



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2017

No. 160

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Father of love, who made Heaven and Earth, sustain us through this day. May our lawmakers focus on Your glory and not their own. Inspire them with Your presence so that their lives will reflect Your mercy and truth. Lord, give them the wisdom to trust Your plans and to desire for You to do as You please for our Nation and world.

Forgive us when we depend primarily on our strength and ability to meet life's challenges, forgetting that You are able and eager to help us. God, our deliverer, we bless Your Name from this time forth and forever more. Thank You for Your merciful kindness that is new each day.

We pray in Your precious Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

TAX REFORM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, during the Obama years, many of the hard-working men and women of America's middle class felt completely forgotten. Paychecks often did not keep pace with rising costs. Opportunities

for work could often seem bleak. For those men and women, the promise of a hard-earned retirement seemed to drift further and further away. For so many middle-class Americans, the last decade meant a weak economy and a decline of opportunities. People of this Nation deserve better. They deserve larger paychecks, more jobs, and better opportunities to get ahead.

This Congress is committed to helping the economy live up to its full potential once again, which is exactly why we are committed to passing tax reform. This is our once-in-a-generation opportunity to overhaul a broken tax code that holds us back and replace it with something that actually works for the hard-working people of our country. It represents the single most important thing we can do today to get our economy back on the right track.

Working together, President Trump, his team, and the tax-writing committees in Congress have developed the framework that will help us get there. Here is what it envisions:

For American workers, we want to make your taxes lower, simpler, and fairer. We want to take more money out of Washington's pockets and put more in yours.

Helping individuals and families succeed is the first aim of tax reform. Helping businesses succeed is the second aim, so we can help create more jobs and keep them right here in America.

American businesses, both large and small, face an increasingly competitive global economy. We want to put American businesses and workers on a level playing field because when they are, they can win.

We want to help bring jobs and profits back home, and once they are here, we want to give businesses the right incentives to keep them right here in America.

We want to unleash the potential of the American economy—helping you keep more of the money in your pay-

check, helping businesses grow and workers succeed, helping move the economy into high gear so we can sustain real prosperity into the future for America's middle class.

These are the kinds of ideas that should be shared by everyone, Republicans and Democrats alike. Our friends across the aisle supported the need for tax reform for many years. They used to advocate it loudly. But the tone seems to be different now. What changed? The President, or so it would seem.

We know that our Democratic friends are under immense pressure from the hard left to oppose everything this President touches, but I hope they can resist that pressure and do what they know is right. After all, shouldn't we all support cutting middle-class taxes, helping small businesses, and bringing jobs and investments back to our country?

I was always under the impression that Democrats wanted to end corporate offshoring, eliminate loopholes for the wealthy, and cut middle-class taxes. Well, these are all aspects of the current tax reform framework. So there is no need for our friends to invent reasons to justify opposing tax reform. There is no reason to launch attacks on the tax reform framework based on made-up details that aren't actually in it. Tax reform has been a bipartisan effort in the past. It can be, and it should be, again now.

It is up to our Democratic friends to decide if they would like to engage in a serious way. I personally hope they will join us in advancing this important initiative for our country. I think we owe at least that much to the millions of Americans who felt forgotten over the last decade.

Tax reform can help move our economy into high gear. It can help deliver more jobs, higher wages, and increased opportunities for the American people. The men and women of this country deserve it, which is why I am committed

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S6327

to keeping up the work to get tax reform accomplished.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Quarles nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Randal Quarles, of Colorado, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2004.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to applaud the nomination of Randal Quarles to help oversee the Federal Reserve System. Mr. Quarles is certainly eminently qualified to serve in this capacity in this important position. Through his long experience in public service and the private sector, Mr. Quarles has gained experience in financial regulation, economics, and the firsthand operations of financial institutions. He also has a proven track record of leadership and policy management.

The Fed's responsibilities are extensive, and they are varied, and the roles Mr. Quarles has been nominated for come during a unique period in the Fed's history. The years ahead will be decisive for the development of the Federal Reserve, the American economy, as well as domestic and international financial reform. It is paramount that the Fed be equipped with a well-rounded leadership team so it can meet the many challenges and opportunities of maintaining monetary and financial stability. I firmly believe that Mr. Quarles is an ideal fit to take on such responsibilities—for the success of the Federal Reserve and the good of our Nation.

In closing, I applaud and strongly support the President's nominee to help oversee the Federal Reserve System. I know him personally. I know what a fine man he is. I know what an excellent leader he is. He will do a good job.

Importantly, I would note that it is the intention to confirm Mr. Quarles to

the position of Vice Chair for Supervision—another essential role.

It is critical that Mr. Quarles begin his work at the Fed as soon as possible. There really is no time to waste. He will do a great job.

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

• Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I had expected to be able to vote today on the confirmation of Mr. Randal Quarles to be a member of the Federal Reserve. Instead, I am in Las Vegas, meeting with victims of and first responders to the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

On the question of Mr. Quarles's nomination, I want to make clear that I would have voted "no" had I been present. While an official in the Bush administration Treasury Department in the lead-up to the economic crisis of 2007 to 2009, Mr. Quarles failed to take action to prevent the build-up of risk that ultimately led to hundreds of thousands of foreclosures and evictions in Nevada. In fact, Mr. Quarles during that period repeatedly maintained that the financial system was safe, that large banks were well-capitalized, and that the housing market was strong, notwithstanding clear signs of escalating risk. After serving in the Treasury Department, Mr. Quarles was the beneficiary of the second-largest "loss share" agreement in the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's history. This agreement provided a taxpayer-backed guarantee and allowed Mr. Quarles to profit substantially off of the failure of a large bank.

If confirmed, I hope that Mr. Quarles will exceed my expectations and become a strong advocate for a safe and resilient American financial system. However, I cannot in good conscience vote to confirm him given my concerns about his past record.

Thank you.

NOMINATION OF LEE FRANCIS CISSNA

Mr. President, I had expected to be able to vote today on the confirmation of Mr. Lee Francis Cissna, to be Director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, USCIS. Instead, I am in Las Vegas helping my constituents in the aftermath of the worst mass shooting in modern American history.

On the question of Mr. Cissna's nomination, I want to make my opposition to his confirmation clear. I do not believe Mr. Cissna to be qualified to lead the USCIS. This decision is based on his prior experience, as well as his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Mr. Cissna stated during his confirmation hearing that he had a role on President Trump's transition team and he offered his "technical assistance" in crafting some of the President's draconian immigration policies. Additionally, it is my belief that Mr. Cissna does not have the management experience necessary to oversee a large organization like the USCIS.

If confirmed, I hope that Mr. Cissna will surpass my expectations and serve

this country well as USCIS Director. The role of the USCIS in implementing and administering our immigration benefits is too important for any other result. I believe strongly in the importance of immigrants to the culture and economy of the United States, and I hope Mr. Cissna's actions as Director show that he agrees. However, I cannot in good conscience vote to confirm someone about whom I have so many concerns.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, as we continue to grieve with the people of Las Vegas and families of the injured and the deceased, when I think of the pictures I see of those beautiful young people who had the best of life ahead of them, we ache for them. But our thoughts must turn to action so this doesn't happen again.

What can we do as a nation to change? Because surely when there are more mass shootings this year than there are the number of days this year, when we average more than one mass shooting per day, something has to change.

I am sure that if you asked the grieving families whether they want the laws to change so this might not happen again, the overwhelming majority would say yes, they would want us to do something. If we could talk to those brave souls who were killed and are now in Heaven, they would say: Do something. They wouldn't say: Let's wait. They wouldn't say: Leave things alone. The fact that they were killed, the fact that there were so many injured—they wouldn't think it is political to try to save their lives or prevent somebody else from dying the way they did. So when folks say: Don't bring politics into this, that it is inappropriate, I am sure the families of the loved ones who were lost would agree with me that it is appropriate and important and necessary.

Politics is where we are supposed to come together and debate the great problems of our time in order to find solutions to them. Politics is how we are supposed to make our country a better, safer, more prosperous place to live. And there is no more appropriate time than now to talk about the issue of gun violence.

Yesterday, President Trump visited Las Vegas. I am glad he went to show our solidarity and remind everyone there that they have the full support of the Nation. But he didn't talk about guns. There is a huge opportunity he

missed to lead this Nation in a reasonable, moderate debate on gun safety, but that opportunity is not over. The President still has the opportunity. All eyes are on the President to see if he will grasp the opportunity and lead the Nation to do something reasonable and moderate about guns and gun safety.

President Trump, are you going to wait to hear what the NRA says first? Are you going to wait for the NRA to give you the green light? You ran your campaign saying you were beholden to no one. You fashion yourself as a strong man. Well, are you going to show that you are not beholden to anyone now? Are you going to show your strength now? Are you going to be the first Republican President in a generation to buck the NRA? You know what the right thing to do is.

I say to President Trump: Come out and say that you support and would sign a law to ban bump stocks—the modification used by the Las Vegas gunman to make his weapons automatic. That is small, and it is the right thing to do. Don't wait for the NRA to make up their mind. Do it.

Of course, banning bump stocks can't be our only response. It is hardly enough. Even though we should do whatever we can in this body in obedience to the NRA, we must do more. Abandoning efforts to deregulate silencers would be the next step. The police were able to figure out where the gunman was because of the noise from his gun in the Mandalay Bay Hotel.

Let's forget about implementing a national concealed carry reciprocity. My police officers in Times Square don't want to let someone who has had no check, who might have a mental derangement like Paddock, come to Times Square—and they can't do anything about it; that is what that law would do—or any other heavily populated place, the downtowns of many of our big cities and even medium-sized cities, Disney World, baseball games, football stadiums. If this concealed carry reciprocity passed, crazy people could carry weapons concealed into any football stadium in America, and the police couldn't check on them and see if they had a gun.

We have to do these things. If you looked at what would be the most effective way in stopping the daily gun violence that is doable, the most important and attainable thing to do would be adopting universal background checks. It is common sense, it is measured, it is prudent, and it would be really effective.

The bill Senator MURPHY introduced yesterday is one I have been involved with for a long time, and we should see if we can get enough support to pass it. We can and should talk about these issues more. It requires only a modicum of moral and political coverage. President Trump and Republicans in Congress ought to show that moral and political courage now by bucking the NRA and engaging in a reasonable debate about commonsense gun laws.

Fully automatic weapons are already illegal, made so by a law signed by President Reagan in 1986. Banning bump stocks is entirely consistent with the books. Senator FEINSTEIN introduced a reasonable proposal. What are we waiting for, the NRA to give us a green light? That is so wrong.

If the President and Congress are so beholden to the NRA that they can't do the very bare minimum—banning a device that allowed a shooter to kill 59 Americans with ease, a device whose ban would in no way infringe on the legitimate rights of gun owners—then our politics, our means of making this country a better and safer place, will have once again failed us.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. President, turning to the humanitarian crisis in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, yesterday, once again, Congress received a request from the administration for a supplemental aid package that will go to help Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and other States hit by storms. It also includes some money for the Western States beset by wildfires.

It is a good first step, but it is just the start of a long recovery and relief effort that will require additional aid from this Congress. While aid and resources are necessary now, these islands are just starting to assess the damage. Once they determine how devastating these storms actually were, we need to respond immediately to provide additional support and funds to assist their recovery and rebuilding, just as we have done for past storms and disasters. On this package, I have three points.

First, I am urging my colleagues to add additional and vital flexible funding for recovery like the community development block grant. We gave CDBG to help Texas after Harvey. We can't deprive Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of this money.

Second, I am warning my colleagues on the other side—particularly those in the House—not to attach any extraneous, ideological policy riders to this urgent aid package. Ideological policy changes to the Flood Insurance Program and forest management policies should come nowhere near this bill. They tried to do it last week in the FAA bill, and we had to send it back because of joint opposition, both sides of the aisle. Let's not go through that again. I thank our chairman of the Banking Committee for helping in that regard.

Third, it has become clear that Puerto Rico's recovery will be further hindered by its ongoing debt crisis. That crisis, coupled with the devastation from Hurricane Maria, has led to growing concerns that the island will soon face a liquidity crisis. Simply put, the island is running out of money to pay for essential services like first responders, not to mention funds for rebuilding and recovery. The funds we hope to include in the disaster package are crit-

ical, but we have to make sure the island has enough cash to start the process. In FEMA, local governments often have to lay out the money first and then they get repaid, but Puerto Rico doesn't have the money to lay out so we have to deal with that issue to make it effective.

With these issues in mind, we should act quickly on this supplemental aid, but it is just the beginning of Congress's aid to rebuild.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, finally, on the Republican tax plan, I have so much to say about this plan. It is so awful in so many ways: huge tax cuts for the wealthy and the powerful, raising taxes on middle-class people—which I am going to talk about in a minute—blowing a huge hole in our deficit, and to fund the tax cuts for the rich, cutting Medicare and Medicaid by close to \$1.5 trillion.

We are all in favor of a serious tax reform debate. We have mentioned our guidelines: no tax cuts for the 1 percent, no increase in the deficit, and do it in a bipartisan way. The Republican plan does just the opposite. That is why Democrats are so opposed. It lavishes tax breaks on the rich, pays for it by cutting Medicare and Medicaid, and leaves everyone in the cold, except the very wealthy.

Today I want to focus on one provision of the GOP tax plan: the repeal of the State and local tax deduction. The Republican plan raises taxes on millions of middle-class families across the country by repealing the State and local deduction. Forty-four million Americans take that deduction. That is about one in eight. It is about one in four or five families who take that deduction. One-third of all taxpayers take the deduction. It is almost one in three. They don't just get a few pennies back. They get several thousand dollars off their taxes each year. It is not just a rarified group in States like Massachusetts, New York, and California. The reason it brings in \$1.3 trillion is because it affects so many people throughout the entire country.

If you do not believe me, look at the numbers. Look at these charts. I am posting the percentages for each State. Forty-six percent of the people in Maryland get an average deduction of \$12,900. Connecticut gets 41 percent. I showed one of my colleagues that Virginia is higher than New York. Thirty-seven percent get an \$11,000 deduction. Massachusetts, Oregon. To my colleagues from Utah, 35 percent of Utah taxpayers get an average deduction of \$12,954. In Utah, they say: Well, the standard deduction makes up for it. With most families, the standard deduction will not because we are taking away the standard exemption so it is a wash if you are a family of three.

Let's keep going. Minnesota and New York. I want to show my Republican colleagues how it would affect some of their States. Let's take Georgia. One-third of all taxpayers get an average

break of \$9,000. Look at these numbers, my colleagues. I am going to send them to every one of you. Look how it affects your State.

Here we go. Iowa, 29 percent of all people get a \$10,000 break, on average; Pennsylvania, 29 percent, an \$11,000 break; Arizona, 28 percent, a \$7,000 break.

My friend from Idaho, I didn't know he would be here, but his number on the chart—28 percent of Idahoans get an average of an \$8,800 break. Do you want to take that away from them? The standard deduction doesn't make up for it if you have one child or more. Nebraska, 28 percent get an \$11,000 deduction.

By the way, these numbers come from a group that put it together, but it is from the IRS. These are IRS numbers.

South Carolina, 27 percent, \$8,000; Missouri, 26 percent, \$9,800; Ohio, 26 percent, \$10,000. Kentucky, my dear friend the Republican leader, in his State, 26 percent of the people—one out of four—get that State and local property deduction, averaging \$9,995. Do you want to take that away?

Alabama, where our dear friend the Presiding Officer is from, gets 26 percent. One out of four of his constituents get an average break of \$5,900. Kansas, 25 percent, gets an average break of \$9,400.

I am saying these numbers because our friends on the hard right, who just want to lower their own taxes, are telling everybody, oh, this is just in four States—Massachusetts, New York, California, New Jersey.

No, it is across America.

Let's keep going. I am having a good time. I hope you all are.

Oklahoma, 24 percent of the people get an \$8,000 break. I think this is Mississippi, 23 percent, gets a \$6,300 break; Louisiana, 23 percent, close to one out of four, \$6,700. Texas, the great State of Texas, where our majority whip comes from, 23 percent, close to one out of four Texans, get a \$7,800 break. Indiana, 23 percent get an \$8,700 break; Florida, 22 percent get a \$7,300 break. Wyoming—it wouldn't affect Wyoming because it is a rural State—22 percent get a \$6,300 break.

The State that is least affected is still very affected. South Dakota and West Virginia, only 17 percent of the people get a \$9,000 break in West Virginia and a \$6,000 break in South Dakota. North Dakota, Tennessee, and Arkansas—21 percent, 19 percent, 18 percent breaks, between \$4,900 and \$6,800.

The Achilles' heel of this bill—there are many—is State and local deductibility. It kills the middle class and the upper middle income people. It doesn't really affect the rich. They do not pay a lot of property taxes, the bulk of these deductions. They make their money in high-income places. They have a lot of stocks and a lot of bonds. It is the middle class and the upper middle class who get clobbered by this

tax break. The standard deduction does not undo it because you lose the standard exemption. Even if you are just a husband and wife without kids—

Mr. President, I am going to ask unanimous consent that the debate be delayed for a few minutes. I know my colleagues are—well, I just need to finish my remarks. I am almost done.

The benefit of State and local deductibility affects every State, every city, every town, every municipality, and goes deep into the middle class and the working class.

One other point I have to make, now realizing this, some of our Republican colleagues are saying we will modify it. Folks, there is no real way to modify the provision to eliminate State and local deductibility. If you want to give a choice that will not work—because for middle-class taxpayers, it is only the combination of their itemized deductions, such as State, local, mortgage, and others, that make it worth it for them to itemize.

If you have to choose between the mortgage deduction and your property tax deduction, it is a loser. So they say: Well, we will just do this for the very rich. Yet, as I mentioned, that is not where the money is. Where are you going to cap it? It is mostly a middle-class deduction. If you cap it, say, for people whose incomes are above \$500,000 or \$1 million, you don't bring in much money. So it is a loser. You cannot fix it. Get rid of it. You cannot fix it. The plans that are being done still continue to hurt the middle class dramatically.

The Republican plan to repeal State and local cannot be fixed, modified, or tweaked around the edges. Each of the proposals does not work. It must be scrapped. The State and local deduction affects everyone, even the almost one in five taxpayers in the lowest States where it affects the fewest people. It is just one of the many flaws in this broken, broken framework.

Let's start over. Don't just do a Republican plan that appeals to the handful of very wealthy corporations and very wealthy individuals. Work with us on a fair plan that helps the middle class, not the very wealthy. We are ready, but if you do the same thing that you did on healthcare in trying to do it by yourselves, I think that you will meet with the same fate that the healthcare bill did.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator CRAPO and I both be allowed to speak for 5 minutes on the nomination of Randal Quarles.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, every time President Trump has the choice between standing up for American families or standing up for wealthy banks and giant corporations, he chooses the rich guys.

Time and again, he has promised that he would "never be beholden to the lobbyists or the special interests," but he has appointed dozens of Big Business executives and lobbyists to senior positions in his administration. During his campaign, he promised that he would not let the Wall Street guys get away with murder, but after he was sworn in, he loaded up his economic team with Goldman Sachs executives. Over and over again, he has promised to drain the swamp, but then he appointed an army of lobbyists and industry insiders to positions that oversee the industries that paid them for years.

Randal Quarles is just the latest in this long line of corporate appointments. He is President Trump's nominee to the Federal Reserve's Vice Chair for Supervision. He has gone through the revolving door so many times that it is hard to keep up—from a big Wall Street law firm, to the Treasury Department, back to the Wall Street law firm, back, eventually, to the Treasury Department, then to a private equity fund, followed most recently by a trip to another private equity fund. Now Mr. Quarles is ready for another spin through the revolving door.

The Vice Chair for Supervision of the Fed is one of the most important jobs in the government. After the 2008 crisis, Congress put the Fed in charge of supervising the biggest banks. That included banks and other financial institutions that would bring down the whole financial system with them if they went under—the so-called "too big to fail" institutions. The Fed is what stands between millions of American families and another economic catastrophe that could rob them of their jobs, their savings, or their homes. After the 2008 crisis, Congress created the Vice Chair for Supervision position to lead efforts to supervise these giant institutions. There is no other position in government that has a more important role in stopping the next financial crisis.

So what kind of supervision and oversight does Mr. Quarles believe in? His motto seems to be, "Whatever the big banks want, give it to 'em."

Mr. Quarles has spent more than a decade in private equity and investment management, where he has argued repeatedly for weaker rules for giant banks, including relaxing the rules for stress tests that evaluate banks' soundness, lowering capital and leverage standards, and repealing the Volcker rule.

At his hearing before the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, I showed Mr. Quarles a 124-page list of financial rule rollbacks from a lobbying group for the biggest banks in the country. I asked him to tell me which of those dozens of changes he disagreed with. He couldn't name one—not one.

The No. 1 thing that we need from a Vice Chair for Supervision is independence from Wall Street—a demonstrated willingness to stand up to the wishes of

the big banks and protect the interests of working families. There is not a speck of independence in Mr. Quarles' track record.

Mr. Quarles' time in government also raises red flags. As Under Secretary of the Treasury for Domestic Finance, he was responsible for overseeing financial institutions, markets, and regulations in the years leading up to the financial crisis. Let me say that again. Mr. Quarles was the Treasury official in charge of helping to oversee Wall Street in the years leading up to the crisis. Does anyone want to point out how that worked out?

If Mr. Quarles had wanted to stand up to the banks, he could have found and fixed systemwide problems in the markets before catastrophe struck. Instead, in 2006, when the banks were making gobs of money off of risky bets that eventually crashed the economy, Quarles gave a speech in front of a roomful of bankers and said: "Fundamentally, the economy is strong, the financial sector is healthy, and our future"—the banks—"looks bright." Less than 2 years later, the entire system exploded and cost Americans, collectively, about \$14 trillion.

Make no mistake about it, confirming Mr. Quarles endangers the health of the economy. The last time that Mr. Quarles was in charge, he failed to act to protect the American people from the biggest recession since the Great Depression either because he missed the signs or because he deliberately ignored them. Either way, that makes him the wrong person for the job.

American families deserve a strong leader as the Vice Chair for Supervision of the Fed who will fight hard to keep them safe. Everything we know about Mr. Quarles says that he will be fighting hard for the big banks. I will be voting no on Mr. Quarles' nomination, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise in support of the nomination of the Honorable Randal Quarles to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

Mr. Quarles has extensive government and private-sector experience dealing with both domestic and international financial markets. He is no stranger to public service in his having previously served in multiple top posts in the Treasury Department.

Mr. Quarles has also been nominated to serve as the Vice Chairman for Supervision, a role that has never been officially filled. Instead, former Federal Governor Dan Tarullo has acted as the de facto Vice Chairman for Supervision in various ways, including by chairing the Federal Reserve Board's Committee on Supervision and Regulation, overseeing the Large Institution Supervision Coordinating Committee, and representing the Fed at the Financial Stability Board and in Basel, among other functions.

In February, Chair Yellen committed in a hearing that she expected President Trump's nominee for Vice Chairman for Supervision to have the same responsibilities that Governor Tarullo had, including heading the Federal Reserve's Committee on Supervision and Regulation and representing the Fed at the Financial Stability Board and in Basel.

I expect Mr. Quarles to perform those same duties in the interim, and I look forward to confirming him to that position soon. Mr. Quarles has strong bipartisan support and was voted out of the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee with the affirmative vote of 17 to 6. If confirmed, he will play a key role in developing regulatory and supervisory policy for the Federal Reserve System.

I urge all of my colleagues to support Mr. Quarles' nomination today and vote for his confirmation.

I yield the floor.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 65, nays 32, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 213 Ex.]

YEAS—65

Alexander	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Peters
Bennet	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Burr	Heitkamp	Rounds
Capito	Hoeven	Rubio
Cardin	Inhofe	Sasse
Carper	Isakson	Scott
Cassidy	Johnson	Shaheen
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Coons	King	Strange
Corker	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Tester
Cotton	Manchin	Thune
Crapo	McCain	Tillis
Cruz	McCaskill	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Moran	Warner
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Nelson	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—32

Baldwin	Franken	Markey
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Menendez
Booker	Harris	Merkley
Brown	Hassan	Murphy
Cantwell	Heinrich	Murray
Casey	Hirono	Reed
Duckworth	Kaine	Sanders
Durbin	Klobuchar	Schatz
Feinstein	Leahy	

Schumer	Udall	Whitehouse
Stabenow	Warren	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Cochran	Cortez Masto	Heller
---------	--------------	--------

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 Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise to make a unanimous consent request. We have been able to work out an agreement on further aspects of Mr. Quarles' nomination.

I want to thank my ranking member, SHERROD BROWN, for working with us on this and helping us to be able to move forward.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 303.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Randal Quarles, of Colorado, to be Vice Chairman for Supervision of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of four years.

Mr. CRAPO. 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; that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; and that the Senate then resume consideration of the Gingrich nomination.

One modification, Mr. President. I am striking the portion of this unanimous consent request relating to the Gingrich nomination.

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

Is there further debate on the nomination?

Hearing none, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Quarles nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

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 Lee Francis Cissna, of Maryland, to

be Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.

Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, John Cornyn, John McCain, Pat Roberts, Steve Daines, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Lee, John Boozman, Lindsey Graham, James M. Inhofe, Cory Gardner, Jeff Flake, John Thune, John Barrasso, Orrin G. Hatch.

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 Lee Francis Cissna, of Maryland, to be Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, 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. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 214 Ex.]

YEAS—54

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

NAYS—43

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

NOT VOTING—3

Cochran	Cortez Masto	Heller
---------	--------------	--------

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 43.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Lee Francis Cissna, of Maryland, to be

Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Cissna 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 Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) is necessarily absent.

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

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 215 Ex.]

YEAS—54

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

NAYS—43

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

NOT VOTING—3

Cochran	Cortez Masto	Heller
---------	--------------	--------

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.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Callista L. Gingrich, of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Holy See.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

TAX REFORM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, not too long ago—I believe this was 2011—a President came to a joint session of Congress and before the American people, he said what needed to be said about our Tax Code. He was pretty blunt. He said that our Tax Code is “rigged.” He said: “It makes no sense, and it has to change.” Of course, you can imagine, that was met with bipartisan applause in the House Chamber and across the country.

The same President called on Democrats and Republicans to “simplify the system, get rid of the loopholes, and . . . lower the corporate tax rate”—one that, I might add, ranks among the highest in the industrialized world.

That President, like the rest of us, knows that our business tax rate is a self-inflicted economic wound because businesses figure out, How can I move money offshore and my headquarters offshore, and if I earn money overseas, how can I avoid bringing that back to the United States for better wages and more jobs and to build the business? That is all because of our self-destructive Tax Code.

But the President's name—and I gave it away by saying the year the speech was given. The President's name might surprise you, given the nature of the current debate in Washington. It was Barack Obama who said that, and the straight talk came from his 2011 State of the Union address.

Let's fast forward a few years. We have a new President from a different party beating the same drum. President Trump has called our Tax Code a relic and a colossal barrier standing in the way of America's economic comeback. He is right, of course, but so was President Obama.

Tax reform doesn't have to be partisan. In fact, it shouldn't be because the ramifications are much more important than just the politics and the scorekeeping of the day. The job creators in my State of Texas are the ones who really understand what is at stake because they are living it. They are the ones who are getting slammed by our current system.

Take Lisa Fullerton, for example, who owns a small retail business in San Antonio, my hometown. Ms. Fullerton is an accountant with 33 years of experience, who used to handle her own business's tax compliance in-house. Eventually, though, the code became too complex, and enforcement became too punitive, and she couldn't take that risk anymore. She said that her outsourcing of tax and employment functions now costs her small business roughly \$280,000 more per year than it did in 2000.

Lisa is far from the only one who is frustrated. Kurt Summers is the President of Austin Generator Service, a small residential power company in the Texas capital. For him, a lower tax rate would mean the difference between his company turning a profit or

a loss. It would literally make the difference between being able to keep the doors open or have to lock them up permanently. He explained that any extra profits realized through tax savings might enable his company to grow more aggressively. To him, the need for change is very simple. It means more hiring and more jobs.

So Texans, like Alaskans and like all Americans, get the picture. But the picture is pretty messed up, and it doesn't make any sense.

Greg Brown, President of W.W. Cannon, an industrialized storage company in Dallas, says that compliance has gotten to be a truly herculean tax. It has gotten so difficult that he has had to outsource that to a CPA—again, because it is so complex and people don't want to risk the burden of not doing it right because of the punitive nature of the penalties.

Darryl Lyons, CEO of PAX Financial Group, has done the same thing. He is harmed each year by the passthrough taxes on his small business income, which impair his ability to save for business emergencies, as well as to pay off his company debt.

Lastly, in terms of my stories here, Andy Ellard, the owner and general manager of a machine company in Dallas, regularly purchases expensive computer numerical controlled equipment to stay competitive in his industry. I have no idea what that is—computer numerical controlled equipment. He said that the tax ramifications of every purchase have to be considered. Almost every day, he asks: Can we expense it? Do we have to depreciate it? And if we do, over how long?

Mr. Ellard isn't shy with his words. He calls the complicated deduction scheme for business expenses "chaos."

Clearly, something needs to change. As I said at the outset, that has been acknowledged on a bipartisan basis by the current President and the past President. I even brought out some quotes yesterday or the day before from the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, making exactly the same argument. The ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, the Senator from Oregon, said that lowering the corporate tax rate will make America more competitive globally and will bring money back home for jobs and investment in our country. So it is important for us to be consistent and, unfortunately, they haven't been.

Things are starting to change. Last week, the so-called Big 6—led by Speaker RYAN; Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin; KEVIN BRADY, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee; and the Finance Committee chairman, ORRIN HATCH—released a unified framework that contains core principles for reform. Among them are a simplified rate structure, the elimination of the alternative minimum tax, and many itemized deductions and incentives for companies to keep jobs on American soil. Perhaps most importantly, the framework rec-

ommends what is widely agreed upon as overdue, which is lowering our uncompetitive corporate rate, which puts American employers and workers at a disadvantage.

Today, it is sad but true that we are divided on many issues in America. But as President Trump and President Obama have suggested, tax reform does not have to be one of them.

I listened to our friend the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, this morning, calling for bipartisan tax reform. They are going to have a chance to do that because, after we pass a budget resolution, I anticipate that in the Senate Finance Committee, Senator HATCH will call up a base bill known as the chairman's mark, which will be open for amendment in the Senate Finance Committee. That is what people have been asking for, a chance to participate in the writing of the legislation in the committee and then to have it come to the floor for open debate and amendment. It is what we call regular order around here. But what I am hearing from our Democratic colleagues is, yes, they want bipartisan legislation, but they don't want to participate in the process of writing. It strikes me as pretty hypocritical. This shouldn't be partisan, as President Obama and President Trump have demonstrated and as Democrats and Republicans alike have said time and again.

We in Washington have no magic wand that will make our Tax Code suddenly disappear, but that doesn't excuse us from working to make taxes and tax compliance a little less painful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, last weekend a man camped out on the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas. He stockpiled 23 weapons and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. He set up bipods and scopes. He brought a hammer to knock out the window. Then, on Sunday, he opened fire. He kept firing for 15 minutes, stopping only to reload and switch weapons. Over 15 minutes, he murdered 58 Americans and injured more than 500.

The day after the shooting, I was in Washington. I had seven or eight meetings, and not a single person in those meetings brought up the worst shooting in modern American history—not one.

I am not sure if it was two mass shootings ago or three when we started to accept this as a normal condition of American life, when we lost our belief that it was within our power to protect our fellow Americans at a country music concert or at a nightclub or at a movie theater or at a school.

I know there are strong beliefs about guns in America—principled beliefs—but there are also steps that the overwhelming majority of Americans want us to take. There are 90 percent of

Americans who think we need background checks for every gun sale, including 74 percent of NRA members. There are 89 percent of Americans who think we should prevent the mentally ill from purchasing guns. There are 82 percent of Republicans who want us to bar gun purchases for people on the no-fly or terrorist watch list. Yet Congress has done nothing to respond to the American people. We did nothing after Aurora, after Newtown, after Orlando—nothing.

Unlike Washington, in Colorado, after the two mass shootings in Aurora and at Columbine, our legislators rose to the occasion and made tough choices after we suffered two of the worst mass shootings in our Nation's history. After the massacre at Columbine, we closed the gun show loophole. After the tragedy in Aurora, we strengthened our background checks in a Western State. Last year, those background checks blocked 8,704 people from buying guns. That may sound like a lot, but 380,000 people applied for guns in Colorado last year. That means just 2 percent of those folks who applied were blocked and that 98 percent were able to buy guns without a problem.

Who were the 2 percent whom Colorado is blocking but whom this Congress fails to block? Among them were murderers and rapists and kidnappers and domestic abusers.

