomenting social turmoil” in Cambodia;

Whereas Kem Ley had been a frequent critic of Prime Minister Hun Sen, fueling concerns that his killing was politically motivated and ordered by higher authorities;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia has taken several measures to restrict its media environment, including imposing a tax bill amounting to millions of dollars levied against independent media outlets that resulted in the closure of independent newspaper The Cambodian Daily in early September 2017;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia has ordered several radio stations to stop the broadcasting of Radio Free Asia and Voice of America;

Whereas the next general election in Cambodia is scheduled for July 29, 2018, and the CPP continues to use intimidation and misuse of legal mechanisms to weaken political opposition and media organizations in order to retain its power;

Whereas the Cambodian parliament in 2017 passed two repressive amendments to Cambodia’s Law on Political Parties that allow authorities to dissolve political parties and ban party leaders from political activity, and which contain numerous restrictions tailored to create obstacles for opposition parties in an attempt to maintain the CPP’s hold on power;

Whereas Kem Sokha, the President of CNRP, was arrested on September 3, 2017, and charged with treason and conspiring with the United States Government to overthrow the Government of Cambodia, and if convicted faces up to 30 years in prison, which sets the stage for the CNRP to be dissolved;

Whereas the United States Embassy in Cambodia has publicly called for the immediate release of Mr. Sokha and the removal of restrictions on civil society;

Whereas the CNRP’s previous leader, Sam Rainsy, remains in exile due to an outstanding warrant for his arrest in a politically motivated criminal case;

Whereas Human Rights Watch reported that local elections held in Cambodia on June 4, 2017, took place in a “threatening environment hostile to free speech and genuine political participation, leading to elections that were neither free nor fair”;

Whereas international election monitoring groups reported fundamental flaws in the electoral process and violations of Cambodia’s election campaign rules during June’s local election;

Whereas the Interior Ministry of Cambodia demanded that two election-monitoring organizations cease their activities just months after the local elections for allegedly violating the LANGO law, which will allow the CPP to continue to increase restrictions on election monitoring as the 2018 national elections approach;

Whereas, despite irregularities in the electoral process, the CNRP made significant gains in local elections compared to previous cycles, making clear that national elections in 2018, if they are conducted freely and fairly, will be tightly contested; and

Whereas national elections in 2018 will be closely watched to ensure openness and fairness, and to monitor whether all political parties and civil society groups are allowed to freely participate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,
That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Cambodia;

(2) condemns all forms of political violence in Cambodia, and urges the cessation of ongoing human rights violations;

(3) urges Prime Minister Hun Sen and the Cambodian People’s Party to end all harassment and intimidation of Cambodia’s opposition and

foster an environment where democracy can thrive and flourish;

(4) urges the Department of the Treasury, in consultation with the Department of State, to consider placing all senior Cambodian government officials implicated in the abuses noted above on the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list;

(5) urges the Government of Cambodia to free Mr. Kem Sokha immediately and unconditionally;

(6) calls on the Government of Cambodia to respect freedom of the press and the rights of its citizens to freely assemble, protest, and speak out against the government; and

(7) supports electoral reform efforts in Cambodia and free and fair elections in 2018 monitored by international observers.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment be agreed to, the resolution, as amended, be agreed to, the McCain amendment at the desk be agreed to, the preamble, as amended, be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 279), as amended, was agreed to.

The committee-reported amendment to the preamble in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The amendment (No. 1586) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To acknowledge the contributions of nongovernmental organizations in Cambodia)

In the preamble, strike the tenth whereas clause and insert the following:

Whereas the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and other nongovernmental organizations that advance United States policy objectives abroad have a long history in Cambodia and respect unique cultural, historical, and religious differences when promoting policies, engaging local partners, and building capacity for civil society, democracy, and good governance;

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 279

Whereas Prime Minister Hun Sen has been in power in Cambodia since 1985 and is the longest-serving leader in Southeast Asia;

Whereas the Paris Peace Accords in 1991 provided a vital framework, supported by the international community, intended to help Cambodia undertake a transition to democracy, including through elections and multiparty government;