No one could come to this floor and tell me Colorado is worse off because we have kept guns out of the hands of those people. The average wait time for those background checks is 12 minutes. That strikes me as a fair tradeoff to keep guns out of the hands of murderers and kidnappers and rapists. Yet here in Washington, despite now an annual tragedy—tragedy after tragedy—Congress has done nothing. We haven't even done the simple things like close the gun show loophole or stop people on the terrorist watch list from buying weapons.

This is not about taking guns away from people who have them. It is about keeping guns out of the hands of people who nearly everybody agrees should not have them. It is about stopping more people like the Las Vegas killer from modifying his rifles to become almost fully automatic and far more deadly. I cosponsored a bill this week to ban those modifications, and I am encouraged that some of my Republican colleagues seem to be open to that idea.

I know we cannot stop every madman or every random act of violence in this country—we cannot—just as we cannot stop every murder from happening, but that does not mean we should not make them less likely or that we cannot take steps to limit their harm, steps that are backed by the overwhelming majority of Americans and that are fully consistent with the Constitution.

I remember, after the shooting at the Pulse Nightclub, I was supposed to take my daughter to camp that day.

She was going to be away from us for a month. I can remember I did everything I could to keep her from hearing the news that day, as the numbers of fatalities increased during the course of the day, because I didn't want her to leave us—she was about 12 at the time—with a sense of fear, the fear I felt and the country felt. I am so sorry my children and America's children have to grow up in a country where mass shootings are common, where we are beginning to see them just as part of our lives.

I heard somebody the other day on television say that is the price of freedom. What a shame that somebody would say that in the United States of America. What a surrender that represents to our children and to the victims of these crimes. I didn't grow up in that America, but conditions have changed. We have let it happen. The result is, we now have an entire generation of Americans—of our countrymen, our sons, and our daughters—who are growing up with a reasonable fear that they could be victims of a mass shooting or that their moms or their dads might not come home one day.

I think our kids have enough to worry about. They have every right to see a movie with their parents, to go dancing with their friends, or to see a concert on their one night off without having the fear of being shot down by people who have no business carrying such powerful weapons. They have a right to expect that this Congress will finally do something about gun violence in our country—violence which is far greater than anywhere else in the industrialized world.

In the wake of these horrific acts, as always, Americans spring into action. First responders secure the area and care for the wounded. Neighbors hold vigils to honor the victims and support grieving families. Journalists shed light on what happened and why. Citizens speak out to demand action from their elected officials. They are doing their jobs, and it is time for Congress to do ours.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from West Virginia.

TAX REFORM

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, last week, I rose to talk about the importance of tax reform. I believe this is a policy issue we cannot talk about enough and that we cannot emphasize enough. So, today, I rise to talk about how important the reform is to our small businesses, and in the coming weeks, I will be up here to talk about other important aspects of tax reform.

We are all from different States and other parts of the country, but we all know small businesses are a major economic driver in our country, as 95 percent of businesses in the United States are small businesses, and that number is even higher in my State of West Virginia. Small businesses employ more than half of West Virginia's workforce.

Yet our small businesses face a marginal tax rate as high as 39.6 percent. At the same time, their effective tax rate can vary widely. In fact, a CNBC survey showed that 22 percent of small businesses cannot really say what their effective tax rate really is.

Think about that.

If you are a small business that is a partnership or an LLC, then your profits are going to pass through to you and be taxed at the individual rate. There are currently seven individual tax brackets. Then you have credits and deductions. There is also a self-employment tax, and the list goes on. On top of that, small businesses can have Social Security and Medicare taxes, a Federal unemployment tax, and employment taxes. That is not even taking into account taxes like a State-level income tax or property tax and more. That is why businesses and individuals spend billions of dollars a year to comply with the Tax Code. That is more than 18 hours for every man and woman and child in the United States of America. If I could give a visual here, that is basically 3 million people working full time on taxes for small businesses at a cost of \$195 billion.

The point is, it is complicated. Our Tax Code is too complicated, and that is part of what tax reform is about—simplifying the Tax Code. If Congress can simplify the Tax Code just to cut compliance costs in half, think of how many significant resources that would free up that would be better used to grow the economy, create jobs, raise wages, and expand businesses.

The National Federation of Independent Business, which represents 325,000 small businesses across this country, called this tax reform framework a good start, and it has urged us to take swift action. According to a survey by Paychex, 41 percent of small business owners want tax reform to be the very top priority.

Whom will these reforms really help? We are going to have a long discussion on this. This is just part of whom they will help. They will help the small businesses that employ so many people in my home State of West Virginia. They will help people like Eric Hott, of EH Chocolates & More, from Hampshire County. Eric has a great story. Eric grew up on a farm in Kirby, WV. His mother was from Hornberg, Germany. While growing up, his grandmother was always cooking something. After graduating from high school, Eric moved to Germany to begin a culinary apprenticeship. By 2006, he had a chef apprenticeship at a five-star hotel in Germany. He went on to serve at events like the G8 Summit and for guests that included the German Chancellor and his First Lady. After running a patisserie in Germany, he moved to Switzerland, where he refined and perfected the art of chocolate-making. That sounds good to me. Then what did he do? He wanted to come home. He returned home to West Virginia. He went back to Kirby, WV, and started his own

small businesses—first EH Chocolates & More and, later, Farm Fresh Produce. Both are growing and delicious businesses.

Small businesses employ middle-class Americans who power this and other small businesses across the country. We need more folks like Eric—lots more—who are willing to take the risk, who have a good idea, and who want to stay and work in their own homes in rural America and certainly in our State of West Virginia, which has had a major economic downturn. We need more Eric Hotts. We need to simplify the Tax Code for small businesses and let them focus on what they do best, which is refining their products, providing their services, and providing jobs for people in their various areas.

As much as any other policy that Congress can advance, tax reform will promote growth and provide job opportunities across this great country. Across the entire country, only two in five distressed communities have seen any job growth during the past 5 years. Fully 50 percent of U.S. job growth has occurred in just 2 percent of our country's counties.

We need to change that. We need to help small businesses that are major economic drivers in every part of our country. It is no wonder that small businesses have found it difficult to open, let alone succeed in many parts of our country. Because of our outdated Tax Code, real wages for most workers have barely increased for decades. By modernizing our Tax Code, we can create more opportunity and higher wages for Americans. We can achieve a simpler system with lower rates that is good for business and workers and, from the description I just put forward, would be a good time saver and resource saver.

The best thing about this in terms of small business is that it would lead to more jobs. Let's create an environment that leads to more investment in our States and continues to grow and build jobs. These are the changes hard-working West Virginians and Americans are hungering for. In order to make West Virginia the best place to live and work, now is the time for tax reform.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to make this a reality. Doing it will benefit so many—everyone in this country.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

(The remarks of Mr. FLAKE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1937 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. FLAKE. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING ELDER ROBERT D. HALES

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I rise today to honor the life of Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder Hales passed away peacefully on Sunday, October 1, at the age of 85. He leaves behind his faithful wife Mary and their two sons, Stephen and David.

Robert Hales was born and raised in a faithful household in Long Island, NY. He was an all-American boy who played baseball through college at the University of Utah but eventually traded in his baseball uniform for a flight suit, serving in the U.S. Air Force as a jet fighter pilot. Elder Hales's service as a military aviator would inform the rest of his life and certainly his entire ministry. He took with him the unit motto displayed on the side of his aircraft: "Return With Honor."

After his discharge from the military, Elder Hales entered the world of international business. In jobs around the world, he established a reputation as an enthusiastic leader who relished a challenge and dealt fairly with others. Because of these qualities, Elder Hales rose to become president of Paper Mate, a division of Gillette. Later, he assumed senior executive positions at Max Factor Company, the Hughes Television Network, and Chesebrough-Pond's Manufacturing Company. But Elder Hales never let work dominate his life, as so many executives do. Despite the enormous demands on his time, he stayed faithful to the more important commitments he made to his family and to his Lord.

So it was that Robert Hales, a business executive of international renown, made an unusual decision in the prime of his life: He left the corporate world to give his all to the church. When Jesus said "Come, follow me," Robert Hales left his nets straightaway and became a fisher of men.

Elder Hales was called to become the presiding bishop of the church in 1985, overseeing the church's vast charitable network. As bishop, he used the skills of a business executive not for profit but to help the least of those among us.

In 1994, Elder Hales was sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, a church position he held for 23 years until his passing just days ago. From this position as a watchman on the tower, he boldly proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and he also spoke out on such pressing societal issues as religious freedom. He saw that the erosion of religious belief in the United States was quickly devolving into social and political intolerance for religious people and institutions. But this prediction did not lead Elder Hales to despair, no; instead, he redoubled his efforts to edify the next generation—the young men and women who were in the preparatory period of life, as he termed it.

His addresses and sermons were full of moral exhortation and practical advice on living well. Don't walk, run to holiness, he urged his brothers and sisters in faith. Elder Hales knew that holiness is an activity, a pursuit to which we must consecrate our whole lives running the race and enduring to the end.

Through his example and through his words, Elder Hales taught that virtue is not just a good intention but a good deed reinforced and compounded by past deeds.

Elder Hales urged young men and women to embrace the joys of adulthood through marriage, child-rearing, and responsible citizenship. He knew that the way to true happiness lies in those sacrificial activities, not the selfish lifestyles that tempt so many today.

During one memorable address to the General Conference of the church, Elder Hales recounted the advice he received as a boy when he had been tempted to make a poor decision: "Robert," his father had said to him, "straighten up and fly right!" From the testimony of his life, it is clear that Elder Hales honored his father's advice in the Air Force, in the workforce, in the household, and in the church. Elder Robert D. Hales flew right. Now he has returned with honor to be embraced by his Heavenly Father.

Thank you, Madam President.

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

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

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, I want to be able to give a quick update to this body on a conversation that started yesterday and has been ongoing for months about Russia and their interference in our elections and how they are trying to engage with us in a way that much of Europe has seen for decades but that we just haven't seen in the United States.

Yesterday, Senator BURR and Senator WARNER stood up and gave an update of where we are in the status of the investigation of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. They walked through some of the statistics. We have done over 100 interviews. We have 4,000 pages of transcript from those interviews. We have 100,000 documents that we have gone through so far, and there is more to go. We have completed some areas where we have interviewed everyone who we could possibly interview in that area. In other areas, as we do one interview, they quote a couple of other people, and we chase down those individuals, and it continues. So parts of the inves-

tigation are not done at this point, but some of it is.

Several aspects are clear from the investigation, though, again, it is not complete, and we will have a final document at the end. Some of the areas that are clear are that Russia was trying to use active measures to engage us in our last election. That part is very, very clear.

The question comes for many people: Why would they do that? Quite frankly, this is the way Russia has worked for a very long time—this asymmetric warfare they do where they try to constantly interfere in other people's thoughts and conflicts. They have done it across Europe for a long time. They are now doing it here.

Some of this is a product of Russia's having a very weak economy and trying to find some way to bolster themselves up. In the last 2 years, the Russian ruble has dropped 40 percent in value. As they struggle with low oil prices and struggle in the way they function with their government with the oligarchs and have a select group of people who can succeed and other folks who continue to struggle around the country and as they struggle under that system where they have fake elections and such, they try to reach out to other countries and try to interfere in our elections to make us look like them.

We have a free press that they try to engage in. We have free speech that they don't have in Russia. We have freedom of religion, which they don't have in Russia. We have the ability to be able to have disputes on political issues. They clearly don't have that in Russia. If you disagree with leadership in Russia, you will end up in prison. If you disagree with leadership in the United States, you will end up on TV. It is very different to be in an open society like ours. But they reach into what we consider a strength and try to make it our weakness.

We are going to try to get the facts out on this over the next several months as we work through this process. We are going to expose what Russia is really trying to do. Do they use some overt propaganda networks like Sputnik Radio and RT? Is their Russian propaganda on multiple cable and satellite channels throughout the United States? Their version of the facts are designed to create discord in our Nation. That is what they do.

They also have ways that are not quite as overt. They reach in on social media platforms. They have their trolls in Russia who have thousands of fake accounts on Facebook and Twitter and other social media apps. They use those thousands of apps to search around any news in America and find a place where there is conflict in America and then try to amp up the volume.

To be clear, the Russians are not creating conflict in America. We have plenty of it. We disagree on issues. Again, it is our free society. When we disagree on something, we disagree on

it publically and sometimes loud. That is who we are as Americans. We try to work things out, sometimes at a high volume. But just like two kids who are fighting on the playground in the fifth grade—remember those two kids that started a fight and their friends were watching them? Then, eventually, someone on the other side of the playground started yelling “fight,” and the crowd started forming. The Russians aren’t starting the fight. They aren’t even in the fight. They are the kids on the far side of the playground, trying to get more people to run to the fight. They are not starting the Twitter wars and the battles, but they look at where America is divided, issues like race. Their troll farms will try to find areas where we disagree, such as areas of race, and reach in and try to amplify the volume on that by repeating accusations and by trying to be even more hostile online. They are trying to stoke disunity in our Nation.

It is important that we know that every time you see something with a high number of hashtag counts that goes up, it is not always Americans who are pushing that up. Occasionally, it is an outside body trying to raise the volume and make a conflict look even bigger than it already is in America because they are into sowing discord. That is what they love to do. That is what the rest of the nations have seen them do. We should be very clear that the Russians are trying to continue to sow chaos into us.

They have reached into our election systems. In the previous couple of weeks, the FBI notified 21 different States that during the last election season, the Russians tried to interfere in their election process as a State. Now, that doesn’t mean they did interfere. That means they reached in and tested systems. That means they tried to go into voter databases to see if they could access a voter database to see who was registered to vote. They tried to get into a secretary of State’s office in a local State to see if they could figure out how they do their elections. That means they reached into systems in States to see what voting machines they used and if they tried to connect them in. They were trying to find out how they do elections, learn as much as they could about their process, and see how far they could get.

Through all of our work, we have yet to find a single vote that was changed. The Russians didn’t get into voting machines. They didn’t alter the election in any way, but they were constantly probing through multiple States to see what they could get access to.

Now, it is my belief that they are preparing for something else. They are trying to see what they could get access to in the last election to see if they could get back into it and do even more in the next election. We should be aware of that. We should be aware not only of their propaganda, but we should be aware that they are going

after our elections to see if they can find a way, at the end of the election, to make us doubt the outcomes.

What can we do about that? I will give you several ideas. One of them, I would say, is that we need to protect the primacy of States running the elections. There is absolutely no need for the Federal Government to go to States and take over their election process. It is a constitutional protection that those States have to be able to run their elections, but every State is also responsible to do it. Of the 21 States that I noted here that the Russians tried to engage in, they couldn’t get to a single voting machine. The States are already doing a good job, but they need help.

There is no reason the State of Oklahoma should have to work alone to be able to protect itself from the Russians trying to invade it in the cyber attack. They are going to need some allies to come along with them, but the States should still be able to run the system. There should be more sharing between the State and the Federal Government. There should be an opportunity for the Federal Government to be able to say to a State, earlier than 10 months after the election: Hey, you are being hacked. For the FBI to notify States a couple of weeks ago that they were hacked in the 2016 elections is a little late. When it is occurring, we need to have that engagement between State IT folks and Federal IT folks. We need to be able to have that conversation as it is ongoing so the State can take protective measures as it is occurring. We need to have that cooperation between States and the Federal Government. We need to be able to help States come up with ways they can audit their system after the election is over.

When every election occurs, you should be able to audit it and make sure the machines that were running the election actually were not hacked. You can verify that. In Oklahoma, we have optical scanners. You fill out a paper ballot. You run it through an optical scanner at the end of the election time, and they can count everything from the optical scanner. If there is any question, they can go back to the paper and actually do a hand count. We can literally audit our elections and their process. It is a safe system that we have set up in our State. Every State does it differently, but I would encourage every State to set up a system where they can audit their system.

We know this year that the Russians were trying to engage in our election. It could be someone else who could do it. Any number of groups could try to interfere in our process. It is basic common sense to say we should have a system of elections we can actually audit. Perhaps Russia, in the days ahead, hopes that our Nation will be more like theirs. We will not be.

We are the longest constitutional Republic in the world. We still need the world. We still put out our values about free speech, free press, freedom

of religion, and opportunities for individuals to actually engage and to have conflict with their own government and to be able to disagree publically on things. We still can disagree with each other. We need to be aware that they want to turn us into them. I would hope for the sake of the Russian people, in the days ahead, that they could be more like us.

Ronald Reagan told a story about a friend of his who had a conversation with a Cuban refugee fleeing from communism and oppression in Cuba in 1964. He said that his friend, this Cuban refugee, said:

If we lose freedom here, there is no place to escape to. This is the last stand on Earth.

We are still a role model for the rest of the world. As much conflict as we have with each other, we are still a role model. I have no issue disagreeing at times with people on this floor. We can have our disagreements, but I don’t want the Russians to interfere in our disagreements. They can keep their business over there. In the days ahead, we will continue to expose the things they are doing. So they can back off and go bug someone else because we are akin to what they are doing.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Ohio.

EQUIFAX BREACH

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I say to the Presiding Officer—and the Senator who is about to become the Presiding Officer—I appreciated the work of you two together, in tandem, today for two nominees in front of the Agriculture Committee. I thank you.

(Mr. SASSE assumed the Chair.)

Mr. President, I rise to talk for a moment about a hearing yesterday, which the Presiding Officer sat through, too, with the outgoing CEO of Equifax. We know what happened with Equifax, yet we really don’t know entirely what happened. We know there was a breach of Equifax’s information, and 145 million Americans—more than half of the adult population in our country—had their data breached. Criminals will now have access to the data of far too many Americans.

I am hopeful because I and Senator CRAPO, the chairman of the committee, and others on the committee were pretty unhappy—not to speak for others, certainly, but we were pretty unhappy with Equifax’s performance yesterday because we didn’t get a lot of answers to a number of our questions.

When you think about what we do with medical language, with our personal medical information, we have laws to say that our personal medical information belongs to us. We, of

course, can share it with a hospital or a doctor or whomever we want, but our doctor can't share it with other doctors without our permission. Our hospital can't share it with other hospitals without our permission. But our personal financial data doesn't fall into those categories.

We know how this happens. Equifax is a company that many have rarely thought about. A lot of people have never thought much about it, and many have never really explored who they are. Equifax is a company in Atlanta. There are three data agencies like this. They get your data without your permission. They get it from a utility company or from a bank or from somebody else. They have two jobs: to collect your data and then to protect your data, your personal financial data.

This company—this CEO has been paid \$69 million over the last 3 years. The CEO we met with, who has retired, has been compensated very generously. Who knows if he will end up getting bonuses and golden parachutes and all? The American public has come to unfortunately expect that these CEOs will abuse the public trust.

Look at what happened at Wells Fargo, creating all kinds of accounts for people who didn't even want those accounts, who didn't even know they were having those accounts opened. And look at Equifax.

In far too many cases, these companies don't protect our information the way they have promised they would. It makes all of us, the 145 million, subject to some kind of criminal activity in all kinds of ways—to violate our privacy and to take advantage of us financially and all the identity theft and all the things that come with that.

If you were a student at Bowling Green State University who graduated and you miss a student loan payment after you have graduated, you get your credit dinged by Equifax. If you are a homeowner in Mansfield, OH, or in Ravenna, OH, and you miss a monthly payment or a couple of monthly payments, you get your credit dinged. You are held accountable by Equifax, but Equifax hasn't really been held accountable much by anyone.

The cynicism people in this country have toward our financial system, toward Wall Street—then we see Wells Fargo do what they have done; then we see Equifax do what they have done. It is time for Congress to push away these special interest groups that have far too much influence in this body.

The White House has not been helpful. The White House looks like a retreat for Goldman Sachs executives, with all the people around the President who do the bidding of Wall Street and protect far too many of these Wall Street firms and Wells Fargo and the Equifaxes of the world.

I am hopeful that we will sit down in a bipartisan way and begin to figure out what to do here. Maybe we do consider the protections we have for peo-

ple's medical records—we ought to have the same protection for their financial records. It simply makes sense, and I am hopeful we can come to a solution.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PUERTO RICO RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today, as I have on so many occasions, to give voice to the 3.5 million Americans who call Puerto Rico home. Their lives have been turned upside down by Hurricane Maria, and now more than ever, they desperately need to be heard. I invite my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in amplifying the voices of millions of Puerto Ricans calling out for help and the millions here on the mainland who have yet to hear from their families.

Here on the floor with me today are aerial photos of the destruction caused by Hurricane Maria, the astounding damage I saw firsthand when I toured Puerto Rico by helicopter on Friday, pictures largely taken by me.

Take this collapsed bridge in the municipality of Utuado, situated in the central mountains of Puerto Rico. Every day, the 30,000 Americans who live in Utuado depend on these bridges to cross the beautiful rivers that run through it, but today those 30,000 Americans are secluded, waiting in the dark, and wondering when help will arrive.

Images like these have stayed with me from the moment I left Puerto Rico, and I share them today because the people of Puerto Rico need our collective voices and support to stop this humanitarian crisis from devolving into a full-blown American tragedy.

This is another example of some of the devastation of a large number of homes in a community.

If we hope to overcome the monumental challenges before us, we need a full grasp of the reality on the ground. I thought that is why President Trump went to Puerto Rico this week—to get a dose of reality. Instead, the President continued to feed on his own warped version of reality. The President told the people of Puerto Rico that they should be “very proud” that the death count was only “16 versus literally thousands of people” who died in “a real catastrophe like Katrina”—a real catastrophe like Katrina. And certainly that was a catastrophe, but this is no less real for the people of Puerto Rico. Yet, moments later, the AP reported that fatalities in Puerto Rico have tragically risen to 44. And while I pray it is not the case, I fear that it may be even worse, because we have secluded communities that still have not

gotten access, so we don't know what is happening there.

In short, the situation is perilous, and we don't have a moment to waste.

Like many, I had hoped that during his visit to Puerto Rico, the President would take the high road and set a new tone after his administration's woefully delayed and inadequate response to Hurricane Maria. Instead, the President took victim-blaming to a whole new level. He told emergency responders and local elected officials: “I hate to tell you, Puerto Rico, but you have thrown our budget a little out of whack.”

Well, Mr. President, perhaps we have to dial back the budget-bursting, trillion-dollar tax cuts you want to give to billionaire families like yours, because it is going to take more than paper towels to help the people of Puerto Rico.

In this country, we don't turn our backs on Americans in need. We don't complain about how much it costs to restore power to hospitals or rebuild roads in ruin that connect people to their government and essential services or get clean drinking water and food and medicine to the hungry and the frail. We are the United States of America, and we are there for each other, whether it is Texas after Harvey or Florida after Irma or New Jersey after Sandy or Puerto Rico after Maria.

If you heard the President speak earlier this week, you would heard that everything is going great and that he in particular is doing the greatest job any President has ever done in the history of the world. The administration will tell us that the majority of hospitals are open but leave out the fact that many are running on emergency generators at significantly reduced capacity. They will leave out how the shortages of ambulances and fuel and functional roads have made getting to the hospitals nearly impossible. Even if you do find a way there, the hospitals might not have the medicine, supplies, or doctors you need.

The administration will boast that it has set up 11 distribution points for food, water, and other necessities, but what good is a distribution center that takes hours to reach and is out of supplies before you get there?

They will brag about how half of the people have access to running water but neglect to say that in some rural areas in the north, barely over 13 percent of people have access to running water.

They will boast about all of the buildings being inspected—something that even the Governor of Puerto Rico questioned—but look at this image I took 5 days before the President landed. This is just 25 minutes outside of San Juan. Hurricane Maria destroyed many of the wooden homes that populate the island and weakened many of its immense structures, as the picture showed that we had up before. Here is an example of it. So you see that all of

these homes are destroyed. Some of them are not made in the same way. Here is a cement structure that is also totally destroyed. I saw the same sights across Puerto Rico in communities near the capital, in the mountains, and along the coast.

What does all this tell us? It tells us an unfortunate truth: that the administration's response to this crisis has been woefully inadequate from the start.

For 2 weeks, Puerto Ricans cried out for help—help accessing clean water, help powering hospitals, help feeding families. Yet the President accused them—the victims of this historic natural disaster—of being ingrates clamoring for handouts. He dismissed the urgency of their situation, and he effectively called the mayor of San Juan another nasty woman who should pipe down.

Well, this is the mayor of San Juan, wading hip deep in water. Does this look like a woman who isn't taking responsibility? No. To me, it looks like a leader doing everything she can to save lives.

I knew from the start that we weren't getting the full picture, and because the administration went out of its way not to provide support for a bipartisan congressional delegation to visit the island, I decided to go myself. After all, it will be the responsibility of Congress to fund disaster relief and long-term recovery on these islands, and we need the facts in order to produce the right legislation. So last Friday, I boarded an Americans Airlines flight to Puerto Rico.

Now, let me be clear. I have visited the island of Puerto Rico I don't know how many times over the past 25 years, both in my official capacity as a Member of Congress and personally to vacation. It is no exaggeration to say that the island I saw on Friday is not the island I have known and loved. The lush, green, tropical landscape that comes to mind when we think of Puerto Rico was mostly devoid of life.

I met with the Governor of Puerto Rico. I spoke to local law enforcement officials, first responders, and Federal FEMA officials. With the help of the Governor's office and the Puerto Rico Joint Forces of Rapid Action—or FURA, as they are known on the island—I saw the damage by helicopter. I saw debris and mudslides and fallen trees on the inland streets, destroyed homes sprinkled with the occasional yet all-too-familiar blue of FEMA tarps. A dead green hue covered the landscape that was such a foreign sight to me that I caught myself thinking I was somewhere else.

This was an all-too-familiar scene—the scene of a strong cement structure of a building, on the surface impervious to the strong winds of a hurricane, yet now on the verge of sinking into the Earth. The hurricane eroded so much land that in some inner parts of the island, landslides have become the new norm. The people who live here may

never be able to return. Entire generations of close-knit communities may never be the same.

Despite these dire conditions, during my visit to Puerto Rico, I felt the spirit of community and commitments shared by so many Americans across the island. After Hurricane Maria, they woke to devastation, no communication, and the isolating affects of roads being cut off by fallen trees, electrical posts, and debris. As they wait and wonder when their government will come to their aid, they are doing everything they can to survive. They have taken matters into their own hands. They are clearing roads, sheltering relatives who lost their homes, and working together to care for the most vulnerable. So through it all, I saw the hard-working spirit alive in Puerto Rico that I see whenever I speak with Puerto Rican families there and across New Jersey, where so many of my constituents are mobilizing to send help as they anxiously wait to hear from their families.

Like so many Americans, I too worried about my family on the island. My brother faces health challenges, and I worried about his care. Fortunately, we had a brief moment to meet, and I was able to give him some supplies—help one person. But as tough as this situation was, he is one of the lucky ones. He lives in a suburb of San Juan which is relatively better off than the more remote, rural areas.

Let's look at a chart of our recovery status. Fifteen days after the storm ravaged the island, where does it stand? Well, 93 percent of our fellow Americans are still without power. I can tell my colleagues firsthand that the heat and the humidity from all of the water that came from Maria is stifling. It is oppressive. It is hard to breathe.

Sixty percent of Puerto Rico has no cell phone service, meaning people have no way of connecting to their families on the island and outside of the island or calling for help if they needed it. If they did, we could have pinpoint accuracy of search and rescue missions.

Day by day, fewer and fewer Puerto Ricans have access to clean, running water. From October 2 to October 3, the population with running water dropped from 29 percent to 13 percent.

The truth is, this situation would be unacceptable in any major city on the U.S. mainland, but, as the people of Puerto Rico know all too well, they don't get the same treatment as their fellow citizens on the mainland. The ugly truth is that for generations, Congress has treated the people of Puerto Rico not as our fellow Americans, not as people who have fought and bled for their country, like the famous Borinqueneers, an all-Puerto Rican infantry division, who received, recently, the highest decoration Congress gives collectively—the Congressional Gold Medal. They haven't treated them as first-class citizens but as second-class citizens.

Hurricane Maria didn't create this disparity, but it exposed the longstanding inequities that have hindered the island's success for generations. The people of Puerto Rico don't receive equal Medicaid funding, Medicare coverage, or access to tax credits. They aren't just numbers on a ledger; they are long-term care for a grandparent, treatment for a critically ill child, and a fair shot to make a living wage and raise a family.

This didn't happen overnight. These wrongs add up over time. As Governor Rossello said so eloquently:

I invite you to reflect on why Puerto Rico is in the current state of disadvantage and inequality. It's not something that happened just a few months or few weeks before this storm. It is a condition that has happened for more than a century in Puerto Rico.

I invite you to reflect on the reality that even after the storm hit Puerto Rico, even when it was evident it was a disaster in the United States, only half of our U.S. citizens knew Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens. So when Hurricanes Irma and Maria slammed into Puerto Rico, these disparities, these inequalities, were laid bare.

None of this should have taken the Trump administration by surprise. We knew the storm was coming. We knew for days that a category 5 hurricane was on a collision course with Puerto Rico, just as communities across the island were picking up the pieces after Irma. We have known for years about the island's aging infrastructure, like the downed power line pictured here.

In short, all of us knew Hurricane Maria was a recipe for disaster that would leave 3.5 million Americans imperiled, disconnected, and in the dark. It should not have taken the administration 12 days to issue a disaster declaration—something I called for—for 100 percent of the island because, as I saw on Friday, there is no community in Puerto Rico untouched by this tragedy. Focused leadership would have had a three-star general on the ground the moment the clouds parted, not 8 days after the storms struck.

We needed medical evacuation vehicles and vessels, aid and relief delivery systems on standby, the USNS *Comfort* ready for immediate deployment—something I called for. Instead, the administration told us helping Puerto Rico is hard because it is an island in a big ocean—but it happens to be an island of 3.5 million U.S. citizens.

We have no more time to waste. That is why it is so urgent that we take action now. If we could send 20,000 troops to Haiti, surely, we can get more boots on the ground saving American lives in Puerto Rico. We need more helicopters airdropping food and water to secluded communities. We need generators delivered and the repair of communication towers expedited.

It is up to the President to mobilize every resource possible—to save lives, to get the lights turned on, to rebuild bridges, to reach secluded communities, to reconnect families. We can't

afford to waste any more time, not when lives are on the line, not when elderly residents in nursing homes grow frailer by the moment, not when hungry American children have nothing to eat, not when communities are without clean drinking water for days on end. We need to keep the pressure on the administration.

That is why I wrote the President, urging that he activate the Defense Production Act of 1950 so the military could more quickly deliver vast private sector resources to those in need. That is why my colleagues and I wrote to the White House and urged FEMA to waive disaster relief cost sharing because, as the Governor told me: I have no revenue coming in. I have no revenue coming in, and the likelihood of revenue coming in, certainly in the short term, is not there. How do you acquire the 70 or 75 percent Federal assistance if you don't have the 25 percent to put up? That is why we have written the USDA asking that they use all available resources to get food to the people of Puerto Rico.

This is an all-hands-on-deck situation for the Federal Government, but Congress also has a responsibility to act. That is why I sent a letter to Leader MCCONNELL and Speaker RYAN urging that they bring forward an emergency supplemental aid package and fund community development block grants for disaster recovery. It is up to us in Congress to immediately authorize, not just the emergency funding needed to save lives in Puerto Rico but also the assistance needed for a full-powered recovery.

We must give Puerto Ricans the tools to rebuild. That means making sure Puerto Rico's financial control board gives the Governor the flexibility to spearhead this recovery. Board members of that control board should be on the island, assessing the damage, speaking to the survivors, allowing Governor Rossello to create a new budget that reflects Puerto Rico's post-Maria reality. The damage, by some estimates, could be as high as \$90 billion, so adjusting expectations and enabling flexibility is absolutely critical going forward.

I have said it before and I will say it again. The people of Puerto Rico must come before Wall Street creditors. As it turns out, this is one area where the President and I can find common ground. Just last night, he called for Puerto Rico's debt to be wiped out. I hope all of us—the administration, my colleagues in Congress, and the fiscal control board—can work together to jump-start Puerto Rico's recovery. That must include enabling flexibility, addressing the island's crippling debt, and ensuring that pensions are protected and paid. Imagine not getting your pension—no longer working, having no income, and then your pension is not protected. How do you make it? All of us in the Senate have a responsibility to stand with Puerto Rico. How we respond to this crisis will have pro-

found consequences, not just for the Americans who live in Puerto Rico today but for generations to come.

We need to pass a disaster package that matches the astounding damage suffered by the island. The photos I have brought to the floor today give a glimpse—not anywhere near the whole picture—of the devastation on the ground. It is not enough to reconnect a faulty, ailing power grid. It is time to be proactive and rebuild Puerto Rico so it is prepared for the next storm and for the 21st century. It is time to fix the underlying disparities which have hindered Puerto Rico's success. Otherwise, we will simply be rebuilding a broken foundation.

Let me close by saying, I remind my colleagues that Puerto Ricans are not just citizens of the United States—which, in and of itself, should speak to the compelling arguments we should be engaged in helping Puerto Rico as our fellow Americans. They have fought to defend our Nation from World War I to the War on Terror. Take a walk down to the Vietnam Memorial, and you will see Puerto Rican names engraved in that stone far in excess of the number of people proportionately to the American population. Throughout our history, Puerto Ricans have given their lives so they may remain part of the “land of the free.” To this day, more than 10,000 Puerto Ricans serve in every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Let's also remember that beyond the 3.5 million citizens living on the island, there are 5 million Puerto Ricans living in our States, in our congressional districts, and in our communities. In the aftermath of this unprecedented disaster, these Americans deserve the same rights, the same respect, and the same response from their Federal Government. That is what I told leaders from New Jersey's Puerto Rican community earlier this week—assemblymen and women, mayors, community leaders, and concerned citizens.

We all remember how hard it was to secure the funding we needed to rebuild New Jersey in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. We had to fight tooth and nail every step of the way, and, guess what, we had two U.S. Senators from New Jersey and 13 Members of Congress, joined by our colleagues from New York—two U.S. Senators from New York and a whole host of congressional Members as well as from Connecticut, which was also affected. It was an incredible time here to try to get relief.

Americans in Puerto Rico have no vote in the Senate, they have no votes in Congress, and the fight to rebuild Puerto Rico will be that much harder, but, as I have in the past, I intend to be their voice and their vote in the U.S. Senate.

Now is not the time to pretend like recovery will be a piece of cake. No one—not the Governor, not the President, not any one of us—should sugarcoat the human catastrophe playing out in Puerto Rico. It is time for hon-

esty about the conditions on the ground, the challenges we face, and the actions we must take.

Yes, Puerto Rico is an island in the middle of a very big ocean, but we are the most powerful nation on the face of the Earth. We have the most advanced military capabilities ever known and the most skilled Armed Forces in the world. We have to be there for 3.5 million Americans who are in need. We are the United States of America. We do the impossible. Give our men and women in uniform any mission, and they rise to the occasion.

If we conducted the Berlin Airlift, set up tactical operations in the mountains of Afghanistan, built green zones in Baghdad in the height of the Iraq war, then surely we can save the lives of Americans in danger, and surely we can save those lives and help rebuild Puerto Rico. We must not rest until every American is safe and the work of rebuilding is done.

I yield the floor.

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

● Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I had expected to be able to vote today on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Callista L. Gingrich to be Ambassador to the Holy See. Instead, I am in Las Vegas meeting with victims of and first responders to the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

I support the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Callista L. Gingrich to be Ambassador to the Holy See. The U.S. relationship with the Holy See is an important one and is best supported with a confirmed ambassador leading it. Ms. Gingrich's faith and engagement with the Catholic community will support U.S. ties to the Vatican.●

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back on both sides.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The 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 Callista L. Gingrich, of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Holy See.

Mitch McConnell, Bob Corker, Johnny Isakson, Patrick J. Toomey, Richard Burr, Orrin G. Hatch, Roger F. Wicker, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, Pat Roberts, Ron Johnson, Richard C. Shelby, Cory Gardner, John Thune, James E. Risch, Deb Fischer, David Perdue.

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 Callista L. Gingrich, of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Holy See, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 75, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 216 Ex.]

YEAS—75

Alexander	Fischer	Murkowski
Baldwin	Flake	Murphy
Barrasso	Franken	Murray
Bennet	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Perdue
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Reed
Cantwell	Heinrich	Risch
Capito	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cardin	Hoeven	Rounds
Carper	Inhofe	Rubio
Casey	Isakson	Sasse
Cassidy	Johnson	Schumer
Collins	Kaine	Scott
Coons	Kennedy	Shaheen
Corker	King	Shelby
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Strange
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Leahy	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	Manchin	Toomey
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Enzi	McConnell	Whitehouse
Ernst	Menendez	Wicker
Feinstein	Moran	Young

NAYS—20

Blumenthal	Hassan	Stabenow
Booker	Hirono	Tester
Brown	Markey	Udall
Duckworth	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Peters	Warren
Gillibrand	Sanders	Wyden
Harris	Schatz	

NOT VOTING—5

Cochran	Heller	Nelson
Cortez Masto	McCain	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). On this vote, the yeas are 75, the nays are 20.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from North Dakota.

TAX REFORM

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I rise today to talk about what is really a “once in a generation” opportunity, and that is the opportunity we have

right now to reform our outmoded and complex Tax Code and also, most importantly, to provide tax relief for our Nation’s families, farmers, and small businesses.

Our Tax Code has not been updated since 1986. When you think about all that has changed over the last 30 years, you know that modern advances in technology have drastically revolutionized the way business is conducted. Today, the creation of the internet, substantially increased automation, and instant communications have created dramatic changes and in many ways have brought us closer in terms of communication and have interconnected our global economy in ways we never could have foreseen back in the 1980s, when we last reformed our Tax Code.

So it is past time—not time but past time—to modernize our outdated Tax Code to the 21st century. We must do so in order to ensure that American businesses can compete on the global stage, while providing tax relief to hard-working middle-class families who have been struggling to get and stay ahead over the last decade.

The recently released tax blueprint proposes sweeping tax reforms that will benefit working families and small businesses throughout the country while promoting job creation, economic growth, and global competitiveness. This country was built on hard work by individuals and families who strive each and every day to make ends meet to provide for their loved ones and to plan for retirement. The current Tax Code is complex and has many loopholes that do nothing to help our hard-working families keep more of their own hard-earned money. Our tax framework will help individuals and families in my home State and across this country to get ahead by generating new jobs through sustained economic growth while lowering the overall tax burden and putting more money back in the taxpayers’ pockets.

We do this in a number of ways: by doubling the standard deduction, by eliminating taxes on the first \$12,000 earned by an individual and \$24,000 earned by a married couple, effectively establishing a zero-percent tax rate as the bottom bracket—the bottom tax rate. That means that nearly 81 percent of North Dakotans who claim the standard deduction could see a significant increase in their take-home pay. That is true of other States across the country as well. Further, we are consolidating and lowering the tax rates across the board while simplifying the Tax Code to make it fairer for every-

body. At nearly 70,000 pages long, it is no wonder that Americans currently spend 6 billion hours a year complying with the Tax Code. In fact, 94 percent of taxpayers choose either to pay someone else or to use software to prepare their taxes because of the complexity of our Tax Code. Our goal for tax reform is to allow the vast majority of

Americans to file their tax returns on a single page—a simple calculation, something they can do themselves. We want to reduce the cost and stress that many Americans feel during tax season.

Further, our tax framework aims to create greater opportunities for small business owners, farmers, and others to help grow our economy and be more competitive than ever before. While we focus on a business friendly State in North Dakota—we have a very business friendly climate—the Federal tax continues to place an undue burden on the nearly 71,000 small businesses that operate in our State, which is more than 95 percent of all of the employers in the State. Again, this is something that applies across the Nation. The driver of our economy, the backbone of our economy is small business. They are the job generators. They are the job creators. We have to do more to help them do what they do, which is to create jobs and to grow our economy.

The same applies to our family farmers. My State alone has more than 30,000 family farms and ranches. Their marginal tax rate can reach as high as almost 45 percent, nearly twice the average rate of the rest of the industrialized world. That creates real challenges. This tax framework follows the example we have set in our State by restoring economic opportunity, by lowering the tax burden, and by enacting a pro-growth tax code.

Economists in general agree that high corporate taxes reduce wages to workers, raise costs to consumers, and reduce returns on retirement savings. That affects all of us. Maintaining high tax rates does nothing to improve the fairness of our system. It only punishes everyday citizens and reduces economic opportunities for all Americans.

For far too long, our Tax Code has incentivized American companies to send jobs and investment overseas, instead of keeping them here at home—keeping that investment, keeping those jobs here at home. Consequently, large multinational corporations now hold approximately \$2.6 trillion overseas. That is money that could be repatriated back to the United States for investment in American jobs here at home. Our framework would end the loopholes and the incentives that keep foreign profits offshore by moving to a territorial tax system and encouraging repatriation of these offshore funds, bringing that investment back to America. This is about getting the American economy going again and creating jobs and opportunity here at home rather than overseas.

It is vital that we advance a comprehensive tax reform that simplifies the IRS code and simplifies rates. Putting more money in the pockets of working individuals and families and empowering private investment will drive domestic job creation and increase wages through higher demand for labor and lower business costs. All the while we can ensure stable government revenues through a broader tax

base, a growing economy, and a more efficient tax system. That means that we will continue to be able to fund our priorities as we work to get our debt and deficit under control.

Ensuring U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace and providing tax relief to middle-class families will benefit both current and future generations. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work together to get tax reform done for the people of my State of North Dakota, for their respective States, and for Americans across this entire country.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, in many ways, the Children's Health Insurance Program has been an outstanding example of what a bipartisan, democratic process can accomplish. Twenty years ago, President Bill Clinton worked with a Republican majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives to successfully pass the Children's Health Insurance Program into law. That legislation passed with 85 votes in the Senate—an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote—to recognize the simple fact that all children born in this great country of ours should have healthcare coverage.

The Children's Health Insurance Program, along with our Nation's community health centers, has more often than not seen great bipartisan support. As Members of Congress, we have always come together and understood the importance of these programs, and we have done everything we can to ensure that quality, cost-effective care is available to millions of Americans. Unfortunately, as I stand here today, funding for both the Children's Health Insurance Program and community health centers has expired.

The Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, provides healthcare coverage to over 100,000 children in my home State of Michigan and more than 9 million children nationally. In addition, community health centers serve as the primary medical home to over 600,000 Michiganders and more than 20 million individuals across our country. For people living in rural and underserved areas, their community health center is their doctor's office and often their only choice when it comes to care close to home.

We have already passed the deadline to extend the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Community Health Center Fund. We have passed the time to act. We should not wait any longer to provide certainty to the millions of children and their families who depend on CHIP and to the Americans who will lose access to care if their community health center is closed.

We are already seeing the impact of our inaction in the CHIP program. Several States have begun to warn that

they may be forced to end enrollment of new children, cut back services, or end their programs altogether if we do not act soon. Independent experts estimate that at least 10 States could completely run out of funding for their Children's Health Insurance Program before the end of the year, while funding for the remaining States' programs would not be very far behind.

This is not a responsible way to govern. I have heard from physicians in my State, especially in rural communities, who fear that this lack of action will mean great harm to the patients they serve. I have heard from pediatricians who know firsthand what the end of CHIP would mean for Michigan's children. As our country grapples with what we can do to expand mental health treatment and address the expanding opioid epidemic, letting these programs lapse would be a huge step in the wrong direction. This unnecessary uncertainty has already forced some community health centers to contemplate staff hiring freezes and layoffs. It is certainly harming their day-to-day operations. It has made it difficult for them to recruit new doctors, and it has made it harder for their offices to obtain loans to grow their practices and to serve more patients.

Luckily, this is a problem we know how to solve. I am proud to have cosponsored bipartisan legislation with Senators HATCH and WYDEN that would ensure funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program. I also support similarly bipartisan legislation by Senators BLUNT and STABENOW to extend funding for our Nation's community health centers.

I welcome the fact that the Senate Finance Committee held a markup yesterday and was able to advance the bipartisan bill to fund the Children's Health Insurance Program. Now the rest of us in Congress need to do our job. Let's bring both of these bills up for a vote because, quite frankly, we cannot afford to wait any longer. Our Nation's children and millions of Americans who use community health centers as their primary medical home cannot afford to wait any longer. Historically, these programs have not been controversial to reauthorize, and they should not be now.

I am urging my colleagues to prioritize the children of our rural and underserved communities who will be hurt if we do not act soon. Let's do what is right for our country's children and families and pass this vital legislation as soon as possible.

Madam 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.

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

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

(The remarks of Ms. HEITKAMP and Ms. MURKOWSKI pertaining to the introduction of S. 1942 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND DR. ALONZO B.

PATTERSON, JR., AND MRS. SHIRLEY PATTERSON

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I wish to recognize an extraordinary individual in my State, along with his wife. I would like to take a few minutes today to recognize Reverend Dr. Alonzo B. Patterson, Jr., and Mrs. Shirley Patterson.

During the first week of November, Anchorage is going to host 4 days of events to commemorate the service of two of our most beloved community leaders, the Reverend Dr. Alonzo B. Patterson and his wife, Shirley Patterson. Next month, Reverend Patterson leaves the pulpit of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church. This is a pulpit he has held for some 47 years. Mrs. Patterson, his wife of six decades, is to be recognized for her service as well.

Anchorage is one of America's great communities, and it is not uncommon to celebrate the retirement of a figure of Patterson's stature, but 4 separate days of events—that is huge, and it is a testament to the respect our community has for the Patterson family.

Think about this: Alaska has been a State for just 58 years. Reverend Patterson has had his pulpit for 47 years. And Shiloh is not Reverend Patterson's first pulpit in Alaska; it is his second. He came to Anchorage after founding the Corinthian Baptist Church in Fairbanks. Reverend Patterson grew up with Alaska, and Alaska grew up with Reverend Patterson.

Corinthian and Shiloh could appropriately be characterized as African-American churches. But for the African-American community in Alaska, they are far more than churches; they are centers of Black history in Alaska.

Zakiya McCummings interviewed Reverend Patterson earlier this year for an article published in the Anchorage Press, and in that interview, Reverend Patterson explained:

The church was, and always has been, the sanctuary in the Black community. It is the meeting place, the community center, the focus for support and help, the place you come to be important, the psychologist for your particular problem, the time to shout out your frustrations and the only place to be significant. You could be a Deacon or something in the church where in the rest of the community, you were just another Black person. The church was for us a panacea for many of the social ills that existed then and still have relevance.

Given the central role Reverend Patterson has played in Alaska's African-American community for most of our State's existence, it is no surprise that he is regarded as a historian of Black culture in Alaska. Ms. McCummings observed that it is a responsibility that he doesn't take lightly. Reverend Patterson told her:

I feel like I have to be the keeper of our historical plight and to speak to each generation in my time. It is a powerful responsibility because if I go to sleep on my watch,

then the next watch will have nothing to build on. . . . We're responsible that the gate remains open for the next generation.

Under Reverend Patterson's watch, there was much progress. In the 1960s and 1970s, Reverend Patterson recalled, "much of Alaska was small family businesses, including the banks. If you were not part of that family or their friends, you had a hard time getting a job.

Many of the jobs for African Americans were either construction or government jobs."

Reverend Patterson proudly recalls the first Black principal of a State elementary school, an African-American banker who was elected to the school board and subsequently to the Alaska Legislature, an African-American activist in the Fairview section of Anchorage who is regarded as the grandfather of the city's public transportation system. Today's African-American community is built on the foundation of these pioneers who endured.

Make no mistake about this, Alonzo Patterson was no mere spectator to all of this progress. He was an agent of change, rooted in his observation, and he stated: "In ministry there are no limits except the ones we set for ourselves." Under his leadership, Shiloh grew spiritually, physically, and fiscally, and would include a church school, a television ministry, and a jail outreach ministry.

On Shiloh's 29th anniversary, the mortgage note for the original structure was burned under the theme, "Burning to Build," and groundbreaking for a new educational wing commenced. There was more building to come. The Martin Luther King Jr. Family Life Center was dedicated on May 23, 1993. In 2001, Reverend Patterson spun off a new nonprofit organization, Shiloh Community Development, Inc., to serve youth, minorities, and the disadvantaged. Today Shiloh Community Development is well known for its youth mentoring program called Young Lions of Alaska.

He is a founder of Bridge Builders of Alaska, which celebrates the diversity of our communities and a powerful voice in Alaska's annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Day. In 2015, Reverend Patterson was the keynote speaker at the King Day ceremonies on JBER. At that ceremony, he warned his audience that Dr. King's dream is at risk of dying. He said:

This dream is at risk if nothing is done, and nothing is holding us back but ourselves. Stop waiting for miracles; believe in yourself to make society better. Each of us can do our part, by loving and respecting others.

This is just one example of his powerful voice. Reverend Patterson's sermons were always inspiring, many legendary, and it explains why he is regarded as a pastor's pastor, growing not only his congregants but the generations of ministers who will follow in his footsteps. As one who has joined in the congregation there at Shiloh on numerous occasions, I can attest that

there was never a Sunday that I did not leave feeling inspired by the words of Dr. Patterson.

They aren't calling the appreciation festivities for Reverend Patterson a retirement ceremony. They are calling it a transition, probably because nobody believes Rev. Alonzo Patterson has any intentions of pursuing a future of leisure. Leadership and inspiration runs in Alonzo Patterson's DNA.

We wish him and Shirley well in their next calling, and we take comfort in the fact that their contributions to our community are far from over. November marks a transition, not a retirement—and certainly not a eulogy—for this extraordinary Alaska family.

On behalf of my Senate colleagues, I thank Dr. Patterson and his lovely wife Shirley for their good works, and thank them in advance for their continued leadership.

ALASKA AIRLINES "COMBI" PLANES

Mr. President, I know I have occupied a little bit of time on the floor this afternoon with a wide range of topics—from the tragedies that face many of our indigenous women to recognizing a prominent leader of the Alaska community. Now I wish to share a little bit of Alaska's history as we see a transition in aviation and transportation.

It is really the end of an era in my home State. On October 18, just a few days from now, Alaska Airlines will fly the final run of the uniquely Alaskan combi plane before retiring them and updating the fleet.

OK. She is going to make a floor speech about an airplane. Yes, I am going to make a floor speech about an airplane because this combi plane is a special Boeing 737-400, designed to carry up to 14,000 pounds of cargo and 72 passengers. It is called a combi because it is a dual-use plane, a combination of passengers and cargo. Alaska Airlines is the only major airline in the country to have these combi planes, and they were specifically designed for the special challenges of a very large State. Over their lifespan, they have delivered every imaginable thing via airplane in Alaska.

You have all heard me talk about the size of our State. The sheer size of this State presents logistical hurdles unlike anyplace else. I keep saying we are one-fifth the size of the country, and 80 percent of our communities are not connected by road. When we think about how we move around in our State, a postage stamp placed in the middle of an average sheet of paper represents the area a person can reach in Alaska by coastline, river, road, or railroad. The rest is only reachable by plane. You just have to fly everywhere. This being the case, it only makes sense to try to efficiently deliver people and goods to hub communities in Alaska. Alaska Airlines is looking to serve. This is not a promotion for them; it is a recognition that they needed to figure out how to move people and freight, and they reconfigured the aircraft to do this.

What makes these planes so special is, they can carry up to four large cargo containers. We call them igloos. These igloos load into the front portion of the aircraft, right behind the pilots. There is a simple divider between the cargo and the passengers. So they load the cargo up front, and the passengers come up the back on a set of steps, just like we used to do in the prejetway times. You load from the back, but your first 17 rows of a traditional aircraft would be occupied by cargo. If you have more cargo—if you are flying fish out from Cordova south or if you are flying your Iditarod dogs that have been dropped in Nome and need to get back to Anchorage and you need a lot of space for the animals, you have flexibility to move back and forth.

These have flown all over the State, up to Nome, on the Bering Sea coast, along the Arctic Ocean, to the oilfields in Prudhoe, and, most famously, in the "milk run" area. The milk run got its name because Alaska Airlines literally delivered the milk to the communities along the way, as well as other food stuff—all manner of goods and passenger. It is something that if you are from the southeast, we all know about the milk run. We all complain about the fact that it takes about 5 hours to get from Anchorage down to Juneau, if you have to go through Yakutat and Cordova and stop at each one. That is just the way it is. You bounce down from Cordova, Yakutat, Juneau, Ketchikan. Finally, you hit Seattle. You run into your sports teams, families are coming and going. These are the workhorses that are not only moving the passengers, they are moving the groceries, they are moving the mail, they are moving the medicine. They are moving it all.

When I say it moves everything, we have built up a little bit of history about how things move around. We have moved cows. We have moved cars. The picture I like best is moving the herd of Santa's reindeer. I think Santa was actually posed in this, but the reindeer were not. They needed to be able to move the reindeer so they hauled them in the front, situated them, and closed it off, and you have the passengers in the back. Whether you are moving reindeer, whether you are transporting an injured eagle to the Raptor Center in Sitka or letting the sled dogs hitch a ride back to Anchorage after they have made the thousand-mile trip to Nome, this is what we do.

The invention of the combi plane really highlights the unique needs and the parameters of daily life in the State. We are a long way from the lower 48. You can barely drive to any of the communities. If you are going to move goods, if you are going to move passengers, you are on an airplane. Whether it is Essential Air Services, bypass mail, air freight, these are the backbones of commerce in Alaska. This is our interstate. It is the interstate in the air.

Whether we are shipping our wild caught, sustainably managed salmon that people around the world love to eat, we ship that out. We ship in the toothpaste, the loaves of bread, and the basics that we need. Thanks to the combi, we have been able to do this with regular, reliable scheduled service in areas where the weather would usually chase off more. These are smaller aircraft. They can handle it all. The size of the combi allows them to land and take off in much more turbulent conditions than smaller propeller planes.

So it is a kind of bittersweet time for some of us who have grown up around these aircraft. As we think about the “only in Alaska” type of things, it is encouraging to know that this development of retiring the combi planes—the proposal is to replace them with separate, full-sized passenger and cargo planes. As a result of the increased demand for goods and passengers, we need more space on planes to deliver both. If updating the fleet means that we need and get more business in Alaska, I suppose that is a good thing for all.

There are many of us who are going to be bidding a fond farewell come October 18, which is the last scheduled flight for the combi. It is also Alaska Day in our State. I thank Alaska Airlines and those who fly these great planes and do so safely. They provide a level of service and have for so long. I thank them for what they have done over the course of so many years.

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

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, here is what is happening with so-called “tax reform.” Tonight, the Budget Committee is voting on a budget resolution that does two things.

First, it sets the spending limits for everything in the government—environment, energy, defense, healthcare, education, transportation, and so on.

Second, it includes something called reconciliation instructions that basically direct all of the committees to report back with legislation that either increases or decreases the Federal deficit by a certain amount. This time around, here is what they are doing—asking the Senate Finance Committee to draft legislation to increase the deficit by \$1.5 trillion. Again, this is going to pass on a party-line vote, with Republicans prevailing, to increase the deficit by \$1.5 trillion. This is what will start the tax reform process.

That is not all. Republicans still haven’t given up on decimating our healthcare system. They are still trying to cut Medicaid and, this time,

Medicare, and they are going to use this tax bill. They are going to cut \$473 billion from Medicare at a time when our population is getting older and many seniors are already struggling. They are also going to cut \$1 trillion from Medicaid. This is the program that pays for one out of every two births in this country. It helps millions of families who have loved ones in nursing home care.

Last week, they tried to pass a healthcare bill that cut taxes. Now they are trying to pass a tax bill that will cut healthcare. Their proposal will, actually, increase the deficit by \$4 trillion. That is 12 zeros.

Here is what we could do with \$4 trillion. We could completely rebuild half of the airports in the United States. We could put 20 million people through 4 years of college. We could pay off the debt for every student loan.

Instead, the United States is going to be in the red by \$4 trillion, but after they cut \$1 trillion from Medicaid and one-half trillion dollars from Medicare, the party that has railed against the Federal debt and deficit will still add \$2.5 trillion to the deficit.

This is all so that they can give tax cuts to the richest people in the United States. I promise you, I understand that both parties are sometimes guilty of exaggerating and that sometimes both parties are guilty of relying on talking points and relying on caricatures of the other side, but you couldn’t caricature this bill if you tried. This bill is already a caricature of what people say Republicans are all about, which is to shred the social safety net and provide tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans.

They are going to cut the corporate tax rate from 35 to 20 percent, and they are going to cut tax rates across the board, but the people who will actually benefit will be the people at the top. The Tax Policy Center, which is a non-partisan, highly respected group, has crunched the numbers, and they found that within 10 years, 80 percent of the benefits of this \$4 trillion tax bill will go to 1 percent of Americans.

Remember what is happening. We are borrowing a huge chunk of this, and whatever is not borrowed comes out of Medicare and Medicaid. So the programs that pay for women to give birth in a hospital or for elderly people to get healthcare will be decimated, and the wealthiest Americans will pay less in taxes. This is bad policy, not just for the people who work hard but for the whole economy.

I want to give you a specific example. Again, both parties rely on talking points, and both parties accuse each other of having the wrong set of ideas, but we have an example of what happens when you do this. This bill is actually modeled after what they did in the State of Kansas. The State government eliminated one of its business taxes, telling people that it would help the State’s economy. Instead, the economy slowed down, which left them with

even lower tax revenues. They had to cut government programs, like education, and now people do not want to send their kids to Kansas public schools anymore because they do not have the resources to educate their children.

This is not a path that America should follow. Everyone needs to pay their fair share, and that includes big corporations and the people who are benefiting from the system and making millions of dollars every year, but in this proposal, they are the ones getting all of the tax breaks.

Companies already have huge tax breaks. Some corporations end up paying zero in Federal income tax every April 15 even though they are making healthy profits. They have teams of lawyers and accountants who help them dodge paying even a penny to the Federal Government. That is why corporate income taxes make up less than 10 percent of all of the revenue to the Federal Treasury. Meanwhile, at least 30 percent of the middle class will actually pay more if the Republicans succeed with their tax reform package.

Think about this.

Thirty percent of the middle class is going to see tax increases in their tax bills. Why? It is because they have to find some money to subsidize the tax cuts for the richest people. Some of the money will be found by borrowing; some of the money will be found by making cuts to Medicare and Medicaid; and some of the money will be found by increasing taxes on the middle class. One out of every two households with children will see its taxes go up under this plan. Increasing taxes for these people while decreasing them for big corporations is not a plan for economic growth. We have heard over and over that Republicans do not want to add to the deficit—I don’t either—but this is, literally, what they are voting to do tonight.

Again, this is not a talking point. This is not a sort of rhetorical flourish. The bill, itself, provides for \$1.5 trillion worth of deficit spending. Yet it is not deficit spending on the military; it is not deficit spending on disaster response; and it is not deficit spending on Medicare or Medicaid or Social Security or any of the social safety net programs that they claim is the problem with the Federal budget. It is deficit spending for the purpose of a tax cut, 80 percent of which is going to 1 percent of the country. This is not conservative—certainly not fiscally conservative—and it will not help us to grow the economy.

It is no surprise that this policy is bad, because, again, the process has been so bad. With healthcare, they ignored regular order. They obliterated the committee process. They ignored Democrats. They ignored the way the U.S. Senate is supposed to work, and they failed. One Republican Senator says that he will not vote for anything that adds one penny to the deficit. Another Republican Senator said that he

will not do anything that does not cut taxes for everybody. It already does not meet that test. Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle—Republicans too—have promised not to cut Medicaid or Medicare. It violates all of those promises.

If you did not like the ACA repeal because it cut Medicaid, guess what. This cuts Medicaid more. If you made a promise to your voters not to cut Medicare, you should be aware that this bill provides for one-half trillion dollars in cuts to Medicare. If you are railing against debt and deficits, this is the biggest budget buster that I have ever seen in my short, 5-year career in the U.S. Senate.

During the campaign, the President of the United States promised not to cut Medicare, and the senior Senator from Arizona has called for regular order. This violates every procedural and policy principle that has been articulated on this Senate floor since I have been here. I do not see a way forward on this legislation when it has been conceived in a purely partisan way. It will only take us deeper into dysfunction. For the sake of the Senate, let's stop going down this path. Let's restore regular order and work together on a bipartisan tax reform process.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO PASTOR ALONZO PATTERSON

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, nearly every week I have been coming down to the Senate floor to recognize someone in my State who has made a difference for Alaska and really has made a difference for all Americans. It is my favorite part of the week to actually come down and talk about Alaska to my colleagues in the Senate, to the folks in the Gallery, to the press, and to the American people watching. It is what I refer to as our time to talk about the Alaskan of the Week.

Many watching and on the floor and those who have visited our great State know that Alaskans think it is the most beautiful place in the world. There are natural wonders everywhere. We had a beautiful summer. We have resilient, warm-hearted, fiercely independent but accepting people. We have challenges in Alaska just like the rest of the country, but at the heart of our State are kind, generous people full of different cultures and backgrounds that we celebrate.

Most people don't know this about Anchorage, AK: My hometown is probably the most culturally and ethnically diverse city in the country. We have places of worship all over the city and the State that reflect that great diversity of Alaska and America.

One of the stalwarts of our faith community for the past 47 years has been Pastor Alonzo Patterson of the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, and he is our Alaskan of the week. Every Sunday he fills his church with spirit, joy, and gospel music punctuated by "amens" that float through the church, down the street, and work their way into our community and into our hearts. That is what he has been doing for 47 years. For decades, those sermons have inspired countless Alaskans to help feed the hungry, provide homes for those without, and strive to create a more just country, State, and society, and a more just community.

Let me tell you a little bit about Pastor Patterson. He was born in Wilson, LA, and raised in New Orleans. Like a lot of Alaskans, thousands of Alaskans, he joined the military and made his way up to Fairbanks, AK, in the 1960s, where he founded the Corinthian Baptist Church, and he ministered to the congregation there. Then, in 1970, he was called to Shiloh, one of the few African-American churches in Anchorage. He designed and rebuilt Shiloh at its current location, and under his leadership, Shiloh's membership, its facilities, and its energy took off.

He has conducted thousands of marriages and baptisms. He has given thousands of eulogies, celebrated graduations and anniversaries, counseled countless couples, people who are grieving, people who are rejoicing, people who are suffering, and he has helped turn that into action—not just for the African-American community but for all people and all races in our community and in our State.

Pastor Patterson told a reporter:

The church was and always has been a sanctuary in the Black community. It is the meeting place, the community center, the focus for support and help, the place you come to be important, the psychologist for your particular problem, the time to shout out your frustrations and the only place to be significant.

He continued:

You could be a Deacon or something in the church where in the rest of the community you were just another Black person. The church was for us a panacea for many of the social ills that existed then and still have relevance.

That is what he talked about. That is his heart and soul, how he saw his church and congregation. Thanks to Pastor Patterson and Shiloh, the city is a more inclusive place for all. He has helped heal those social ills for thousands of our fellow Alaskans.

One of his friends, Celeste Hodge Growden, a member of the church, said:

He and the church have led the way for a lot of things that have been accomplished here [in Anchorage]. Pastor Patterson always says, "leaders lead." That is the way he has lived his life. He is not in the back-ground.

During election time, Pastor Patterson organizes a huge "get out the vote" campaign. He was instrumental in getting a Martin Luther King memorial in Anchorage—a 10-year-long endeavor.

She also talked about the groups he chaired, founded, and led beyond his congregation, including Bridge Builders of Anchorage, the March of Dimes Foundation, the Martin Luther King Jr. Foundation of Alaska, and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Anchorage.

You know, with leaders like this, the list goes on and on. In addition to Corinthian Baptist Church in Fairbanks and Shiloh in Anchorage, Pastor Patterson also planted Eagle River Missionary Baptist Church and Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church of Palmer.

I have been uplifted to the core when my wife Julie and I have gone to Shiloh and listened to Pastor Patterson preach and listened to the beautiful—and I mean beautiful—Shiloh choir sing. It is a spiritual and energizing experience like no other. I love attending services at Shiloh.

On November 5, 2017, Pastor Patterson's 80th birthday, he will be giving his last sermon as pastor of Shiloh, and I certainly plan on being there. He is stepping down for Pastor Undra Parker, who will be the new and dynamic leader of Shiloh—another great Alaskan, another veteran—and I know he is going to do a great job. But of course it is a bittersweet time for Shiloh's parishioners because of the foundation Pastor Patterson built.

The church, the singing, and the amens will continue on Earth and the church in Anchorage, AK, as it is in Heaven. God bless Pastor Patterson, his wife of 61 years, First Lady Shirley Patterson, and the congregation of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church for all they have done and continue to do for our community.

Congratulations to Pastor Patterson for being our Alaskan of the Week.

Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about my Members on the other side of the aisle who are doing something that is just not helping the United States of America right now; that is, obstructing progress with regard to the new administration.

I understand that right now my party is in the majority, and to be honest, I have been someone who thinks we should spend a lot more time here in the Senate, working in the Senate and getting things done. We have a lot of work to do. But I see that people back home can get frustrated with some of the lack of progress, and some of that we can address by spending more time in this body.

Some of the questions that are coming out are about why things aren't getting done. It is a good question. Answers can be complicated, but what it mostly boils down to is that a lot of issues in this body—a lot—rely on consensus. The rules were carefully constructed so that the minority has a say in the legislative process. For the most part, I believe that is a good thing. As a former President once pointed out, we are not a red or blue America; we are the United States of America.

With that said, the people did elect us to come here and start getting

things done. Implicit in their votes for a new President and a new administration was to be able to put people in the Federal Government to work, to focus on growing the economy, and to focus on rebuilding the military after a 25-percent cut over the last 8 years, to focus on better jobs and higher wages.