Whereas the United States Government, for more than 25 years, has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in development aid and other types of assistance to the people of Cambodia and funded work in areas including civil society, capacity building for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), global health, and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal;

Whereas despite decades of international attention and assistance to promote a pluralistic, multi-party democratic system in Cambodia, the Government of Cambodia con-

tinues to be undemocratically dominated by the ruling Cambodia People’s Party (CPP), which controls every agency and security apparatus of the state;

Whereas the leadership of Cambodia’s security forces, including all of its top military and police commanders, sit on the Central Committee of the Politburo of the CPP;

Whereas the CPP controls Cambodia’s parliament and can pass legislation without any opposition, and has often passed laws that benefit its rule and weaken the capacity of the opposition to challenge it;

Whereas each of the five elections that have taken place in Cambodia since 1991 were not conducted in circumstances that were free and fair, and each were marked by fraud, intimidation, violence, and the government’s misuse of legal mechanisms to weaken opposition candidates and parties;

Whereas in 2015, the CPP-controlled parliament passed the “Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations”, known as LANGO, which gave the government sweeping powers to revoke the registration of NGOs found to be operating with a political bias in a blatant attempt to restrict the legitimate work of civil society;

Whereas since the passage of LANGO, the Interior Ministry has announced that it was surveilling several civil society organizations and their employees for allegedly aiding Cambodia’s opposition party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP);

Whereas the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and other nongovernmental organizations that advance United States policy objectives abroad have a long history in Cambodia and respect unique cultural, historical, and religious differences when promoting policies, engaging local partners, and building capacity for civil society, democracy, and good governance;

Whereas, on August 23, 2017, Cambodia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordered the closure of NDI and the expulsion of its foreign staff on allegations that it had violated LANGO and was conspiring against Prime Minister Hun Sen;

Whereas, on September 15, 2017, Prime Minister Hun Sen called for the withdrawal of all volunteers from the United States Peace Corps, which has operated in Cambodia since 2006 with 500 United States volunteers providing English language and healthcare training;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia in 2016 arrested four senior staff members of the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC), as well as a former ADHOC staff member and official on the National Election Committee (NEC), and held them in pre-trial detention for 427 days until released on bail on June 29, 2017, in the wake of sustained international pressure;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia arrested activist and women’s rights defender Tep Vanny in August 2016 and has kept her in prison for over a year;

Whereas the prominent Cambodian political commentator Kem Ley was assassinated on July 10, 2016, five days after a senior Cambodian general publicly called on the Cambodian Armed Forces to “eliminate and dispose of” anyone “fomenting social turmoil” in Cambodia;

Whereas Kem Ley had been a frequent critic of Prime Minister Hun Sen, fueling concerns that his killing was politically motivated and ordered by higher authorities;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia has taken several measures to restrict its media environment, including imposing a tax bill amounting to millions of dollars levied

against independent media outlets that resulted in the closure of independent newspaper The Cambodian Daily in early September 2017;

Whereas the Government of Cambodia has ordered several radio stations to stop the broadcasting of Radio Free Asia and Voice of America;

Whereas the next general election in Cambodia is scheduled for July 29, 2018, and the CPP continues to use intimidation and misuse of legal mechanisms to weaken political opposition and media organizations in order to retain its power;

Whereas the Cambodian parliament in 2017 passed two repressive amendments to Cambodia's Law on Political Parties that allow authorities to dissolve political parties and ban party leaders from political activity, and which contain numerous restrictions tailored to create obstacles for opposition parties in an attempt to maintain the CPP's hold on power;

Whereas Kem Sokha, the President of CNRP, was arrested on September 3, 2017, and charged with treason and conspiring with the United States Government to overthrow the Government of Cambodia, and if convicted faces up to 30 years in prison, which sets the stage for the CNRP to be dissolved;

Whereas the United States Embassy in Cambodia has publicly called for the immediate release of Mr. Sokha and the removal of restrictions on civil society;

Whereas the CNRP's previous leader, Sam Rainsy, remains in exile due to an outstanding warrant for his arrest in a politically motivated criminal case;