Throughout history, whether it has been Republicans or Democrats, the minority party has understood this. When a new administration gets elected, they start to put nominees in place, and the Senate takes action. We hold hearings and we have votes to put Senate-confirmed officials in the Federal Government to work. If you don't like the person, you can ask them tough questions in hearings and you can vote against them on the floor of the Senate or in committees. But what we are seeing right now is pure obstruction. On every single nominee, the maximum amount of time is required before there is even a vote. This is something new. This is something different. In fact, the current minority leader said the following words in 2013:

Who in America doesn't think a President, Democrat or Republican, deserves his or her picks for who should run the Federal Government agencies? Nobody.

That was the minority leader in 2013. They were wise words then, but apparently he and his Members have forgotten those words.

I have some facts here on the board. At this point in time, 10 months into President Obama's Presidency in 2009, the Senate had allowed more than 318 nominees to be cast by a simple vote. The Senate only asked for a procedure known as cloture five times. Essentially, President Obama got elected, and the Senate Democrats and Republicans worked to get his team put in place. Yes, the Republicans did that. Certainly, I wasn't here then. They voted against some of these nominees, and that is fine. But what they did was they let them come to the floor for a vote.

In contrast to what I mentioned about President Obama's first year in office, only 100 of President Trump's nominees have been confirmed through voice vote. That is less than one-third of the courtesy given to President Obama 8 years ago. Cloture votes for Trump's nominees have been required for 100 nominees. Remember, I just said there were five for Obama's nominees 8 years ago. There have been 100 for Trump's nominees, and only 63 have been allowed by simple voice vote. What does that mean? It means that each vote requires a 2-day waiting period and then another 30 hours of debate. That is what it means.

The press won't write about it. My friends in the press sitting up here in the Gallery won't write about this. The contrast between the Trump treatment by the Senate and the Obama treatment by the Senate is incredible, and we don't hear a word out of the press on this. And this isn't partisan; this is just hurting the American people.

There was an election, and now we need to fill the government with people who can run agencies. With all due respect to my friends on the other side of the aisle, they are not doing it. They are not allowing it.

We had a vote on an Eighth Circuit judge last week. It had to go through cloture. We essentially spent the whole week on this—2 days and 30 hours. The judge passed the Senate by a 95-to-1 vote. It was a 95-to-1 vote. He wasn't controversial at all so what was the point? The point was simply to delay.

Again, here is the difference. Nominations sent to the Senate are about the same. President Obama had more 8 years ago but not too many more. There were 520 versus 443 for President Trump confirmed. At this time during the Obama administration, there were 342. Trump has 163. So that is 66 percent for the Obama nominees 8 years ago and 37 percent for the Trump nominees.

The press will not write about it, but this is a disservice to Americans, whether you are a Democrat or Republican. I will just mention a few. We have had nominees, such as the Assistant Secretary for Health in Health and Human Services. It came out of committee several weeks ago. It is sitting on the floor. The Assistant Secretary of Health, it is not a controversial position for the company, but it is an important position. I bet that person is going to finally get passage from the Senate at some point by a big supermajority, but we are delaying it. We are delaying it.

I really would love it if the minority leader would come down, look at the American people, and just say: Here is why we are delaying. Here is why we are delaying. Explain it. They love to do this kind of stuff, procedural "dark arts," thinking people aren't watching. People understand this.

The head of a leading Democratic think tank told the press they intend to hold up and tie up floor time on every single Trump administration nominee. Now, if that happens, if they take the time for every nominee—there are over 1,000 who need Senate confirmation—and they take the entire amount of time they are allowed with cloture and other votes, if they don't extend the courtesy that was extended to President Obama when he was trying to put his team in place, the Trump administration will never have a team in place. It will literally be 4 years.

I hope today the press starts writing about this because the difference here in 8 years is quite remarkable and yet nobody is talking about it; that being that the minority leader and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle stop obstructing what every other administration has had in terms of a courtesy, which is, if you win the election, whether you liked it or not, you work with the other side in the U.S. Senate to get your people in place—Department of Defense officials, Department of Transportation officials, De-

partment of Health officials, Environmental Protection Agency officials. We have to get the country moving again, and the obstruction, which is unprecedented, by the minority leader and unfortunately many of my colleagues on the other side is only harming the American people. It is only harming the progress that the vast majority of Americans want, whether you are a Democrat or a Republican. I am hopeful they are finally going to change and start moving forward nominations and letting us vote on them so we have an opportunity to actually get this country moving again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I would like to begin by talking about the recent tragedy in Las Vegas, the largest mass shooting in U.S. history, with at least 59 dead and more than 500 injured, including one Minnesotan who was injured and another who lost his life. So I join my colleagues in mourning for the victims and their families. They are and should be our focus at this time, as well as making sure those who were hurt get the best medical care this country can give.

As we look ahead, these events underscore the urgency to continue fighting for funding to better treat mental illness but also for sensible gun safety legislation, and I joined with some of my colleagues the day after the tragedy in Las Vegas to call for those changes. No one policy will prevent every tragedy, but we need to come together on commonsense legislation to save lives.

One place we discussed this week where we could come together—because we have in the past—is on background checks. My colleagues Senator MANCHIN and Senator TOOMEY, who are two A-rated NRA Senators, have already demonstrated that we can find bipartisan agreement on something as straightforward as background checks. I was very pleased they came together on this legislation, but the fact remains, the Senate's failure to pass that bipartisan compromise was disheartening—one of my more disheartening days in the Senate because I began my day that day with the families of the Sandy Hook tragedy, with the parents who had lost their little kids, with the parents who had come to this building to advocate for a bill, the background check bill, that they knew wouldn't have saved their child's life, but they knew it would have saved others. What we have seen with expanded background checks is they reduce suicides and they reduce domestic homicides by a fairly large number.

Our constituents agree that we should be able to find some agreement here, as the numbers have consistently shown that Americans across the political spectrum, including gun owners, support proposals to require background checks by wide margins. I have

a State, like the Presiding Officer's, where there are a lot of hunters. It is a proud tradition in Minnesota so I look at all these proposals and I say to myself: Does this hurt my Uncle Dick and his deer stand? For many of the ones I have looked at, the answer is clearly no, including the background check bill.

When I talk to law enforcement in my State, they stress the need to have effective background checks to stop felons, people with severe mental illnesses, and others prohibited under current law from accessing guns. These efforts do not have to infringe in any way on Americans' lawful right to own guns.

Another sensible measure is Senator FEINSTEIN's legislation to close a loophole that allows bump stop devices to convert semiautomatic firearms into weapons that work like fully automatic guns. Law enforcement officers have now recovered 12 of these devices from the Las Vegas shooter's room. I am a cosponsor of that bill, and I am encouraged that some of my Republican colleagues have agreed to look at this.

I hope we can find a path forward in the weeks ahead, not only with regard to this particular focus, the bump stock device legislation, but also on some of the other bills like the background check bill.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, I am here for another purpose today; that is, that we must get to work on other important business in the Senate. We need to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program and come together on bipartisan fixes to the Affordable Care Act. No parent should ever have to worry whether their child will have healthcare, but funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, expired over this weekend. CHIP is one of the great bipartisan success stories. Both parties have come together to support a program that provides healthcare to millions of children.

In Minnesota, these funds support coverage for 125,000 children. I heard from the children's hospitals and clinics of Minnesota just last week about many of the families who count on this program. While States like mine are finding ways to make Federal funding last a bit longer, since ours has already expired, every single day Congress doesn't act puts coverage of millions of children at risk.

There is already bipartisan work underway to keep this program going. Senator HATCH and Senator WYDEN have introduced a bipartisan bill to extend CHIP for 5 years. In 2015, the last time we renewed this program, it passed the Senate with 92 votes—92 out of 100 votes. We should demonstrate that same bipartisan spirit again. The children in America are counting on us. We must act before it is too late or States like mine may be forced to make difficult choices about insurance

coverage for some of our more vulnerable constituents.

CHIP is one part of our healthcare system that is working. We should be doing everything in our power to protect it. So let's come together and pass this long-term reauthorization of CHIP.

Mr. President, CHIP is not the only area where we should be able to come together on healthcare. The American people want us to work together on bipartisan fixes to the Affordable Care Act. As I said the day it passed, it was a beginning and not an end. Any major piece of legislation like that needs improvements and changes. Let's work together on the bipartisan bills and ideas that have been put forward. Just like my friend Senator MCCAIN said, we could do better working together—Republicans and Democrats.

Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY have been holding hearings and discussions on commonsense solutions to bring down insurance costs over the past month. We had Governors here, and there were actually more Republican Governors in the room than Democratic Governors, as they embraced these suggested changes which include reinsurance. I note Senator COLLINS and Senator NELSON, a Republican and a Democrat, have a bill together that would do something on that front.

I look at what has been done in Alaska—I see my colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI here—and what has been done in Minnesota when it comes to reinsurance, and we have seen some of the rates go down, not to where we need them to go, but there has been a decrease in the amount of rates. We would like to see that on a national basis, and that is why I am such a strong supporter of Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY's work.

Mr. President, finally, we need to be doing something on the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs. People such as Kim from Plymouth, MN, is struggling to afford her insulin because it has gone up three times. She keeps the injector with a few drops of insulin from day-to-day so she can get by. That is why I think we should have Medicare Part D negotiations. I have a bill that now has 33 cosponsors that lifts the ban that makes it illegal for 41 million seniors to negotiate the prices of drugs. Seniors can be a pretty stubborn and very vocal group. Why don't we let them unleash their power and allow Medicaid to negotiate prices?

Senator GRASSLEY and I have a bill to stop pay for delay, where major pharmaceutical companies are paying off generics to keep their products off the market. I have a bill with Senator GRASSLEY, Senator LEAHY, and Senator LEE—the four of us lead the bill—the CREATES Act, which makes it easier to get more generic competition in the market. We also—MCCAIN and I, and Senator LEE and I—have bills that allow for safe drugs to come in from other countries to again create more

competition to bring the price down. When the prices of four of the top best selling drugs in America have gone up over 100 percent, I don't think we can just sit here and do nothing anymore.

I bring up these efforts because, for the most part, they are bipartisan—the work of Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY, the bills that have been introduced to do something on prescription drugs. Let's get moving on that and let's reauthorize CHIP. The last time it passed the Senate with 92 votes.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 323, 324, 325; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc, with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. INHOFE. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, it is my hope that we will be able to come to agreement with regard to the nominees whom I have just asked for consideration. These are individuals who have been moved out of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee to be named to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. This is a Commission that has been without a functioning quorum for months on end. They have just recently been able to achieve that quorum, but they are not yet to a full complement.

We worked hard to reach an agreement with colleagues so these names could advance so the FERC could get to work in an expeditious manner. There is much to be considered. The work that has piled up, that has cost our economy, that has cost our country over these many months, as we have seen these delays when you don't have a functioning FERC, has been considerable. We want to try to reach agreement, but I am disappointed that we are not going to be able to advance them this afternoon.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

WILDFIRE FUNDING

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, 4 weeks ago, I stood here on the floor of the Senate and called for increased funding to fight the wildfires. This is just one of the dramatic pictures of Oregon ablaze. It is thousands and thousands of acres.

I had the experience of driving roughly 350 miles in my State and never escaping the smoke from the fires that were in every single corner and in every quadrant of the State of Oregon. We have seen the challenge of Mother Nature at work this year with Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria hitting in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico. But let's not forget the incredible damage being done in Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington by these extraordinary fires.

Over the last decade, we have seen an average of 50,000 fires in America each year. They destroy and burn up more than 5 million acres, but this year the count is well over 8 million acres and counting. In Oregon, we normally have fires that burn, on average, about 500,000 acres, but this year we are well over 600,000 acres and counting.

As a result of these raging fires, we have many communities that have been so powerfully impacted and so many forests destructively impacted. We should stop and ask: What can we do better in terms of our forests and our communities? That is why I am taking to the floor right now.

The first thing we need to do is to end fire borrowing. This is where the U.S. Forest Service, in order to pay for fighting these fires, proceeds to borrow from every other account. This has become all too common. What are those other accounts? They are the hazardous fuels funds, forest management funds, forest restoration funds, forest conservation funds, road maintenance funds, and funds that are designed to prepare for future timber sales.

All of that does a lot of damage to the preparation. So the fires are more resilient and aren't susceptible to this type of firefighting. We have seen, on average in the last decade, a cost of fighting fires across the country of about \$1.6 billion. But this year, we are over \$3 billion—almost double. So even though the Appropriations Committee had wisely put in a buffer of several hundred million dollars to prevent fire borrowing, those funds were long ago wiped out.

So there we were 4 weeks ago. I was working to say that now that we are over the allotted funds for the year, let's immediately get more funds that can be used to backfill this shortage in September. I thank all of my colleagues for the fact that those funds were included in the continuing resolution. We successfully provided a bridge so that firefighting could continue and so that the fire borrowing was quickly repaid.

But that is not a permanent solution—to try to legislate or to backfill on a rapid basis. Indeed, when we have these kinds of fire seasons, it is like other natural disasters. It is like tornadoes and hurricanes and floods. So we need to have a FEMA-style backup for those worst ever fire seasons. That is what my colleagues Senator WYDEN and Senator CRAPO—bipartisan teamwork—have been putting forth. It is

called the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act of 2017. It says that when we reach a certain level of funding for fighting fires, the balance will go to a FEMA-style fund. That is exactly the way it should be done.

It has been estimated in the past that if just the top 1 percent or 2 percent of the worst fires were funded in FEMA-style fund, we would never have had fire borrowing in the past. But the most relevant kind of crisp and clean way to do that would be to adopt this bill Senator WYDEN and Senator CRAPO have put so much work into and which I am certainly pleased to cosponsor. That would be very useful, and we should do that now.

We should respond while the memory is fresh and, actually, while fires are still burning in State after State—certainly burning in my home State of Oregon. Then we should recognize, too, that this terrible fire year has done so much damage to so many communities. We have communities where the roads have been cut off. We have communities where the tourists disappeared because of the smoke, or other economic enterprises had to shut down for an extended period.

So as we assist those communities hit by Harvey and hit by Irma and hit by Maria, let's also help those communities that were hit by this year's extraordinary fires. That would mean strengthening the Small Business Disaster Loan Program. That would mean taking the additional funding for the USDA Emergency Community Water Assistance Program, and, certainly, it would mean making additional community development block grants available to the communities impacted by these fires. Let's not forget those communities as we provide assistance in funding to the communities affected by the hurricanes.

Then we also need to address the fact that many assets in our forests were scorched by these fires. There are trails that have to be repaired, roads that have to be repaired, watershed repairs to avoid landslides, facilities that were scorched and burned, and wildlife and fish management restoration, including critical sage grouse areas.

I was up visiting the incredible waterfall, the Multnomah Falls. They were explaining that several of the trails have bridges—there are so many bridges on the trails in Oregon—and that the fire had burned some of the understructure. So from above it looked like the bridges were safe, but they weren't safe. They can't reopen those trails until they get support to do all these repairs. The Forest Service has estimated that it will take \$150 million to restore the damage done to the Forest Service's infrastructure.

So we should make that happen as part of this bill. Then, we should turn to forest fire resilience. We have 2 million acres in need of fire prevention efforts in Oregon. Actually, we have far more of that in need of fire prevention, but we have nearly 2 million that have

already passed through environmental approval for work to reduce the hazardous fuels that are on the floor of the forest, and we need to thin these forests.

You can imagine that when you have clearcuts and those clearcuts are replanted, the trees grow back very close together. In a short amount of time, those forests are very good for fires and very good for disease, but they are neither good for ecosystems nor for timber stands. So they have to be thinned, and that thinning can be done, in Oregon alone, on nearly 2 million acres already approved through the environmental process. The challenge is to get more funds into that effort.

That, too, should be part of this because, whether you talk to an environmentalist or talk to somebody who wants sawlogs for the mills, they both know that if you thin these forests, you make them more resistant to fire. With better timber stands, you have better ecosystems, and you supply a steady supply of sawlogs to the mill.

Let's not reopen the timber wars of the past. Let's work together with a win-win.

I want to show this chart because it indicates the dramatic change of what has happened to the Forest Service budget. We can go back to 1995 and compare it to the year 2015. I want to focus particularly on the orange. The orange is the amount of money that was spent fighting forest fires, and 20 years ago, it was 16 percent of the Forest Service budget. But in 2015—2 years ago—it broke 50 percent. It was 52 percent of their budget. This year, it has certainly gone up much higher than that. So as the amount of funds spent on fighting fires has increased, it has dramatically reduced the amount of funds that support our maintenance and improvement of the forest. That is what is getting squeezed out.

Let me put it differently. The more you spend fighting fires out of a single pot of money, the less money you have to prevent the fires. Everywhere I go they say: Can't we do more on the front end so these forests are more resilient? If you think about how fire works, it really gets going if the trees are close together because one tree lights the next tree on fire. If you thin them, you slow that down. The fire goes from the ground, where there is brush, to the canopy, where there are branches, very easily if the branches are close to the ground. So you trim off those branches, separate the trees, thin them out, shave off the branches, cut off the branches, and suddenly you have a forest that is much more resilient.

There are those folks who have said: Let's just get rid of the environmental rules. Let's just clearcut everything. Let's do 10,000 acres at a time. That is, by the way, 15 square miles. Let's set those 15 square miles next to each other. Let's just shave the Earth and wipe out the forests. That way, there will not be forest fires. Those are the timber wars of the past.

What we have seen is that we can bridge the divide between a good ecosystem and a good timber stand by thinning the forest, by making them more like a natural forest, which is much more fire resilient. In the process of thinning, which has to be done periodically over time, we are also providing a steady foundation for sawlogs for our mills.

There is a mill in John Day, OR. I met with the folks there who were very worried. The workers there were very worried about that mill getting shut down. I was determined to do everything I could to save that mill. What ended up happening is that we found we couldn't save that mill with a timber sale because a timber sale can't commit to a load of logs over a 10-year period. The owner of the mill couldn't commit to the cost of new machinery if he didn't know he would get logs for an extended period of time. So we discovered that we could, though, through a forest health contract—through a stewardship contract—enable a steady supply of thinned logs to make it to that mill and make sure that mill stayed open. Not only did it keep it open, but it added workers to that mill. That is the type of win-win solution that we need.

There is another way of looking at the cost of fighting fires. Here we see, in 1995, 16 percent of the budget going to fight fires; in 2017, 56 percent. Let's look into the future. An original estimate was that we would reach 67 percent by 2025; now the new estimate, based on the changing dynamics in the forest, is that we will get to over two-thirds of the budget fighting fires by the year 2021—four fire seasons from today. That is how big the issue is. That is why we need funds from the front end to be able to thin these forests. This is simply common sense.

If you are the private owner of a private forest, you wouldn't dare let this forest retain this high propensity for fires and disease. You would thin the forest. You would make it a better timber stand; you would make it a better ecosystem. And that is what we need to do.

We have also seen that another way of looking at the changes is how the staffing levels have changed over the last two decades. If we look at just two decades ago, we can see that in 1998 there were about 18,000 individuals dedicated to managing the forest lands and just 5,700 dedicated to going out and fighting blazes. Now we have come into the future, and we see now that the number of people fighting fires is larger than the number working on all of the other forest programs. We have to commit to doing far more on the prevention end. If we let this summer's crisis go without securing funding to thin those forests that have already gone through the environmental process, we are making a huge mistake, and it is going to cost us more because there are going to be even more fires in the future. So not only do we spend

more out of the National Treasury to fight them, but we will have less healthy timber stands to fuel our economy.

Let's end the fire burn. Let's provide the funding to restore the fire service assets that were burned, the scourged assets. Let's provide assistance through community development block grants and small business loans to assist the communities that were scourged by these fires. Let's pass Senator WYDEN and Senator CRAPO's bill, which proceeds to create a FEMA-like structure to back up the worst fire seasons, and certainly, certainly, absolutely, let's invest in prevention on the front end by thinning these forests and getting the flammable buildup of forest branches off the floor of the forests. Those are positive things we can do.

At this moment in Houston, in Miami, in Puerto Rico, people are thinking, what can we do to better prepare for the next storm surge? What can we do to be better prepared for the next hurricane? Well, we know for sure that we are going to have fires across the Northwest in Montana, in Idaho, in Oregon, in Washington every summer, and they are simply getting worse. We must ask ourselves the same question: How do we change this rhythm? How do we operate this differently and better? That is our responsibility in this Chamber, and that is the set of things we can do to have a far better outcome in the future.

I urge all of my colleagues to support these five efforts as we support funding for Texas and Florida and Puerto Rico. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUNT). The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks on Tuesday, October 17, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 191, the nomination of David Trachtenberg to be Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. I further ask that there be 10 minutes of debate on the nomination equally divided in the usual form; that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on confirmation with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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. 327, 332, 333, and 337.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Stephen B. King, of Wisconsin, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Czech Republic; BARBARA LEE, of California, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Seventy-second Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations; CHRISTOPHER SMITH, of New Jersey, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Seventy-second Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations; and J. Steven Dowd, of Florida, to be United States Director of the African Development Bank for a term of five years.

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.

Is there any further debate on the nominations en bloc?

If not, the question is, will the Senate advise and consent to the King, Lee, Smith, and Dowd 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. 365, 366, and 367.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Timothy Gallaudet, of California, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere; Howard R. Elliott, of Indiana, to be Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. Department of Transportation and Walter G. Copan, of Colorado, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology.

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 Gallaudet, Eliott, and Copan 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. 360.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Bruce J. Walker, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability).

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 Walker nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over 2 weeks ago, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands were devastated by Hurricane Maria. This was less than a month after the islands felt the impacts of another powerful storm, Hurricane Irma. Hurricane Maria has left a wake of destruction across the islands. In Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, too many Americans remain without power, clean drinking water, or a method of communicating with their relatives and first responders.

Last week, I met with leaders in the Puerto Rican community in Chicago to discuss local efforts to provide aid.

This week, I met with a delegation from Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to discuss relief efforts and what we can do at the Federal level to help them rebuild. The stories they shared about friends and family in Puerto Rico were heartbreaking. These people, our fellow American citizens, are facing a life and death situation. Sadly, the lives of at least 16 people have been claimed.

The situation in Puerto Rico is dire, and aid cannot wait. The 3.5 million people who live on the island of Puerto Rico are our fellow U.S. citizens, and it is our duty to provide aid to them in their time of need.

Yesterday, Congress received a supplemental aid request from the administration to provide much needed disaster relief to our fellow Americans. Now, Congress must come together to help these Americans rebuild homes and businesses, restore critical infrastructure, and access life-sustaining supplies.

Providing emergency disaster assistance to people in need is not a local issue. It is an American issue.

Just as I expect my colleagues to come to the aid of the State of Illinois when we are faced with a natural disaster and just as Congress came to the aid of Hurricane Harvey victims a few short weeks ago, the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands expect us to rally behind them as they work to respond to Hurricane Maria.

I urge my colleagues to quickly pass a clean aid package that will help all Americans whose lives have been impacted by these natural disasters. Any supplemental appropriations bill that includes aid for States impacted by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma must also include aid for Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and western States that have been devastated by wildfires.

I was heartened to hear that the Illinois National Guard has deployed teams to provide telecommunication assistance, food, water, tents, and cots to Puerto Rico. I was also glad to see that individual assistance is now available for all 78 of the municipalities on the island, ensuring all individuals in Puerto Rico can receive assistance from the Federal Government.

The Federal response to this disaster has taken far too long, and we must do more to help our fellow American citizens during this humanitarian crisis.

In Congress, our top priority should be making sure the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have the funding they need to rebuild and recover. We cannot delay providing this much needed funding any longer.

It has been tragic to see thousands of shipping containers held at ports, which have been full of critical, life-sustaining supplies that are not reaching those most in need. There continue to be reports of families in Puerto Rico who are stranded and isolated. We must prioritize quickly distributing supplies to reach every individual in the days, weeks, and months to come.

The U.S. citizens who live in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are at risk of running out of food, water, and fuel. It would be unconscionable for us to abandon them in their time of need.

Our thoughts are with the many people who have lost their loved ones, their homes, and other property. I want to recognize the hard work of the volunteers, local officials, and Federal employees that have come forward in this time of need and pitched in at every level.

We can and should do more to help the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands rebuild and recover. I have no doubt that the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands will be able to clean up and rebuild, and they will be stronger for it. The entire Nation must come together as an American family to give them the aid and support they need at every step along the way.

FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, there are a lot of issues roiling our Nation these days. I want to talk about an issue that may not get all the headlines, but that has seen dramatic and troubling changes this year: our Nation's higher education policy.

Over the last several weeks, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos has continued her assault on students and their families.

Previously we had seen her rescind reforms that would improve customer service for students and hold student loan servicers accountable for their treatment of borrowers; rescind a policy prohibiting debt collectors from charging borrowers 16 percent fees to bring their loans out of default; halt the processing of borrower defense loan discharge applications from students defrauded by for-profit colleges and throwing out rules intended to help students get the discharges to which they are entitled to under law; rewrite the gainful employment rule, which is meant to protect students from programs for-profit colleges that saddle students with too much debt compared to their income; propose eliminating public service loan forgiveness, which helps students afford to serve their communities, States, and country while repaying their student loans; propose dumping \$38 billion in additional student loan interest on needy students by eliminating subsidized undergraduate loans; and propose freezing the maximum Pell grant award so that their award covers even less of what it costs a student to attend college.

That is just the beginning.

Several weeks ago, I joined Senators BROWN, MURRAY, and WARREN in calling on Secretary DeVos to appoint a credible, well-qualified, independent chief enforcement officer to lead the Department of Education's enforcement unit.

The unit was created after the collapse of Corinthian to improve oversight of higher education institutions and enforcement of Federal laws.

Robert Kaye, a respected investigator and consumer expert from the Federal Trade Commission, was selected to be the first chief. Kaye left the post in March.

Secretary DeVos allowed this critical position to remain vacant for more than 4 months until earlier last month, when she finally announced the appointment of Dr. Julian Schmoke, Jr.

At first glance, Dr. Schmoke meets none of the requirements for the job that my colleagues and I set out in our letter.

As chief enforcement officer, Dr. Schmoke will be charged with ensuring that institutions of higher education are following Federal laws and regulations.

This will mean paying special attention to an area that poses the most risk to students and has demonstrated systemic abuse: for-profit colleges.

These are the colleges that enroll 9 percent of all postsecondary students in America, but take in 17 percent of all Federal student aid and account for 33 percent of all Federal student loan defaults.

Beyond the infamous Corinthian and ITT Tech examples, there are countless examples of for-profit colleges defrauding students, whether it be Ashford, Westwood, or DeVry.

Last year, DeVry agreed to pay the Federal Trade Commission \$100 million for defrauding students and agreed to a separate settlement with the Department of Education.

Guess who Dr. Schmoke previously worked for? You guessed it, DeVry University.

In fact, there are reports that DeVry is still under investigation by the very unit Dr. Schmoke has been appointed to lead. How is that for the fox guarding the henhouse?

If that wasn't enough, there is no discernable evidence on Dr. Schmoke's resume of any experience conducting or overseeing investigations.

Shortly after his appointment, I joined Senators BROWN, WARREN, BLUMENTHAL, and WHITEHOUSE in writing to Dr. Schmoke raising these concerns and asking him to meet with us. We are still waiting.

As Betsy DeVos orchestrates a corporate takeover of the Department of Education by for-profit interests, State attorneys general and other Federal agencies are even more important in providing aggressive oversight to protect students and taxpayers.

Betsy DeVos is doing what she can to disrupt that, too.

On September 1, the Department of Education provided notice to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that it was terminating its existing data-sharing agreement with the CFPB.

The Department took exception "to the CFPB unilaterally expanding its

oversight role . . ." into areas that the Department viewed as within its jurisdiction.

The CFPB has been a leader in protecting student borrowers harmed by Federal loan servicers like Navient and predatory lending practices by institutions like Corinthian and ITT Tech.

This political stunt makes clear that Secretary DeVos would rather initiate a turf war than work with other Federal agencies to fulfill the Federal Government's collective oversight responsibilities.

In announcing Dr. Schmoke as the new chief enforcement officer, Secretary DeVos said, "Protecting students has always been my top priority."

Well, Madam Secretary, your actions just don't back up that statement.

Nearly every time you have had the opportunity to stand up for students, their families, and taxpayers, you have turned your back on them.

Commonsense protections for students and taxpayers shouldn't be a partisan issue.

Secretary DeVos, I urge you to abandon this assault on students and instead work with us to strengthen America's system of higher education, to deal honestly with wrongdoing by for-profit colleges, and to increase opportunities for all Americans.

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for today's vote on the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 226, Callista L. Gingrich to be U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See. I would have voted yea. •

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

CONFIRMATION OF ERIC HARGAN

• Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I had expected to be able to vote on the confirmation of Mr. Eric Hargan, to be Deputy Secretary for Health and Human Service, HHS. Instead, I am in Las Vegas to grieve with and assist my fellow Nevadans in the aftermath of the worst mass shooting in modern American history.

On the question of Mr. Hargan's nomination, I want to make my opposition to his confirmation clear. I do not believe Mr. Hargan to be qualified to be a leading member of HHS. This decision is based on his prior experience, his work and statements opposing the Affordable Care Act, as well as his statements regarding the extension of the State Children's Health Insurance Program. Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan would be the highest ranking appointee at HHS, making him responsible for implementing and enforcing the Affordable Care Act, ACA, going forward. Considering the fact that the administration has repeatedly and consistently sought to undermine the ACA, I fear that someone with Mr. Hargan's views

will only aid and abet this reckless game the administration is playing with Americans' healthcare.

I hope that Mr. Hargan will surpass my expectations and serve this country well as Deputy Secretary at HHS. The role of HHS Deputy Secretary in implementing and administering the efforts of strengthening our healthcare system is too important for any other result. I believe strongly that Americans deserve affordable and accessible healthcare coverage, and I hope Mr. Hargan's actions as Deputy Director show that he agrees. However, I could not in good conscience vote to confirm someone about whom I have so many concerns. Thank you. •

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17-42, concerning the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Japan for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$113 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,
CHARLES W. HOOPER,
Lieutenant General, USA,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-42

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Japan.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:
Major Defense Equipment * \$108 million.
Other \$5 million.
Total \$113 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Fifty-six (56) AIM-120C-7 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAMs).

Non-MDE includes: Containers, weapon support and support equipment, spare and repair parts, U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical and logistical support services, and other related elements of logistical and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Air Force (X7-D-YAK).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: JA-D-YAI, JA-D-YAH.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: October 4, 2017.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Japan—AIM-120C-7 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAMs)

The Government of Japan has requested a possible sale of fifty-six (56) AIM 120C-7 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAMs). Also included are containers, weapon support and support equipment, spare and repair parts, U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical and logistical support services, and other related elements of logistical and program support. The total estimated program cost is \$113 million.

This sale will support the foreign policy and national security of the United States by meeting the security and defense needs of a major ally and partner nation. Japan continues to be an important force for peace, political stability, and economic progress in the Asia-Pacific region.

The proposed sale will provide Japan a critical air defense capability to assist in defending the Japanese homeland and U.S. personnel stationed there. Japan will have no difficulty absorbing these additional munitions into the Japan Air Self-Defense Force.

The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractor will be Raytheon Missile Systems, Tucson, Arizona. There are no offset arrangements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of U.S. Government or contractor representatives to Japan.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-42

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The proposed sale will involve the release of sensitive technology to the Government of Japan related to the AIM-120C Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air (AMRAAM). The AIM-120C AMRAAM is a radar guided missile featuring digital technology and micro-miniature solid-state electronics. AMRAAM capabilities include look-down/shoot-down, multiple launches against multiple targets, resistance to electronic countermeasures, and interception of high flying, low flying, and maneuvering targets. The AMRAAM All Up Round is classified CONFIDENTIAL, major components and subsystems range from UNCLASSIFIED to CONFIDENTIAL, and technology data and other documentation are classified up to SECRET.

2. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the specific hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures or an equivalent system which might reduce system effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

3. A determination has been made that Japan can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

4. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to Japan.

AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE PREVENTION ACT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, yesterday I introduced the Automatic Gunfire Prevention Act of 2017.

First, I would like to thank Senators BLUMENTHAL, MURPHY, SCHUMER, DURBIN, LEAHY, CORTEZ MASTO, VAN HOLLEN, GILLIBRAND, KLOBUCHAR, MARKEY, CASEY, REED, HASSAN, MERKLEY, CARPER, CARDIN, COONS, FRANKEN, HARRIS, BOOKER, WHITEHOUSE, HIRONO, SANDERS, WARREN, CANTWELL, MCCASKILL, NELSON, MURRAY, UDALL, KAINE, WARNER, BENNETT, SCHATZ, WYDEN, BROWN, DUCKWORTH, MENENDEZ, and BALDWIN for cosponsoring this legislation. Their support for this bill is deeply appreciated.

Just days ago, in Las Vegas, NV, we experienced the worst mass shooting—in terms of the number of victims—in our Nation's history.

There are now at least 58 dead and nearly 500 wounded as a result of that attack. The grief and pain of so many victims and their loved ones is overwhelming and all too familiar to gun violence victims and survivors all across America.

What makes this mass shooting particularly devastating is that the shooting was done by a single gunman. Within minutes, the gunman exacted devastating firepower on hundreds of people, terrorizing concertgoers and an entire community.

How was this possible?

While facts are still being uncovered, we know that this particular gunman had amassed a vast arsenal. He had at least 23 firearms and hundreds of rounds of ammunition in his hotel room among which were 12 semiautomatic rifles enhanced with “bump-stock” devices.

These bump-stock devices are typically used to turn semiautomatic rifles into functional machine guns, capable of shooting hundreds of bullets per minute.

A semiautomatic rifle's rate of fire is usually 45 to 60 rounds per minute. With a bump-stock device attached, these semiautomatic weapons can fire up to 700 rounds per minute. Bump-stock devices are readily accessible. They can be purchased online or at a store by anyone for merely \$100.

Anyone who has seen YouTube video clips of semiautomatic rifles outfitted with these devices knows just how devastating they are.

The number of bullets that can be sprayed into a crowd within minutes is staggering.

Because they are so dangerous, automatic machine-gun-like weapons have been categorically banned in America since 1986 under the National Firearms Act.

This law was a direct response to the Prohibition Era's mobster crimes during which machine guns were used to kill their victims at a deadly rate.

One seminal event during this period was the St. Valentine's Day Massacre of 1929.

That tragic day was marked by the murder of seven men in a garage on the North Side of Chicago. The massacre was the culmination of a feud between an Irish American gang and another gang led by Al Capone. Organized crime was rampant during that era, and fully automatic weapons were the weapons of choice for gangsters. Indeed, the men who committed the St. Valentine's Day Massacre used Thompson submachine guns, known as “Tommy guns,” to mow down their victims.

The St. Valentine's Day Massacre, which remains in infamy, clearly demonstrated that elected leaders must do something about this violence and get these fully automatic guns out of the hands of killers.

As a result, the National Firearms Act was enacted in 1934. When originally passed, it heavily regulated machine guns, imposing a tax on the making and transferring of machine guns and other lethal weapons. It also imposed a special occupational tax on those engaged in the business of importing, manufacturing, and dealing in firearms regulated under the National Firearms Act.

It also required the registration of all machine guns and other guns regulated under the National Firearms Act with the Treasury Secretary.

Later, in 1986, the National Firearms Act was amended to ban all future automatic weapons from private possession, except for those legally owned and registered as of May 19, 1986.

Therefore, today, automatic weapons are generally banned for civilian use—and rightfully so. They are absolutely lethal weapons of war and have no business being in our homes, our schools, our businesses, and our streets.

Notwithstanding this outright ban, there is a loophole in the law that allows bump-stock devices to configure legal semiautomatic weapons so that they can function like a fully automatic weapon. This loophole must be closed.

If automatic weapons are banned, these devices should be banned. There is no functional difference between automatic weapons and a bump-stock enhanced semiautomatic weapon. Such devices are simply not needed to hunt

or to use in a private home for self-defense.

Like we saw in Las Vegas, these bump-stock devices allow those with a motive to kill to use fully legal firearms to wreak havoc and kill large numbers of people within minutes.

The bill I have introduced is straightforward. It closes the loophole that allows civilians to purchase and use devices that convert semiautomatic weapons into machine guns. Specifically, it bans the sale, transfer, importation, manufacturing, or possession of bump fire devices, trigger cranks, or anything that accelerates a semiautomatic rifle's rate of fire.

The bill further provides an exception to this ban, by allowing for the lawful possession of these devices by law enforcement and the government.

Those who violate the ban would be subject to the same penalty available to those who illegally possess a machine gun under current law.

Closing this loophole should not be a partisan issue. Anyone who has seen footage from the shooting in Las Vegas should recognize that weapons that are altered to emulate automatic gunfire should not be permitted in our communities.

In my view, this bill is a modest proposal. It was one that was included in the Assault Weapons Ban legislation that I proposed 4 years ago, which we failed to pass in 2013.

Tragically, had that legislation been enacted in 2013, it could have perhaps saved lives in Las Vegas.

Indeed, when the police dispatcher was first contacted in Las Vegas at 10:09 PM local time, it took 11 minutes until the last shots were fired and the suspect was neutralized.

Think of that for a moment. If automatic gunfire had been impossible for the gunman, less shots would have sprayed through Las Vegas that night, and less people may have died. That is extraordinarily sobering.

I recall standing here on this floor nearly 4 years ago, urging my colleagues to adopt the assault weapons ban, pleading that it could possibly save lives.

That was on the heels of one of the darkest days in American history, when 20 beautiful children and 6 educators had their lives taken at Sandy Hook Elementary School. It is an absolute travesty that Congress refused to act back then.

It is my strongest belief that when our Nation is faced with dire situations—like sickness, or job stagnation, or human trafficking—it is our job, our solemn oath as lawmakers, to try to solve these problems.

We utterly forsake that solemn oath when we simply do nothing; when we yield to cynicism or to a single lobbying faction.

If we do not act today, we are failing the American people. We are failing our communities. We are failing responsible gun owners.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill. We must act. Now is the time.

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, the United States is facing an urgent nuclear crisis with North Korea. President Trump should not trigger another nuclear crisis with Iran.

North Korea's nuclear program presents a clear and direct threat to the United States. Our top military official, General Dunford, testified last month that North Korea has the capability to strike the U.S. mainland with an intercontinental ballistic missile. North Korea has ramped up the pace of its ballistic missile tests, firing two ICBMs over Japan in recent months. Just last month, North Korea conducted its sixth test of a nuclear weapon, the largest yet.

Meanwhile, President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un are engaged in nuclear brinkmanship. Trump has threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea, has tweeted that North Korea "might not be around much longer," and has rebuked his own Secretary of State for attempting to find a diplomatic solution. With each reckless pronouncement, Trump's threats could bring the United States closer to a war that would put at risk millions of lives, including tens of thousands of American soldiers.

Confronted with the North Korean nuclear threat, President Trump is seeking to provoke another nuclear crisis, this time in the turbulent Middle East. He has repeatedly threatened to withdraw from the agreement that the United States and the international community forged to prohibit Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. He has called the Iran deal an "embarrassment," "the worst deal ever," and has vowed to "rip up" the agreement. In making those threats, Trump is putting our security and credibility at risk.

The Iran deal is working. It has verifiably shut off Iran's pathways to a nuclear bomb, imposed tough constraints on Iran's nuclear program, and subjected Iran to the most comprehensive inspection and monitoring regime ever negotiated. How do we know? We know from Donald Trump himself.

Just 2 weeks ago, President Trump found Iran in compliance and waived nuclear-related sanctions on Iran. In fact, the Trump administration has twice certified Iran's compliance with the deal, acknowledging that adherence to the agreement is in the vital national security interests of the United States. Our State Department, our Defense Department, and our intelligence community have all assessed that Iran is in compliance with the nuclear agreement. Most importantly, President Trump has presented no evidence to Congress, as he is required to do by law, of any potential Iranian breach of the deal. In fact, the administration has yet to brief the Senate on its strategy for Iran, despite weekly requests from my colleagues.

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Trump has suggested

that he will refuse to certify Iran's compliance with the deal by October 15, the next deadline. This will effectively kick the deal's fate to Congress, which will then have 60 days to decide whether to reimpose the nuclear-related sanctions on Iran waived under the deal.

Make no mistake: Trump's reasons for not certifying Iran's compliance are based on politics, not national security. He wants to tear up an agreement that has prevented Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, simply because it was negotiated by a democratic administration. Trump has threatened to do this without offering any alternative plan to block Iran from getting a nuclear bomb.

In the absence of any evidence of an Iranian violation, Trump and his team are manufacturing reasons not to certify the deal, citing issues not addressed in the nuclear agreement, such as Iran's sponsorship of regional terrorism, its ballistic missile tests, and its human rights violations.

Iran is subject to sanctions for those malign activities. Since the Iran deal has been implemented, the United States had designated over 100 individuals and entities for sanctions. Congress passed a new law this July, that I cosponsored, sanctioning Iran for these aggressions. It is worth underscoring this point: Donald Trump has yet to issue instructions to his administration on how to implement that sanctions law.

In short, the Iran deal has not prevented the United States from taking measures to hold Iran accountable for its destabilizing actions elsewhere. It has, however, prevented Iran from conducting those same actions with a nuclear weapon. That is where our focus should continue to be. A nuclear-armed Iran would be a far greater menace in the region than a nonnuclear Iran.

The truth is, if the United States had tried to expand the nuclear agreement to also address Iran's ballistic missile tests and its regional terrorism, there would simply be no deal. Russia and China would not have agreed to its terms. Preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon was the only point on which all parties were united. Critics of the deal who argue otherwise are not being straight with the American people.

In a world of alternative facts, that point is worth reiterating. No deal, including this one, contains everything we want. That is the nature of a negotiation. Unilaterally withdrawing from the agreement will not produce a better deal today. In fact, we have much less negotiating leverage today. The United States does not have the backing of our allies and partners around the world for withdrawal. Our partners have been crystal clear. They will not renegotiate the deal while it is working. Without that international backing, we have no leverage with Iran.

This brings to bear another, equally important, point. This administration

is already putting American credibility at risk; if we manufacture a specious excuse for abandoning the Iran agreement, our word will mean little. That will make it nearly impossible to negotiate a diplomatic solution to the nuclear crisis in North Korea, already an extremely challenging prospect. Put simply, our allies, partners, and adversaries would have no reason to trust the United States.

That is why Secretary of Defense Mattis, when asked whether it was in the national security interest of the United States to stay in the Iran deal, said, "Yes, Senator, I do."

I want to end by outlining the choice we face right now. The choice we face right now is between a deal or no deal. It is between cutting off Iran's pathways to a bomb or allowing Iran to push forward with its nuclear weapons program. It is between maintaining U.S. leadership in the world or empowering our adversaries. It is a choice between diplomacy or heading down a path toward war.

For these reasons, I urge President Trump to certify Iran's compliance with the nuclear agreement by October 15. If he fails to do so, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to preserve the deal.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to join my colleagues and all Americans in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month and the innumerable contributions of the Hispanic American community. There is much to celebrate. Although Hispanic Americans comprise 18 percent of the U.S. population, Latino-owned businesses, by some estimates, are responsible for approximately 86 percent of this country's small business growth. What is more, their economic influence is unrivaled by any other demographic since the baby boomers, representing a \$1.5 trillion segment of the consumer market, according to a recent Stanford University state of Latino entrepreneurship, and perhaps, most notably, Hispanic Americans play an increasingly important role in our democracy, with a record 27 million Latinos eligible to vote in last year's election.

It has never been clearer that Hispanic Americans represent an impressive cultural and economic force. Ultimately, however, their value to this country is not in their statistics. It is in their character. A love for family, a commitment to community, and an unparalleled penchant for hard work are the tenets of Hispanic heritage. They are also the building blocks of America. This is no coincidence: Hispanic Americans helped build and sustain our Nation. They are an irreplaceable thread in the fabric of American society. With their knack for innovation, with their fearless pursuit of better lives, and sometimes with their bare hands, they have shaped this country from the ground up, and we are all the better for it.

While we use this month to reflect on their dignity and importance to this country, this year, in particular, the Hispanic American community is best served through actions not just words. Congress must pass the Dream Act. President Trump's order to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, Program has shaken the Hispanic American community and most American to their core. Dreamers were brought to this country as children, with no decision in the matter. More importantly, they are quintessentially American in every way, except for their immigration status. They have lived, played, worshipped, and gone to school alongside our children most of their lives. They are our children's classmates and neighborhood friends and teammates. They are the college students studying at the library. They are the young serviceworkers at our favorite restaurants, studiously saving up for next semester's tuition. They are young men and women in uniform, serving in harm's way, defending our freedoms.

Dreamers were raised here, and most know no other home except the United States of America. If Congress does not act to protect them, the President's actions will force many of them out of work, into hiding and into poverty. This will not make America stronger. What makes America stronger are the Dreamers themselves. Their spirit, character, and will to overcome represent what is best about our country. We should be proud to call them our own. We shouldn't be sending them underground or into exile.

There is another urgent matter demanding our full attention: hurricane relief for Puerto Rico. The pictures coming from Puerto Rico are heart-breaking. The devastation that has hit the island as a result of Hurricane Maria deserves the same commitment and support that would go to any other location in the United States. Puerto Rico's 3.4 million residents are American citizens, and they should be treated just the same as residents of Florida, Texas, and Louisiana. The Senate should quickly take up the emergency supplemental appropriations request as soon as possible after the Columbus Day recess.

Voting rights, access to quality, affordable healthcare, higher education, tax reform, these are also issues critically important to Hispanic Americans because they are the issues important to the country. There is no breathing room between the two. Our national interests are their personal interests, so their interests must also be ours.

Americans are a diverse group; we do not all look the same or worship in the same way. We are, each and every one of us, united by far more profound things: a love for the freedoms this country affords us; respect for the power and peace we derive from our diverse communities; and an unshakable belief in every person's right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

What makes us Americans is our moral fiber and our shared love for the United States. Any other litmus test is a discriminatory one; yet every day, and sometimes at the hands of our own government, Hispanic Americans are tested and questioned, profiled, and met with suspicion, out of sheer ignorance and baseless prejudice. Still, they march on. They meet the challenges of systemic discrimination with grace, grit, and courage. Indeed, the Hispanic American community often reflects the best of America, even when America offers less than its best in return.

Now more than ever, Hispanic Heritage Month must be about standing up and declaring support for Hispanic Americans. Now more than ever, Congress must use its collective voice to magnify their voices, to affirm Hispanic Americans' rightful place in this Nation and to proclaim a commitment to representing their interests right here in this Chamber.

We must begin fulfilling that commitment by immediately passing the Dream Act. But our commitment must extend further. We must support more equal representation of Hispanic Americans in our society, including in Congress. We must address the healthcare disparities that disproportionately affect the Hispanic community, an issue that begs Congress to work together toward more universal, affordable coverage. We must acknowledge the difficulties Hispanic American students face in affording college. Finally, we must stand firm against the tidal wave of bigoted rhetoric that has flooded the national dialogue in recent months. Whenever and wherever Hispanic Americans are degraded, belittled, or oppressed, basic morality demands that we speak up and speak out. Tolerance and respect, like a muscle, require effort and exercise. We must not allow these values to atrophy on our watch. Diversity and inclusion are American virtues and proud features of Hispanic heritage alike; we must now, and always, be their steward.

TRIBUTE TO MARY GAUTREAUX

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I wish to indulge in a bit of bragging. I know every one of us in this Chamber has that one or two staffers who are the Jacks or Janes of all trades of their operations.

My longtime loyal friend and staffer, who has served the great State of Oregon for over 20 years in my office as a fellow, a field representative, and now deputy State director, Mary Gautreaux celebrates her 70th birthday on October 17. I want to recognize her enormous and long-lasting contributions over the past two decades in my office to making Oregon a better place to live and enjoy.

Mary brings a lifetime of expertise to the natural resources issues that play such an essential part in Oregon's economy and quality of life. Not only

does she know these issues but she has lived these issues and passed on her love of them to her children, Ryder, Myria, Callie, and Lucas, as well as her five grandchildren.

Before joining my office in the 1990s, Mary served in the U.S. Forest Service. In those days, Mary planted trees and fought fires to support her young family. While the work was seasonal, to start, she quickly made an impression on the U.S. Forest Service and became a full-time employee.

Then I was lucky enough to get her as a fellow in 1994 in my DC office when I was still a member of the House of Representatives for the proud 3rd District of Oregon and still had rugged good looks and a full head of hair.

She worked in my DC office for a year and had just moved back to Oregon when I realized my office was better for her presence, so I hired Mary to work as field rep in Oregon. I may not know much about a lot of things, but I can recognize an excellent teammate, and Mary was a natural fit on "Team Wyden."

When I was elected to the U.S. Senate for the first time in 1996, I made a promise to do a townhall meeting in every county in Oregon every year I was privileged enough to represent the good people of Oregon in Washington, DC. In the last 21 years, she has been with me at almost every one of the 800-plus townhalls I have held each year in each of Oregon's 36 counties.

At almost every one of those townhalls, I have at some junction pointed to Mary and said, "Folks, give Mary a call about this issue. She works nights and weekends—never hesitate to call." It does not matter the issue; Mary always answers the phone. She has been going the extra mile with and for Oregonians in every nook and cranny of our State, both literally and figuratively.

Literally, Mary has traveled with me and solo to countless meetings in grange halls, diners, and farmhouses all across Oregon, and there has never been an issue too big or too small for her to take on.

One way to explain the praise Mary has earned is to say that Oregonians know Mary as a public servant always willing to listen and find solutions that benefit all of Oregon and Oregonians, not just the ones that vote for me. She lives by my promise to be the "Senator for all of Oregon," and Oregonians know it and appreciate her for it.

My appreciation and Oregon's appreciation for Mary goes deeper than that accurate and well-deserved summation.

The deeper truth is that anybody who knows Mary knows she is an original and unforgettable force of nature—fierce on behalf of Oregonians, bold in her problem-solving, always willing to help, and just as ready with a smile to lighten any situation.

She has a gigantic heart matched only by her passion for public service and protecting the natural treasures we Oregonians all hold dear.

The bottom line is I have been very fortunate to work with her, to call her friend, to have her as an integral member of Team Wyden, and I look forward to many more years of her public service to the people of Oregon and her friendship to me and my family.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DONALD AND RITA GALLES

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the St. Anthony Tri-Parish Catholic School Foundation's 2017 honorees, Donald Galles and Rita (Murphy) Galles.

The foundation supports the wonderful work of the St. Anthony Tri-Parish Catholic School. The school is dedicated to achieving academic excellence in a faith-filled community and living a life committed to Christian service. Since 1927, the school and staff have provided a high standard of academic achievement and Christian values. The school provides strong religious and educational leadership to the Casper community.

On October 12, 2017, the foundation will be hosting the sixth annual Joy Breakfast and celebrating the school's 90th anniversary, nearly a century of educating students. Every year at this event, the foundation honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the school and exemplify the values of the Catholic community. Don Galles and Rita (Murphy) Galles are perfect for this honor. Both the Galles family and the Murphy family have a long history of supporting Catholic education and serving as role models to our community. John and Mari Ann Martin, Susie and the late Mick McMurry, and Joe Scott will also be recognized at the breakfast for their invaluable contribution and dedication to the St. Anthony's Tri-Parish Catholic School Foundation.

Rita is a caring nurse and dedicated mother. As a native to Casper, WY, she attended St. Anthony's Parochial School and graduated from Natrona County High School in 1947. Rita then attended the St. Joseph's School of Nursing in Denver, CO, and started her nursing career. As a nurse, she touched so many lives by caring for the sick and injured. While in Denver, she married Dr. Joseph Murphy at the Blessed Sacrament Church on November 24, 1953. They were married for 51 years and had 12 children: Patrick, Mary Ann, Donald, Kevin, Mark, Sheila, Michelle, Rita, Kathleen, Maureen, Robert, and Anne. Rita enrolled all 12 of her children in St. Anthony's in order to ensure they received an excellent academic and religious foundation. With this strong background, her children have collectively spent more than 75 years in post-high school education.

Donald is a decorated veteran, accomplished businessman, and loving

family man. Like Rita, he is a native of Casper, WY, and attended both St. Anthony's Parochial School and Natrona County High School. After high school, Don joined the U.S. Army's 100th Infantry Division in France. He proudly fought for our country on the front lines during World War II. Don was seriously wounded while fighting in France. For his brave service to our Nation, Don was awarded the Silver Star, the Nation's third-highest award for valor. He also received a Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Combat Infantry Badge. After the war, Don attended and graduated from Creighton University in Nebraska. It is there that he met Ann Christensen, who later became his wife for 55 years. They returned to Casper and raised six children: Tom, David, Dona, Laura, Karla, and Jeff. Many of their children attended St. Anthony's. In Casper, Don had a successful career as a partner with a local oil and gas firm. He is also active in the community as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the Knights of Columbus, and a lifelong member of St. Anthony's Catholic Church.

The Galles and Murphy families were joined together in 2005. In the presence of their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, Don and Rita were married at St. Anthony's Catholic Church on December 29, 2005. As the place where they first met as children, the church holds great memories and a deep personal connection for them both.

Over the years, Don and Rita have generously contributed their time and resources to both the church and school. They have also given back to our community in numerous other ways. For example, Don and Rita made an essential donation to purchase land and a building to expand the Casper Seton House, which assists homeless mothers and children. Their kindness, devotion, and generosity are true reflections of their character and the values they have passed along to their family.

It is with great honor that I recognize these outstanding members of our Wyoming community. My wife, Bobbi, joins me in extending our congratulations to Donald and Rita Galles for receiving this special award.●

TRIBUTE TO JOHN GABRIEL "GABE" SMITH

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to a Marylander, John Gabriel Smith, whose courage not only broke barriers for himself but also advanced the cause of the betterment of humanity. We celebrate and honor Mr. Smith, known as Gabe, because he was the very first African American to graduate from Gonzaga College Preparatory High School, located just a few blocks from the Capitol Building, with the class of 1954.

Gabe was born in the turbulent times of the early 1940s in St. Mary's County,

MD, where he and his two sisters were introduced to the ugly world of racism. His hard-working parents committed their children to a Catholic education and religious fellowship at St. Peter Claver, a predominantly African-American church in rural Ridge, MD. As an eighth grader, Gabe decided to serve as an altar boy; little did he know that it would change his life and place him in the annals of American history.

The head pastor of St. Peter Claver was a humble man by the name of Father Horace B. McKenna, S.J., a White Jesuit priest who had been serving the segregated and neglected African-American community in Southern Maryland for two decades. Father McKenna would later found So Others Might Eat, SOME, a ministry which continues to feed the hungry here in Washington, DC. One day, Gabe listened intently as Father McKenna described the spiritual journey many men had taken on the way to priesthood. Gabe, who was interested in pursuing this vocation, asked Father McKenna how he could become a priest too. Father McKenna told Gabe that he would, at a minimum, need to learn Latin. Unfortunately, there were no schools in St. Mary's County or the surrounding areas that Gabe could attend which taught Latin, let alone provide the other instruction necessary to launch his vocation, so Father McKenna told him about a school in Washington, DC, where he could learn Latin and all the other requisites. That school was Gonzaga College High School.

Racial segregation was the barrier that would have prevented Gabe from attending Gonzaga, but that was about to change. Gabe often speaks about the angels who have been in his life, including Father McKenna, football coach Joe Kozik, and Archbishop Patrick A. O'Boyle, a man who quietly but diligently worked to break the racial divide here in the Nation's Capital. Several years before the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 to end segregation, Archbishop O'Boyle ordered the integration of all Catholic schools and churches in the Archdiocese of Washington. Thus, in 1951, John Gabriel Smith was one of the first African Americans to enter Gonzaga, one of the Nation's elite prep schools.

Gabe moved in with his sister, who lived around the corner from the school. He had observed and experienced abusive conditions under segregation in St. Mary's County; thus, he was on guard among his peers at school. Fortunately, during his time at Gonzaga, his classmates welcomed him in the classroom and stood with him in the face of adversity and strife when they walked outside the school's walls.

As a member of the Gonzaga Purple Eagle football team, he encountered yet another angel in his life, a football coach named Joe Kozik, who stood by Gabe, along with his teammates. Whenever the Eagles played an opponent opposed to integrated teams, Coach Kozik and his teammates always stuck to-

gether like a family to overcome hate and ignorance.

In June of 1954, the year of the Brown decision to end segregation in public schools across the Nation, Gabe completed his education at Gonzaga College High School as the first African-American graduate. Poised with a thorough education, including a command of Latin, he entered Howard University, where he chose to pursue a different vocation and graduated with a degree in pharmacy. He became a pharmacist and worked for over 40 years, retiring just this past spring with Shopper's Food Warehouse in Fort Washington, MD, where he spent most of his career.

Gabe has been married to Mrs. Jeanette Graves Smith for 50 years and has five children; his eldest, Pamela, passed away several years ago. Gabe is a proud Marylander and a proud resident of Prince George's County. He has long led his neighborhood association as president and served as an active member in good standing of the Mt. Ennon Baptist Church Men's Ministry.

Even though more than 60 years have passed since Gabe attended Gonzaga, he still comments, "I had angels who helped me through and they continue to be with me today." To this day, Gabe sees his life as an example of the power of love in the pursuit of the greater good. Gabe's life shows us that, despite dark times and dark moments, where there is light through our good deeds and good intentions, there is hope.

John Gabriel Smith was the first of over 1,100 African-American students to graduate from Gonzaga College High School so far. He will leave an outstanding legacy for the State of Maryland, the halls of Gonzaga, and for the United States as an example of what happens when we seek inclusion and love for humanity. He shows us that living by faith and love, everyone can succeed. I commend Gabe Smith for his leadership and life of service.●

● Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to a Marylander, John Gabriel "Gabe" Smith, whose courage not only broke barriers for himself but whose courage advanced the cause of the betterment of humanity.

On October 14, he will be recognized at the Gonzaga High School homecoming by the Gonzaga Onyx, a group of African-American alumni of Gonzaga, due to his achievement of being the very first African-American to graduate from Washington, DC's Gonzaga College Preparatory High School with the class of 1954.

He was born in the turbulent times of the early 40s in St. Mary's County, MD, where he and his two sisters grew up. His parents relied on hard work and diligence to pursue excellence and committed their children to a Catholic education and religious fellowship at St. Peter Claver, a church with a predominantly African-American parish in rural Ridge, MD. As an eighth grad-

er, Gabe decided to serve as an altar boy; little did he know, it would change his life and place him in the annals of American history.

He listened to Father McKenna describe the ways that people had traveled to find God and become a priest. Interested in pursuing this vocation, he asked Father McKenna how he, too, could achieve it and was surprised when Father McKenna told him that he would, at a minimum, need to know Latin.

Unfortunately, there were no schools in St. Mary's or the surrounding areas that taught Latin, let alone the tools necessary to launch his vocation, so Father McKenna told him about a school in Washington, DC, where he could learn Latin and all the other requisites. That school was Gonzaga College High.

Several years before the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 to end segregation, Archbishop O'Boyle ordered the integration of all Catholic schools and churches in the Archdiocese of Washington. Thus, in 1951, he entered the halls of Gonzaga.

Fortunately, during his time at Gonzaga, his classmates stood with him in the face of adversity and strife when they walked outside the school walls. As a member of the Gonzaga Purple Eagle football team, he encountered additional support from Coach Joe Kozik who stood by him, along with his teammates. Whenever the Eagles would play an opponent that vehemently rejected the idea of teams with African-American players, Coach Kozik and his teammates always stuck together like a family to overcome hate and ignorance.

In 1954, he completed his education at Gonzaga College High School as the first African-American graduate. Poised with his education and command of Latin, he entered Howard University and graduated with a degree in pharmacy, where he commanded his field for over 40 years, just retiring this past spring of 2017. He is now spending time with his wife and children.

Gabe says that "he had angels who helped him through and they continue to be with him today." He will forever leave an outstanding legacy for the State of Maryland and the halls of Gonzaga College High School. He was the first African American at Gonzaga, paving the way for over 1,100 esteemed African-American alumni to follow in his footsteps.●

REMEMBERING
COLONEL
LIEUTENANT
FREDERICK
HOLLISTER CAMPBELL AND AMY S. CAMPBELL

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to honor the lives of Lt. Col. Frederick Hollister Campbell and Amy S. Campbell.

Lt. Col Frederick Hollister Campbell served in the U.S. Marine Corps for more than 25 years, serving in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. He earned

a Navy Commendation Medal for saving the lives of 250 fellow marines at the Battle of Iwo Jima. After his military career, Fred opened his own private law practice and taught college-level classes at Colorado College and the University of Colorado.

During a time when women rarely attended college, Amy received her B.A. in elementary education from National University and went on to receive her M.A. in reading education from Northwestern University. Prior to her marriage to Fred, Amy taught first and second grade. A two-time military widow, Amy lost her first husband, Bob Noran, as a result of injuries sustained during the Battle of the Bulge in WWII.

Amy and Fred were married on April 14, 1951. A proud supporter of her husband's career, Amy put aside her teaching career to be a full-time officer's wife and mother to their daughter.

Amy and Fred went on to live an incredible life together, traveling, raising their daughter, Susan, and volunteering with many organizations. Fred passed away on December 27, 2011, and Amy went on to live near Susan in Missoula, MT, before passing away on November 29, 2016. I send my condolences to the friends and family of Fred and Amy, as they are both greatly missed. They will be laid to rest together in Arlington National Cemetery.●

TRIBUTE TO BRADEN MATZINGER

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the distinct honor of recognizing a young Montanan named Braden Matzinger for his compassionate heart and entrepreneurial spirit in helping our State recover from a devastating wildfire season.

The 2017 wildfire season has impacted many communities in Montana. The fires consumed nearly 1.3 million acres of land. Over the summer, two firefighters lost their lives while protecting the people of the Treasure State. The bravery and commitment demonstrated by all the folks involved with the firefighting effort has generated a sense of unity and support from Troy to Alzada. That sense of unity can be found in the actions of 9-year-old Braden Matzinger of Bozeman. Braden has raised donations for the Montana Wildfire Relief Fund at the last two Montana State University home football games. He sweetened his approach to charitable fundraising with a cup of free lemonade for all those making a donation. At the two football games, he raised over \$600 in donations.

Sometimes life throws us lemons. How we respond is a reflection of our character. The Montana values of charity, compassion, and entrepreneurship are alive and well in the character of our next generation of youngsters, and Braden is a prime example. Thank you, Braden, for seeing an opportunity to help, making a plan, and following through with your plan. To Braden's parents, Jeff and Katie, thank you as

well for raising such a high-quality young man.●

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 164TH REGIMENT LANDING ON GUADALCANAL

● Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, 75 years ago, on October 13, 1942, the men of the 164th Infantry Regiment, North Dakota Army National Guard, landed on Guadalcanal to make history as the first U.S. Army unit to offensively engage the enemy in either theatre during World War II.

The soldiers, supplies, and the rifles they carried were welcomed by the beleaguered First Marine Division that had been fighting on the island since August. The prize was the strategic airfield captured by the marines and coveted by both Allies and the enemy as a key location to champion air and naval superiority in that area of the South Pacific.

On Guadalcanal for only 12 days, the trained but untested soldiers were thrust into the second battle for Henderson Field on the night of October 24. The 3rd Battalion trudged up muddy slopes to fight shoulder to shoulder with Lt. Col. Chesty Puller's marines as waves of Japanese threatened the thin line protecting the airfield. The next day, having proved its mettle, the 164th Infantry remained in charge of that line as the marines moved to an adjacent location. The Japanese attacked the 164th sector on the night of October 26, incorrectly believing the new Army troops could not hold the line. The 164th held firm at the location that became known as the Battle of Coffin Corner, earning the respect of the marines in the form of a Navy Presidential Unit Citation.

The lineage of the 164th Infantry Regiment carries significant history as North Dakota National Guard infantrymen were called to serve in the Spanish American War, the Philippine Insurrection, Mexican Border Incident, World War I, World War II, and the Korean war. The regiment ceased to exist in 1955, its companies reorganized to engineer units, but the esprit de corps of the combat soldiers has remained intact.

On the 75th anniversary, to the day, of the regiment's landing at Guadalcanal, the 164th Infantry Association will hold its last annual reunion, ending a tradition that began in 1945. On Saturday, October 14, the 164th Association will host a public event to recognize the service and heritage of the unit that was so important to the history of the North Dakota Army National Guard, the State of North Dakota, and the United States of America. Eight veterans of Guadalcanal will attend this event, ages 94 to 98, and they will represent all members of the regiment, living or remembered, as this important chapter of North Dakota military history ends.●

RECOGNIZING FIGARETTI'S RESTAURANT

● Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Figaretti's Restaurant in the scenic northern panhandle of my home State of West Virginia.

Figaretti's was recently named the best Italian restaurant in West Virginia. In my home State, this honor means so much more than just good food. It is a testament to our State's value of family, heritage, and traditions.

Some people may think our love of history means we cling to the past. It is the exact opposite. In an age where the future seems so uncertain, where we have access to more information and more choices than we know how to process, West Virginians know their priorities. What has stayed constant throughout history is our commitment to our loved ones, keeping our traditions alive, and passing our knowledge of our diverse heritage on to the next generation. The future of West Virginia and the entire country is at the forefront of our minds. These are the values that have made West Virginia stand out in our Nation, and these values are also present in the legacy of excellence at Figaretti's.