Whereas Human Rights Watch reported that local elections held in Cambodia on June 4, 2017, took place in a "threatening environment hostile to free speech and genuine political participation, leading to elections that were neither free nor fair";

Whereas international election monitoring groups reported fundamental flaws in the electoral process and violations of Cambodia's election campaign rules during June's local election;

Whereas the Interior Ministry of Cambodia demanded that two election-monitoring organizations cease their activities just months after the local elections for allegedly violating the LANGO law, which will allow the CPP to continue to increase restrictions on election monitoring as the 2018 national elections approach;

Whereas despite irregularities in the electoral process, the CNRP made significant gains in local elections compared to previous cycles, making clear that national elections in 2018, if they are conducted freely and fairly, will be tightly contested; and

Whereas national elections in 2018 will be closely watched to ensure openness and fairness, and to monitor whether all political parties and civil society groups are allowed to freely participate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Cambodia;

(2) condemns all forms of political violence in Cambodia, and urges the cessation of ongoing human rights violations;

(3) urges Prime Minister Hun Sen and the Cambodian People's Party to end all harassment and intimidation of Cambodia's opposition and foster an environment where democracy can thrive and flourish;

(4) urges the Department of the Treasury, in consultation with the Department of State, to consider placing all senior Cambodian government officials implicated in the abuses noted above on the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list;

(5) urges the Government of Cambodia to free Mr. Kem Sokha immediately and unconditionally;

(6) calls on the Government of Cambodia to respect freedom of the press and the rights of its citizens to freely assemble, protest, and speak out against the government; and

(7) supports electoral reform efforts in Cambodia and free and fair elections in 2018 monitored by international observers.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 337, S. Res. 338, S. Res. 339, and S. Res. 340.

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

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

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

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

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2017, THROUGH MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn to then convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted, on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, November 17, at 11 a.m.; Tuesday, November 21, at 11 a.m.; Friday, November 24, at 11 a.m.; I further ask that when the Senate adjourns on Friday, November 24, it next convene at 4 p.m., Monday, November 27; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Friedrich nomination, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; finally, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the cloture motion filed on the Katsas nomination ripen following disposition of the Friedrich nomination.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come be-

fore the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:45 p.m., adjourned until Friday, November 17, 2017, at 11 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

MELISSA F. BURNISON, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF ENERGY (CONGRESSIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS), VICE BRADLEY CROWELL.

JOHN G. VONGLIS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, VICE JOSEPH S. HEZIR.

LINDA CAPUANO, OF TEXAS, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION, VICE ADAM E. SIEMINSKI.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JOHNNY COLLETT, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE MICHAEL K. YUDIN.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

MICHAEL K. ATKINSON, OF MARYLAND, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY, OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE, VICE IRVIN CHARLES MCCULLOUGH III.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be colonel

RICHARD G. ADAMS
CHRISTOPHER PAUL BACA
GAVIN M. BATCHELDER
GEOFFREY O. BILLINGSLEY
FREDRIC LEE BLACK
MICHAEL M. BLAKE
BRIAN C. BOWMAN
ROBERT KYLE BRADY
STEVEN ANTHONY BREITFELDER
SEAN T. BRENNAN
MICHAEL S. BURK
RICHARD D. CARTER, JR.
MATTHEW W. CAUPELL
PATRICK D. CHARD
SCOTT MATTHEW CHARLTON
KEITH AKIRA CHIKASAWA
JEFFREY DAVID COATS
JEFFREY RUSSELL COLE
DAVID W. COMPTON
KEVIN ROBERT CURLEY
VINCENT E. CYRAN
JAMES L. DALTON
JAMES S. DINSMORE
GARY L. DODGE
FRANCISCO J. DOMINGUEZ
GEORGE HENRY DOWNS
MICHAEL N. DUGAS
JASON ROBERT FALLIS
ANDY FITTORRE
LAWRENCE R. FLANNIGAN
PATTI LYNN FRIES
KEVIN B. GEORGE
SCOTT RICHARD GILLOON
JOYCE M. GORDON
ERIC ALAN GUTTORMSEN
OLEN O. HARDEN
MILES K. HARKEY
STEPHEN J. HENSKE, JR.
SCOTT C. HUMPHREY
CHARLES HENRY HUTSON
PAUL EDUARDO JARA
CATHERINE MARIE JUMPER
NATHAN WILLIAM KEARNS
JASON WILLIAM KNIGHT
CHAD W. KORBERG
DANIEL J. KRAMER II
JEFFREY GYNN LAIBLE
LANSE ERIC LAVOY
JOSEPH J. LIEBERT
BRIAN LEROY MANDT
KERRY JOHN MCCAULEY
WILLIAM D. MCCONNELL
ADAM STEWART MERCIER
CHRISTOPHER A. MILLER
MIRCEA A. MITRAN
TROY C. MORGAN
PAUL MICHAEL MORTON
CHARLES WESLEY NICHOLS, JR.
FRANCES RENEE OLEEN
HUMBERTO PABON, JR.
FAUSTO ALFREDO PADILLA
DANIEL J. POTAS
TIMOTHY A. PUZAN
ROBERT T. REDMAN
CHARLES D. RILEY