In 1944, Sicilian immigrant, Anna Figaretti, started making spaghetti sauce for her neighbors while her husband, Giuseppe, worked in the local mine in Clarksburg. Soon, with support and encouragement from her community and help from her five sons, Anna's spaghetti sauce became available in local grocery stores and eventually in her own restaurant.

Today the restaurant is owned by the third generation of the family. It is my honor to congratulate Dino Figaretti, his wife, Michelle, and his son, Enzo, for this special recognition. Gayle and I have enjoyed the company of the Figaretti family at the beloved Wheeling location and have shared many great meals and conversations with Tony, Sr., and Tony, Jr. I value their friendship so very much.

Owning a business is one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences, and doing it as a family makes it all the more special.

It is my honor to recognize and celebrate the Figaretti family and the Wheeling community for this well-deserved honor.●

REMEMBERING ERMALEE HICKEL

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to Ermalee Hickel, the wife of our late Governor, Wally Hickel, who passed away on September 14 at the age of 92. Ermalee was married to Wally Hickel for 65 years until his death in 2010. She is buried next to her husband in Anchorage Memorial Park, standing up, facing Washington, just as Governor Hickel was.

This is the way the power couple of post-Statehood Alaska desired to be remembered. Standing up for Alaskans to

Washington, DC. A powerful symbol not only to Alaskans, but Washington, that the battle for Alaska's sovereignty is far from over and that the Hickels, in spirit, stand with Alaskans as we wage this battle to conclusion, however long that may take.

Wally and Ermalee's son, Jack Hickel, remembers these words explaining why his father wanted to be buried standing up. "He said, if they don't do it right he's going to crawl out of his grave and straighten them out. He thought they were going to screw everything up. He wanted to keep his eye on them." Now there will be two pair of eyes gazing east.

Ermalee, I should warn you, has two pretty tough eyes. She was widely known as "more beautiful than a butterfly, but tougher than a boot."

The history books will mention that Ermalee was twice the first lady of Alaska, as well as the wife of a Secretary of the Interior. They might mention that she was a strong woman, but that really doesn't tell you much about the person, and there is really much more to the story.

Ermalee was born to Lewis and Aline Strutz. The Strutzes moved from Montana to Anchorage in 1924. They bought a house downtown and raised six kids in that house: four girls and two boys. Anchorage was a pretty small town in the day, but it had plenty of life. As a high school student, Ermalee did it all. She was a softball player, editor of the school paper, and quite popular. She never missed a dance. She ushered at the movie theatre and, unique to Anchorage, worked at a cannery. Upon graduation, she went to work on the local base as the secretary to a military officer, a very important job for an outstanding individual. The Strutz girls were like that—popular, successful, from a really good family.

Wally Hickel, on the other hand, arrived in Anchorage from Kansas in 1940 with all of 37 cents in his pocket. His family was in insurance, but he left Kansas to pursue his passion in boxing. That led him to California, and when it didn't work out, Wally booked a ticket in steerage on a vessel headed to Alaska. He replenished his bank account by winning a \$125 purse at a boxing tournament conducted during Fur Rondy, the Anchorage winter carnival. Wally married a local girl, Jannice Cannon, who went to school with Ermalee. Wally and Jannice had a son, Ted. Jannice tragically died in 1943 at the Mayo Clinic. Wally returned to Anchorage, a single dad, and took a job inspecting aircraft on the ramp of Alaska airbases.

In 1945, Ermalee and Wally were married in a small Catholic Church and went on to build a family. It was a tough time for the both of them. Wally still had to pay off Jannice's medical bills and worked a second job as a bartender and a bouncer to make ends meet.

Wally subsequently quit his job on base and told Ermalee that he figured

it out. Anchorage was growing and construction was its future. Turns out, he was right. The family found stability and a modicum of wealth. That gave Wally the freedom to pursue his interest in politics. Over time, Wally's investments in Anchorage's growth provided a strong financial foundation for the family.

Throughout it all, Ermalee was a steadfast partner—managing the house, putting chains on the tires of the car to take the kids skiing, even ironing the pants of her hero, Charles Lindbergh, when he came to Juneau to address the Alaska Legislature. Lindbergh asked Ermalee if she would get "the help" to press his pants. Turns out Ermalee was "the help."

"Ermalee was calm, empathetic and insightful. Wally turned to her and followed her counsel. She guided and protected him, out of sight," wrote Anchorage author and historian Charles Wohlforth. She read to schoolchildren and visited with elders in the Pioneer's Homes. She visited the soup kitchens and the juvenile detention facilities. She fought for benefits for the disabled, raised awareness of fetal alcohol syndrome, and sought to protect seniors from scammers. She did it all without ever seeking credit. Ermalee was always gracious and lovely to me.

Wohlforth headlined his column remembering Ermalee Hickel's legacy with the words "Ermalee Hickel led Alaska, too." She did with dignity and grace from the beginning to the very end. It is an honor and a pleasure to share this story of an Alaskan life well lived with the Senate today.●

RECOGNIZING THE CAROLINA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER'S NEW PARTNERSHIP

● Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I would like to recognize and congratulate the Carolina Youth Development Center, Cummins, Inc., and the Hootie and the Blowfish Foundation on its new partnership to provide youth aging out of foster care an independent living transitional house. The Carolina Youth Development Center has been a blessing to our State for over 200 years with their bold mission. They work tirelessly to empower and equip South Carolina's most vulnerable children by providing a safe environment, educational support, and career readiness.

Carolina Youth Development Center has an impressive 227-year history of serving the community's most vulnerable children and families, dating back to its founding as the Charleston Orphan House in 1790. The agency remains steadfast in its commitment to youth in foster care and continues to lead the way, changing lives and transforming communities.●

TRIBUTE TO BILL JOHNSTONE

● Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a man who has done so much for Montana. Bill Johnstone, a

native Montanan, graduate of Montana State University, and retiring chairman of D.A. Davidson, has dedicated his life to improving Montana.

His work at D.A. Davidson has helped countless Montanans financially prepare for the future. Whether it is helping Montana families plan for retirement, small business owners strategize about the future, or municipalities meet their financial needs, Bill has been there for them, but Bill's good work expanded beyond the private sector. While running a thriving company that employs more than 1,300 employees, hundreds of them Montanans, Bill has always invested his time and resources in Montana. He serves as a member of the board of regents to the Montana University system and has spent years improving schools across Montana.

Bill has also served on the International Heart Institute in Missoula and as the chairman of the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation, helping to raise funds for our public schools. His dedication to his company, his family, and his community makes Bill a model Montanan.

Helping move Montana forward is a common theme in Bill's family, his father, William A. Johnstone, served the education community for nearly 30 years and retired as acting president of Montana State University. It is clear Bill has instilled hard work and public service in his children as well. His son Anthony is an associate professor of law at the University of Montana and former solicitor general of the State of Montana and his son Jesse is the founder and president of a digital marketing agency in New York.

As Bill retires, his legacy at D.A. Davidson will live on and his lasting impact on Montana as a whole will continue to grow. Thanks for the 17 years at D.A. Davidson, Bill, and for your service to Montana. I wish you, your wife, Andrea, and your kids Anthony and Jesse nothing but the best in retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO ANNE MAXWELL LIVINGSTON

● Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the service of my friend Anne Maxwell Livingston. Mrs. Livingston has served since 2011 as chairwoman of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, CRMC, which protects Rhode Island's coastal resources through research, regulation, and restoration.

During her 6-year tenure, CRMC has been a nationally recognized leader in ocean and coastal management. One of the shining jewels of CRMC's work has been its innovative Special Area Management Plans, or SAMPs. These plans are ecosystem-based management strategies developed in collaboration with government agencies, municipalities, and other stakeholders to best manage coastal systems. During Mrs. Livingston's tenure, the council saw its

groundbreaking ocean SAMP, the first formally adopted ocean spatial plan in the country, pay real-life dividends. In developing this plan, CRMC engaged a diverse group of stakeholders and laid the groundwork for cooperation among a multitude of regulatory agencies. This effort and CRMC's continued engagement in the process paved the way for the successful development of the Nation's first offshore wind farm off the coast of Rhode Island.

The CRMC has also helped Rhode Island towns and residents understand the increasing effects of sea level rise and storm surge. Using the latest climate change predictions and state-of-the-art modeling, CRMC, in cooperation with the University of Rhode Island and others, developed an online tool, STORMTOOLS, that gives anyone with an internet connection free access to information that can be used to help decide everything from what neighborhood to buy a home in to where to site a new stormwater treatment plant. CRMC is now developing a coastal environmental risk index that can show Rhode Island homeowners individualized flood risks in 3-D.

In addition to her service on the CRMC, Mrs. Livingston has served Rhode Islanders as a board member of the Jamestown Tax Assessment Board of Review and on the board of the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island and the Jamestown Education Foundation. She also continues to serve as treasurer for the Opera House Theater & Performing Arts Center in Newport and on the advisory boards of the Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island and the Providence Children's Museum. Mrs. Livingston is a passionate and committed leader, and I am grateful for her many years of service to our State's CRMC.●

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

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

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

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:18 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to section 3 of the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act (Public Law 114-244), the Minority Leader appoints Dr. Dolores

Subia BigFoot of Norman, Oklahoma, to the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 12:36 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:

S. 178. An act to prevent elder abuse and exploitation and improve the justice system's response to victims in elder abuse and exploitation cases.

S. 652. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis, and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children.

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

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 1:26 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 1117. An act to require the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to submit a report regarding certain plans regarding assistance to applicants and grantees during the response to an emergency or disaster.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 34. A bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for the en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for "midnight rules", and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-164).

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment:

S. 906. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for congressional notification regarding major acquisition program breaches, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-165).

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 938. A bill to require notice of cost-free Federal procurement technical assistance in connection with registration of small business concerns in procurement systems (Rept. No. 115-166).

H.R. 1293. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to require that the Office of Personnel Management submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by Federal employees (Rept. No. 115-167).

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1514. A bill to amend certain Acts to reauthorize those Acts and to increase protections for wildlife, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-168).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Amy Coney Barrett, of Indiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

Joan Louise Larsen, of Michigan, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

William L. Campbell, Jr., of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee.

Thomas Lee Robinson Parker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

Eric S. Dreiband, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., of Kentucky, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky for the term of four years.

Charles E. Peeler, of Georgia, to be United States Attorney for the Middle District of Georgia for the term of four years.

Bryan D. Schroder, of Alaska, to be United States Attorney for the District of Alaska for the term of four years.

(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. ROUNDS:

S. 1921. A bill to amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to increase limitations and authorizations for Farm Service Agency guaranteed loans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. HATCH, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. LEE, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SASSE, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. WICKER, Mr. RISCH, Mr. PAUL, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. BURR, Mr. STRANGE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. THUNE, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. ENZI, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. HOEVEN, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 1922. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. REED, Mr. KAINE, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. HASSAN, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 1923. A bill to prohibit firearms dealers from selling a firearm prior to the completion of a background check; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 1924. A bill to authorize 2 additional district judgeships for the district of Colorado; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 1925. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently modify the limitations on the deduction of interest by financial institutions which hold tax-exempt bonds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HARRIS (for herself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1926. A bill to provide for the establishment of a national memorial and national monument to commemorate those killed by the collapse of the Saint Francis Dam on March 12, 1928, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. FRANKEN):

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; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORKER (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. KAINE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. ISAACSON, and Mr. CASEY):

S. 1928. A bill to establish a review of United States multilateral aid; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. UDALL:

S. 1929. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform the system of public financing for Presidential elections, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. UDALL):

S. 1930. A bill to establish a cost of greenhouse gases for carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide to be used by Federal agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. UDALL:

S. 1931. A bill to reform public financing for Presidential elections and provide for public financing for Congressional elections; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. TESTER, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1932. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide for certain wildfire mitigation assistance; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. UDALL, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. KING, Mr. PETERS, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. COONS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. KAINE, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 1933. A bill to focus limited Federal resources on the most serious offenders; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 1934. A bill to prevent catastrophic failure or shutdown of remote diesel power engines due to emission control devices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 1935. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat Indian tribal governments in the same manner as State governments for certain Federal tax purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1936. A bill 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, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. FLAKE:

S. 1937. A bill to authorize appropriations for border infrastructure construction, to provide conditional resident status to certain aliens, and to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to include grounds of inadmissibility and deportability for alien members of criminal gangs and cartels, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 1938. A bill to establish a policy framework that offers and rewards work, strengthens the incentive to work, greatly reduces poverty, and creates new jobs in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. REED, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. WARREN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 1939. A bill to repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 1940. A bill to amend the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to reauthorize the volunteer services, community partnership, and refuge education programs of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 1941. A bill to amend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to clarify the treatment of authentic Alaska Native articles of handicraft containing nonedible migratory bird parts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MERKLEY, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 1942. A bill to direct the Attorney General to review, revise, and develop law enforcement and justice protocols appropriate to address missing and murdered Indians, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. NELSON (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 1943. A bill to amend the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act to extend the transition period for preferential treatment of certain textile and apparel articles; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 1944. A bill to amend title XVI of the Social Security Act to allow the Commissioner of Social Security to waive the 30-day residency requirement for receipt of supplemental security income benefits for individuals who evacuate from certain territories of the United States as a result of an emergency or natural disaster; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. REED, Mr. KAINE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CARPER, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BOOKER,

Ms. HASSAN, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. HARRIS):

S. 1945. A bill to regulate large capacity ammunition feeding devices; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 1946. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow unpopulated census tracts that are contiguous to low-income communities to be treated as low-income communities under the new markets tax credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BROWN:

S. 1947. A bill to improve food safety, to encourage greater production of agricultural commodities for use in the locality of production, to reauthorize and expand Department of Agriculture support of those efforts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL:

S. 1948. A bill to abrogate the sovereign immunity of Indian tribes as a defense in inter partes review of patents; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mrs. MURRAY:

S. 1949. A bill to authorize demonstration projects to improve educational and housing outcomes for children; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

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

S. 1950. A bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to submit to Congress a report on promoting broadband Internet access service for veterans; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. COONS:

S. 1951. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to award grants to nonprofit veterans service organizations to upgrade the community facilities of such organizations; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 1952. A bill to improve oversight and accountability of the financial processes of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 1953. A bill to amend the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 and the Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act to provide for advancements in public safety services to Indian communities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. PERDUE (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 1954. A bill to authorize the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to plan, design, and construct a central parking facility on National Zoological Park property in Washington, D.C.; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

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

S. 1955. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Liu Xiaobo, and collectively to all advocates of democracy and human rights in China, in recognition of their extraordinary advocacy for liberty and human rights despite repression and their impact on world peace and global understanding of China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1956. A bill to authorize the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Director of the National Park Service to enter into cooperative management agreements for the operation, maintenance, and management of

units of the National Park System in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 1957. A bill to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to require the Secretary of Energy to establish a gasoline supply reserve in the State of Florida, and for other purposes; 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 Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. BURR, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. Res. 285. A resolution honoring the life and achievements of Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. Res. 286. A resolution supporting the role of the United States in ensuring children in the poorest countries have access to a quality education through the Global Partnership for Education; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. COONS):

S. Res. 287. A resolution designating October 8, 2017, as "National Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Day"; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. HASSAN, and Mr. HATCH):

S. Res. 288. A resolution designating the week of October 1 through 7, 2017, as "National Community Policing Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. Res. 289. A resolution designating the week beginning October 8, 2017, as "National Wildfire Refuge Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. COONS, Mr. HATCH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. REED, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WARNER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. GARDNER, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 290. A resolution designating October 5, 2017, as "Energy Efficiency Day" in celebration of the economic and environmental benefits that have been driven by private sector innovation and Federal energy efficiency policies put in place over the past 4 decades; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 91

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) 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. 283

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 283, a bill to amend title 38,

United States Code, to provide for the treatment of veterans who participated in the cleanup of Enewetak Atoll as radiation exposed veterans for purposes of the presumption of service-connection of certain disabilities by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 293

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 293, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the deferral of inclusion in gross income for capital gains reinvested in opportunity zones.

S. 322

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors 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. 339

At the request of Mr. PETERS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 339, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 479

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 479, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening.

S. 503

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 503, a bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to make publicly available certain regulatory records relating to the administration of the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the use of an alternative depreciation system for taxpayers violating rules under the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act, and for other purposes.

S. 654

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 654, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 818

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a co-

sponsor of S. 818, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals with disabilities to save additional amounts in their ABLE accounts above the current annual maximum contribution if they work and earn income.

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 818, *supra*.

S. 825

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 825, a bill to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium located in Sitka, Alaska, and for other purposes.

S. 896

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 896, a bill to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

S. 980

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 980, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for payments for certain rural health clinic and Federally qualified health center services furnished to hospice patients under the Medicare program.

S. 1050

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1050, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Chinese-American Veterans of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.

S. 1064

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) 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. 1084

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1084, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to require that the Director of the Bureau of Prisons ensure that each chief executive officer of a Federal penal or correctional institution provides a secure storage area located outside of the secure perimeter of the Federal penal or correctional institution for firearms carried by certain employees of the Bureau of Prisons, and for other purposes.

S. 1085

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1085, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide enhanced penalties for convicted murderers who kill or target America's public safety officers.

S. 1182

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1182, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the 100th anniversary of The American Legion.

S. 1510

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1510, a bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to provide for online voter registration and other changes and to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to improve voting, to require the Election Assistance Commission to study and report on best practices for election cybersecurity and election audits, and to make grants to States to implement those best practices recommended by the Commission.

S. 1589

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1589, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Small Business Act to expand the availability of employee stock ownership plans in S corporations, and for other purposes.

S. 1595

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 1595, a bill to amend the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 to impose additional sanctions with respect to Hizballah, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1595, *supra*.

S. 1690

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1690, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide greater support to students with dependents, and for other purposes.

S. 1693

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) were added as cosponsors of S. 1693, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify that section 230 of that Act does not prohibit the enforcement against providers and users of interactive computer services of Federal and State criminal and civil law relating to sex trafficking.

S. 1706

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 1706, a bill to prevent human health threats posed by the consumption of equines raised in the United States.

S. 1719

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1719, a bill to eliminate duties on imports of recreational performance outerwear, to establish the Sustainable Textile and Apparel Research Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 1756

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1756, a bill to improve the processes by which environmental documents are prepared and permits and applications are processed and regulated by Federal departments and agencies, and for other purposes.

S. 1823

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1823, a bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to clarify that houses of worship are eligible for certain disaster relief and emergency assistance on terms equal to other eligible private nonprofit facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 1827

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1827, a bill to extend funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1859

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1859, a bill to extend the moratorium on the annual fee on health insurance providers.

S. 1863

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1863, a bill to clarify that non-commercial species found entirely within the borders of a single State are not in interstate commerce or subject to regulation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 or any other provision of law enacted as an exercise of the power of Congress to regulate interstate commerce.

S. 1883

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1883, a bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to publish a final rule to provide for the screening, testing, and treatment for sleep disorders of individuals operating commercial vehicles.

S. 1916

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1916, a bill to prohibit the possession or transfer of certain firearm accessories, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 245

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 245, a resolution calling on the Government of Iran to release unjustly detained United States citizens and legal permanent resident aliens, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 245, *supra*.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. FRANKEN):

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; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today I reintroduced the Adjunct Faculty Loan Fairness Act, a bill that would enable faculty working less than full-time to participate in the Public Service Student Loan Forgiveness Program.

Contingent faculty members are like full-time instructors. They have advanced degrees. They teach classes and spend many hours outside the classroom preparing for class. They hold office hours, grade papers, and give feedback to students. They provide advice and write letters of recommendation. Students rely on them. Since most adjuncts have advanced degrees and, as the 63 percent of graduate degree recipients who borrow have an average of almost \$59,000 in student loans, they are among the 44 million Americans with student debt.

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness program is meant to encourage graduates to go into public service by offering student loan forgiveness for eligible Federal loans after ten years of full-time work in government or the non-profit sector. Public service fields like nursing, military service, and public health qualify. And many education jobs qualify, including full-time work at public universities and part-time work at community colleges in high-needs subject areas or areas of shortage. But other faculty members, those who work part-time, are not eligible for loan forgiveness because the law requires an annual average of 30 hours per week to qualify for the program. For adjunct faculty working on a contingent basis—many of whom may only teach one or two classes while holding down other part-time jobs to make ends meet—this requirement can be difficult or impossible to meet, even when they are putting in more than 30 hours of work each week.

The number of faculty hours given for each class is calculated differently at different schools. Some schools give one hour per hour in the classroom while others actually take into consideration the time required outside the classroom. So, even as these faculty members are working hard to provide quality instruction for their students, often without the option of moving into a tenured, full-time position, their public service is not recognized by the current Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.

The Adjunct Faculty Loan Fairness Act of 2017 would solve this by amending the Higher Education Act to expand the definition of a “public service job” to include a part-time faculty member who teaches at least one course at an eligible institution of higher education. They would still have to meet all the other requirements to qualify for the public service loan forgiveness program, including making 120 on-time payments while employed at a qualifying institution, and they could not be employed full-time elsewhere at the same time. I believe it corrects a major flaw in the current system and rewards individuals for their contribution to public service rather than penalize them for the number of hours they work.

This bill would benefit someone like Brittany, an adjunct professor in southern Illinois. Brittany finished her graduate degree in 2013 and still has over \$70,000 in student loan debt today. This debt has prevented her from attending law school, her longtime dream, and makes it challenging to put money aside for her retirement. This debt is also putting her children's future at risk—Brittany will still be paying off her own loans when it is time for her now four-month old child to attend college. This bill would ensure that Brittany, and thousands like her, could secure their family's financial future by earning credit towards the Public Service Loan Forgiveness for

loan payments made while teaching, regardless of the fact that she isn't full-time faculty.

Unfortunately, for all their contributions to their colleges and the students they work with, adjunct faculty like Brittany often don't have the same employment benefits or job security as their colleagues. The number of classes they teach every semester varies. To make ends meet, these professors often end up teaching classes at more than one school in the same semester, getting paid about \$3,000 per class and making an average annual income that hovers around minimum wage. This also means that, in some parts of the country, they spend as much time commuting as they do teaching.

Nationally, over half of all higher education faculty work on a contingent basis. In the past, these were a minority of professors who were hired to teach an occasional class because they could bring experience to the classroom in a specific field or industry. Over time, as university budgets have tightened and it has gotten more expensive to hire full-time, tenure track professors, higher education institutions have increasingly relied on adjuncts.

From 1991 to 2015, the number of part-time faculty in the U.S. increased two and a half times from 291,000 to over 743,000. At the same time, the percentage of professors holding tenure and tenure-track positions has been steadily decreasing from 45 percent of all instructors in 1975 to only 29 percent in 2015. The number of full-time instructors, tenured and non-tenured, now makes up less than half of all professors on U.S. campuses. Today, a majority of the 1.5 million faculty employees at public and non-profit colleges and universities in the United States work on a part-time, contingent basis.

Illinois colleges rely heavily on adjuncts. In 2015, 52 percent of all faculty at all Title IV degree-granting institutions in the state—more than 31,700 faculty employees—worked on a part-time basis. This is a 32.4 percent increase in part-time faculty in Illinois compared to a 7 percent increase in full-time faculty since 2002.

This bill does not fix the growing reliance by our higher education system on part-time professors who are underpaid and undervalued. But it would ensure that members of the contingent faculty workforce are no longer unfairly excluded from the loan forgiveness program for public servants. I would like to thank my colleague, Senator AL FRANKEN from Minnesota, for joining me in this effort. I hope my other colleagues will join us to ensure this program benefits faculty members who provide our students with a quality education.

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. 1927

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 “Adjunct Faculty Loan Fairness Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR ADJUNCT FACULTY.

Section 455(m)(3)(B)(ii) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(m)(3)(B)(ii)) is amended—

(1) by striking “teaching as” and inserting the following: “teaching—

“(I) as”;

(2) by striking “, foreign language faculty, and part-time faculty at community colleges), as determined by the Secretary.” and inserting “and foreign language faculty), as determined by the Secretary; or”;

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(II) as a part-time faculty member or instructor who—

“(aa) teaches not less than 1 course at an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101(a)), a postsecondary vocational institution (as defined in section 102(c)), or a Tribal College or University (as defined in section 316(b)); and

“(bb) is not employed on a full-time basis by any other employer.”.

By Mr. FLAKE:

S. 1937. A bill to authorize appropriations for border infrastructure construction, to provide conditional resident status to certain aliens, and to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to include grounds of inadmissibility and deportability for alien members of criminal gangs and cartels, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Border Security and Deferred Action Recipient Relief Act, which I am introducing.

This bill offers solutions to the serious problems facing us with regard to border security, while at the same time addressing the needs for a legislative solution for those issues faced by the children who were brought here through no fault of their own.

With respect to the border, this bill provides \$1.6 billion in funding for border security measures that the President requested and the House has already approved in a bipartisan vote. As an Arizonan, I am more than familiar with the steps we need to take to increase border security. We have a better situation on the border than we have had in a while, but there are still measures that need to be taken.

In addition to the appropriate barriers that will aid in preventing illegal crossings, we need access roads that actually get to the border. If there is one issue I hear from property owners, ranchers, Border Patrol agents, and others near the border, it is that they need better access. We have had an issue with regard to roads that are used by the Border Control that are paid for by the county. It is a situation that needs to be resolved, and it will benefit all of us who travel near the border. This bill addresses that. The road issue was also raised by the GAO. I requested a study on behalf of my constituents,

along with my colleagues, to see what we could do with the roads and access situation. GAO came back with recommendations, and this would implement some of the recommendations.

The bill also aids law enforcement by ensuring the swift deportation of individuals determined to be members of violent gangs and drug cartels.

I would also like to thank Congresswoman BARBARA COMSTOCK for her leadership on this issue by sponsoring the Criminal Alien Gang Member Removal Act, which passed the House.

With respect to the children brought here through no fault of their own, this bill takes a measure that has already earned bipartisan support in the House of Representatives, the Recognizing America's Children Act, which provides a solution for the DACA kids. These young immigrants were brought here as children and simply know no other country. For all intents and purposes, these young people consider themselves Americans. If we can protect these DACA recipients and provide solutions to better secure our borders at the same time, that is a win-win.

The President and Congress both want to improve border security. We both want to respond to the threat of dangerous gangs and drug cartels. We both want to arrive at a legislative solution for the rescission of the DACA Program that benefits those who want to contribute to their communities and to the American dream. This bill is the best way to thread the needle and deliver what the President has asked for, what the Congress wants, and what my constituents in Arizona deserve. These issues are far too important for us to delay.

To be clear, I will work with anyone to support any number of proposals that accomplish these goals, but I believe that the straightforward approach of the Border Security and Deferred Action Recipient Relief Act, which I am introducing today, is the best chance we have to put this bill on the President's desk.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself,
Mr. TESTER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr.
HEINRICH, Mr. MERKLEY, and
Ms. WARREN):

S. 1942. A bill to direct the Attorney General to review, revise, and develop law enforcement and justice protocols appropriate to address missing and murdered Indians, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss and bring awareness to the obligation that we have to never forget what is happening to way too many Native American women in this country.

For too long, the disproportionate incidents of violence against Native American women have gone unnoticed, unreported, or underreported, and it is time to address this issue head-on. That is what I intend to do today and in the remaining days of my time in

the Senate, until we actually get a bill passed.

There is no official database or requirement for information collection regarding the number of missing and murdered Native women. In most cases, the only records of them are records that have been provided to us by the families and friends of the victims. It is critical that Congress push the U.S. Department of Justice and the FBI to work with Tribal communities to come up with culturally appropriate protocols for responding to cases of missing and murdered Native women.

I would like to take this time to honor Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, whose story has been told on the news in North Dakota and nationally and who has been on the forefront of my mind since introducing this bill.

On August 19, Savanna, a 22-year-old member of the Spirit Lake Tribe, who was 8 months pregnant, went upstairs to her neighbor's apartment in Fargo, ND, after being invited to try on a dress for alterations. While she was there, what awaited her in that apartment were truly horrific acts of violence. Although Savanna's baby daughter survived and is now safe with her father and grandparents, that was the last time anyone who loved Savanna saw her alive.

After 8 days of searching for Savanna by the family and the community, her body was finally found by chance by kayakers in a nearby river. Her body was wrapped in plastic and duct taped. Her death was an incredible tragedy and, unfortunately, one that happens way too often to Native women.

While the news of Savanna's death was heard around the world, thousands of indigenous women are murdered and disappear each year, with many of those cases being ignored or forgotten.

Over my decades in public service, I have worked with Tribal communities on issues that involve violence against Native women. In response to those talks and to this latest tragedy, today I am introducing legislation that would help tackle the barriers to bringing justice for missing and murdered Native women across the country.

My bill, which is named after Savanna, would work to improve Tribal access to Federal databases for missing persons. It would promote interjurisdictional collaboration by establishing protocols for responding to cases of missing and murdered Native Americans, and it would require the collection of data related to missing and murdered Native women.

Native women are an inherently vulnerable population whose voices are still not heard by most people in power. Across rural North Dakota, women living on reservations face unique challenges when dealing with violence. Lack of access to emergency services, lack of access to law enforcement officers, lack of access to an AMBER Alert system, and confidential victim services that are not provided—these all act as barriers to women get-

ting the help that they desperately need.

Unfortunately, there is no official database or mandated database collection on the total number of missing and murdered Native women in our country. This has added to not knowing what the actual magnitude of this epidemic really is and has resulted in several Tribal members sending me stories and handwritten lists of the names of missing and murdered women that people have gathered just from their collective memory.

I would like to share some of the stories that I have been so honored to receive from family members. Telling these stories—and giving me the ability to tell these stories—is not easy because every time you tell the story, you relive the story. These tragedies still hurt deeply. Even years after the murder, they still absolutely relive that experience. I know they have given me these stories to tell for one simple reason: because they pray and they hope and they dream that giving me these stories may change the outcome for some other family.

I am going to start by talking about these wonderful women—these beautiful women. Up at the far right-hand corner with her beautiful baby is Stella Marie Trotter-Graves. Stella Marie was born and grew up in Belcourt, ND, and was a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. She spent many years traveling the world with her husband, who served in the U.S. Air Force, and their three children. The family lived in Florida, Germany, Japan, and Arizona. Everywhere they went, Stella quickly made friends and proudly shared her Chippewa culture. She was loved and adored by all who met her for living an adventurous and fearless life.

In July 2009, Stella and her family moved back to Belcourt, ND, and she started to attend Turtle Mountain Community College. On September 16, 2010, Stella and her cousin were at the local bar when she decided to stay behind with other people they knew. According to witnesses, Stella left with another couple to continue the evening out.

Stella's body was later found in a male Tribal member's pickup in an open field on the reservation. It wasn't until 13 days later that the family was officially notified by law enforcement of Stella's death.

Throughout the investigation, there were a lot of rumors and misinformation, which made it difficult to find the murderer or the murderers. People who were with Stella the night of her death said that they were never questioned, and information provided was never followed up on. No one has ever been charged or convicted for this murder, and the last hours of Stella's life remain unknown.

Stella was an incredible woman who was loved by all who knew her. Her family, her children, and her Tribe deserve justice.

Monica Wickre is pictured here with those beautiful earrings and the red

shirt. Monica was a 42-year-old mother of three who was born and raised in Belcourt on the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa reservation and lived near Aberdeen, SD.

After a night out with friends on April 7, 1993, Monica never returned home. Her relatives grew concerned when they had not heard from or seen Monica for several days. Eventually, the family filed a missing persons report and started to talk to friends and neighbors. The detective assigned to the case worked closely with the community and the family and assured them he was working diligently on this case.

In June of that year, a canoeist found Monica's badly decomposed body in the James River outside Aberdeen. Throughout the next several years, new detectives were assigned to the case, each having to basically start over and work with limited notes, interviews, and evidence from the previous investigators. A couple of times, the police told the family that they had a suspect or were close to arresting someone for Monica's murder, but there was never enough information to charge the suspect. This has resulted in nearly 25 years of heartache for Monica's family and her friends.

Monica's family wants justice for their daughter, sister, and mother, and they all want closure. Although the case is no longer active, the family continues to bring awareness about Monica's case in the hope that someone will come forward with information that will, in fact, help solve it.

Monica Lisa Two Eagle is the woman with the dark hair in the floral print shirt. She was a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and one of 14 children. She was kind, caring, and athletic. In the winter of 1979, Phil Two Eagle saw his sister Mona Lisa, who was in her early twenties, leave the siblings' house and get into a red-and-white pickup with a couple of men. Mona Lisa never returned.

In the following days, the family and local law enforcement searched for her on horseback. Taking it upon themselves, they searched for her on horseback. About 2 weeks after she went missing, Mona Lisa's father and brother found her frozen in a pasture near their home. She had been beaten, possibly raped, and left alone in a blizzard. Rumors ran wild that family and law enforcement tried to solve the crime, but, even to this day, no one was ever convicted or even charged. The two men who were last seen with Mona Lisa all those years ago are still running free, while the family lives every day with the lack of justice.