SEAN DELACY RILEY
LYNN K. ROBINSON, JR.
ANDY HAROLD ROWE
MARK W. RUANE
RICHARD A. RYMERSON
ESTHER CAMACHO SABLAN
SARAH ANN SHIRLEY
CHRISTOPHER ALLEN SNIDER
CHRISTOPHER JOHN SOUTHARD
EDWARD K. STAMPER, JR.
SHAWN R. STRECK
ANTHONY D. SULLINS Y
WILLIAM THOMAS TESCH
TRACE NOLAN THOMAS
STEVEN ELLIOTT TINDOLL
ELIZABETH TOPOL
RAYMOND JOSEPH TRAMPOSCH
GINGER DELAINE TURCOTTE
KENNETH E. VORIS
JEFFREY HOLT WALDMAN
LARRY J. WERBISKI
ADAM GARTH WIGGINS
JOSEPH F. ZINGARO

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

MELVIN J. NICKELL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

ERICA L. HERZOG

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY NURSE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be colonel

ADAM W. VANEK

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

JASON PARK

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

JOHN T. HUCKABAY

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203(A):

To be captain

GEORGE BAMFORD
ERIC S. BERNSTEIN
RACHAEL B. BRALLIAR
TIMOTHY W. DECKER
GEOFFREY S. DEAS
BRIAN J. DUDLEY
RONZELLE L. GREEN
SCOTT C. HALE
RICHARD A. ROBERTS
TABITHA A. SCHIRO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 271(E):

To be captain

STEPHEN J. ADLER
RICARDO M. ALONZO
BRIAN R. ANDERSON
EUGENIO S. ANZANO
JONATHAN D. BAKER
TIMOTHY J. BARELLI
LAMONT S. BASEMORE
KALLIE J. BENSON
SCOTT D. BENSON
JOHN D. BERRY
JED R. BOBA
SEAN T. BRADY
ANDREW S. BROWN
MATTHEW T. BROWN
TIMOTHY T. BROWN
SCOTT R. CALHOUN
WILLIE L. CARMICHAEL
ADAM A. CHAMIE
TIMOTHY P. CRONIN
QUINCY L. DAVIS
PATRICK J. DOUGAN
MICHAEL A. EDWARDS
ROY J. EIDEM
MICHAEL A. FAZIO
MICHAEL S. FREDIE
RILEY O. GATEWOOD
CHRISTOPHER L. GERMAN
MICHAEL P. GULDIN
TIMOTHY D. HAMMOND
KATHRYN N. HERTY
WALTER L. HORNE
ROBERT A. HUELLER
CHRISTOPHER J. HULSER

ANTHONY R. JONES
ADAM L. KERR
CHRISTIAN A. LEE
BRIAN J. LEFEBVRE
STEPHEN MATADOBRA
GREGORY A. MATYAS
JOHN F. MCCARTHY
PETER N. MELNICK
ANDREW D. MEVERDEN
DONALD P. MONTORO, JR.
JOE L. MORGAN, JR.
JONATHAN E. MUSMAN
PETER S. NILES II
BLAKE L. NOVAK
CRAIG M. OBRIEN
SEAN J. OBRIEN
DAVID E. OCONNELL
REBECCA E. ORE
MICHAEL J. PARADISE
ANDREW T. PECORA
TINA J. PENA
PATRICK F. PESCHKA
SCOTT T. PETEREIN
TRAVIS J. RASMUSSEN
KEVIN B. REED
ANTHONY L. RUSSELL
OLAV M. SABOE
JEREMY C. SMITH
VASILIOS TASIKAS
JONATHAN D. THEEL
MICHAEL A. TURDO
HEATHER K. TURNER
STEVEN P. WALSH
TODD D. VANCE
WILBORNE E. WATSON
ANTHONY W. WILLIAMS
JOHN A. WILLIAMS
TORRENCE B. WILSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 271(E):

To be commander

LAWRENCE F. AHLIN
JONATHAN A. ALEXANDER
CRAIG H. ALLEN, JR.
MIKAEL D. ANDERSON
JENNIFER J. ANDREW
KARL M. ANFORTH
EDWARD S. APONTE
NEAL E. ARMSTRONG
RICHARD P. ARMSTRONG
MICHAEL P. ATTANASIO
MATTHEW S. BAKER
STEPHEN T. BAXTER
TODD M. BEHNEY
MALCOLM D. BELT
JAMES R. BENDLE
MICHAEL A. BENSON
TORREY H. BERTHEAU
BRYAN R. BLACKMORE
CHRISTOPHER W. BLOMSHIELD
JEFFREY S. BOGDANOVICH
JASON A. BOYER
ERIN M. BOYLE
JASON T. BOYLE
COREY A. BRADDOCK
MATTHEW J. BRECKEL
DEVON S. BRENNAN
MICHAEL D. BRIMBLECOM
COLLIN R. BRONSON
CHRISTOPHER D. BRUNCLIK
MARTIN J. BRYANT
JONATHAN W. BURBY
JOSHUA D. BURCH
MELANIE A. BURNHAM
ANDRES CAMARGO
JAMES J. CAMP
RONALD J. CAPUTO, JR.
TAYLOR J. CARLISLE
LUIS O. CARMONA
CHRISTY S. CASEY
GEORGE B. CASEY
EMILE F. COCHET III
BRIAN T. CONLEY
JAMES T. CORBETT
STACEY L. CRECY
CHRISTOPHER A. CULPEPPER
BIEN J. DECENA, JR.
AARON V. DELANO-JOHNSON
JEREMY R. DENNING
LINNEA V. DORN
SCOT R. DRUCKREY
TRAVIS M. EMGY
JOSHUA M. EMPEN
KERRY A. FELTNER
PATRICIA L. FERRELL
KRYSTYON N. FINCH
CHARLENE S. FORGUE
JASON S. FRANZ
BRETT A. FREELS
HSINGYEN J. FU
LISA L. GARCEZ
BRENDAN T. GAVIN
GLENN H. GOETCHIUS
BENJAMIN F. GOFF, JR.
JASON W. HAAG
BRENDAN J. HARRIS
LEE J. HARTSHORN
CHRISTIAN J. HERNAEZ
WHITNEY H. HOUCK
PETER J. IGOE
MARCUS A. IVERY
WESTON R. JAMES
VINCENT J. JANSEN
JAMES A. JENKS

JESSICA L. JOHNSON
LACRESHA A. JOHNSON
KEVIN T. KAROW
ROBIN H. KAWAMOTO
PAIGE A. KEENAN
BENJAMIN R. KEFFER
LUANN J. KEHLENBACH
BRENT G. KENNY
LYLE E. KESSLER
STEVEN A. KOCH
MATTHEW R. KOLODICA
JENNIFER M. KONON
ADAM J. KOZIATEK
CHRISTOPHER W. LAVIN
TIMOTHY J. LEE
KAREN R. LEYDET
CHRISTOPHER D. LUCERO
JEFFREY D. LYNCH
AARON J. MADER
THOMAS D. MANSELL
MATTHEW K. MATSUOKA
JOSEPH W. MATTHEWS
DOREEN MCCARTHY
JAMES F. MCCORMACK
DAVID M. MCCOWN
COLLEEN S. MCCUSKER
JAMES C. MCFERRAN V
CARRIE A. MCKINNEY
TERESA S. MCMANUS
JOHN B. MCWHITE
NATHAN S. MENEFE
MATTHEW J. MESKUN
ANTHONY R. MIGLIORINI
BORIS MONTATSKY
COMMANDER K. MOORE
JAMES K. MORROW, JR.
ERNESTO MUNIZTIRADO
RONALD T. NAKAMOTO
BENJAMIN J. NORRIS
JEREMY R. OBENCHAIN
JEFFREY P. OWENS
ERIC G. PARA
CHRISTOPHER R. PARRISH
MICHAEL C. PETTA
CATHERINE A. PHILLIPS
BEAU G. POWERS
KEVIN J. RAPP
EMILY P. REUTER
MARIA L. RICHARDSON
ROBERTO RIVERA
JOSHUA D. ROSE
JEFFREY H. RUBINI
NATHAN L. RUMSEY
JENNIFER M. RUNION
RICHARD C. SANSONE
ANDREW G. SCHANNO
BRENT R. SCHMADEKE
WILLIAM A. SCHRADER II
PAUL W. SCHURKE
GINO S. SCIORTINO, JR.
RAY A. SLAPKUNAS
ANDREA J. P. SMITH
FRANCES M. SMITH
JAKE M. SMITH
PAUL D. SMITH
JOHN A. SOUDERS V
LANE G. STEFFENHAGEN
STEVEN D. STOWERS
JONATHAN E. SULLIVAN
PATRICK M. SULLIVAN
NICHOLAS J. TABORI
VINCE Z. TAYLOR
BRIAN J. TESSON
JOSEPH G. THOMAS
ALLYSON M. THOMPSON
BRETT J. THOMPSON
JOHN K. TITCHEN
KRISTOFER A. TSAIRIS
CHRISTOPHER B. TUCKEY
MICHAEL O. VEGA
DAVID B. VICKS
JOHN E. WALSH IV
RICHARD B. WALSH
REBECCA A. WALTHOUR
MATTHEW G. WEBER
SHAY R. WILLIAMS
TIMOTHY J. WILLIAMS
TODD M. WIMMER
CARRIE A. S. WOLFE
MICHAEL D. WOLFE
CHRISTOPHER WOLFER
BRETT R. WORKMAN
NICHOLAS S. WORST
DAMIAN YEMMA
STEVEN M. YOUNG
CHRISTOPHER J. YOUNG
KYLE S. YOUNG
RUSSELL R. ZUCKERMAN

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate November 16, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BRENDA BURMAN, OF ARIZONA, TO BE COMMISSIONER OF RECLAMATION.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

JOSEPH OTTING, OF NEVADA, TO BE COMPTROLLER OF THE CURRENCY FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS.

THE JUDICIARY

DONALD C. COGGINS, JR., OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

JOSEPH KERNAN, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTELLIGENCE.

GUY B. ROBERTS, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

ROBERT L. WILKIE, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS.

FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY

JAMES THOMAS ABBOTT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS EXPIRING JULY 1, 2020.

COLLEEN KIKO, OF NORTH DAKOTA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS EXPIRING JULY 29, 2022.

ERNEST W. DUBESTER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS EXPIRING JULY 1, 2019.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

ROBERT BEHLER, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

THOMAS B. MODLY, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

JAMES F. GEURTS, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

ROBERT H. MCMAHON, OF GEORGIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

SHON J. MANASCO, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REBECCA ELIZA GONZALES, OF TEXAS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO.

LISA A. JOHNSON, OF WASHINGTON, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA.

IRWIN STEVEN GOLDSTEIN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY.

SEAN P. LAWLER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, AND TO HAVE THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE.

FOREIGN SERVICE

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH LISA-FELICIA AFI AKORLI AND ENDING WITH STEPHANIE P. WILSON, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 1, 2017.

FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JOHN R. BASS II AND ENDING WITH SUNG Y. KIM, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 1, 2017.