Lakota Rae Renville, the woman in the black-and-white photo, is the last victim I want to talk about. I want to thank her family, who are here today and who have honored me and trusted me with her memory. I want to help them understand how grateful I am, but I also want them to know that sharing her story will help raise aware-

ness about the crimes of missing and murdered indigenous people.

Lakota was a member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota Bands of North and South Dakota, who, despite being shy and reserved, had a solid group of friends who supported her and even helped her excel in school. After graduation, Lakota spent time taking care of her family, especially her nieces and nephews.

In 2005 Lakota met a man online and unexpectedly relocated to Missouri, unbeknownst to her family. With most details still unknown 12 years later, the family is left with more questions than answers. What they do know is that she was forced into sex trafficking and manipulated against her will.

In October of 2005, Lakota's family was called and told that her body was found badly beaten, wrapped in carpet padding and a blanket in an open gravel pit in Missouri. Local investigators brought in and subsequently let go dozens of suspects and, to this day, have not brought her murderer to justice.

Lakota was never given a chance to become a mother or pursue that bright future that surely lay ahead of her. She was robbed of a life she had yet to experience, a life that was certain to be filled with love from her family and deep appreciation from her family.

These are not isolated cases. This goes on every day in America.

I want to make a point of how discouraging it, so many times, when you see events unfolding where it may be that a young girl goes missing in a Caribbean island and the world is turned upside down looking for her or when we hear a story of someone who comes from maybe a more affluent and wealthy family who goes missing and we turn over every stone to find them. Yet that is not the story for very many indigenous women.

When you look at the importance of what we do today, probably the most important thing we can do is to tell these stories, and from telling these stories we have an opportunity to really change. We can't ignore that frequently for Native people, they are not wrong to believe that they are the forgotten people of this country. Way too often, the first Americans become the last Americans.

Under the Savanna's Act, the Attorney General, in cooperation with the Secretary of the Interior, must consult with the Tribes on how to improve Tribal access to Federal criminal information databases, such as the National Crime Information Center and the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System. We need to ensure that Tribal law enforcement has up-to-date information on missing Native women and better communication—in fact, essential—with Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies and Tribal law enforcement agencies so cases like the ones you have heard of today don't go unnoticed or uninvestigated.

Jurisdictional issues are a huge barrier in Indian Country to responding to

and prosecuting crimes committed on Tribal lands. Standardized protocols must be established in order to give a quicker response to Native women going missing. The complexity of jurisdiction on Tribal lands can slow down an investigation, but it is not an excuse. It can waste crucial time at the beginning of an investigation or a case, but it is not an excuse. If we do not act rapidly, we know we lose precious time to prevent homicides and to bring a woman safely home and help apprehend the perpetrators.

In one case study alone done by the National Institute of Justice, 97 percent of Native women experience violence by a non-Native perpetrator. This number emphasizes what I have long said, that historical trauma is a major factor of violence against Native women, and perpetrators feel that Tribal lands give them a free pass from the law. This can no longer be tolerated, and jurisdictional issues must be addressed. It cannot be the excuse for inaction.

Although we don't know the total number of missing and murdered Native women, it is clear, from all of the stories and from the statistics that we do have, that the rates at which Native American women experience violence is intrinsically related to the likelihood of their going missing, being murdered, and forced into sex trafficking.

Here are just some of the statistics collected by the National Institute of Justice, the Government Accountability Office, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding violence against Native women. In 2016, 5,712 cases of missing Native women were reported to the National Crime Information Center, and 125 of those cases were in my State of Dakota alone. On some reservations, Native women are murdered at more than 10 times the national average. I want to repeat that. On some reservations, Native women are murdered at more than 10 times the national average.

American Indians and Alaskan Natives are two times more likely to experience rape or sexual assault compared to all other races.

In 2010, we found that the U.S. attorneys declined to prosecute nearly 52 percent of violent crime that occurred in Indian Country. Homicide is the third leading cause of death among American Indians and Alaskan Native women between 10 and 24 years old.

These high rates of violence, including domestic violence, sex assault, and human trafficking, must stop. We must work together to combat domestic violence and human trafficking in Indian Country.

Just last week, the Indian Affairs Committee held a hearing to discuss the lack of services provided for Indian Country regarding the horrific acts of violence and human trafficking of Native women. Just yesterday, while questioning one of the officials at the Department of the Interior about the need to do training in human trafficking at our casinos, he simply said:

I thought you were going to ask me about Indian gaming. I quickly said: I am asking you about Indian gaming because all of this works together.

If we do not work together in every institution of the Federal Government, in every institution of the State government, and in every institution of Tribal government, we will never make progress in providing the security that we have in this building, and the security that we enjoy as White women will never be realized for women living on the reservation in Indian Country. We cannot let this continue.

There are countless more stories like Savanna's, Stella's, Mona Lisa's, Monica's, and Lakota's that we will never know. It is time for Congress to recognize this epidemic and take action to prevent these stories and find out just how many stories there really are. It is time to give voice to these voiceless women. It is time to bring their perpetrators to justice and give a voice to the families who are struggling even today—sometimes decades later—to understand how this can happen in America. They seem to be second-class citizens.

I think that is what we know. I am working with very many of my colleagues on the other side. This isn't a partisan issue.

I have been joined by my wonderful colleague from the great State of Alaska. I think the first time we ever met, this was the topic of conversation: What is the security for Indian children, security for Indian women, and Alaskan Native women? We knew because both of us have traveled extensively in our States and spent a lot of time in the indigenous populations.

When family members ask us why this is happening, we frequently don't have an answer.

I know that in my State jurisdictional issues provide some barriers to actually getting this done, but that is an excuse. We need to do better.

With that, I want to yield the floor to my wonderful colleague from the great State of Alaska, who once again is joining me and leading her side of the aisle to bring attention to these issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I want to acknowledge and thank the Senator from North Dakota. She has been a champion for the Native people, the indigenous people around the country, including in my State of Alaska. Whether it is working to address the issues related to childhood trauma, which so many of our young Native children face, or the issues relating to domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking—these are scourges that we see directed, unfortunately, at so many of our Native women in the State of Alaska, in the State of North Dakota, and around the country.

She has cited the statistics. I think sometimes we just get numb by the statistics. When you are told that you

are four times the national average, that sounds bad. But what does that mean? When you put a face to it, when you hear the tragedy repeated through the stories, these are not just statistics that we are speaking of. These are real women. These are our sisters. These are our neighbors. These are our friends, and these are human beings who deserve to be respected in their lives but also respected in other tragic deaths. How we work to address these difficult issues needs to be a focus and a priority for us.

So I appreciate what the Senator from North Dakota is doing in bringing attention to our Nation's lackluster—and that is kind of a polite term here—response to the tragedy of missing and murdered Native women and girls.

I am proud to lend my voice to the proposition that Congress, in the exercise of our trust responsibility to our Native peoples, has a responsibility to do more. You would think that that trust responsibility demands us to be paying even closer attention, and yet it seems that we just withdraw from that, that that responsibility is not acknowledged.

Now, it is not often here in the United States that we benchmark our treatment of indigenous peoples against Canada, but in this case, there is actually a compelling difference between Canada's national response to the tragedy of missing and murdered Native women and our seeming indifference here in the United States.

Down in southeastern Alaska, right across on the Canadian side, lies a town called Prince Rupert. It is in British Columbia. The Alaskan ferry comes in from Washington State and stops in Prince Rupert and then moves into Alaska. Prince Rupert is also the terminus of Highway 16, and the locals refer to Highway 16 as the "Highway of Tears." They refer to it as the "Highway of Tears" because it is a road on which Native women and girls have vanished for decades now. The question is, How many? Who is disappearing? Some would say as few as 12 and perhaps as many as 43. CBS News devoted a segment of its news magazine show "48 Hours" to the Highway of Tears.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed 54 million Canadian dollars to a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. I will admit that there is some controversy over whether the national inquiry is actually fulfilling its mission, but my point here is that Canada stepped up. They have acknowledged that this is an issue, that this is a problem, and they have responded to the disproportionate victimization of Native women and girls, and they have done so in a tangible way. Here in the United States, as my friend and colleague has noted, we are more than a bit late in acknowledging that the problem even exists.

Earlier this year, the Senators from Montana—both Senator DAINES and Senator TESTER—were successful in

designating May 5, 2017, through a resolution, as the National Day of Awareness on Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls. The resolution recites that some Tribal communities face murder rates that are 10 times the national average, as Senator HEITKAMP has noted. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, homicide was the third leading cause of death among Native women between the ages of 10 and 24 years and the fifth leading cause of death for Alaska Native women between 25 and 34 years of age. So we are trying to raise attention and awareness. We are trying to shine a spotlight on this issue.

I certainly think it is high time that Federal law enforcement answer the question, Why? Why is the murder rate for Native women so high, and why are we not addressing it in a comprehensive fashion? The Senator from North Dakota has pointed out that in many areas, jurisdictional issues are at play, and I agree. That is not an excuse. We acknowledge that we have challenges with jurisdictions. Let's figure this out. Women are disappearing and dying.

In Alaska, it is not so much jurisdictional issues; it is the fact that in far too many of our communities, we lack any law enforcement presence. We might have a VPSO—a village safety police officer—but they are not armed. They are very limited in terms of their ability to provide for levels of enforcement. More frustrating than so much of that is that women who have been victimized feel as though reporting doesn't get them anywhere because there is no follow-through. There is no prosecution. There has been no effort that will allow them to have any level of recourse, much less justice, visited upon them.

As we talk about these issues of jurisdiction and law enforcement and the rates that we see, I think we need to be clear that the discussion today—the call for justice—is not driven by statistics and rates. It is driven by their faces. It is driven by the loss of people's daughters, people's siblings, people's friends, including Savannah and Stella and Nicole and Mona Lisa. These are all real people, real women with names, with faces, with families.

In Alaska, the face we so often associate with the lack of progress when it comes to addressing the issue of missing and murdered Native women is the face of Sophie Sergie. This year marks the 24th anniversary of the death of Sophie Sergie from Pitkas Point. This is a Yup'ik village in southwest Alaska.

On August 26 of 1993, Sophie was found dead in the women's bathroom dorm on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. She was raped. She was shot dead. It is believed that her body remained in that bathroom for some 13 hours before it was found. The murder weapon was never recovered. That case is still a cold case 24 years later. But we don't forget Sophie Sergie, just as

we don't forget the women the Senator from North Dakota has shared stories about. We cannot forget these women.

Unlike the tragedies along the Highway of Tears, we really don't know how many Native women and girls have gone missing and murdered. That is a big part of the problem. But I will tell my colleagues that if you ask advocates for Native women, the answer comes back: It is no secret. We all know somebody. We all know somebody who has gone missing, somebody who has been murdered.

That was the testimony of Tammy Jerue. She is the executive director for the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, and she testified before a congressional briefing last February. Tammy told the briefing that her organization has documented as many as 50 names of women. When we think about it, numbers on that order were significant enough for Prime Minister Trudeau to commission a national inquiry. So it causes us to ask the question, What about us? What number do we have to get to before there is a call to action, before we wake up and say: This is not acceptable. This is not acceptable that our Native women are disappearing, are being murdered.

Native women are asking why Federal law enforcement has no protocol for addressing the crisis in our Indian Country, why there is a lack of coordination among criminal justice agencies in this country to set aside the jurisdictional challenges and investigate these tragedies in an effective manner, and why there is a lack of victim services.

In the Indian Affairs Committee, we had a hearing on human trafficking, sex trafficking. It was pretty revealing about the lack of victim services—specific—that could be there to help our Native victims. Right now, the families of missing and murdered Native women in Alaska have to cover the cost of a traditional burial. They have to cover the cost of immediate long-term counseling, and so many other expenses they can't afford. We maintain a victims of crime fund here in this country to address these sorts of costs, but there is no dedicated Tribal funding stream. We have had some pretty bipartisan efforts here in the Senate to establish one, but we haven't even been able to do that bare minimum to provide for the victims.

The issue we are discussing today is tragic and frustrating. It is depressing. But to remain silent is to truly further marginalize Native women and girls, and that is unacceptable. Perhaps we are not going to devote tens of millions of dollars to a national inquiry; However, it is high time that we acknowledge a problem that has failed to make headlines in this country, because you first have to acknowledge that a problem exists to make headway in addressing that problem.

So, again, I thank the Senator from North Dakota for her strong and steadfast advocacy on behalf of not only our

Native women but our Native children, our indigenous peoples across this country. I appreciate all that is being done, and I look forward to working with her again as we try to shine a brighter light on a very tragic situation.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. REED, Mr. KAINE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CARPER, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. HARRIS):

S. 1945. A bill to regulate large capacity ammunition feeding devices; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. MENENDEZ. 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. 1945

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 "Keep Americans Safe Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

Section 921(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after paragraph (29) the following:

"(30) The term 'large capacity ammunition feeding device'—

"(A) means a magazine, belt, drum, feed strip, helical feeding device, or similar device, including any such device joined or coupled with another in any manner, that has an overall capacity of, or that can be readily restored, changed, or converted to accept, more than 10 rounds of ammunition; and

"(B) does not include an attached tubular device designed to accept, and capable of operating only with, .22 caliber rimfire ammunition.

"(31) The term 'qualified law enforcement officer' has the meaning given the term in section 926B."

SEC. 3. RESTRICTIONS ON LARGE CAPACITY AMMUNITION FEEDING DEVICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 922 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after subsection (u) the following:

"(v)(1) It shall be unlawful for a person to import, sell, manufacture, transfer, or possess, in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, a large capacity ammunition feeding device.

"(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the possession of any large capacity ammunition feeding device otherwise lawfully possessed on or before the date of enactment of the Keep Americans Safe Act.

"(3) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to—

"(A) the importation for, manufacture for, sale to, transfer to, or possession by the United States or a department or agency of the United States or a State or a department, agency, or political subdivision of a State, or a sale or transfer to or possession by a qualified law enforcement officer employed by the United States or a department or agency of the United States or a State or a department, agency, or political subdivision of a State for purposes of law enforcement (whether on or off-duty), or a sale or

transfer to or possession by a campus law enforcement officer for purposes of law enforcement (whether on or off-duty);

"(B) the importation for, or sale or transfer to a licensee under title I of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 for purposes of establishing and maintaining an on-site physical protection system and security organization required by Federal law, or possession by an employee or contractor of such licensee on-site for such purposes or off-site for purposes of licensee-authorized training or transportation of nuclear materials;

"(C) the possession, by an individual who is retired in good standing from service with a law enforcement agency and is not otherwise prohibited from receiving ammunition, of a large capacity ammunition feeding device—

"(i) sold or transferred to the individual by the agency upon such retirement; or

"(ii) that the individual purchased, or otherwise obtained, for official use before such retirement; or

"(D) the importation, sale, manufacture, transfer, or possession of any large capacity ammunition feeding device by a licensed manufacturer or licensed importer for the purposes of testing or experimentation authorized by the Attorney General.

"(4) For purposes of paragraph (3)(A), the term 'campus law enforcement officer' means an individual who is—

"(A) employed by a private institution of higher education that is eligible for funding under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.);

"(B) responsible for the prevention or investigation of crime involving injury to persons or property, including apprehension or detention of persons for such crimes;

"(C) authorized by Federal, State, or local law to carry a firearm, execute search warrants, and make arrests; and

"(D) recognized, commissioned, or certified by a government entity as a law enforcement officer."

(b) IDENTIFICATION MARKINGS FOR LARGE CAPACITY AMMUNITION FEEDING DEVICES.—Section 923(i) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following: "A large capacity ammunition feeding device manufactured after the date of enactment of the Keep Americans Safe Act shall be identified by a serial number and the date on which the device was manufactured or made, legibly and conspicuously engraved or cast on the device, and such other identification as the Attorney General shall by regulations prescribe."

(c) SEIZURE AND FORFEITURE OF LARGE CAPACITY AMMUNITION FEEDING DEVICES.—Section 924(d) of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by inserting "or large capacity ammunition feeding device" after "firearm or ammunition" each place the term appears;

(B) by inserting "or large capacity ammunition feeding device" after "firearms or ammunition" each place the term appears; and

(C) by striking "(k)" and inserting "(k), or (v)";

(2) in paragraph (2)(C), by inserting "or large capacity ammunition feeding devices" after "firearms or quantities of ammunition"; and

(3) in paragraph (3)(E), by inserting "922(v)," after "922(n),".

SEC. 4. PENALTIES.

Section 924(a)(1)(B) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking "(or (q))" and inserting "(q), or (v)".

SEC. 5. USE OF BYRNE GRANTS FOR BUY-BACK PROGRAMS FOR LARGE CAPACITY AMMUNITION FEEDING DEVICES.

Section 501(a)(1) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968

(34 U.S.C. 10152(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(I) Compensation for surrendered large capacity ammunition feeding devices, as that term is defined in section 921 of title 18, United States Code, under buy-back programs for large capacity ammunition feeding devices.”.

SEC. 6. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Act, an amendment made by this Act, or the application of such provision or amendment to any person or circumstance is held to be unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act, the amendments made by this Act, and the application of such provision or amendment to any person or circumstance shall not be affected thereby.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 285—HONORING THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF DR. SAMUEL DUBOIS COOK

Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. BURR, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 285

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook was born on November 21, 1928, in Griffin, Georgia;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia;

Whereas, as a student, Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook was a friend and classmate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and a leader at Morehouse College, where he served as student body president and founded the campus chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook earned a Master of Arts in Political Science and a Doctor of Philosophy from Ohio State University;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook is a veteran who served in the United States Army during the Korean War;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook taught at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Atlanta University, the University of Illinois, and the University of California, Los Angeles, before becoming a faculty member at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook spent his life working for social justice and equality;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook distinguished himself as an educator, scholar, thinker, activist, and public servant;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook broke racial barriers as the first African American to hold either a regular or tenured faculty appointment at a predominantly white southern college or university, when he received an appointment at Duke University;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook also broke racial barriers in his field by serving as the first African American president of the Southern Political Science Association;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook endeavored to advance interracial harmony;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook left an indelible imprint on Dillard University, a historically black university in New Orleans, Louisiana, as its president for more than 2 decades;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook was appointed to the National Council on the Humanities by President Jimmy Carter and appointed to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council by President Bill Clinton;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook served as vice president of the American Political Science Association, president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, and chair of the Presidents of the United Negro College Fund;

Whereas Duke University established the Samuel DuBois Cook Society, the Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity, the Samuel DuBois Cook professorship, and the Samuel DuBois Cook Postdoctoral Fellowship;

Whereas Ohio State University established the Samuel DuBois Cook Summer Academy and the Samuel DuBois Cook graduate fellowship, to honor the work and achievements of Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook;

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook died on May 29, 2017; and

Whereas Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook is considered to be a trailblazer who lived a life of integrity: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate honors the life and achievements of Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook.

SENATE RESOLUTION 286—SUPPORTING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN ENSURING CHILDREN IN THE POOREST COUNTRIES HAVE ACCESS TO A QUALITY EDUCATION THROUGH THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION

Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 286

Whereas access to quality education reduces poverty, advances economic prosperity, improves peace and security, and strengthens public health;

Whereas the 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, the globally recognized annual accountability tool on the status of education internationally, found that an estimated 263,000,000 children and youth are out of school worldwide, with girls still more likely to be out of school than their male peers in most of the developing world;

Whereas a 2015 GEM Report found that two-thirds of the world's out-of-school children live in countries affected by fragility and conflict;

Whereas a 2016 GEM Report found that sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest out-of-school rates for all age groups and of the 61,000,000 out-of-school children of primary school age, 33,000,000, or more than half, live in sub-Saharan Africa;

Whereas the 2011 World Health Organization's World Report on Disability has found an estimated 90 percent of children with disabilities under age 18 in the developing world do not attend school;

Whereas a 2012 GEM Report found that 250,000,000 primary schoolchildren are failing to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills, 130,000,000 of whom have attended at least four years of school;

Whereas a 2011 GEM Report found that educating all students in low-income countries with basic reading skills could lead to 171,000,000 people lifted out of poverty, a 12 percent drop in global poverty;

Whereas a 1999 World Bank study on conflict found every year of school decreases the chance of male youth engaging in violent conflict by 20 percent;

Whereas a 2011 GEM Report reported that an educated mother is more likely to have her children vaccinated, and girls in school are three times less likely to be infected

with HIV than their peers who are not in school;

Whereas the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is the only public-private global partnership exclusively dedicated to education in the world's poorest countries;

Whereas GPE eligible countries are home to approximately 870,000,000 children and youth, which represent 78 percent of out-of-school children;

Whereas GPE support resulted in 72,000,000 more children in primary school in 2015 than in 2002 and a 10 percent increase in primary school completion over that same period in GPE partner countries;

Whereas GPE support to partner countries has achieved a 71 percent primary completion rate for girls in 2014 compared with 56 percent in 2002;

Whereas 60 percent of GPE's spending is in countries affected by conflict or fragility and helped these countries to increase their primary school completion rates from 56 percent in 2000 to 69 percent in 2015;

Whereas GPE incentivizes developing country governments to increase their own domestic financing for education, which has resulted in partner countries pledging \$26,000,000,000 for their own domestic financing during GPE's 2014 replenishment conference;

Whereas support for GPE complements the United States Government's bilateral basic education programs by fostering coordination among all key partners, ensuring the development of national education sector plans, and building on the commitment of developing country governments;

Whereas, on April 20, 2017, GPE called on donors and developing country partners to fund a \$3,100,000,000, three-year plan to support 89 developing countries in improving the quality of and access to education for 870,000,000 children and youth and provide education plan implementation grants to 67 developing countries, covering 64 percent of out-of-school children;

Whereas GPE is urging developing country governments to allocate 20 percent of government expenditure to education and philanthropic and private sector donors to increase their contributions; and

Whereas, with support from donors, GPE will be able to ensure 19,000,000 more children complete primary school, 6,600,000 more children complete lower secondary school, 1,700,000 more teachers are trained, 23,800 classrooms are built, and 204,000,000 textbooks are distributed, bringing new hope to a generation of children and youth: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) affirms the leadership and commitment of the United States Government to improving access to quality education for the poorest and most marginalized children and youth worldwide, which is critical to global stability, economic prosperity, and poverty elimination;

(2) supports the mission and goals of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to mobilize global and national efforts to contribute to the achievement of equitable, quality education and learning, with a focus on effective and efficient education systems and strong education financing;

(3) recognizes that United States Government investments in bilateral basic education are complemented by GPE's education systems approach and convening authority; and

(4) encourages increased commitment and investment by the United States Government, international donors, private foundations, and private sector donors through the GPE to the global effort to ensure children and youth are in school and learning throughout the world.

SENATE RESOLUTION 287—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 8, 2017, AS “NATIONAL HYDROGEN AND FUEL CELL DAY”

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. COONS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 287

Whereas hydrogen, which has an atomic mass of 1.008, is the most abundant chemical substance in the universe;

Whereas the United States is a world leader in the development and deployment of fuel cell and hydrogen technologies;

Whereas hydrogen fuel cells played an instrumental role in the United States space program, helping the United States achieve the mission of landing a man on the moon;

Whereas private industry, Federal and State governments, national laboratories, and institutions of higher education continue to improve fuel cell and hydrogen technologies to address the most pressing energy, environmental, and economic issues of the United States;

Whereas fuel cells utilizing hydrogen and hydrogen-rich fuels to generate electricity are clean, efficient, and resilient technologies being sold for stationary and backup power, zero-emission light duty motor vehicles and buses, industrial vehicles, and portable power;

Whereas stationary fuel cells are being placed in service for continuous and backup power to provide business and energy consumers with reliable power in the event of grid outages;

Whereas stationary fuel cells can help reduce water use, as compared to traditional power generation technologies;

Whereas fuel cell electric light duty motor vehicles and buses that utilize hydrogen can completely replicate the experience of internal combustion vehicles, including comparable range and refueling times;

Whereas hydrogen fuel cell industrial vehicles are being deployed at logistical hubs and warehouses across the United States and exported to facilities in Europe and Asia;

Whereas hydrogen is a nontoxic gas that can be derived from a variety of domestically available traditional and renewable resources, including solar, wind, biogas, and the abundant supply of natural gas in the United States;

Whereas hydrogen and fuel cells can store energy to help enhance the grid and maximize opportunities to deploy renewable energy;

Whereas the United States produces and uses more than 11,000,000 metric tons of hydrogen per year; and

Whereas engineers and safety code and standard professionals have developed consensus-based protocols for safe delivery, handling, and use of hydrogen: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates October 8, 2017, as “National Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Day”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 288—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 1 THROUGH 7, 2017, AS “NATIONAL COMMUNITY POLICING WEEK”

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. HASSAN, and Mr. HATCH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 288

Whereas police officers are indispensable members of the community who put their lives on the line to protect others;

Whereas promoting strong relationships founded in trust and mutual respect between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve helps ensure the safe and effective execution of the law;

Whereas law enforcement officers and communities that work together to address public safety concerns can create lasting solutions to difficult challenges;

Whereas a long-term commitment to community policing is necessary to eliminate the underlying causes of crime;

Whereas the advancement of community policing should be supported to ensure that State and local law enforcement agencies have necessary resources; and

Whereas community policing has been recognized as an important tool for improving the relationship between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of October 1 through 7, 2017, as “National Community Policing Week”; and

(2) supports community policing and encourages the people of the United States, law enforcement agencies, and elected officials to identify ways in which communities may improve public safety, strengthen relationships, and build trust.

SENATE RESOLUTION 289—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING OCTOBER 8, 2017, AS “NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK”

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 289

Whereas, in 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge on Pelican Island in Florida;

Whereas, in 2017, the National Wildlife Refuge System, administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, is the premier system of land and water to conserve wildlife in the world and has grown to approximately 836,000,000 acres, 566 national wildlife refuges, and 38 wetland management districts located in every State and territory of the United States;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important recreational and tourism destinations in communities across the United States and this protected land offers a variety of recreational opportunities, including 6 wildlife-dependent uses that the National Wildlife Refuge System manages, specifically hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation;

Whereas, in 2017, 373 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have hunting programs and 310 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have fishing programs, averaging more than 2,400,000 hunting visits and nearly 6,900,000 fishing visits each year;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System experienced more than 31,400,000 wildlife observation visits during fiscal year 2016;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important to local businesses and gateway communities;

Whereas visitation to the National Wildlife Refuge System increased by nearly 30 percent from 2006 to 2016;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System experiences more than 50,000,000 visits

each year, which generate more than \$2,400,000,000 in sales and 35,000 jobs in local economies;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System encompasses every kind of ecosystem in the United States, including temperate, tropical and boreal forests, wetlands, deserts, grasslands, arctic tundras, and remote islands, and spans 12 time zones from the Virgin Islands to Guam;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are home to more than 700 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 species of reptiles and amphibians, and more than 1,000 species of fish;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are the primary Federal lands on which the production, migration, and wintering habitat for waterfowl are fostered;

Whereas, since 1934, the sale of the Federal Duck Stamp to outdoor enthusiasts has generated more than \$850,000,000 in funds, which has enabled the purchase or lease of more than 5,700,000 acres of habitat for waterfowl and numerous other species in the National Wildlife Refuge System;

Whereas refuges provide protection to more than 380 threatened and endangered species;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are cores of conservation for larger landscapes and resources for other agencies of the Federal Government, State governments, private landowners, and organizations in efforts to secure the wildlife heritage of the United States;

Whereas more than 40,000 volunteers and approximately 200 national wildlife refuge “Friends” organizations contribute more than 1,350,000 volunteer hours annually, the equivalent of nearly 650 full-time employees, and provide an important link to local communities;

Whereas national wildlife refuges provide an important opportunity for children to discover and gain a greater appreciation for the natural world;

Whereas there are national wildlife refuges located in several urban and suburban areas and there is a refuge located within a 1 hour drive of every metropolitan area in the United States, which has enabled national wildlife refuges to employ, educate, and engage young people from all backgrounds in exploring, connecting with, and preserving the natural heritage of the United States;

Whereas, since 1995, refuges across the United States have held festivals, educational programs, guided tours, and other events to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week during the second full week of October;

Whereas the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has designated the week beginning on October 8, 2017, as “National Wildlife Refuge Week”; and

Whereas the designation of National Wildlife Refuge Week by the Senate would recognize more than a century of conservation in the United States, raise awareness about the importance of wildlife and the National Wildlife Refuge System, and celebrate the myriad recreational opportunities available to enjoy this network of protected lands: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning on October 8, 2017, as “National Wildlife Refuge Week”; and

(2) encourages the observance of National Wildlife Refuge Week with appropriate events and activities;

(3) acknowledges the importance of national wildlife refuges for their recreational opportunities and contribution to local economies across the United States;

(4) finds that national wildlife refuges play a vital role in securing the hunting and fishing heritage of the United States for future generations;

(5) identifies the significance of national wildlife refuges in advancing the traditions of wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation;

(6) recognizes the importance of national wildlife refuges to wildlife conservation, the protection of imperiled species and ecosystems, and compatible uses;

(7) acknowledges the role of national wildlife refuges in conserving waterfowl and waterfowl habitat under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.);

(8) reaffirms the support of the Senate for wildlife conservation and the National Wildlife Refuge System; and

(9) expresses the intent of the Senate—

(A) to continue working to conserve wildlife; and

(B) to manage the National Wildlife Refuge System for current and future generations.

SENATE RESOLUTION 290—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 5, 2017, AS “ENERGY EFFICIENCY DAY” IN CELEBRATION OF THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS THAT HAVE BEEN DRIVEN BY PRIVATE SECTOR INNOVATION AND FEDERAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY POLICIES PUT IN PLACE OVER THE PAST 4 DECADES

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. COONS, Mr. HATCH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. REED, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WARNER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. GARDNER, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 290

Whereas October has been designated as “National Energy Awareness Month”;

Whereas improvements in energy efficiency technologies and practices along with policies of the United States enacted since the 1970s have resulted in energy savings of more than 60,000,000,000,000 British thermal units and energy cost avoidance of more than \$800,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas energy efficiency has enjoyed bipartisan support in Congress and in administrations of both parties for more than 40 years;

Whereas bipartisan legislation enacted since the 1970s to advance Federal energy efficiency policies includes—

(1) the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6201 et seq.);

(2) the National Appliance Energy Conservation Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-12; 101 Stat. 103);

(3) the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 13201 et seq.);

(4) the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15801 et seq.);

(5) the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17001 et seq.); and

(6) the Energy Efficiency Improvement Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-11; 129 Stat. 182);

Whereas energy efficiency has long been supported by a diverse coalition of businesses (including manufacturers, utilities, energy service companies, and technology firms), public-interest organizations, environmental and conservation groups, and State and local governments;

Whereas, since 1980, the United States has more than doubled its energy productivity, realizing twice the economic output per unit of energy consumed;

Whereas more than 2,200,000 individuals in the United States are currently employed across the energy efficiency sector, as the United States has doubled its energy productivity and business and industry have become more innovative and competitive in global markets;

Whereas the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy of the Department of Energy is the principal Federal agency responsible for renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency efforts;

Whereas cutting energy waste saves the consumers of the United States billions of dollars on utility bills annually; and

Whereas energy efficiency policies, financing innovations, and public-private partnerships have contributed to a reduction in energy intensity in Federal facilities and vehicle fleets by over 47 percent since the mid-1970s, which results in direct savings to United States taxpayers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 5, 2017, as “Energy Efficiency Day”; and

(2) calls on the people of the United States to observe Energy Efficiency Day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1110. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. PERDUE, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. TESTER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MORAN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. WICKER, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. HELLER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. SASSE, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. COONS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. MANCHIN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1595, to amend the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 to impose additional sanctions with respect to Hizballah, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1110. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. PERDUE, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. TESTER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MORAN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. WICKER, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. HELLER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. SASSE, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. COONS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. MANCHIN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1595, to amend the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 to impose additional sanctions with respect to Hizballah, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2017”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—PREVENTION OF ACCESS BY HIZBALLAH TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Sec. 101. Mandatory sanctions with respect to fundraising and recruitment activities for Hizballah.

Sec. 102. Modification of report with respect to financial institutions that engage in certain transactions.

Sec. 103. Sanctions against agencies and instrumentalities of foreign states that support Hizballah.

TITLE II—NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND SIGNIFICANT TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES OF HIZBALLAH

Sec. 201. Blocking of property of Hizballah.

Sec. 202. Report on racketeering activities engaged in by Hizballah.

Sec. 203. Modification of report on activities of foreign governments to disrupt global logistics networks and fundraising, financing, and money laundering activities of Hizballah.

Sec. 204. Report on combating the illicit tobacco trafficking networks used by Hizballah.

TITLE III—GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 301. Regulatory authority.

Sec. 302. Exceptions.

TITLE I—PREVENTION OF ACCESS BY HIZBALLAH TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

SEC. 101. MANDATORY SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO FUNDRAISING AND RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES FOR HIZBALLAH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 101 of the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-102; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 101. MANDATORY SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO FUNDRAISING AND RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES FOR HIZBALLAH.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to any foreign person that the President determines knowingly provides significant financial, material, or technological support for—

“(1) Bayt al-Mal, Jihad al-Bina, the Islamic Resistance Support Association, or any successor or affiliate thereof as designated by the President;

“(2) al-Manar TV, al Nour Radio, or the Lebanese Media Group, or any successor or affiliate thereof as designated by the President;

“(3) a foreign person determined by the President to be engaged in fundraising or recruitment activities for Hizballah; or

“(4) a foreign person owned or controlled by a foreign person described in paragraph (1), (2), or (3).

“(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

“(A) ASSET BLOCKING.—The exercise of all powers granted to the President by the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) (except that the requirements of section 202 of such Act (50 U.S.C. 1701) shall not apply) to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of a foreign person determined by the President to be subject to subsection (a) if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

“(B) ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

“(i) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An alien who the President determines is subject to subsection (a) is—

“(I) inadmissible to the United States;

“(II) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

“(III) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

“(ii) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—The issuing consular officer, the Secretary of State, or the Secretary of Homeland Security shall revoke any visa or other entry documentation issued to an alien who the President determines is subject to subsection (a), regardless of when issued.

“(II) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A revocation under subclause (I) shall take effect immediately and shall automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the possession of the alien.

“(2) PENALTIES.—The penalties provided for in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) shall apply to a person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of regulations prescribed under paragraph (1)(A) to the same extent that such penalties apply to a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of such section 206.

“(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out this section.

“(d) PROCEDURES FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—If a finding under this section, or a prohibition, condition, or penalty imposed as a result of any such finding, is based on classified information (as defined in section 1(a) of the Classified Information Procedures Act (18 U.S.C. App.)) and a court reviews the finding or the imposition of the prohibition, condition, or penalty, the President may submit such information to the court ex parte and in camera.

“(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to confer or imply any right to judicial review of any finding under this section or any prohibition, condition, or penalty imposed as a result of any such finding.

“(e) WAIVER.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may, for periods not to exceed 180 days, waive the imposition of sanctions under this section if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that such waiver is in the national security interests of the United States.

“(2) BRIEFING.—Not later than 30 days after the issuance of a waiver under paragraph (1) with respect to a foreign person, and every 180 days thereafter while the waiver remains in effect, the President shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on the status of the involvement of the foreign person in activities described in subsection (a).

“(f) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2017, and every 180 days thereafter for the following 5 years, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that lists the foreign persons that the President determines are described in subsection (a).

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) ADMITTED; ALIEN.—The terms ‘admitted’ and ‘alien’ have meanings given those terms in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101).

“(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ means—

“(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Ways and Means, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

“(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate.

“(3) ENTITY.—The term ‘entity’ means a partnership, association, corporation, or other organization, group, or subgroup.

“(4) HIZBALLAH.—The term ‘Hizballah’ has the meaning given such term in section 102(f).

“(5) PERSON.—The term ‘person’ means an individual or entity.

“(6) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term ‘United States person’ means a United States citizen, permanent resident alien, entity organized under the laws of the United States (including foreign branches), or a person in the United States.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 is amended by striking the item relating to section 101 and inserting the following new item:

“Sec. 101. Mandatory sanctions with respect to fundraising and recruitment activities for Hizballah.”

SEC. 102. MODIFICATION OF REPORT WITH RESPECT TO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT ENGAGE IN CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS.

Subsection (d) of section 102 of the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-102; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended to read as follows:

“(d) REPORT ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ORGANIZED UNDER THE LAWS OF STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2017, and every 180 days thereafter for the following 5 years, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that—

“(A) identifies each foreign financial institution described in paragraph (2) that the President determines engages in one or more activities described in subsection (a)(2);

“(B) provides a detailed description of each such activity; and

“(C) contains a determination with respect to each such foreign financial institution that is identified under subparagraph (A) as engaging in one or more activities described in subsection (a)(2) as to whether such foreign financial institution is in violation of Executive Order 13224 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property and prohibiting transactions with persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism) by reason of engaging in one or more such activities.

“(2) FOREIGN FINANCIAL INSTITUTION DESCRIBED.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—A foreign financial institution described in this paragraph is a foreign financial institution—

“(i) that, wherever located, is—

“(I) organized under the laws of a state sponsor of terrorism or any jurisdiction within a state sponsor of terrorism;

“(II) owned or controlled by the government of a state sponsor of terrorism;

“(III) located in the territory of a state sponsor of terrorism; or

“(IV) owned or controlled by a foreign financial institution described in subclause (I), (II), or (III); and

“(ii) the capitalization of which exceeds \$10,000,000.

“(B) STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM.—In this paragraph, the term ‘state sponsor of ter-

rorism’ means a country the government of which the Secretary of State has determined is a government that has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism for purposes of—

“(i) section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act of 1979 (50 U.S.C. 4605(j)) (as continued in effect pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.));

“(ii) section 620A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2371);

“(iii) section 40 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2780); or

“(iv) any other provision of law.”

SEC. 103. SANCTIONS AGAINST AGENCIES AND INSTRUMENTALITIES OF FOREIGN STATES THAT SUPPORT HIZBALLAH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title I of the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-102; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 103. SANCTIONS AGAINST AGENCIES AND INSTRUMENTALITIES OF FOREIGN STATES THAT SUPPORT HIZBALLAH.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, and as appropriate thereafter, the President shall block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of any agency or instrumentality of a foreign state described in subsection (b) if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

“(b) AGENCY OR INSTRUMENTALITY OF A FOREIGN STATE DESCRIBED.—An agency or instrumentality of a foreign state described in this subsection is an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state that the President determines knowingly provides significant financial, material, or technological support for, goods or services to or in support of, or arms or related material to—

“(1) Hizballah;

“(2) an entity owned or controlled by Hizballah; or

“(3) an entity that the President determines has acted for or on behalf of Hizballah.

“(c) PENALTIES.—The penalties provided for in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) shall apply to a person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of regulations prescribed under subsection (a) to the same extent that such penalties apply to a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of such section 206.

“(d) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out this section.

“(e) PROCEDURES FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—If a finding under this section, or a prohibition, condition, or penalty imposed as a result of any such finding, is based on classified information (as defined in section 1(a) of the Classified Information Procedures Act (18 U.S.C. App.)) and a court reviews the finding or the imposition of the prohibition, condition, or penalty, the President may submit such information to the court ex parte and in camera.

“(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to confer or imply any right to judicial review of any finding under this section or any prohibition, condition, or penalty imposed as a result of any such finding.

“(f) WAIVER.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may, for periods not to exceed 180 days, waive the imposition of sanctions under this section with

respect to an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that such waiver is in the national security interests of the United States.

“(2) BRIEFING.—Not later than 30 days after the issuance of a waiver under paragraph (1) with respect to an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state, and every 180 days thereafter while the waiver remains in effect, the President shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on the status of the involvement of the agency or instrumentality in activities described in subsection (b).

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) AGENCY OR INSTRUMENTALITY OF A FOREIGN STATE; FOREIGN STATE.—The terms ‘agency or instrumentality of a foreign state’ and ‘foreign state’ have the meanings given those terms in section 1603 of title 28, United States Code.

“(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ means—

“(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

“(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate.

“(3) ARMS OR RELATED MATERIAL.—The term ‘arms or related material’ means—

“(A) nuclear, biological, chemical, or radiological weapons or materials or components of such weapons;

“(B) ballistic or cruise missile weapons or materials or components of such weapons;

“(C) destabilizing numbers and types of advanced conventional weapons;

“(D) defense articles or defense services, as those terms are defined in paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively, of section 47 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2794);

“(E) defense information, as that term is defined in section 644 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2403); or

“(F) items designated by the President for purposes of the United States Munitions List under section 38(a)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2778(a)(1)).

“(4) HIZBALLAH.—The term ‘Hizballah’ has the meaning given that term in section 102(f).”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 102 the following new item:

“Sec. 103. Sanctions against agencies and instrumentalities of foreign states that support Hizballah.”

TITLE II—NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND SIGNIFICANT TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES OF HIZBALLAH

SEC. 201. BLOCKING OF PROPERTY OF HIZBALLAH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 201 of the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–102; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 201. BLOCKING OF PROPERTY OF HIZBALLAH.

“(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that Hizballah conducts narcotics trafficking and significant transnational criminal activities.

“(b) BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2017, and as appropriate thereafter, the President shall block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of Hizballah if such property and interests in

property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

“(c) PENALTIES.—The penalties provided for in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) shall apply to a person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of regulations prescribed under subsection (b) to the same extent that such penalties apply to a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of such section 206.

“(d) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out this section.

“(e) PROCEDURES FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—If a finding under this section, or a prohibition, condition, or penalty imposed as a result of any such finding, is based on classified information (as defined in section 1(a) of the Classified Information Procedures Act (18 U.S.C. App.)) and a court reviews the finding or the imposition of the prohibition, condition, or penalty, the President may submit such information to the court *ex parte* and in camera.

“(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to confer or imply any right to judicial review of any finding under this section or any prohibition, condition, or penalty imposed as a result of any such finding.

“(f) WAIVER.—The President may, for periods not to exceed 180 days, waive the imposition of sanctions under this section if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that such waiver is in the national security interests of the United States.

“(g) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ‘Hizballah’ has the meaning given that term in section 102(f).”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The table of contents for the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 is amended—

(1) by striking the item relating to title II and inserting the following:

“TITLE II—IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO HIZBALLAH AND REPORTS RELATING TO NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND SIGNIFICANT TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES OF HIZBALLAH.”; AND

(2) by striking the item relating to section 201 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 201. Blocking of property of Hizballah.”

SEC. 202. REPORT ON RACKETEERING ACTIVITIES ENGAGED IN BY HIZBALLAH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 202 of the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–102; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 202. REPORT ON RACKETEERING ACTIVITIES ENGAGED IN BY HIZBALLAH.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2017, and annually thereafter for the following 5 years, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the following:

“(1) Activities that Hizballah, and agents and affiliates of Hizballah, have engaged in that are racketeering activities.

“(2) The extent to which Hizballah, and agents and affiliates of Hizballah, engage in a pattern of such racketeering activities.

“(b) FORM OF REPORT.—Each report required under subsection (a) shall be submitted in an unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

“(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ means—

“(A) the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

“(B) the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

“(2) HIZBALLAH.—The term ‘Hizballah’ has the meaning given that term in section 102(f).

“(3) RACKETEERING ACTIVITY.—The term ‘racketeering activity’ has the meaning given that term in section 1961(1) of title 18, United States Code.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 is amended by striking the item relating to section 202 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 202. Report on racketeering activities engaged in by Hizballah.”

SEC. 203. MODIFICATION OF REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO DISRUPT GLOBAL LOGISTICS NETWORKS AND FUNDRAISING, FINANCING, AND MONEY LAUNDERING ACTIVITIES OF HIZBALLAH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 204 of the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–102; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “this Act” and inserting “the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2017, and annually thereafter for the following 5 years”; and

(B) in subparagraph (D)(ii)(II), by striking “and” at the end;

(C) in subparagraph (E), by striking “and free-trade zones.” and inserting “free-trade zones, business partnerships and joint ventures, and other investments in small and medium-sized enterprises.”; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

“(F) a list of jurisdictions outside of Lebanon that expressly consent to, or with knowledge allow, the use of their territory by Hizballah to carry out terrorist activities, including training, financing, and recruitment;

“(G) a description of the total aggregate revenues and remittances that Hizballah receives from the global logistics networks of Hizballah.”;

(2) by redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsections (c) and (d), respectively;

(3) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

“(b) ENHANCED DUE DILIGENCE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall prescribe, as necessary, enhanced due diligence policies, procedures, and controls for United States financial institutions, and foreign financial institutions maintaining correspondent accounts or payable-through accounts with United States financial institutions, that the President determines provide significant financial services for persons and entities operating in a jurisdiction included in the list required under subsection (a)(1)(F) if the President determines and reports to the appropriate congressional committees that it is in the national security interest of the United States to do so.

“(2) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection, the terms ‘correspondent account’ and ‘payable-through account’ have the meanings given those terms in section 5318A of title 31, United States Code.”; and

(4) in subsection (c), as redesignated by paragraph (2) by adding before the period at

the end the following: “and on any requirements for enhanced due diligence prescribed under subsection (b)”.

(b) REPORT ON ESTIMATED NET WORTH OF SENIOR HIZBALLAH MEMBERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than annually thereafter for the following 2 years, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that contains—

(A) the estimated total net worth of each individual described in paragraph (2); and

(B) a description of how funds of each individual described in paragraph (2) were acquired, and how such funds have been used or employed.

(2) INDIVIDUALS DESCRIBED.—The individuals described in this paragraph are the following:

(A) The Secretary General of Hizballah.

(B) Any other individual that the President determines is a senior foreign political figure of Hizballah.

(3) FORM OF REPORT; PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—

(A) FORM.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

(B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The unclassified portion of the report required under paragraph (1) shall be made available to the public in precompressed, easily downloadable versions that are made available in all appropriate formats.

(4) SOURCES OF INFORMATION.—In preparing the report required under paragraph (1), the President may use any credible publication, database, or web-based resource, and any credible information compiled by any government agency, nongovernmental organization, or other entity provided to or made available to the President.

(5) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(i) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

(ii) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

(B) FUNDS.—The term “funds” means—

(i) cash;

(ii) equity;

(iii) any other intangible asset the value of which is derived from a contractual claim, including bank deposits, bonds, stocks, a security (as defined in section 2(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 (15 U.S.C. 77b(a))), or a security or an equity security (as those terms are defined in section 3(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78c(a))); and

(iv) anything else of value that the Secretary of the Treasury determines to be appropriate.

(C) SENIOR FOREIGN POLITICAL FIGURE.—The term “senior foreign political figure” has the meaning given that term in section 1010.605 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation).

SEC. 204. REPORT ON COMBATING THE ILLICIT TOBACCO TRAFFICKING NETWORKS USED BY HIZBALLAH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on combating the illicit tobacco trafficking networks used by Hizballah to finance their operations, as described in the report submitted to Congress in December 2015 by the Department of State, the Department of Justice, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Health and Human Services entitled, “The Global Illicit Trade in Tobacco: A Threat to National Security.”

(b) MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of the steps to be taken by Federal agencies to combat the illicit tobacco trafficking networks used by Hizballah.

(2) A description of the steps to be taken to engage State and local law enforcement authorities in efforts to combat illicit tobacco trafficking networks used by Hizballah operating within the United States.

(3) A description of the steps to be taken to engage foreign government law enforcement and intelligence authorities in efforts to combat illicit tobacco trafficking networks used by Hizballah operating outside the United States.

(4) Recommendations for legislative or administrative action, as appropriate, to address the threat of illicit tobacco trafficking networks.

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Homeland Security, the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Financial Services, and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on Finance of the Senate.

TITLE III—GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 301. REGULATORY AUTHORITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, prescribe regulations as necessary for the implementation of this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

(b) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 10 days before the prescription of regulations under subsection (a), the President shall notify the appropriate congressional committees regarding the proposed regulations and the provisions of this Act and the amendments made by this Act that the regulations are implementing.

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

SEC. 302. EXCEPTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—This Act and the amendments made by this Act shall not apply to the following:

(1) Any authorized intelligence, law enforcement, or national security activities of the United States.

(2) Any transaction necessary to comply with United States obligations under—

(A) the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947;

(B) the Convention on Consular Relations, done at Vienna April 24, 1963, and entered into force March 19, 1967; or

(C) any other international treaty.

(b) EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—The authorities and requirements to impose sanctions under this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall not in-

clude the authority or requirement to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I have 8 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, October 5, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., in room SR-328A to hold a hearing on the following nominations: Gregory Ibach, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Marketing and Regulator Programs; William Northey, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Farm and Foreign Agriculture Services.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 5, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD-406 to hold a hearing on the nomination of Paul Trombino III, to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 5, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room SD-215 to hold a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 5, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., to hold a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 5, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., to hold a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 5, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room SD-430 to hold a hearing entitled “The Federal Response to the Opioid Crisis.”

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 5, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room SD-226 to hold an executive business meeting.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday,

October 5, 2017, at 2 p.m., in room SH-219 to hold a closed hearing.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FLEXIBILITY ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 109, S. 692.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 692) to provide for integrated plan permits, to establish an Office of the Municipal Ombudsman, to promote green infrastructure, and to require the revision of financial capability guidance.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Water Infrastructure Flexibility Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITION OF ADMINISTRATOR.

In this Act, the term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

SEC. 3. INTEGRATED PLANS.

(a) **INTEGRATED PLANS.**—Section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1342) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(s) **INTEGRATED PLAN PERMITS.**—

“(1) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this subsection:

“(A) **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE.**—The term ‘green infrastructure’ means the range of measures that use plant or soil systems, permeable pavement or other permeable surfaces or substrates, stormwater harvest and reuse, or landscaping to store, infiltrate, or evapotranspire stormwater and reduce flows to sewer systems or to surface waters.

“(B) **INTEGRATED PLAN.**—The term ‘integrated plan’ has the meaning given in Part III of the Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework, issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and dated June 5, 2012.

“(C) **MUNICIPAL DISCHARGE.**—

“(i) **IN GENERAL.**—The term ‘municipal discharge’ means a discharge from a treatment works (as defined in section 212) or a discharge from a municipal storm sewer under subsection (p).

“(ii) **INCLUSION.**—The term ‘municipal discharge’ includes a discharge of wastewater or storm water collected from multiple municipalities if the discharge is covered by the same permit issued under this section.

“(2) **INTEGRATED PLAN.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator (or a State, in the case of a permit program approved under subsection (b)) shall inform a municipal permittee or multiple municipal permittees of the opportunity to develop an integrated plan.

“(B) **SCOPE OF PERMIT INCORPORATING INTEGRATED PLAN.**—A permit issued under this subsection that incorporates an integrated plan may integrate all requirements under this Act addressed in the integrated plan, including requirements relating to—

“(i) a combined sewer overflow;

“(ii) a capacity, management, operation, and maintenance program for sanitary sewer collection systems;

“(iii) a municipal stormwater discharge;

“(iv) a municipal wastewater discharge; and

“(v) a water quality-based effluent limitation to implement an applicable wastewater allocation in a total maximum daily load.

“(3) **COMPLIANCE SCHEDULES.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—A permit for a municipal discharge by a municipality that incorporates an integrated plan may include a schedule of compliance, under which actions taken to meet any applicable water quality-based effluent limitation may be implemented over more than 1 permit term if the compliance schedules are authorized by State water quality standards.

“(B) **INCLUSION.**—Actions subject to a compliance schedule under subparagraph (A) may include green infrastructure if implemented as part of a water quality-based effluent limitation.

“(C) **REVIEW.**—A schedule of compliance may be reviewed each time the permit is renewed.

“(4) **EXISTING AUTHORITIES RETAINED.**—

“(A) **APPLICABLE STANDARDS.**—Nothing in this subsection modifies any obligation to comply with applicable technology and water quality-based effluent limitations under this Act.

“(B) **FLEXIBILITY.**—Nothing in this subsection reduces or eliminates any flexibility available under this Act, including the authority of—

“(i) a State to revise a water quality standard after a use attainability analysis under section 131.10(g) of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation), subject to the approval of the Administrator under section 303(c); and

“(ii) the Administrator or a State to authorize a schedule of compliance that extends beyond the date of expiration of a permit term if the schedule of compliance meets the requirements of section 122.47 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this subsection).

“(5) **CLARIFICATION OF STATE AUTHORITY.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Nothing in section 301(b)(1)(C) precludes a State from authorizing in the water quality standards of the State the issuance of a schedule of compliance to meet water quality-based effluent limitations in permits that incorporate provisions of an integrated plan.

“(B) **TRANSITION RULE.**—In any case in which a discharge is subject to a judicial order or consent decree as of the date of enactment of the Water Infrastructure Flexibility Act resolving an enforcement action under this Act, any schedule of compliance issued pursuant to an authorization in a State water quality standard shall not revise a schedule of compliance in that order or decree unless the order or decree is modified by agreement of the parties and the court.”.

(b) **MUNICIPAL OMBUDSMAN.**—

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established within the Office of the Administrator an Office of the Municipal Ombudsman.

(2) **GENERAL DUTIES.**—The duties of the municipal ombudsman shall include the provision of—

(A) technical assistance to municipalities seeking to comply with the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) and the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.); and

(B) information to the Administrator to help the Administrator ensure that agency policies are implemented by all offices of the Environmental Protection Agency, including regional offices.

(3) **ACTIONS REQUIRED.**—The municipal ombudsman shall work with appropriate offices at the headquarters and regional offices of the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that the municipality seeking assistance is provided information—

(A) about available Federal financial assistance for which the municipality is eligible;

(B) about flexibility available under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) and, if applicable, the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.); and

(C) regarding the opportunity to develop an integrated plan, as defined in section 402(s)(1)(B) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (as added by subsection (a)).

(4) **INFORMATION SHARING.**—The municipal ombudsman shall publish on the website of the Environmental Protection Agency—

(A) general information relating to—

(i) the technical assistance referred to in paragraph (2)(A);

(ii) the financial assistance referred to in paragraph (3)(A);

(iii) the flexibility referred to in paragraph 3(B); and

(iv) any resources related to integrated plans developed by the Administrator; and

(B) a copy of each permit, order, or judicial consent decree that implements or incorporates an integrated plan.

(c) **MUNICIPAL ENFORCEMENT.**—Section 309 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1319) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(h) **IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED PLANS THROUGH ENFORCEMENT TOOLS.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—In conjunction with an enforcement action under subsection (a) or (b) relating to municipal discharges, the Administrator shall inform a municipality of the opportunity to develop an integrated plan, as defined in section 402(s).

“(2) **MODIFICATION.**—Any municipality under an administrative order under subsection (a) or settlement agreement (including a judicial consent decree) under subsection (b) that has developed an integrated plan consistent with section 402(s) may request a modification of the administrative order or settlement agreement based on that integrated plan.”.

(d) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and make publicly available a report on each integrated plan developed and implemented through a permit, order, or judicial consent decree since the date of publication of the “Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework” issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and dated June 5, 2012, including a description of the control measures, levels of control, estimated costs, and compliance schedules for the requirements implemented through an integrated plan.

SEC. 4. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROMOTION.

Title V of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating section 519 (33 U.S.C. 1251 note) as section 520; and

(2) by inserting after section 518 (33 U.S.C. 1377) the following:

“SEC. 519. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROMOTION.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator shall ensure that the Office of Water, the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, the Office of Research and Development, and the Office of Policy of the Environmental Protection Agency promote the use of green infrastructure in and coordinate the integration of green infrastructure into, permitting programs, planning efforts, research, technical assistance, and funding guidance.

“(b) **DUTIES.**—The Administrator shall ensure that the Office of Water—

“(1) promotes the use of green infrastructure in the programs of the Environmental Protection Agency; and

“(2) coordinates efforts to increase the use of green infrastructure with—

“(A) other Federal departments and agencies;

“(B) State, tribal, and local governments; and

“(C) the private sector.

“(c) **REGIONAL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROMOTION.**—The Administrator shall direct each regional office of the Environmental Protection Agency, as appropriate based on local factors, and consistent with the requirements of this

Act, to promote and integrate the use of green infrastructure within the region that includes—

“(1) outreach and training regarding green infrastructure implementation for State, tribal, and local governments, tribal communities, and the private sector; and

“(2) the incorporation of green infrastructure into permitting and other regulatory programs, codes, and ordinance development, including the requirements under consent decrees and settlement agreements in enforcement actions.

“(d) GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INFORMATION SHARING.—The Administrator shall promote green infrastructure information sharing, including through an Internet website, to share information with, and provide technical assistance to, State, tribal, and local governments, tribal communities, the private sector, and the public regarding green infrastructure approaches for—

“(1) reducing water pollution;

“(2) protecting water resources;

“(3) complying with regulatory requirements; and

“(4) achieving other environmental, public health, and community goals.”.

SEC. 5. FINANCIAL CAPABILITY GUIDANCE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AFFORDABILITY.—The term “affordability” means, with respect to payment of a utility bill, a measure of whether an individual customer or household can pay the bill without undue hardship or unreasonable sacrifice in the essential lifestyle or spending patterns of the individual or household, as determined by the Administrator.

(2) FINANCIAL CAPABILITY.—The term “financial capability” means the financial capability of a community to make investments necessary to make water quality or drinking water improvements.

(3) GUIDANCE.—The term “guidance” means the guidance published by the Administrator entitled “Combined Sewer Overflows—Guidance for Financial Capability Assessment and Schedule Development” and dated February 1997, as applicable to the combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows guidance published by the Administrator entitled “Financial Capability Assessment Framework” and dated November 24, 2014.

(b) USE OF MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME.—The Administrator shall not use median household income as the sole indicator of affordability for a residential household.

(c) REVISED GUIDANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of completion of the National Academy of Public Administration study to establish a definition and framework for community affordability required by Senate Report 114–70, accompanying S. 1645 (114th Congress), the Administrator shall revise the guidance described in subsection (a)(3).

(2) USE OF GUIDANCE.—Beginning on the date on which the revised guidance referred to in paragraph (1) is finalized, the Administrator shall use the revised guidance in lieu of the guidance described in subsection (a)(3).

(d) CONSIDERATION AND CONSULTATION.—

(1) CONSIDERATION.—In revising the guidance, the Administrator shall consider—

(A) the recommendations of the study referred to in subsection (c) and any other relevant study, as determined by the Administrator;

(B) local economic conditions, including site-specific local conditions that should be taken into consideration in analyzing financial capability;

(C) other essential community investments;

(D) potential adverse impacts on distressed populations, including the percentage of low-income ratepayers within the service area of a utility and impacts in communities with disparate economic conditions throughout the entire service area of a utility;

(E) the degree to which rates of low-income consumers would be affected by water infra-

structure investments, the use of rate structures, and customer assistance programs to address the rates of low-income consumers;

(F) an evaluation of an array of factors, the relative importance of which may vary across regions and localities; and

(G) the appropriate weight for economic, public health, and environmental benefits.

(2) CONSULTATION.—Any revised guidance issued to replace the guidance shall be developed in consultation with stakeholders.

(e) PUBLICATION AND SUBMISSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On completion of the revision of the guidance, the Administrator shall publish in the Federal Register and submit to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives the revised guidance.

(2) EXPLANATION.—If the Administrator makes a determination not to follow one or more recommendations of the study referred to in subsection (c)(1), the Administrator shall include in the publication and submission under paragraph (1) an explanation of that decision.

(f) EFFECT.—Nothing in this section preempts or interferes with any obligation to comply with any Federal law, including the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.).

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 692), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 221, S. 1103.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1103) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department-wide guidance and to develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes.

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

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

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

The bill (S. 1103) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1103

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 “Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. ENHANCED DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY COORDINATION THROUGH THE BLUE CAMPAIGN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle C of title IV of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 231 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 434. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN.

“(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ‘human trafficking’ means an act or practice described in paragraph (9) or (10) of section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

“(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within the Department a program, which shall be known as the ‘Blue Campaign’. The Blue Campaign shall be headed by a Director, who shall be appointed by the Secretary.

“(c) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Blue Campaign shall be to unify and coordinate Department efforts to address human trafficking.

“(d) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Secretary, working through the Director, shall, in accordance with subsection (e)—

“(1) issue Department-wide guidance to appropriate Department personnel;

“(2) develop training programs for such personnel; and

“(3) coordinate departmental efforts, including training for such personnel.

“(e) GUIDANCE AND TRAINING.—The Blue Campaign shall provide guidance and training to appropriate Department personnel and other Federal, State, tribal, and law enforcement personnel, as appropriate regarding—

“(1) programs to help identify instances of human trafficking;

“(2) the types of information that should be collected and recorded in information technology systems utilized by the Department to help identify individuals suspected or convicted of human trafficking;

“(3) systematic and routine information sharing within the Department and among Federal, State, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies regarding—

“(A) individuals suspected or convicted of human trafficking; and

“(B) patterns and practices of human trafficking;

“(4) techniques to identify suspected victims of trafficking along the United States border and at airport security checkpoints;

“(5) methods to be used by the Transportation Security Administration and personnel from other appropriate agencies—

“(A) to train employees of the Transportation Security Administration to identify suspected victims of trafficking; and

“(B) to serve as a liaison and resource regarding human trafficking prevention to appropriate State, local, and private sector aviation workers and the traveling public;

“(6) utilizing resources, such as indicator cards, fact sheets, pamphlets, posters, brochures, and radio and television campaigns—

“(A) to educate partners and stakeholders; and

“(B) to increase public awareness of human trafficking;

“(7) leveraging partnerships with State and local governmental, nongovernmental, and private sector organizations to raise public awareness of human trafficking; and

“(8) any other activities the Secretary determines necessary to carry out the Blue Campaign.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–296) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 433 the following:

"Sec. 434. Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign."

SEC. 3. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure, in accordance with the Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance required under section 434(d) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 2, the integration of information technology systems utilized within the Department to record and track information regarding individuals suspected or convicted of human trafficking.

SEC. 4. REPORT.

Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit a report to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives that—

(1) describes the status and effectiveness of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign; and

(2) provides a recommendation regarding the appropriate office within the Department of Homeland Security for the Blue Campaign.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated \$819,000 to carry out section 434 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 2.

HIZBALLAH INTERNATIONAL FINANCING PREVENTION AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 1595 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title. The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1595) to amend the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 to impose additional sanctions with respect to Hizballah, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Rubio substitute amendment be considered and agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 1110) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The bill (S. 1595), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consid-

eration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 287, S. Res. 288, S. Res. 289, and S. Res. 290.

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 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.")

REPORTING AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the Senate's adjournment, committees be authorized to report legislative and executive matters on Friday, October 13, from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m.

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

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2017, THROUGH MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 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, October 6, at 10:30 a.m.; Tuesday, October 10, at 9:15 a.m.; and Friday, October 13, at 8:30 a.m.

I further ask that when the Senate adjourns on Friday, October 13, it next convene at 4 p.m. on Monday, October 16; 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; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Gingrich nomination, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:51 p.m., adjourned until Friday, October 6, 2017, at 10:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

R. D. JAMES, OF MISSOURI, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, VICE JO-ELLEN DARCY.
BRUCE D. JETTE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, VICE HEIDI SHYU, RESIGNED.
SHON J. MANASCO, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE, VICE GABRIEL CAMARILLO.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

DAVID J. RYDER, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE MINT FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE EDMUND C. MOY, RESIGNED.

AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LEON A. WESTMORELAND, OF GEORGIA, TO BE A DIRECTOR OF THE AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS. (NEW POSITION)

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

ANDREW WHEELER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE ROBERT PERCIASEPE, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

KATE S. O'SCANNLAIN, OF MARYLAND, TO BE SOLICITOR FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, VICE M. PATRICIA SMITH, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MITCHELL ZAIS, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, VICE JAMES H. SHELTON III, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FRANK M. COFFMAN, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE PATRICK J. WILKERSON, TERM EXPIRED.

THE JUDICIARY

KURT D. ENGELHARDT, OF LOUISIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT, VICE EDITH BROWN CLEMENT, RETIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

THOMAS M. GRIFFIN, JR., OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE KELVIN CORNELIUS WASHINGTON, TERM EXPIRED.

MARK S. JAMES, OF MISSOURI, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE ALFRED COOPER LOMAX, TERM EXPIRED.

JOHNNY LEE KUHLMAN, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE CHARLES THOMAS WEEKS II, TERM EXPIRED.

DANIEL C. MOSTELLER, OF SOUTH DAKOTA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH DAKOTA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE PAUL CHARLES THIELEN, TERM EXPIRED.

GARY G. SCHOFIELD, OF NEVADA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE CHRISTOPHER TOBIAS HOYE, TERM EXPIRED.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate October 5, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

LEE FRANCIS CISSNA, OF MARYLAND, TO BE DIRECTOR OF UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

RANDAL QUARLES, OF COLORADO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM FOR THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF FOURTEEN YEARS FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2004.

RANDAL QUARLES, OF COLORADO, TO BE VICE CHAIRMAN FOR SUPERVISION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STEPHEN B. KING, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC.
BARBARA LEE, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SEVENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

CHRISTOPHER SMITH, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO

THE SEVENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

J. STEVEN DOWD, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNITED STATES DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

BRUCE J. WALKER, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF ENERGY (ELECTRICITY DELIVERY AND ENERGY RELIABILITY).

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

TIMOTHY GALLAUDET, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR OCEANS AND ATMOSPHERE.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

HOWARD R. ELLIOTT, OF INDIANA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE PIPELINE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SAFETY ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

WALTER G. COPAN, OF COLORADO, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY.