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No. 195

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a Senator from the State of Mississippi.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Mighty God, help our lawmakers to not put their complete trust in mere humans, who are as frail as each breath. Instead, give them the wisdom to totally trust You to guide them in doing what is best for our Nation and world.

Lord, remind them that eventually all will be well for those who pursue Godliness and that You reward those who diligently seek You.

May they remember that You will judge their work and reward their faithfulness, for they are accountable to You.

Inspire them to continue to plant and water the seeds of peace, knowing that a bountiful harvest will surely come. Keep their motives pure, as they seek to glorify You.

We pray in Your Merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 17, 2020.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a Senator from the State of Mississippi, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, there is significant outstanding business that Congress needs to complete before the end of the year.

My Republican colleagues and I have stated over and over that we still want to pass more coronavirus relief for the American people. Senate Republicans have voted multiple times to send hundreds of billions of dollars to schools, small businesses, healthcare, and laid-off workers.

If Speaker PELOSI and Leader SCHUMER had not made the calculation to block it, that money could have been out the door many weeks ago.

Instead, our Democratic colleagues have spent months—literally months—holding all of that urgent help hostage over unrelated, leftwing wish list items.

Their so-called “Heroes” proposal is so unrealistic and poorly targeted that Speaker PELOSI’s own moderate Democrats ridiculed the bill the instant she put it out and said it will never become law.

It includes things like a massive tax cut for wealthy people in blue States

and huge sums of money for State and city governments with no linkage to demonstrated COVID needs.

Some blue States, including New York and California, have actually seen higher State income tax revenues this autumn than they saw during the same months last year, in part, because they are taxing a chunk out of vulnerable people’s unemployment benefits. They are receiving more tax revenue now than they did in 2019. Some of these blue States are receiving more revenue now than they did in 2019.

But, alas, Democrats still want coronavirus relief for the entire country held hostage over a massive slush fund for their own use.

Well, even if our Democratic colleagues continue to block any bipartisan pandemic relief from becoming law, there are other responsibilities we still need to tackle together.

The Federal Government is currently funded through December 11. The next few days will tell us a lot about whether Congress can pull off the bipartisan, bicameral appropriations process that I believe both sides would like to deliver.

Last week, our colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee released all 12 bills for fiscal year 2021. The bills would fully fund all kinds of crucial priorities, from securing our border to caring for our veterans, to supporting public health at this particularly critical time.

What needs to happen now is quite simple. Our colleagues on the committee and their counterparts in the House need to continue their bicameral discussions and settle on topline dollar amounts for each separate bill.

I hope they will be able to reach this broad agreement by the end of this very week. That would help keep us on course to deliver full-year funding legislation, which helps our Armed Forces and all Federal agencies plan and get ahead of the curve by the December deadline.

For nearly 2 years now, we have avoided the drama that has become a

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



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Washington routine and funded our government on a bipartisan basis. Last August, we passed a 2-year bipartisan funding agreement that let our committees do their work even amid this divided government.

When both sides have honored the agreement and kept bills clean of poison pills, Chairman SHELBY has been able to deliver full-year bills without drama. I hope we can replicate that successful pattern this year.

Congress should also reach a bipartisan, bicameral compromise on the National Defense Authorization Act and pass a conference report before the end of the year.

Our men and women in uniform need every tool and resource to confront the great-power competitors, rogue states, and terrorists who wish us harm. Congress should be an asset to our own servicemembers, not a liability.

This year would make the 60th consecutive year Congress will have passed an NDAA. This is no time to break that streak and leave our forces in the lurch. Let's get this done and pass a conference report through both Chambers this year.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, while our committees are working, the full Senate is keeping busy with one of the core constitutional responsibilities we have: continuing to confirm well-qualified men and women to lifetime appointments to the Federal judiciary.

Yesterday, we voted to advance the nomination of Kristi Haskins Johnson, the current solicitor general of Mississippi, with multiple impressive clerkships under her belt, to serve as a district judge for the Southern District of Mississippi. She will make history as the first woman to join the bench in that district.

This is just the first of several nominations we will consider this week. We will also vote on Benjamin Beaton, a Kentuckian who has been nominated to be a district judge for the Western District of Kentucky. This Paducah native is yet another outstanding choice by President Trump.

Mr. Beaton received a first-rate education from Kentucky's Centre College and then Columbia Law School, where he edited the law review. He clerked on the DC Circuit and on the Supreme Court for the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Since then, Mr. Beaton has excelled at some of the country's top law firms. He has also undertaken a substantial pro bono caseload and shown a dedication to community service.

At each step, the nominee has demonstrated a firm commitment to the Constitution and the rule of law. The American Bar Association has confirmed what Kentuckians already knew—Mr. Beaton is well qualified to serve as a district judge.

Last month, our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee advanced this

brilliant nominee with no Members voting in opposition. I urge all my colleagues to join me in voting to confirm him later today and our other impressive nominees this week.

Now, this week's nominees are only the latest example of the incredible qualifications that have characterized President Trump's nominees.

Take the metric that our Democratic colleagues have called the "gold standard," the ratings of the left-leaning American Bar Association. As of a few months ago, across all the people that President Trump had nominated to the Federal District Courts, 68.8 percent had earned the ABA's top rating—top rating—of "well qualified."

If you look back over the last seven Presidential administrations, only one—Bush 43—has managed to post a higher average rating for judicial nominations. Even then, it was only higher by just a hair—just a hair.

Even the Democrats' own supposed "gold standard" destroys the talking point that President Trump's nominees have been less thoroughly qualified. It is just not factual. It is not true.

Earlier this year, looking at clerkships and professional experience, one liberal commentator admitted that "the average Trump appointee has a far more impressive resume than any past president's nominees."

Let me say that again. This is a liberal commentator who follows these things and admitted that "the average Trump appointee has a far more impressive resume than any past president's nominees."

So it is pretty hard to argue that these haven't been extraordinary additions to our Federal courts. This is a tremendous accomplishment. These are judges who will serve our Nation honorably for generations to come.

Our colleagues here in the Senate should be rightly proud to have confirmed them, and we are going to continue doing just that.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Beaton nomination be waived.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

MASKS

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, before I begin, Madam President, I want to remind Senators to wear a mask as much as possible on the floor. I personally take my mask off when addressing the Chair, so long as other Senators or staff are not nearby. Otherwise, a mask should be worn at all times on the floor.

This is not only for the safety of other Senators. This is for the safety of our staffs, everyone who works here on the floor, and everyone who works here in this building, as well as setting the right example for the American people.

NOMINATION OF JUDY SHELTON

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on Judy Shelton, today the Senate will vote on the nomination of Judy Shelton to serve as a member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve.

Ms. Shelton is, without a doubt, one of the most unqualified nominees I have ever seen for our Nation's central bank. When her nomination first came before the Senate Banking Committee, a former Republican aide to a Senator on the Banking Committee said that she was so unqualified and so far out of the mainstream that the "idea of even calling Ms. Shelton as a witness for something was beyond the pale."

That is a former Republican aide saying that Shelton wasn't qualified to be a witness in a committee hearing, let alone a nominee to the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

It is not hard to understand why. For years, Ms. Shelton has advocated for the resurrection of the gold standard, a long since discarded policy that in part led to the Great Depression. She has questioned the independence of the Fed and, beyond that, has even questioned whether the Fed should exist.

Ms. Shelton has also suggested that we put an end to Federal deposit insurance, an institution that has protected American savings since the 1930s. That is why over 130 of the nation's top economists, including seven Nobel laureates, have opposed her nomination, as have countless alumni of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

Ms. Shelton's views have another strange quality: They seem to change when it is politically convenient. When President Obama was in office, Ms. Shelton harangued the Fed to increase interest rates, despite the economic downturn. But in 2017, when President Trump took office, Ms. Shelton abruptly switched her position and argued that the Fed should reduce rates, in her words, "as fast, as efficiently, as expeditiously as possible."

It may surprise few to learn that she was an adviser to President Trump's 2016 campaign. She has defended his candidacy and his policies and encouraged world banks to hold international conferences at Mar-a-Lago. Imagine—a nominee for the Federal Reserve, which is supposed to be an independent body.

I have fought both Democrats and Republicans when they have tried to interfere with the independence of the Fed, but Ms. Shelton doesn't seem to care about it at all. So that might be the most concerning thing about her nomination: her stunning lack of independence.

The Federal Reserve Board must make decisions based on objective economic analysis and judgment, not whatever is best for one party or one occupant of the Oval Office. That is why terms on the Federal Reserve board last 14 years. We are supposed to trust Federal Reserve Governors to be neutral arbiters, no matter which party is in power in Washington. We are supposed to trust that everyone who serves on the Fed is first and foremost well qualified and truly independent.

But, unfortunately, Judy Shelton is neither. Ms. Shelton has shown herself to be an economic weathervane, pointing whichever direction she thinks the partisan winds are blowing.

Every single Democrat will oppose her nomination today. I understand a few of our Republican colleagues will oppose her nomination as well. The question is, Will enough of our colleagues on the other side stand up and do the right thing today?

Members of this Chamber have stood up before to prevent President Trump from putting unqualified partisan advocates on the Federal Reserve. During these final few weeks of the Trump Presidency, it is time to do it again. I plead with my Republican colleagues, for the sake of an economy that is hurting from COVID, for the sake of our future economy and its growth, to reject Ms. Shelton's nomination.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on COVID, by all rights, the Senate should not be spending its time this week on so many nominees, especially such unqualified nominees, while COVID-19 is surging throughout the country.

The urgent need for another relief bill has been confronting the Senate since March of this year. The Republican leader put the Senate on "pause," as he said, all summer, while the virus got worse and worse. And when he finally decided it was time to do another bill, he crafted a partisan, emaciated proposal that fell drastically short of what was needed to address a burgeoning health and economic crisis.

Now, President-Elect Biden has urged the Senate to pass a comprehensive bill that actually meets the needs of the American people. He pointed to the HEROES Act, and that is the right focus. We need a comprehensive bill that meets the needs of the American people, but, of course, we would want to sit down and negotiate with our Republican colleagues.

The Republican leader should come to the table and negotiate with Democrats on a bipartisan COVID relief bill

with a bipartisan process that addresses all of the challenges we now face.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The bill clerk read the nomination of Kristi Haskins Johnson, of Mississippi, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Mississippi.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, for the second Monday now in a row, we have received tremendous news about the prospects for a COVID vaccine.

Last week, Pfizer announced that the initial results of its COVID vaccine showed a greater than 90-percent rate of effectiveness. And yesterday, Moderna announced its COVID vaccine is showing a similarly high effectiveness rate, raising the possibility that not one but two COVID vaccines may be available in the very near future.

This success is a tribute to the innovative power of the private sector and the efforts of Congress and the Trump administration to expedite development of COVID vaccines. Operation Warp Speed has helped fund development of Moderna's vaccine and will help fund distribution of both Moderna's and Pfizer's products.

While vaccine trials and development continue, so does research into new COVID treatments. Drugmaker Eli Lilly just received emergency use authorization for an antibody drug that will be used to treat COVID in patients with mild or moderate illness. Another company, Regeneron, has also filed for emergency use authorization for a potential antibody treatment. And there are a lot of other clinical trials going on right now for COVID vaccines and

therapeutics, meaning there may be more good news to come.

Meanwhile, we are also strengthening domestic production of personal protective equipment for medical personnel and other essential workers.

And 3M, which manufactures N95 masks, received two contracts under the Defense Production Act to expand N95 production. I recently visited the 3M plant in Aberdeen, SD, to celebrate the opening of the plant's new N95 manufacturing lines. These new lines will help 3M's N95 production increase from 22 million to more than 95 million respirators per month. That is critical progress on the PPE front, not to mention the jobs that are being created.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Madam President, on the economic front, the good news continues. The October jobs report showed yet another reduction in the unemployment rate and revealed that the economy created more than 600,000 jobs in October.

While we definitely have a ways to go to get back to where we need to be, the speed and strength of our recovery are encouraging. It is a testament to the strength of our economy before the virus hit. Thanks to Republican tax relief and regulatory reform, our economy was thriving before the coronavirus descended, and that economic strength provided the groundwork for a strong recovery.

Republican-led coronavirus initiatives like the Paycheck Protection Program have also helped keep the economy going during the virus. More than 5 million small businesses, including more than 23,000 in South Dakota, have taken advantage of the Paycheck Protection Program's forgivable loans to help keep their businesses operating and their employees on the payroll.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, of course, while there is much to be hopeful about, the virus is still very much with us, and cases are surging. My home State of South Dakota has been hit hard, as have many other areas of the country.

While we wait for final approval of vaccines, it is essential that we keep following best practices and do what we can to slow the virus's spread, like social distancing, wearing masks, washing hands frequently, avoiding large gatherings, and more.

While the money Congress has already invested in COVID relief has gone a long way toward meeting the country's needs, we should pass additional targeted relief to help Americans weather the rest of the pandemic.

Senate Republicans have introduced additional COVID relief legislation that would provide the hardest hit businesses with a second round of Paycheck Protection Program loans, help schools and colleges operate safely, and provide additional healthcare resources to fight the virus.

Our legislation would also provide for an additional \$300 per week over and above regular unemployment benefits for those who have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic.

I am very pleased that our legislation includes an additional \$20 billion in funding to allow the Department of Agriculture to continue to assist ag producers and processors.

We have also made sure to include liability protections for schools and businesses that are doing their best to protect others from the virus. Predatory trial lawyers are already lining up to exploit the COVID crisis for financial gain. We need to protect our economic recovery by ensuring that schools, businesses, and medical professionals aren't subjected to frivolous lawsuits for coronavirus infections that were beyond their control.

I would love to be able to say that Republicans will pass our coronavirus bill in the next couple of weeks, but, unfortunately, that depends on my Democratic colleagues. The Democratic leadership hasn't shown much inclination to work with Republicans. In fact, it has shown the opposite.

Speaker PELOSI spent more than 3 months—3 months—supposedly negotiating a coronavirus relief package that never arrived. Why? Because Democrats refused to put a reasonable offer on the table.

Members of the Speaker's own party pleaded with her to arrive at an agreement, but the Speaker wouldn't listen, and she is still not listening.

Despite the fact that her party lost a number of seats in the House in the election, the Speaker and the Democratic leader in the Senate are still refusing to come to the table to work with Republicans. In fact, the Speaker and the leader have doubled down—doubled down—on their unreasonable demands.

I get that Democratic leaders would like to be able to design their own coronavirus bill with no input from anyone else, but that is not what happens in a divided government.

In a divided government, both sides have to compromise in order to pass legislation. Republicans know that, and we are willing to compromise to get relief into the hands of the American people, but Democrats are not. Even as the coronavirus surges around the country, Democrats continue to insist on their way or the highway.

It is hard not to think that the Democratic leadership is more interested in exploiting this crisis for political gain than in actually getting relief to Americans.

We could have another COVID relief bill ready for passage tomorrow if Democrats would just come to the table. It is inexcusable that they haven't. But Republicans aren't giving up. We will continue to invite our Democratic colleagues to work with us to develop compromise legislation.

I hope that at least some of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle will decide that a pandemic is not the time to play politics and will work with us to deliver a bill to the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VOTE ON JOHNSON NOMINATION

Under the previous order, all postcloture time on the nomination has expired.

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

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I request 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea," the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) would have voted "yea," and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 230 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blackburn	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Hawley	Risch
Boozman	Hoeven	Roberts
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Burr	Inhofe	Rounds
Capito	Johnson	Rubio
Cassidy	Jones	Sasse
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lankford	Shelby
Cotton	Lee	Sinema
Cramer	Loeffler	Sullivan
Crapo	Manchin	Thune
Cruz	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	McSally	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—43

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

NOT VOTING—4

Alexander	Harris
Grassley	Scott (FL)

The nomination was confirmed.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Benjamin Joel Beaton, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, Tom Cotton, David Perdue, Mike Rounds, Pat Roberts, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, Lindsey Graham, Thom Tillis, Tim Scott, James E. Risch, Michael B. Enzi, John Cornyn, Roger F. Wicker, John Thune, John Boozman.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on Benjamin Joel Beaton, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea," the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) would have voted "yea," and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 231 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Barrasso	Enzi	McConnell
Blackburn	Ernst	McSally
Blunt	Fischer	Moran
Boozman	Gardner	Murkowski
Braun	Graham	Paul
Burr	Hawley	Perdue
Capito	Hoeven	Portman
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Collins	Inhofe	Roberts
Cornyn	Johnson	Romney
Cotton	Kennedy	Rounds
Cramer	Lankford	Rubio
Crapo	Lee	Sasse
Cruz	Loeffler	Scott (SC)
Daines	Manchin	Shelby

Sinema
Sullivan
Thune

Tillis
Toomey
Wicker

Young

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—4

Alexander Harris
Grassley Scott (FL)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas are 52, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Benjamin Joel Beaton, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:17 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON BEATON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time has expired.

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

Mr. INHOFE. 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. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea", the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) would have voted "yea", and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "yea".

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 232 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Barrasso Gardner Portman
Blackburn Graham Risch
Blunt Hawley Roberts
Boozman Hoeven Romney
Braun Hyde-Smith Rounds
Burr Inhofe Rubio
Capito Johnson Sasse
Cassidy Kennedy Scott (SC)
Collins Lankford Shelby
Cornyn Lee Sinema
Cotton Loeffler Sullivan
Cramer Manchin Thune
Crapo McConnell Tillis
Cruz McSally Toomey
Daines Moran Wicker
Enzi Murkowski Young
Ernst Paul
Fischer Perdue

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—4

Alexander Harris
Grassley Scott (FL)

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 actions.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Shelton nomination be waived.

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

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 Judy Shelton, of California, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2010.

Mitch McConnell, John Thune, Marsha Blackburn, Joni Ernst, Pat Roberts, John Cornyn, Lindsey Graham, Deb Fischer, Tim Scott, Lamar Alexander, Kevin Cramer, Mike Braun, John Hoeven, Mike Crapo, Michael B. Enzi, John Boozman, Thom Tillis.

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 Judy Shelton, of California, to be a

Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2010, 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. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "nay," the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "yea," and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) would have voted "yea."

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 233 Ex.]

YEAS—47

Barrasso Fischer Perdue
Blackburn Gardner Portman
Blunt Graham Risch
Boozman Hawley Roberts
Braun Hoeven Rounds
Burr Hyde-Smith Rubio
Capito Inhofe Sasse
Cassidy Johnson Scott (SC)
Cornyn Kennedy Shelby
Cotton Lankford Sullivan
Cramer Lee Thune
Crapo Loeffler Tillis
Cruz McSally Toomey
Daines Moran Wicker
Enzi Murkowski Young
Ernst Paul

NAYS—50

Baldwin Hassan Romney
Bennet Heinrich Rosen
Blumenthal Hirono Sanders
Booker Jones Schatz
Brown Kaine Schumer
Cantwell King Shaheen
Cardin Klobuchar Sinema
Carper Leahy Smith
Casey Manchin Stabenow
Collins Markey Tester
Coons McConnell Udall
Cortez Masto Menendez Van Hollen
Duckworth Merkley Warner
Durbin Murphy Warren
Feinstein Murray Whitehouse
Gillibrand Peters Wyden
Harris Reed

NOT VOTING—3

Alexander Grassley Scott (FL)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 47, the nays are 50, and the motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Crouse nomination be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the

Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The 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 Toby Crouse, of Kansas, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas.

Mitch McConnell, James E. Risch, Joni Ernst, Marsha Blackburn, Mike Crapo, James Lankford, Thom Tillis, Roy Blunt, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, Jerry Moran, Lamar Alexander, Mike Braun, 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 Toby Crouse, of Kansas, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea," the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) would have voted "yea," and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 234 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Hawley	Risch
Braun	Hoeven	Roberts
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Capito	Inhofe	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Rubio
Collins	Kennedy	Sasse
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Shelby
Cramer	Loeffler	Sullivan
Crapo	Manchin	Thune
Cruz	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	McSally	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—5

Alexander	Harris	Warren
Grassley	Scott (FL)	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Toby Crouse, of Kansas, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

ORRIN G. HATCH UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Mr. LEE. Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 4902, which was introduced earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4902) to designate the United States courthouse located at 351 South West Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah, as the "Orrin G. Hatch United States Courthouse".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will proceed to the measure.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, this is legislation that would name the Federal courthouse in Salt Lake City, which was completed a few years ago, after my friend and former colleague and also a longtime mentor of mine, Senator Orrin G. Hatch.

Senator Hatch, long before he became a statesman, was a lawyer—and not just any lawyer, he was a lawyer's lawyer. He was really good. He received the prestigious Martindale-Hubbell AV rating as a litigator. His skills as a litigator were so good that they helped convince some of his friends and neighbors that he ought to seek public office. The first public office he sought as an elected official was to the U.S. Senate. He was elected in 1976.

He then served in the U.S. Senate from 1977 all the way up until 2019. During that 42-year time period, Senator Hatch had a profound impact not only on the U.S. Senate and his colleagues here—and he certainly did; he was a friend to everyone who knew him—but he also had a much broader impact, one that will have far-reaching, lasting, durable impacts on the Federal court system.

I took a look at a list of all Federal district judges—the trial court judges who have served on the Federal bench from Utah ever since our statehood. There are only about 20 people on that list. All but five of those came on to the court either during or right after; in other words, with some input—significant input from Senator Hatch.

Senator Hatch has also been a part of every judicial nomination in the con-

firmation process during that same 42-year period. I can't think of any other Utahian in the history of our State who has had anywhere near the kind of impact on the Federal judiciary as Senator Hatch. It is not just that he served on the committee throughout that time period that confirmed judicial nominees, whether to Federal district courts, to the courts of appeals, or to the Supreme Court—he certainly did have a lot of impact there—but his impact even went further than that, you see, because he sought to be a mentor to people interested in the law and in public policy everywhere. His service had an impact certainly on me as one of countless lawyers and other people interested in law and public policy in this country.

I remember watching proudly and with great admiration as he conducted himself as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee during the Robert Bork confirmation hearings. He had a certain commitment to the rule of law and to fundamental fairness that would be owed to anyone nominated to that or any other judicial position, and he was willing to make sure that the Senate did its job and that it didn't get mired in the politics of the day.

He had a great quote on this topic. He said: "Politics must not undermine the principles and standards we apply to every judicial nomination."

I watched over the years, in part, because I had first seen him participate in the Bork hearings. That got me interested in the Senate. In part, because of that example, that got me interested as a teenager to apply to be a Senate page. I later became a Senate page, appointed by Senator Hatch. I got to see him carry out his activities as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. And from then on, I always watched with careful attention when he was handling a judicial confirmation hearing.

I watched through the years as he handled the nomination hearings of individuals including: Justice Thomas, Justice Ginsburg, and, later, Justice Alito, my former boss. In each instance, he treated judicial nominees and literally hundreds of others like them with dignity and respect but also with the amount of thorough attention that lifetime appointment to the Federal judiciary demands.

In addition to this, he also liked to try to foster in others a genuine interest in the law. I remember, when I was serving as a law clerk to Federal District Judge Dee Benson in Salt Lake City—one of the brightest and most capable jurists ever to serve on the Federal bench, whether in Utah or anywhere else. He was a good friend, longtime ally and confidant of Senator Hatch's. I remember, while I was clerking for Judge Benson, right after I graduated from law school, Senator Hatch came by and just held a roundtable discussion with all the Federal judges. He not only seemed but was in fact conversant on all kinds of issues of

the law—not just the hot-button issues that people think of when they watch the news, but he was delving into arcane details of the law that really made me proud to have him representing me in the U.S. Senate from the State of Utah.

I got to know Senator Hatch even better after I got elected to the Senate, and he and I had the opportunity to work together as colleagues. Throughout all these experiences, I have come to revere him as someone who reveres the law.

For these reasons, I conclude that it is fitting for us to name this Federal courthouse in Utah after him. It is difficult to imagine anyone who has had the same impact on the Federal judiciary who has ever lived in or served from our State as Senator Hatch.

Madam President, I would like to yield some time to my colleague, the Senator from Utah.

Mr. ROMNEY. Senator LEE, thank you for your excellent remarks with regard to Senator Orrin Hatch. I rise to second what you said and to add a few words, some duplicative.

As you indicated, Senator Hatch dedicated his life to serving our country and our State, and he served in this body for some 42 years—a remarkable and extraordinary career of public service. And, of course, he was one of the longest serving chairmen of the Senate Judiciary Committee and, therefore, played a pivotal role in confirming many, many current and now-retired Supreme Court Justices. And while serving as chairman, he also helped shepherd hundreds of district and appellate judges through confirmation, including the majority of Utah's Federal judges.

His impact on the State of Utah is not just professional but also personal. Virtually anybody who stopped Senator Hatch and asked his opinion on a topic—he would stop, shake their hand, smile, and give them a full rapt attention. He is a tall drink of water, so you have to look up to Senator Hatch.

I came to him, following the crisis of 9/11, asking for his help in securing essential security funding for the Olympic Winter Games of 2002. Senator Hatch immediately took me to meet with other Senators, and he, along with others, was able to secure the funding necessary to make sure that our games were safe and were ultimately produced successfully in a way that made them the most successful Olympic Winter Games in history. He was and is an honorable public servant who continues to have tremendous impact on our State; therefore, it is only appropriate that Utah's Federal courthouse be named in his honor, and I am glad to support this legislation.

I yield my time back to Senator LEE.

Mr. LEE. I ask unanimous consent that S. 4902 be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 4902) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 4902

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

SECTION 1. ORRIN G. HATCH UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The United States courthouse located at 351 South West Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah, shall be known and designated as the “Orrin G. Hatch United States Courthouse”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the United States courthouse referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Orrin G. Hatch United States Courthouse”.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I am grateful my colleagues have chosen to allow this to pass into law. It is a great day for Senator Hatch, the State of Utah, and the United States.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION—Continued

Mr. DURBIN. 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.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the United States surpassed 11 million COVID-19 cases this past week. This comes just 6 days after our Nation recorded 10 million cases—1 million added to the 10 million in 6 days—making it the fastest transmission of 1 million new cases since the pandemic began. Nearly a quarter of a million Americans have died. This runaway crisis is alarming, it is deadly, and it demands action.

The city of Chicago began a stay-at-home advisory to help encourage people to contain the virus in our communities. Across Illinois, more than 5,000 patients have been hospitalized with COVID-19 each night for the past week. We have shattered new infection records nearly every day this month. Illinois has now experienced more than 597,000 cases, and we have sadly lost 10,875. My heart goes out to everyone who has lost a loved one.

In addition to trying to keep ourselves and our loved ones healthy and safe from the virus, Americans have also been struggling to deal with economic uncertainty, job loss, food insecurity, childcare—the list goes on and on and on. Here we are just days before Thanksgiving, and many of our neighbors are trying to pick the right day to go to the food bank so they can feed their families on this day of thanks.

Where is the sense of urgency on Capitol Hill when it comes to providing another round of economic impact payments, enhanced unemployment bene-

fits, funding for the food stamps—the SNAP program? Our country is in desperate need of help, and they are counting on us.

You would think a crisis of this scale would be the first order of business for the Republican-controlled Senate this week. Yet, while this pandemic continues to rage, too many Republicans in Congress refuse to even come to the table to negotiate a comprehensive, bipartisan relief bill. There are those who will, and I commend them. It takes real courage. Instead, their leader, Senator MCCONNELL, has scheduled votes this week on six barely qualified judicial nominees. The average age of this week's judicial nominees is 38.

You see, these are lifetime appointments. If you get somebody with the right answers to their political questions, then they will give you 20, 30, or more years while you have control of that court, and control of the court is more important, obviously, than coronavirus.

The youngest one of these nominees is Kathryn Mizelle. She is 33 years old. The American Bar Association took a look at her record and judged her “not qualified.” This is the 10th Trump nominee for a lifetime appointment to the Federal court who has been judged “not qualified” by the American Bar Association. You might say: I am sure that happens. Well, it didn't happen at all in the 8 years of the Obama Presidency. Not a single nominee who was judged “unqualified” was sent to Congress.

Another nominee, Stephen Vaden, who has been nominated for a lifetime position at the Court of International Trade, has never appeared before the Court of International Trade. He has never tried a case in any court. He will be a great judge once he figures it out.

We voted on Dr. Judy Shelton's nomination to the Federal Reserve Board. She is uniquely unqualified. Her economic views are almost humorous, they are so out of touch with reality. We are experiencing the worst recession in 75 years, and Dr. Shelton, by her stated views, is unprepared to contribute to dealing with this economic crisis.

It is the story of the 116th Congress. The Republican-controlled Senate spends month after month after month ignoring a raging pandemic and refusing to even consider the House-passed relief legislation.

Here is a good question for Members of the Senate: How many amendments has the Senate voted on this calendar year of 2020? Not counting impeachment—set that aside. But how many amendments to legislation have we considered in this calendar year? The answer is 27—27 amendments in this calendar year. That is an improvement, incidentally. In 2019, we considered exactly 22 amendments. Six of them were forced on us by Senator RAND PAUL of Kentucky, who basically said: I won't let you go home until you vote on this amendment. And, as Senator PAUL has

said, of course he lost every one of those amendments.

Twenty-seven amendments in 1 year; 22 the previous year. Do you know why? We don't legislate. We don't debate. We don't offer amendments. We don't pass bills. We come here with a new set of nominations every week from the Republican majority. We don't have any legislation on the pandemic. We have no legislation on economic recovery. We just have to get these lifetime appointees, some who have been found categorically unqualified. That is what this Senate is all about.

In this last week before the Thanksgiving recess, is this really all we are going to do? How about the 28 rural hospitals in Kentucky that are facing the risk of closure? How about the \$1.3 billion of uncompensated losses for these hospitals across Kentucky? The Republican proposal a few weeks ago didn't provide any economic relief for hospitals, clinics, or healthcare providers like those.

Americans need leadership. They need for the Senate to step up and say: For goodness' sake, whatever the political agenda is here, how can it be more important than this pandemic?

Isn't there enough talent or will on the floor of the Senate—on the Republican side and on the Democratic side—to find a way to help Americans who are struggling, to provide unemployment assistance, to provide help to small businesses, these restaurants and small businesses that are facing closure, to give some money to local units of government that through no fault of their own lost revenue to this COVID-19 crisis? These are not wild ideas; these address the very basics that face families, businesses, and governments across this country. For some reason, that particular issue can't make the agenda.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Mr. President, losing an election hurts. I know. I lost three elections before I ever won one. I suspect that anyone who has ever lost an election has had to grapple with the disappointments, the what-ifs, and even a kind of sadness, bordering on anger, but that is the risk you take when you run for office. The voters have the last word.

Never, until now, have we ever heard it suggested that a losing Presidential candidate ought to be allowed to put America's national security at risk because he is struggling mightily to accept his own loss in the election. Never, until now, have we tolerated a losing Presidential candidate's deliberately undermining Americans' faith in the integrity of our electoral system.

Never before have we witnessed a losing Presidential candidate refuse, out of spite and anger, to follow the law and allow the peaceful, orderly transfer of power to his successor. Never before now could many Americans even imagine an outgoing President deliberately sabotaging our Nation's heroic efforts

to bring an end to the deadliest health crisis in our country, but that is what is happening. It is shocking. It is dangerous. It is shameful. It needs to stop now.

Some of my Republican colleagues ask: What harm can it do? We want to humor the President. He is going through a period of adjustment here. He lost an election. It hurts. The poor President—we have to stick with him. We have to parrot his theories of how there will be massive numbers of votes discovered somewhere. We know that he is raging in his tweets regularly. So he still must be in pain, the poor man, and we have to humor him. We have to tell him: Yes, Mr. President. You must be right. This election must have been stolen from you.

Let me tell you what harm it can do. Every minute of every hour, an American dies from COVID-19. Every day, 1,000 Americans are dying from COVID. That is nearly a 50-percent increase from a month ago. We are nearing 1 million new COVID infections every week. The pandemic is surging in every single State, and public health experts warn the worst is yet to come.

Over the weekend, we learned that President Trump has not attended a single meeting of the White House's coronavirus task force in 5 months. He told us why. I am tired of this COVID-19, he says. He has gone AWOL. By refusing to concede the results of the election, President Trump is preventing our Federal health officials from meeting with President-Elect Biden's COVID task force and starting to coordinate the efforts for the transition that is going to take place on January 20, and failing to put the time, personnel, and resources into the distribution of a vaccine, which we pray to God will be available soon. In doing this, the President is jeopardizing America's ability to successfully distribute a COVID vaccine and bring this pandemic, once and for all, under control.

He is deepening our Nation's economic crisis because the first step to healing our economy is in defeating this virus—all because of the pain he is going through personally. Well, I wish I could share that pain, but I am overwhelmed by the pain of America's going through a pandemic. The President's hurt feelings don't compare. The grief of losing an election is nothing compared to the grief of 246,000 American families who have lost loved ones to this pandemic. That is the grief we ought to be concerned about.

More Americans voted in these elections than ever before—in history. Now that the election is over, the results are clear: President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris received 306 electoral votes versus 232 electoral votes for President Trump and Vice President PENCE. Four years ago, the President referred to exactly the same vote totals in his favor as a landslide. Today, he refuses to acknowledge them. He is so full of himself that he

can't feel the pain of others. Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS received at least 5 million more votes than President Trump and Vice President PENCE. That is the largest popular vote margin of victory in a Presidential election since 1932.

In the 2 weeks since the election has ended, the Trump campaign and its allies have decided to strike back and file a flurry of lawsuits in six different States, challenging the vote counts. Well, how are they doing? These lawsuits have only affirmed the integrity of the election results that we knew. Many of the complaints have been dismissed, and not a single vote has been invalidated. Even Trump campaign officials privately and publicly agree that none of the remaining legal challenges can change the outcome of the election.

Last Thursday, members of the Election Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council, within this administration's own Department of Homeland Security, called the 2020 election "the most secure in American history."

Over the weekend, a senior Federal election official who was nominated by President Trump condemned the President's false postelection claims of vote fraud, calling them baffling, laughable, and insulting. The same official warned "these conspiracy theories that are flying around have consequences."

They are dangerous to our national security. Over the weekend, John Bolton, who is President Trump's former National Security Advisor, urged Republican leaders to finally acknowledge Mr. Trump's defeat and get on with it.

Another former Trump security adviser, LTG H.R. McMaster, rejected Mr. Trump's claim on Twitter that the Presidential election was rigged. "What the President says in this tweet—it's just wrong," the general said. "It's regrettable, it's counterproductive."

John Kelly, once Chief of Staff to the same President, told POLITICO that a delayed transition was detrimental to the country's national security. His concerns were echoed by more than 150 former national security, senior military, and elected officials who called on the leader of the General Services Administration, Ms. Emily Murphy, to recognize the election of President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect HARRIS.

Yet Administrator Murphy refuses to gauge what is known as "ascertainment" to establish who the real winners were. She continues to deny President-Elect Biden and his team access to resources and the knowledge they need to begin the massive task of setting up a new government. Administrator Murphy's actions are in defiance of the Federal Presidential Transition Act, the law that has governed the transfer of Presidential power in America since 1963.

Quite stunningly, what we are hearing from our American President—the

leader of the free world—are the same kind of nonsense claims that petty dictators use to deny citizens democracy and the peaceful transfers of power. One need only look at Belarus, at the moment, for a timely comparison. America is the country that stands against these kinds of undemocratic attempts at power around the world, not a nation that cowers in fear.

Leader MCCONNELL has compared President Trump's refusal to accept the election results to the delay in determining the winner of the 2000 election, which sounds right until you look at the facts. He is wrong. The comparison is wrong. The 2000 election between President Bush and former Vice President Gore ultimately came down to a difference of not 5 million votes but 537 votes in one State—Florida—not tens of thousands of votes in many States. Even Republican attorney and elections expert Ben Ginsberg rejects the comparison. He ought to know. Ginsberg was part of the team that led President Bush's recount effort in 2000.

The refusal by President Trump and some around him to accept the election results is damaging faith in our elections and our democracy. The goal is clear: to undermine the legitimacy of the Biden-Harris administration even before it is sworn in. He is damaging the ability of President-Elect Biden and his team to get to work now on the deep and painful challenges we confront as a nation.

People close to President Trump tell reporters off the record that the President knows he can't win. Some say he just needs to very gradually come to accept the reality of his defeat.

Well, with all due respect, Mr. President, your duty is to preserve this democracy. Your moral obligation is to prevent unnecessary suffering and death and to defend this country.

For 4 years, Donald Trump has feasted on chaos and the discord of America. Time and time again, he has placed his own self-interest over our national interest. He has damaged the institutions of our democracy and abused his power. We shouldn't be surprised by his destructive actions on his way out, but we shouldn't tolerate them either.

It is time for Donald Trump to accept the clear results of the election and for his administration to work with President-Elect Biden's team for a successful, peaceful, productive transition of power. It is time for the President's friends, allies, and political pals to finally level with the President. It is time for a confrontation, perhaps—a moment of truth, perhaps—and to say to the President: It is over. Now be a man. Stand up, and show this Nation that we can have a peaceful transition of power. Show this Nation we are prepared to accept the will of the American people.

Subverting faith in democracy is not a winning strategy, and it should be beneath the dignity of any American President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I was listening to our friend, the Democratic whip, and his advice to President Trump to capitulate before the recounts and before the litigation that has been filed has been finally decided. I know they would like to have him do so, but he is completely within his rights to use the existing procedures in the States and in the local jurisdictions where these elections were conducted to review the results to see if there are discrepancies.

I also know they would like to say it is just about President Trump, but more candidates other than President Trump were on the ballot. We ought to be in the position of trying to preserve every legal vote for every candidate and making sure there are no mistakes, and there is a process in place to make that happen.

I don't know what the ultimate outcome will be—I sort of have a sneaking suspicion about what the trend line looks like—but 72 million-plus people voted for President Trump and Vice President PENCE. Out of respect for them, at least, if not for the President and the Vice President themselves, we ought to let this process play itself out. There will be a peaceful transition of power. I have no doubt whatsoever.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, I would like to also take a second to respond to the Senator's comments about our needing to do something about this pandemic—that we need to pass another piece of legislation and that we need to collaborate with the incoming administration to make sure that we don't miss distributing this vaccine on a timely basis.

My friend from Illinois, at least on three occasions, has voted against bills that would help to facilitate the delivery of the vaccine and would ensure that small businesses and other individuals get the economic help they need during this crisis that has been through no fault of their own.

By my count, our Democratic colleagues voted against a \$1 trillion HEALS bill. They voted against two separate, more targeted pieces of legislation that totaled a half a trillion dollars each. Those are three occasions on which they voted against continuing to provide the aid that we had voted on, on a bipartisan basis, by the end of March—four bills worth \$3.8 trillion.

I could only have wished that the sort of bipartisan cooperation we saw up through and including the CARES Act in late March would have continued, but that wasn't to be. Time and again, Speaker PELOSI stood on a \$3 trillion piece of legislation that she knew had no chance of passing. Why? Because it included things like tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires in blue States. She wanted to eliminate the cap on State and local tax deductions in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which we passed a few years ago, and reward mil-

lionaires and billionaires, which was not exactly dealing with the virus, either its economic fallout or the public health consequences.

Then, if that weren't enough—stiff-arming every effort that we tried to undertake since March to try to pass additional relief, both from a public health and economic perspective—today, the Speaker and the Democratic leader of the Senate took the bold step—the bold step—of writing a letter to Majority Leader MCCONNELL. Man, that was a bold step to protect the public health and protect those who, through no fault of their own, find themselves out of a job or in financial distress.

Well, I have been around here long enough to know the only reason you write a letter to somebody and then release it to the press before it gets to its intended recipient is for political purposes. It is posturing. That is what we continue to see from our friends across the aisle—political posturing.

Now they are saying—I think the Vice President himself said this—unless you drop the lawsuits, you drop the efforts to review the vote and to make sure all the ballots—all the legal ballots—are correctly counted and the ballots that are not appropriate are not counted, then people will die, unless you capitulate and give up all those rights.

In the wake of these partisan efforts to defeat any meaningful, additional relief post-March, it should be held up to ridicule because that is exactly what it deserves. It is not serious. It is partisan posturing.

If the Speaker and the Democratic leader wanted to get to work on another COVID-19 bill, do you know what they could do? They could pick up the telephone. You know, they could do a Zoom call. They wouldn't even have to socially distance or wear masks. They wouldn't have to worry about that. They could do it virtually. Or, if they wanted to do it in person, then they could come over, socially distance, and do it safely.

But this is all partisan posturing. This is not about the public health of the American people. This is not about helping people who are desperately in need of additional financial assistance—the small businesses and others that continue to struggle and lay off their workforce.

If we are serious about solving this problem, then we need to work together as we did during four separate pieces of legislation, ending with the CARES Act in late March.

But ever since that time, ever since we have offered additional assistance, Speaker PELOSI has shut it down. Our Democratic colleagues have all voted against it.

If they were serious about it, they would have voted to get on the bill, offer amendments, try to make it better, and let the Senate do its job. But, no, they wanted to make things worse in the runup to the election because

one of their main arguments against President Trump was that he mishandled the COVID-19 pandemic.

I know and you know that hindsight is 20/20. We know that the public health guidance provided by the CDC has evolved over time. We have learned a lot since then. But they were more interested in the blame game to advance their political cause in the runup to the November 3 election than they were in actually trying to help the very people who sent us here to represent them, and I think it is just shameful.

TERRORISM

On another matter, over the last 4 years, our country has made serious progress in the decades-long fight against terrorism and to lay the foundation for peace and stability in the Middle East.

We have virtually wiped out the ISIS caliphate, which was the most recent manifestation of this poisonous ideology embraced by al-Qaida that led to the attacks on 9/11. We have brought down high-ranking terrorists like al-Baghdadi, and we have eliminated the head of the Quds Force, the IRGC in Iran, that is the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism in the world—Mr. Soleimani.

We have actually strengthened our relationship with allies in the region, like Israel and Jordan, and taken a tougher approach on a unified basis against enemies like Iran. And the recent Abraham Accords Peace Agreement marked a historic step in normalizing relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

There is no question in my mind that the world is safer today than it was 4 years ago because of the historic progress that we have made, not only against terrorists but to provide the foundation of peace and stability in the Middle East by encouraging Israel and its neighbors to work together where they can.

But our job is not finished. Dangerous and destabilizing forces still remain, and America's military continues to play a vital role.

I personally appreciated General Mattis's doctrine of fighting terrorists by, with, and through our allies on the ground. That meant that we didn't need to put hundreds of thousands of American soldiers and marines, Special Forces on the ground. We could work through and with our allies, and that was largely successful at eliminating the ISIS threat in the Middle East.

So I was alarmed by Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller's announcement today that without any real consultation either with our allies at NATO or elsewhere—certainly not with Congress—the Pentagon plans to withdraw troops from Afghanistan and Iraq to a potentially unstable and dangerous level.

I happen to be a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, and one of the things our military does in forward-deployed locations like the Middle East is provide enabling and force

protection for our intelligence officers, who quietly work without any particular attention, hopefully. That is the nature of their work. But they need the military to be there to provide that force protection if they need it to enable their important work.

So a precipitous retreat, which would reverse the progress we have made and fought so hard to make, I think, is deeply troubling.

If we have learned one thing, it is about—maybe you call it the—I don't know if you call it the physics of military conflict or leadership, but history has taught us that power vacuums are not often filled by the good guys. It is the tyrants, it is the thugs, it is the dictators, it is the terrorists who fill those power vacuums, and if we mistakenly, even with the best of intentions, create a power vacuum, we could see once again the rise of ISIS like we saw with President Obama's premature withdrawal from Iraq.

We simply need to learn from our experience and not make the same mistake again. A precipitous withdrawal would not empower our allies. Indeed, we have heard from some of those allies. For example, NATO—the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—has a significant number of troops in these areas that are providing training and support for our friends on the ground.

It could well give rise to an opportunity for our adversaries—to the terrorists and insurgents who would love nothing more than to see American troops packing their bags so they could claim that they have defeated the Great Satan, as some of them have referred to it.

We would also, I think, cause our allies to question our reliability, while unintentionally, perhaps, emboldening our enemies and jeopardizing the lives of civilians in the region.

So I think we need to have a conversation here. We need to have a consultation. We need to get the military leaders before the appropriate committees in the Senate so that we can ask questions and understand the process and what the end goal is, particularly this close to the close of this administration's current term of office.

I understand the desire to bring our troops home. But in doing so, we can't undermine the gains that they and thousands of other brave Americans have made in the fight against terrorism and those who would do us harm.

E-CIGARETTES

Mr. President, on another matter, I have said here on the Senate floor many times over the last several months that COVID-19 is the most urgent threat facing our country right now. But as I just got through saying, it is not the only one.

Both here and abroad, the same threats and challenges that existed before COVID-19 are still with us and may have been exaggerated by the current crisis. I spoke about one example here on the Senate floor yesterday—

the strain on mental health resources. The stresses this virus are taking on our people—on the American people—are serious, as many cope with isolation, health anxieties, job losses, and financial struggles.

We are seeing a correlation with another health crisis that has been exacerbated by COVID-19. Last fall, one of the biggest health threats making headlines was the nationwide use of e-cigarettes by our young people. Folks of all ages were experiencing a range of mysterious medical conditions linked to these devices, with vaping-related injuries reported in all 50 States. What is most concerning to me is that most of those affected were otherwise healthy children and teens.

I met one of those teenagers in Fort Worth last December when I visited the University of North Texas Health Science Center for a roundtable discussion on the use of e-cigarettes. Sixteen-year-old Anna Carey was one of the many students at her high school who became addicted to e-cigarettes. She started to see symptoms that are uncommon for an otherwise healthy teenager. She was extremely lethargic and would experience random and severe pains in her chest.

Two initial x rays came back clear, so doctors released her, but she continued to struggle. Eventually, she was admitted to Cook Children's Hospital and diagnosed with chemical-induced pneumonia in both of her lungs.

Well, I am glad to report that Anna has now fully recovered and is using her story to encourage more teens not to go down the same path that she traveled down.

Now, with the additional public health concern of COVID-19, the need for action to prevent children and teens from using these devices could not be higher.

When it comes to the coronavirus, we know those who are older or who have underlying health conditions are most likely to experience severe cases. But there is a recent study by researchers at Stanford University School of Medicine that looked at the connection between vaping and COVID-19 among young people.

Researchers found that those who use e-cigarettes were five to seven more times likely to be diagnosed than nonusers. Dr. Bonnie Halpern-Felsher is a professor of pediatrics and the senior author of the study. She said: "Teens and young adults need to know that if you use e-cigarettes, you are likely at immediate risk of COVID-19 because you are damaging your lungs."

Now, one of the simplest and most effective ways to discourage children and teens from becoming addicted to these devices is to prevent them from even trying in the first place. But, unfortunately, our current laws make that easier said than done.

If you want to buy tobacco at a convenience store or gas station, you have to show an ID to prove you are over 18. So whether a teen is trying to buy e-

cigarettes or traditional cigarettes, the same guardrails are in place.

But there are two different sets of rules when it comes to online purchases. For traditional cigarettes, the buyer has to sign and show an ID at the time of delivery, just the same as they would have to do for in-person purchases. But e-cigarettes are operating on a different playing field. Anyone, no matter how old or young, can go online and buy e-cigarettes and have them delivered to their front door, no questions asked—no age verification is required, no ID, no nothing.

These devices, we know, are just as addictive and dangerous as traditional cigarettes and should be subject to the same restrictions. That is why the Senate passed legislation that Senator FEINSTEIN from California and I introduced called the Preventing Online Sales of E-Cigarettes to Children Act. This legislation would put in place the same safeguards for e-cigarettes as traditional cigarettes purchased online. It is not to change the law; it is just to make sure we enforce the existing law. It would require online retailers to verify the age of the customer and release deliveries only to adults with an ID. Again, it simply applies the same safeguards already in place for online purchases of regular cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products to e-cigarettes.

These are commonsense, straightforward reforms, and that is why our legislation in the Senate passed unanimously this summer.

It includes an amendment offered by our colleague from Kentucky, Senator PAUL, which requires the National Institutes of Health to conduct a study on the short- and long-term health impact of e-cigarettes on those under 21.

When we talk about passing consensus legislation, this is about as simple and straightforward as they come, and there could not be a more important time to take action. If we are going to turn the tide on e-cigarettes and prevent more young people from facing the deadly health consequences, this is an important and necessary step. This bipartisan bill would keep e-cigarettes out of the hands of our children, and I hope our House Democratic colleagues will pass this critical legislation without additional delay.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, it is timely that I should be giving my "Time to Wake Up" speech with the distinguished Senator from Louisiana presiding because I am going to be talking about sea level rise, and seeing him in the chair reminds me of a recent report on what sea level rise is doing to the great State of Louisiana, "the sportsman's paradise," in which a scientist from Tulane University—a Tulane University geologist—was asked about the report about what the State had to look forward to from sea level rise, and he said: "What it says is

we're screwed." NOLA, the news website in New Orleans, in Louisiana, ran that headline. So I know the Senator is sympathetic to it.

But today, all eyes are on Georgia, which for the first time in generations voted for a Democratic Presidential candidate, and the two Senate races are headed for runoff elections, which will decide the balance of power in this body.

Georgians of every race and background turned out to reject the politics of fear and division that came from the White House for the last 4 years and to reject the disdain for facts and science that has cost Americans so much in battles like COVID and climate change.

Perhaps buried in the election outcome in Georgia was Georgia's knowing the threat of climate change. For people along Georgia's coast, climate change is no Chinese hoax; it is a clear and present danger.

In the spring of 2014, I took a climate trip along the coast of the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida. I met with scientists and students, outdoorsmen, faith leaders, and State and local officials, who cherish their coastal communities, as Louisianans do and as Rhode Islanders do. They saw the seas rising and acidifying due to carbon pollution. Georgians told me how deeply they care about their coast. That caring has powered them through some tough battles. They fought hard against fossil fuel development off Georgia's shores, and they won.

It is not hard to understand why Georgians fight for their coasts against fossil fuel pollution. Near Savannah, I visited Fort Pulaski and Tybee Island. NOAA has a tide gauge at Fort Pulaski. It has been measuring sea level since 1935. The tide gauge takes straightforward measurements—clear, irrefutable facts. That tide gauge showed sea levels up over 8 inches since it was installed. For low-lying areas, those 8 inches of sea level rise are a problem already, but it is going to get worse.

Climate change worsens coastal flooding in two ways. First, it raises the level of the sea as glaciers and ice sheets melt into the sea and as warmer oceans expand. Second, climate change powers up stronger and more frequent hurricanes, which send those higher seas as higher storm surges farther inland. So it is important to look at how far and how often sea level rise and storm surges will flood coastal areas.

This is the map of Georgia's coastal area around Savannah. Here is Savannah. Here is the coastline. Here is the ocean. Here is Tybee Island. This dot here is Fort Pulaski, where the tide gauge is. That is what it looks like now, but "now" is not going to stay because here is what Georgia has coming at it.

Based on NOAA information, this is the risk of flooding along the Georgia coast. It takes NOAA's intermediate prediction of sea level rise—"inter-

mediate" meaning it is not the most extreme scenario; it is the midrange prediction—and it shows the risk in any year of a 4-foot-deep flood.

So here we are in 2020, and the risk is negligible. It is about 3 percent, meaning in present circumstances, you get a 4-foot flood through that area every 33 years. But by 2040, the risk is over 40 percent, which means that a 4-foot flood in that area is now not happening every 33 years, it is happening virtually every other year. By 2060, you hit 100 percent. You are getting a 4-foot flood in coastal Georgia every year. Of course this tops out at one flood per year based on the percentages, but if you look at this trajectory, clearly we are headed for multiple 4-foot floods per year in the outyears.

When I was on Tybee Island, I met city councilman Paul Wolff, who showed me the city of Tybee's new stormwater tide gate, which they just installed to protect the island from sea level rise. He explained that the road out to Tybee Island, which is here, running along that edge, flooded already 45 times per year with just 1 foot of sea level rise.

The city had already put in place a short-term plan for 14 to 20 inches of sea level rise by 2060. They were already thinking what the community would need to do as seas rise and acting on the best science back at that time. But now consider this: Consider sea level rise and storm surges combining to produce a 4-foot flood every year, at least once a year.

Here is what that map looks like when you put 4 feet of water there. This is the Savannah area, and here is Tybee Island. This is all land in gray, and now all of this is underwater. Tybee Island has turned into just a tiny little atoll, basically, out in the ocean. The road that I was talking about is now not just occasionally washed over with water; for 5 miles, that road is underwater.

Now, 4 feet of flooding happening every year is obviously bad, but remember, that wasn't the worst-case scenario; that was the intermediate NOAA scenario.

Here is an extreme case—10 feet of sea level rise. That was Tybee Island. There is nothing left. Do you want an island now? Your island is Savannah—Savannah Island, surrounded by water.

Well before the physical disaster of sea level rise and storm surge and flooding happens, something else comes first: an economic disaster, because we are not the only people looking at these projections of 4 feet and 10 feet of flooding. So do insurance companies. So do banks selling mortgages.

In these populated areas that are now land, how do you insure against a 4-foot flood that will happen every year? You can't buy a flood insurance policy for an event that happens every year. How do you get a 30-year mortgage for a property that will have flooded at least 30 times by the end of the mortgage? That economic punch—when you

can't get insurance and when you can't get a mortgage on the property, that punch lands long before the floods come.

Take Chatham County and Glynn County. According to a report by Climate Central, over \$2 billion in property value would be lost in those two counties with 3 feet of sea level rise. Up the flooding to 8 feet, and it is over \$7 billion in property value destroyed—people's homes, people's businesses. When a buyer can't get insurance and when a buyer can't get a mortgage, sellers face plummeting property values. The market unbalances rapidly because all of a sudden, you don't have many eligible buyers. The only buyers you have are people who can afford the property without having to borrow and who can afford to take the hit of an annual flood without insurance. That is not a big crowd. So the bottom falls out of the coastal property market.

That collapse in the coastal property market is what financial experts call a systemic risk. "Systemic risk" is the mildest and blandest term for a catastrophe that I know. It means that the whole economy is threatened by the economic collapse of coastal property values.

It is not just me saying it. In 2016, the top economists for U.S. mortgage giant Freddie Mac projected that climate-driven flooding along U.S. coasts will cause a property value collapse, leading to economy-wide losses "greater . . . than those experienced in the housing crisis and the Great Recession."

For those of us who remember 2008 and the pain and the difficulty and the harm and the fear that was caused by that mortgage meltdown—greater than that, is what Freddie Mac says. That is not an environmental group, by the way; that is Freddie Mac.

It has already begun. Lenders are already requiring bigger and bigger downpayments in coastal areas, sometimes as much as 40 percent of a home's value before they will insure the remainder. Flood insurance premiums continue to rise, and coverage limits leave many seaside property owners exposed to huge losses.

The people who own this flooded property are going to want to know why Congress paid more attention to fossil fuel polluters than we paid to coastal property owners; why we would only listen to the people causing this problem and not listen to the innocent property owners who are going to suffer billions and, if you multiply it out, trillions of dollars in losses.

When I was in Georgia in 2014, a local clammer named Charlie Phillips took me out over the marshes on his airboat. It was a boat he built himself. He is a member of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, which runs the regional fishery, so Charlie knows his stuff. He has been an outdoorsman his whole life, and he needs fresh, clean water for his Georgia clams. Charlie told me that changes in

the climate are hurting the ecosystem that supports his and his employees' livelihoods. Six years ago, Charlie was worried about a perilous future, one that looks even more perilous now and one to which we have not responded for 6 long years.

Well, one hopeful change is that we have a President-elect now—a President-elect who understands what is happening to our climate and who understands what is happening to our coastal communities. He is from Delaware. He gets it. The question is, How will Congress respond? Will Republicans allow a strong, comprehensive climate bill? So far, there is no sign of that, not in this building.

At some point, we will—mark my words—we will finally cast off the grim and malign grip of the fossil fuel polluters and their massive political influence machines. At some point, we will finally listen to the people now on dry land whose homes and businesses are going to be predictably flooded out because we did nothing. I will tell you that it had better be soon because time is not on our side. As these coasts flood—not just the Georgia coast but the New Jersey coast, the Rhode Island coast—as these coasts flood, coastal property owners will demand answers, and the Georgia voters who live near the Georgia coast are entitled to an explanation of why nothing is being done. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MCSALLY). The Senator from Oklahoma.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, in my neighborhood and my community, you can walk down the street and visit with some really great neighbors—Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus. They all live in the same neighborhood and are friends.

My kids are grown now. We watched all our kids playing together in the community and in the neighborhood. We can see just from this one community and just from this one neighborhood this beautiful thing our Founding Fathers dreamed of—the right of every individual to be able to choose a faith of their own decision, to be able to live that faith out, to be able to change that faith if they choose to, or to be able to have no faith at all.

There are plenty of people in my neighborhood that I have no idea what faith they have. They don't have to post it. They don't have to print it. They don't have to say it because they are an American. They don't have to be a certain faith or be able to maintain that faith.

The Declaration of Independence makes known that every person has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Our Constitution protects our right to a free press, to speak, to assemble, to petition the government, and to have any faith we choose and to be able to live that faith without fear that the government is going to impose a faith on them.

Our founding government documents explicitly state these rights. We know that, inherently, these rights should be for all people. As such, I believe it is the responsibility of every American not just to cherish the freedoms that we have but to also be able to state those freedoms worldwide and to be able to encourage people worldwide to also live those basic human rights and dignities.

The Trump administration is heavily focused on sharing these ideals with the world. In fact, right now, Poland is hosting the Third Ministerial to Advance Freedom of Religion or Belief Alliance. The United States has hosted the first two of those. In fact, I was a participant in the second one, and I was a participant online with the third one that was just in process.

It was implemented with the help of Secretary Pompeo and Ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback. It brought people of all faiths and of all countries together who choose to discuss religious liberty.

This year's ministerial definitely looks very different based on COVID worldwide and its restrictions, but it is remarkable to see Foreign Ministers from all over the world, many from countries that don't practice religious liberty, in the middle of a conversation about religious liberty.

Eighty percent of the world's population live where religious freedom is threatened or denied, which puts an extra obligation on those of us who live in freedom to be able to display that freedom to people worldwide. We should condemn religious persecution and work to ensure that all people have the freedom of faith, to live their faith, to change their faith, or to have no faith at all.

In addition to the ministerial, I am really encouraged by the growing support of the International Freedom Alliance, which has a membership now of 32 countries. They are dedicated to advancing this basic right of religious freedoms. Not only are we seeing countries gathering in this ministerial to discuss religious liberty, many from countries that don't allow religious liberty, but we now have 32 countries that are dedicating together to say: We do practice religious liberty in our country, and we want to spread that.

The alliance of these 32 countries, which we are a part of, has two core functions; the first of which is to enhance global advocacy to protect the right of freedom of religion or belief for all and to hold all accountable to those who violate that freedom of religion or belief; and the second thing is to serve as a platform to better coordinate the efforts of governments, parliamentarians, and civil societies to advance this right.

I hope this alliance continues to grow and continues to have gaining influence on the world's stage. I hope they continue to condemn bad actors who facilitate or condone discrimination

and violence toward people of faith, while encouraging leaders to protect the rights of their religious communities and neighbors.

The United States has a strong history and commitment to religious freedom, but some throughout the world do not have that privilege. One-third of the world's countries have laws that prohibit expression deemed as blasphemous, heretical, apostate, or insulting to religion.

Depending on the country, punishment for individuals who participate in this type of expression that they call blasphemy range from fines to imprisonment, to even the death sentence in places like Pakistan.

These laws affect Christians, Muslims, Hindus, secularists, and all other groups. They scare people into hiding because of their faith. They punish people for changing their faith, and they remove the most basic dignity of the individual: the right to believe.

We should continue to expose those who take away that basic human freedom. That is who we are as Americans. That is what we stand for worldwide.

The independent and nonpartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has identified 84 countries that still have blasphemy laws on the books. That is why I joined Senator COONS in cosponsoring the bipartisan resolution to condemn blasphemy and apostasy laws around the world and called for the release of individuals who have been prosecuted or imprisoned for charges of blasphemy.

That proposal is ready to go and ready to be passed and has cleared everyone on the Republican side of the aisle and most everyone on the Democratic side of the aisle.

To ensure that religious liberty is a core pillar of our engagement with other countries, the President issued an Executive order on Advancing International Religious Freedom—the first of its kind. It is a recommitment of the United States to protecting the freedom to live out your faith, regardless of where you live.

Under this order, the United States places an even greater prioritization on religious freedom with our foreign assistance programs of the Department of State and with USAID.

It is interesting, in addition to religious liberty, this administration has also partnered with other countries to protect and uphold the sanctity of human life, while prioritizing the rights and safety of women worldwide.

Last month, the administration, along with the Governments of Brazil, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, and Uganda, led a coalition of more than 30 government leaders representing 1.6 billion people from every part of the planet to sign the Geneva Consensus Declaration. The declaration reaffirms that “all are created equal before the law” and that the “human rights of women are an inalienable, integral, and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

This historic document also strengthens our international commitment to the protection of the most basic human right, “the inherent ‘dignity and worth of the human person,’ that ‘every human being has the right to life.’” It seems like that would be just a natural thing to say. It seems like that would be apparent, that we as a nation and that people around the world would recognize this most basic right of an individual to live.

We believe in the right for people to be able to practice whatever faith they choose. We should at least agree before they choose whatever faith they are that they are allowed to live at all.

This document that was signed by the Governments of the United States, Brazil, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, and Uganda has the simple statement, along with multiple others. It says: We “[r]eaffirm the inherent ‘dignity and worth of the human person,’ that ‘every human being has the inherent right to life,’ and the commitment ‘to enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant.’”

I am proud of this administration and the 1.6 billion people who are represented by the other governments that have joined into this simple declaration to protect the rights of women, to stand up for the equal rights of those women, and to be able to stand up for the rights of every single child. The historic document strengthens our international commitment to this basic right.

This is a critical tool for the United States and like-minded countries to preserve equal rights for all families, for all individuals in every society. It has four pillars: better health for women, preservation of human life, strengthening of the family as the foundational unit of society, and protecting every nation's national sovereignty in global politics.

As I have said on this floor before, abortion takes a life; it doesn't preserve it. It is not a right, and we as a nation should not promote an action to the rest of the world that is antithetical to the most basic of all human rights—the right to live, to make your own decisions.

I am encouraged that we are partnering with other like-minded nations, that there are people all over the world who are standing up for the rights of women to have equality, the rights to be able to protect human life, to strengthen families, and the rights to be able to protect national sovereignty—something we should be able to stand up for.

In the days ahead, I pray we continue to stand up for that because every individual should have the right to live as they live, have the right to be able to have whatever faith they choose to have—to have that faith, live that faith, change that faith, or to have no faith at all.

But they don't even get to choose that if they are not even allowed to

live first. That is something I would hope that we, as Americans, could also stand for.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I come to the floor today in solidarity with ethnic Armenians all over the world who have experienced terrible losses in recent weeks. This is a tragic moment for Armenians everywhere.

Words cannot describe the devastation inflicted on the region by Azerbaijani President Aliyev with the full support of President Erdogan of Turkey. Thousands of ethnic Armenian civilians and soldiers have lost their lives due to Azerbaijan's aggression, with an unknown number more injured. More than half of the population has been driven from their longtime homes. Every day, more are forced to leave.

Every day, more are forced to leave. Azerbaijan's aggression has created a massive humanitarian crisis that will require a significant response, especially in light of the worsening pandemic. The historically and religiously significant city of Shushi now sits in Azerbaijani hands, and the security of many sacred Christian sites falls to President Aliyev and his backer Erdogan. The world will be watching if these holy sites are desecrated.

These are dark days, indeed, and it did not have to be this way. American leadership could have averted much of this tragedy. Unfortunately, after the conflict began in late September, the highest ranking Trump administration officials decided to remain largely absent and silent.

Certainly, other world leaders engaged. President Macron made calls and actively tried to reduce tensions, as one would expect from one of the leaders of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group cochair country.

Unfortunately, others with less noble goals were also at the table. President Erdogan fueled Azerbaijan's aggression, fanning the flames by providing devastating drone technology and Syrian mercenaries.

President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov worked the phones from the early days of the conflict. The result? Russia has a new foothold in the southern Caucasus. Evidently, Russia was never fully committed to the Minsk goals and now has what they wanted since the 1990s.

All of this happened while Donald Trump slept—yet another example of diplomatic malpractice at the highest levels of an administration which will, thankfully, conclude in January. President Trump's departure is little solace for the ethnic Armenians who have been driven from their homes and seen their livelihoods go up in flames.

So what is the region left with at the end of the day? The security of the Armenian people, who have already suffered brutal violence at the hands of

Presidents Aliyev and Erdogan, now rests with peacekeepers sent by Vladimir Putin—a flawed agreement that does nothing about the jihadis sent there by Turkey, who, if allowed to remain, could commit further atrocities against Christian Armenians.

Without any commitments to the status of Artsakh, there is no incentive for Azerbaijan to make peace with Armenia. Will we see another case of ethnic cleansing in the future? Do we sit silent?

We now have a trio of authoritarians running the show in the southern Caucasus. It should alarm anyone dedicated to a peaceful solution for this long-outstanding conflict. It should alarm anyone dedicated to democratic reform in the region. It should alarm anyone concerned about basic human rights and respect for international law.

We in the United States should be concerned about national security issues that would affect us in the Caucasus. So, my colleagues, we are witnessing the return of great power politics in this critical region. Yet the world's sole superpower is conspicuously absent. This needs to change.

First and most urgently, the United States must lead a response to the humanitarian needs created by this violence, particularly for the tens of thousands of ethnic Armenians forcibly displaced from their homes by the 6-week war.

Winter is fast approaching. The COVID-19 pandemic is raging. There is no time to waste. Congress and the Trump administration must act quickly to save these families. The United States must make a substantial investment in humanitarian and development assistance, along the lines of \$100 million, to make a difference for those on the ground. This includes funding for efforts to demine the affected area.

In April, I sent a letter cosigned by 30 other Senators calling for the Senate to appropriate \$1.5 million in fiscal year 2021 funds for demining, robust funding for rehabilitation services in Nagorno-Karabakh, and money for an independent assessment of remaining mine contamination to help inform future efforts.

Given the widespread use by Azerbaijan of cluster munitions, rockets, and other such weapons in this conflict, I again urge this body to include those provisions in the final appropriations bill.

Second, the United States must immediately—immediately—suspend the provision of defense articles to Turkey and Azerbaijan. We cannot and must not enable any future atrocities by either of those authoritarian countries.

Either we had a tremendous intelligence failure or the State Department lied when it issued the waiver to section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act. Either way, we should be gravely concerned about reports that Azerbaijan has utilized U.S.-origin defense equipment in this conflict.

The administration must fully investigate these reports and respond appropriately to any violations of U.S. law. Indeed, Canada suspended arms sales to Turkey in response to the conflict for this very reason, and I applaud Prime Minister Trudeau for doing so.

The United States must do the same and work diplomatically to encourage others to join us in common cause.

To that end, I have introduced two resolutions that will require the State Department to report on human rights abuses by Azerbaijan and Turkey and on the role that U.S. security assistance and arms transfers may be playing in those abuses. I urge my colleagues to support those resolutions.

Third, the administration must follow the law. It should not waive section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, which states that Azerbaijan should “cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force” against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh as a condition to receive U.S. assistance.

The facts tell us that the Government of Azerbaijan has done the exact opposite. America has no business rewarding this kind of aggressive behavior.

I call on the administration to terminate the waiver of section 907. Congress can also address this injustice in the fiscal year 2021 appropriations bill by stripping the existing waiver authority so that this security relationship stops. It needs to stop, once and for all.

In addition, at my request, the Government Accountability Office is currently reviewing the impact of U.S. security assistance to Azerbaijan, which has skyrocketed under the Trump administration. The Pentagon alone has provided more than \$120 million in equipment to the Aliyev regime in recent years. This is simply unacceptable and must change. The GAO review will shed light on the impact of the repeated waivers of section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act.

Fourth and finally, Turkey's aggression in this conflict must be addressed. President Erdogan clearly aspires to be a modern-day Ottoman Sultan, putting down stakes in Libya, in Syria, across the Eastern Mediterranean, and now in the southern Caucasus.

Under Erdogan, Turkey has engaged in unbridled aggression outside of its borders, in violation of NATO's founding principles and international norms.

Here is what we know: This Turkey is proving to be an unreliable ally in NATO. It is not a democracy, and it is not a responsible actor on the world stage.

The aggression unfolding in Azerbaijan should make crystal clear what we have long known: Erdogan is, without a doubt, trying to claim the title of most destructive actor in the region today. Without a strong response, he will continue these advances and aggression.

I urge the incoming Biden administration to stop him, and Congress has a role to play as well. We must finally

sanction Turkey for its purchase of the S-400 from Russia, which is a clear violation of the CAATSA law.

I expect that the fiscal year 2021 NDAA will take this long overdue step and result in S-400 sanctions on Turkey.

I would also urge the incoming Biden administration to reassert American leadership in the region. The United States must join with Europe in solidarity against Turkey's violations of the sovereignty of Greece and Cyprus, which destabilize the Eastern Mediterranean region.

Sanctions against those conducting illegal exploration activities on behalf of Turkey would be a strong show of support for our European allies, not to mention for the rule of law. Indeed, I have every confidence that President-Elect Biden and his team will live up to America's responsibilities on the world stage by actually engaging on all of these issues.

And though the OSCE Minsk Group process appears to be on life support, we can and must reinvigorate it with senior-level engagement. We must send a clear message to Ankara, Baku, and Moscow that violence as a means to solve the conflict will not succeed and pressure on Armenia from its eastern and western borders will not be tolerated.

I would like to close with this. Above the road between Yerevan and Stepanakert lies the ancient monastery of Dadivank. Father Hovhannes, a priest at the monastery, has vowed to stay even though the area has fallen under Azerbaijani control. His neighbors have mostly fled, on their way to Yerevan, displaced by weeks of horrific fighting.

The courage of Father Hovhannes is hard for most of us to understand, to even comprehend. It comes from a place of deep connection to the land, deep connection to one's culture, and deep connection to one's faith. The world will be watching as to what happens to Father Hovhannes and the ancient monastery of Dadivank.

A neighbor of Father Hovhannes who also committed to stay in the area said:

We are here to stay until the end. This is our God. It's our church. Our cross bears a heavy weight. We are here to carry that weight.

Throughout this war, Armenians across the region have carried that weight under relentless assault from Azerbaijan and Turkey. The Trump administration let them down.

The horror of recent weeks will be very difficult to undo, but we must start the work. Yes, we must start the work. By taking the steps I have described here tonight, we can begin a new chapter of U.S. policy in the region and right past wrongs. And I am committed, as I have always been, alongside the Armenian-American community in New Jersey and across our country, to see this just work through to the end.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

NOMINATION OF TOBY CROUSE

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I rise this evening in support of the nomination of Toby Crouse to serve as a U.S. district judge for the District of Kansas. I am joined on the floor this evening by the senior Senator from Kansas, Senator ROBERTS, and we take our responsibility seriously in vetting judicial nominees, particularly true when the seat that is under consideration—when the seat that is vacant—is from our home State of Kansas. We need good, solid judges who interpret the Constitution in ways that enforce the law and provide justice and equity.

I can tell my colleagues that Toby Crouse is highly qualified, both professionally and personally, to fill this seat.

Toby has had a distinguished career since earning a law degree from the University of Kansas. He completed two Federal clerkships, including one that was with the Tenth Circuit. He then became a partner at Kansas's largest law firm, Foulston Siefkin, before he was appointed as the State's solicitor general in 2013, a position he currently holds while maintaining a solo law practice.

Throughout his career, Toby has come to possess extensive trial and appellate experience in both State and Federal courts. As the solicitor general, he has argued before the Supreme Court three times.

I have had the opportunity to have numerous conversations with Toby, with his law professors, with his colleagues, and members of the bar in Kansas, and he comes highly recommended. The bar in Kansas, as well as the bench, is anxious for this position to be filled so that justice will not be delayed. And the American Bar Association rates Toby as "well qualified."

I want to thank Chairman GRAHAM and the Judiciary Committee for approving this nomination and Leader MCCONNELL for bringing this nomination to the floor for our consideration this evening. I am confident that Mr. Crouse will serve on the Federal bench with distinction, and I encourage my colleagues to vote for his final confirmation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about the work of my good friend and colleague, the junior Senator from Georgia, Senator KELLY LOEFFLER. Republicans, including the Senator from Georgia, continue to put forward solutions to address one of our country's most pressing problems, and that, of course, is healthcare. As a doctor, I recognize that healthcare remains a top priority for families all across this great country.

Senator LOEFFLER also knows how important healthcare is to families, not just across her State of Georgia but to families all around America. She has a proposal. It is called Modernizing Americans' Health Care. It is a plan, and this plan is another example of the important contribution that she is making here in the Senate to the well-being of the entire Nation.

Her plan emphasizes that Americans with preexisting conditions must be protected. My colleague is absolutely right: Everyone knows someone with a preexisting condition. My own wife Bobbi is a breast cancer survivor. She has had three operations. She has had chemotherapy twice, and she has now survived that cancer by over 15 years. That is a preexisting condition.

Let there be no doubt: Republicans will always make sure that patients are able to get insurance regardless of their medical condition.

Senator LOEFFLER's plan also recognizes the need for more insurance choices. Americans need the coverage that works for them and their families. It should be available, affordable, and appropriate for them—what they need, not what the government says they have to have. Families need more options.

Association health plans let small businesses and community organizations come together with the buying power of large corporations. This helps lower the cost of care. Main Street, I believe, deserves the same opportunity to buy insurance as Wall Street, and that is what Senator LOEFFLER is proposing.

Her plan also lets consumers save more of their own money to pay for healthcare. Right now, as a result of the Obama healthcare law, Americans can only use a health savings account when it is tied to a high deductible healthcare plan. My colleague from Georgia wants to expand these accounts for anyone with health insurance coverage regardless of their type of insurance plan.

Everyone knows over the last year—since the Obama healthcare law was passed—that deductibles have continued to keep climbing. We need to give families relief by letting them save more of their own money tax-free through a health savings account. That way, families could use their money to pay for deductibles and other kinds of healthcare expenses that right now they are not allowed to do.

As a doctor, one thing in particular that I strongly support, of course, is direct primary care. We have it running successfully in my home State of Wyoming. That is when someone pays your healthcare provider a flat monthly fee instead of a fee every time you visit the doctor or the nurse or the nurse practitioner.

Consumers like this arrangement. They like it because it takes the uncertainty out of a doctor's visit. They always know what they are going to pay month to month to month. Providers

like it because they get to focus on patients over all of the paperwork that is so often required by insurance companies.

I talk to doctors who are tired of practicing medicine and want to retire: What is it you don't like? They love taking care of patients, but they hate the paperwork that comes with it, so often related to the law, the mandates, and the things that happen with trying to comply with the insurance paperwork.

A lot more can be done, and we know this as a result of coronavirus in terms of providing healthcare using telemedicine. Especially, Madam President, in your home State and mine, where there are great distances and lots of rural communities, it is a great opportunity for people to receive healthcare from a distance, using the newest technology of the day.

I think we have seen much more about telemedicine due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Patients have tried it. They like it. The providers I have talked to around the State of Wyoming like it a lot.

There have been issues in the past, though—the issues of how to reimburse and how many visits and the distance. And did they need to come into the office? Would it be covered by insurance? Would it be covered by Medicare? Would it be covered by Medicaid? All of these are issues—hassles—for the patient and the provider, but, to me, telemedicine is now here to stay.

These direct primary care practices truly have been on the leading edge of telemedicine because they didn't have to worry about insurance company reimbursements based on the number of face-to-face visits. They could just visit and talk to the patient using telemedicine.

Speaking of COVID-19, this plan also ensures that we continue fighting back against this virus. There is tremendous news today about the vaccines—two vaccines, one that is 90 percent effective and one that is 94 percent effective.

As a doctor, I will tell you, these are breakthroughs. These are modern-day miracles of medicine. If you think about it, not that long ago Dr. Fauci said that if we could get a vaccine that was 50 percent effective, that would be tremendous. But we are talking much, much higher rates of effectiveness than that.

My colleague in her proposal also calls for focus on something we can all support, and that is making drugs and personal protective equipment here in the United States—producing here at home in America. We need to bring the manufacturing of these critical supplies back to our own communities, certainly back to our country. Never again—never again—should our patients and healthcare workers be held hostage by China or any other nation.

Senator LOEFFLER knows that Americans should not be the sole payers for the innovation that supports the rest

of the world. My colleague's plan reinforces the fact that our trade policies must reflect when countries freeloader off of American innovation.

Finally, she wants to make sure that pharmacy discounts benefit the patients, not large pharmacies' so-called benefit managers. This is a common-sense legislative proposal that will mean lower drug prices for patients who have to take expensive medications. When discounts go directly to patients, Americans will see much lower costs when they pay at the pharmacy counter.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of what is in Senator LOEFFLER's proposal. But I am sure that in the days ahead, the Senate will have a chance to hear more about her important work on healthcare. I look forward to continuing to work with her and all of my colleagues as Republicans get these important policies enacted into law.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. I yield back the rest of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Toby Crouse, of Kansas, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas, shall be brought to a close?

Mr. JOHNSON. Madam 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. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea," and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), and the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 235 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Barrasso	Fischer	Perdue
Blackburn	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Hawley	Risch
Boozman	Hoever	Roberts
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Burr	Inhofe	Rounds
Capito	Johnson	Rubio
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sasse
Collins	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lee	Shelby
Cotton	Loeffler	Sullivan
Cramer	Manchin	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	McSally	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Enzi	Murkowski	Young
Ernst	Paul	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Hirono	Schatz
Bennet	Jones	Schumer
Blumenthal	Kaine	Shaheen
Booker	King	Sinema
Brown	Klobuchar	Smith
Cantwell	Leahy	Stabenow
Cardin	Markey	Tester
Casey	Menendez	Udall
Coons	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warner
Duckworth	Murray	Warren
Durbin	Peters	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Reed	Wyden
Hassan	Rosen	
Heinrich	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—7

Alexander	Graham	Scott (FL)
Carper	Grassley	
Feinstein	Harris	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action in relation to the Crouse nomination.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEE. Madam 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.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I was unable to attend the rollcall vote No. 227 on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Aileen Cannon to the United States Southern District of Florida. Had I been able to attend, I would have voted to oppose cloture.

I was unable to attend the roll call vote No. 228 on the motion to confirm the nomination of Aileen Cannon to the United States Southern District of Florida. Had I been able to attend, I would have voted to oppose confirmation.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. SINEMA. Madam President, I was necessarily absent, but had I been present would have voted yes on rollcall vote 225, on the Motion to Invoke Cloture on the nomination of James Ray Knepp II to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Ohio.

I was necessarily absent, but had I been present would have voted yes on rollcall vote 226, on the Confirmation of James Ray Knepp II to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Ohio.

RECOGNIZING THE BICENTENNIAL OF TOURMALINE IN MAINE

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, this year, in addition to celebrating the bicentennial of the State of Maine, we are also commemorating the bicentennial of the first major find in North America of the treasured semiprecious stone tourmaline in the mountains of western Maine. It is a fascinating historical coincidence that the State of Maine and the discovery of its official State gemstone share the same anniversary.

Maine became our Nation's 23rd State on March 15, 1820. In late autumn of that year, college students Elijah Hamlin and Ezekiel Holmes were pursuing their studies in mineralogy on an expedition to Mount Mica in Paris, ME. As they headed down the mountain at sunset, they spotted a vivid green sparkle amid the tangled roots of a fallen tree. The beautiful crystal was an exciting find, but the encroaching darkness prevented further exploration.

Their plan to continue their search the next morning was cancelled by an overnight snowfall that blanketed the ground until spring. When the two students did return months later, they were astonished by the amount and variety of the crystals among the rocky ledges. The many shades of green, red, white, and yellow translucent stones they found explain why the word "tourmaline," which comes from an ancient language of Sri Lanka, roughly translates to "many colors."

News of the discovery spread, and the region soon became the foremost hunting grounds in North America for these remarkable gems, rivaling famous sites in South America and Asia. Among the early Maine rock hounds was Elijah Hamlin's younger brother Hannibal, who four decades later would serve as President Lincoln's first Vice President.

Today, Maine tourmaline is treasured by jewelers, artists, and collectors. Our distinctive watermelon tourmaline, which combines pink, white, and green in one stone, is especially prized. Residents and visitors alike delight in searching for these gorgeous stones amid the marvelous scenery of our western mountains.

The Hamlin Necklace, containing stones of various colors from the original find, can be seen at the Harvard

University Mineralogical Museum. In 1972, a spectacular discovery in Newry, ME, yielded hundreds of pounds of red and green crystals, including the "Jolly Green Giant," a 10-inch crystal now in the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History collection. The State of Maine tourmaline necklace was designed using Newry gems and presented to the State in 1975 by the Maine Retail Jewelers Association.

On Presidents Day 2010, a major discovery included a 120-carat blue tourmaline crystal, among the most rare of hues. This was named "The President" and was cut into nine gems. The largest was presented as a gift from the State of Maine to President Barack Obama when he visited that year.

How and why such large deposits of tourmaline are found in Maine, so distant from the usual locales, remains a puzzle for geologists to solve. It is worth noting, however, that tourmaline is said to bestow on its bearer fearlessness, happiness, and self-confidence—qualities that define the people of our State.

Mr. President, Maine is renowned for the stunning beauty of its mountains, forests, and seacoast. The 200th anniversary of the discovery of tourmaline is a reminder that some of the most beautiful things are not as readily apparent but are well worth looking for.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DONNA VILLERE

• Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, Donna Villere will make 70 years old on December 1, 2020. Donna was born at Touro Hospital in New Orleans; Donna has lived her whole life in Jefferson Parish, except for 1 year in New Orleans when she was first married. Donna grew up in Harahan; her maiden name was Gunckel. Donna attended St. Rita's Church and was the first person to be baptized, make their first communion and confirmation, and be married at St. Rita's. Donna attended Chapelle High School and LSUNO College.

She is married 51 years to Roger Villere; they have 3 sons Roger, III, Mark, and Jacques; four granddaughters Madison, Masey, Victoria, and Shelby; and 2 great-grandsons Isaiah and Myles. Donna is co-owner of Villere's Florist, which she opened when she was only 18 years old on the corner of Focis Street and Metairie Road. Donna is Secretary/Treasurer, Villere Corporation.

Donna's hobby is volleyball; she is a great volleyball player, and she started varsity as a freshman at Chapelle HS. Donna has been a volleyball coach for over 35 years at Lakeshore playground in Metairie and has coached at Metairie playground and Harahan playgrounds. Donna likes to attend volleyball tournaments, one of her favorite is Fudpuckers in Destin, FL, and she has attended for over 20 years.

Donna supports local tournaments at both Coconut Beach and White Sands Beach volleyball locations in Jefferson Parish.

Donna loves to babysit with her two great-grandsons and her nephew Jaxon.●

REMEMBERING SCOTT IRVING PEEK, SR.

• Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, today, I honor the life and legacy of Scott Irving Peek, Sr., who passed away on November 10, 2020 at the age of 94. Known to many as Scotty, he was raised in Jacksonville, FL, with a strong work ethic that carried him through a storied life and career. After high school, Scotty served in the U.S. Merchant Marines during World War II. He then went to the University of Florida on a track scholarship in 1945; however, his service to our Nation took precedence, and he served in the U.S. Army from 1946 through 1948. He then returned to UF, where he played both football and track and in 1952 earned his degree in physical education, health, and recreation.

After college, Scotty heard the calling for public service and began a career on Capitol Hill, serving as an aide to Florida's U.S. Senator George Smathers. His advice and counsel was lauded, and he quickly became an integral member of Senator Smathers' team and family. He served his State and Nation with honor. It was in Washington, DC that he met his wife, Lillian Barretto, and perhaps his greatest accomplishment, together they raised six children: Nancy, Rosemary, Scott Jr., Catherine, William, and George.

After returning to Florida, Scotty started a public relations firm and enjoyed a successful career in many ventures, including real estate. If you knew Scotty, you knew he was passionate about his family and the University of Florida. He served in multiple capacities for the UF Foundation, and that incredible work was honored by three UF Presidents.

Through his devotion to his wife of 65 years, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, family and friends, there is no doubt that Scotty left a mark on this world. I honor his life and continued legacy.●

TRIBUTE TO JERRY ELMER

• Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I rise today to honor Mr. Elmer, one of Rhode Island's leading advocates for humanitarian and environmental causes. Mr. Elmer is set to retire after a long and successful career, most recently with the Conservation Law Foundation.

After graduating from Rhode Island College and Harvard Law School, Mr. Elmer devoted the first part of his career to humanitarian, peace, and security issues. He was codirector of Rhode Island's American Friends Service Committee, where he focused on nu-

clear disarmament and human rights. He also traveled extensively in South and Southeast Asia to research the status of human rights and the effect of Western military and economic aid programs in the region.

Mr. Elmer's work yielded important, lasting change. He authored a key referendum to freeze the production and deployment of nuclear weapons, which appeared as a ballot question in Rhode Island in 1982. He then led the successful statewide campaign for that referendum. The 1982 nuclear freeze measure was, at that time, the largest nationally coordinated voter referendum in U.S. history.

Later in his career, Mr. Elmer turned to the fight for climate action for renewable power in Rhode Island's energy market. At the Conservation Law Foundation, Mr. Elmer appeared before Federal and State courts and the Public Utilities Commission to enforce Rhode Island's renewable energy laws. He was the principal author of several of Rhode Island's major renewable energy statutes. Notably, he drafted the long-term contracting statute, which gave rise to the Nation's first offshore wind project, the Block Island Wind Farm, and helped to write the distributed generation standard contracts law, to create a comprehensive framework to spur development of small, local renewable energy projects across the State. In recent years, Mr. Elmer led successful opposition to the siting of a fossil fuel power plant in Burrillville, RI, and has been one of Rhode Island's great environmental litigators.

Mr. Elmer is a staunch advocate for human rights, peace, and action on climate. His tireless efforts on behalf of the Conservation Law Foundation and Rhode Island echo far beyond our State. I am proud to recognize his service and thank him for such an impressive career in battle for great causes.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:57 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 327. An act to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide for a lifetime National Recreational Pass for any veteran with a service-connected disability.

S. 3147. An act to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress reports on patient safety and quality of care at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 3587. An act to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the accessibility of websites of the Department of Veterans Affairs to individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 900. An act to designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of

Veterans Affairs in Bozeman, Montana, as the “Travis W. Atkins Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic”.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 910. An act to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 1069. An act to require the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to establish a constituent-driven program to provide a digital information platform capable of efficiently integrating coastal data with decision-support tools, training, and best practices and to support collection of priority coastal geospatial data to inform and improve local, State, regional, and Federal capacities to manage the coastal region, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1964. An act to provide for the recognition of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6237. An act to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to clarify the requirement of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to reimburse the Indian Health Service for certain health care services.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 1964. An act to provide for the recognition of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

H.R. 6237. An act to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to clarify the requirement of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to reimburse the Indian Health Service for certain health care services; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-5874. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Mefenitrifluconazole” (FRL No. 10015-56-OCSPP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 5, 2020; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-5875. A communication from the Inspector General, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to an investigation of three Forest Service (FS) employee fatalities that occurred during the Twisp River Fire outside of Twisp, Washington, on August 19, 2015; to

the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-5876. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Seven-Day-After report for the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 (Division A of Public Law 116-159, the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act); to the Committee on the Budget.

EC-5877. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants: Phosphoric Acid Manufacturing” (FRL No. 10015-94-OAR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 5, 2020; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5878. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Findings of Failure to Submit State Implementation Plan Revisions in Response to the 2016 Oil and Natural Gas Industry Control Techniques Guidelines for the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and for States in the Ozone Transport Region” (FRL No. 10016-24-OAR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 5, 2020; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5879. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Determination of Attainment by the Attainment Date for the Salt Lake City, Utah and Provo, Utah 2006 24-Hour PM_{2.5} Nonattainment Areas” (FRL No. 10016-52-Region 8) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 5, 2020; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5880. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Arkansas: Final Approval of State Underground Storage Tank Program Revisions and Incorporation by Reference” (FRL No. 10014-65-Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 5, 2020; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5881. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approval: Missouri; Removal of Control of Emissions from Solvent Cleanup Operations” (FRL No. 10016-37-Region 7) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 5, 2020; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5882. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Approval and Promulgation of State Air Quality Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants: Arkansas, New Mexico, and Albuquerque-Bernalillo County, New Mexico; Control of Emissions from Existing Commercial and Industrial Solid Waste Incineration Units” (FRL No. 10015-94-OAR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 5, 2020; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5883. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare

and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Additional Policy and Regulatory Revisions in Response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (CMS-9912-IFC)” (RIN0938-AU35) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 3, 2020; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5884. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Request for Comments Regarding Protection of Annuity and Spousal Rights Under Section 205 of ERISA with Respect to a Terminating section 403(b) Plan Funded Through the Use of Custodial Accounts” (Notice 2020-80) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2020; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5885. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Telephonic Hearings Extension” (Rev. Proc. 2020-49) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2020; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5886. A communication from the Director of the Legal Processing Division, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Distribution of Individual Custodial Accounts in Kind Upon Termination of a Section 403(b) Plan” (Rev. Rul. 2020-23) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2020; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5887. A communication from the Director of the Legal Processing Division, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Guidance Related to the Allocation and Apportionment of Deductions and Foreign Taxes, Foreign Tax Redeterminations, Foreign Tax Credit Disallowance Under Section 965(g), Consolidated Groups, Hybrid Arrangements and Certain Payments under Section 951A” ((RIN1545-BP21) (TD 9922)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2020; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5888. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2020-0088-2020-0090); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5889. A communication from the Secretary of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5890. A communication from the Supervisor of the Regulations and Dissemination Team, Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Adverse Effect Wage Rate Methodology for the Temporary Employment of H-2A Non-immigrants in Non-Range Occupations in the United States” (RIN1205-ACB89) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 5, 2020; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5891. A communication from the Acting Register of Copyrights and Director, United States Copyright Office, Library of Congress,

transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the extension of adjustments to certain timing provisions of the Copyright Act for persons affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5892. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Designation of Benzylfentanyl and 4-Anilinoipiperidine, Precursor Chemicals Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Fentanyl, as List I Chemicals" ((21 CFR Part 1310) (Docket No. DEA-497)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 9, 2020; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5893. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of Cenobamate in Schedule V" ((21 CFR Part 1308) (Docket No. DEA-472)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 9, 2020; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5894. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Listing of Ethylone in the Code of Federal Regulations and Assignment of an Administration Controlled Substances Code Number" ((21 CFR Part 1308) (Docket No. DEA-510)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 9, 2020; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5895. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Control of the Immediate Precursor Norfentanyl Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Fentanyl as a Schedule II Controlled Substance" ((21 CFR Part 1308) (Docket No. DEA-496)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 9, 2020; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5896. A communication from the Attorney, Federal Railroad Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Texas Central Railroad High-Speed Safety Standards" (RIN2130-AC84) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 5, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5897. A communication from the Legal Tech, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zone; Vessel Launch, Menominee River, Marinette, Wisconsin and Menominee, Michigan" ((RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG-2020-0632)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5898. A communication from the Legal Tech, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Special Local Regulation; Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, Morehead City, North Carolina" ((RIN1625-AA08) (Docket No. USCG-2020-0597)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5899. A communication from the Legal Tech, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Special

Local Regulation; Boat Parade; San Diego, California" ((RIN1625-AA08) (Docket No. USCG-2020-0611)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5900. A communication from the Legal Tech, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zone; Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, Florida" ((RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG-2020-0631)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5901. A communication from the Legal Tech, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Anchorage Grounds; Atlantic Ocean, Jacksonville, Florida" ((RIN1625-AA01) (Docket No. USCG-2016-0897)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5902. A communication from the Legal Tech, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zone; Spa Creek, Annapolis, Maryland" ((RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG-2020-0511)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5903. A communication from the Legal Tech, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zone; Electrical Cable Removal, Menominee River, Michigan, and Marinette, Wisconsin" ((RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG-2020-0642)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2020; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-249. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress and the Louisiana Congressional Delegation to take such actions as are necessary to require the Federal Emergency Management Agency to grant Louisiana full federal funding for disaster expenses associated with Hurricane Laura or to grant Louisiana the ability to utilize alternative sources of federal funding as needed, matching funds if full federal funding is not provided; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

HOSUE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3

Whereas, Hurricane Laura was one of the most powerful storms to hit Louisiana in recorded history; and

Whereas, Hurricane Laura's exceptionally strong winds left a scar of damage across our state spanning from the Gulf Coast to our northern border; and

Whereas, while loss and damage totals are still being compiled, the projections across all states impacted by Hurricane Laura are expected to be in the tens of billions of dollars and Louisiana was undoubtedly the state that suffered the brunt of the storm's impact; and

Whereas, between the worldwide slump in oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic shuttering businesses across the state and with-

ering the state's previously strong tourism revenues, Louisiana's economic prospects for the current and ensuing fiscal years were already strained before Hurricane Laura wreaked her havoc; and

Whereas, before Hurricane Laura arrived, Louisiana was already expecting a budget shortfall for the next fiscal year totaling hundreds of millions of dollars; and

Whereas, the strain of providing for the health and safety of its citizens while also meeting the matching fund requirements for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's assistance in recovering and rebuilding from Hurricane Laura could cripple our state fiscal resources and infrastructure in the next few years; and

Whereas, according to the Congressional Research Service, as of early 2013, over the prior twenty-four years, cost-share adjustments had been made for major disaster declarations two hundred and forty-four times, including for Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Ike, Gustav, and Sandy; and

Whereas, Louisiana's request to have the state matching portion of its federal disaster assistance waived is not unprecedented and would provide much-needed relief to a state struggling with this year's unexpected hardships. Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress and the Louisiana Congressional Delegation to take such actions as are necessary to require the Federal Emergency Management Agency to grant Louisiana full federal funding for disaster expenses associated with Hurricane Laura or to grant Louisiana the ability to utilize alternative sources of federal funding as needed matching funds if full federal funding is not provided; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana Congressional Delegation.

POM-250. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress and the Louisiana Congressional Delegation to take such actions as are necessary to require the Federal Emergency Management Agency to grant Louisiana full federal funding for disaster expenses associated with Hurricane Laura or to grant Louisiana the ability to utilize alternative sources of federal funding as needed, matching funds if full federal funding is not provided; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3

Whereas, Hurricane Laura was one of the most powerful storms to hit Louisiana in recorded history; and

Whereas, Hurricane Laura's exceptionally strong winds left a scar of damage across our state spanning from the Gulf Coast to our northern border; and

Whereas, while loss and damage totals are still being compiled, the projections across all states impacted by Hurricane Laura are expected to be in the tens of billions of dollars and Louisiana was undoubtedly the state that suffered the brunt of the storm's impact; and

Whereas, between the worldwide slump in oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic shuttering businesses across the state and withering the state's previously strong tourism revenues, Louisiana's economic prospects for the current and ensuing fiscal years were already strained before Hurricane Laura wreaked her havoc; and

Whereas, before Hurricane Laura arrived, Louisiana was already expecting a budget

shortfall for the next fiscal year totaling hundreds of millions of dollars; and

Whereas, the strain of providing for the health and safety of its citizens while also meeting the matching fund requirements for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's assistance in recovering and rebuilding from Hurricane Laura could cripple our state fiscal resources and infrastructure in the next few years; and

Whereas, according to the Congressional Research Service, as of early 2013, over the prior twenty-four years, cost-share adjustments had been made for major disaster declarations two hundred and forty-four times, including for Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Ike, Gustav, and Sandy; and

Whereas, Louisiana's request to have the state matching portion of its federal disaster assistance waived is not unprecedented and would provide much-needed relief to a state struggling with this year's unexpected hardships. Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress and the Louisiana Congressional Delegation to take such actions as are necessary to require the Federal Emergency Management Agency to grant Louisiana full federal funding for disaster expenses associated with Hurricane Laura or to grant Louisiana the ability to utilize alternative sources of federal funding as needed matching funds if full federal funding is not provided; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana Congressional Delegation.

POM-251. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Senate to take such actions as are necessary to confirm the President of the United States' nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the United States Supreme Court to fill the seat of the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 23

Whereas, the United States of America was founded on the precepts of freedom, liberty, justice, and diversity; and

Whereas, a primary mission of the United States Senate is to ensure that the judiciary maintains integrity; and

Whereas, Judge Amy Coney Barrett has served on the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit since 2017; and

Whereas, Amy Coney Barrett was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and grew up in Metairie, Louisiana; after graduating from St. Mary's Dominican High School in 1990, she attended Rhodes College and graduated magna cum laude in 1994 with a bachelor of arts degree in English literature; she then studied law at Notre Dame Law School, graduating first in her class summa cum laude in 1997 with a juris doctorate degree and serving as executive editor of the Notre Dame Law Review; and

Whereas, upon completion of her law school studies, Amy Coney Barrett served as judicial law clerk for Judge Laurence Silberman of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit from 1997 to 1998 and Justice Antonin Scalia of the United States Supreme Court from 1998 to 1999; and

Whereas, Judge Amy Coney Barrett has worked in both private trial and appellate litigation in Washington, D.C.; during this time, she also worked for more than fifteen years in academia, including at her alma mater, Notre Dame Law School, and has

been published in several prominent journals including the Columbia Law Review, Virginia Law Review, and Texas Law Review; and

Whereas, Judge Amy Coney Barrett has earned accolades and bipartisan praise for her character and work ethic and has demonstrated a steadfast dedication to upholding the United States Constitution as written and not legislating from the bench; her excellent judicial record shows she will protect the rights of Americans and defend the rule of law. Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Senate to take such actions as are necessary to confirm the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the United States Supreme Court; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and to the Honorable Bill Cassidy and the Honorable John Kennedy.

POM-252. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Senate to take such actions as are necessary to confirm the President of the United States' nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the United States Supreme Court to fill the seat of the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 23

Whereas, the United States of America was founded on the precepts of freedom, liberty, justice, and diversity; and

Whereas, a primary mission of the United States Senate is to ensure that the judiciary maintains integrity; and

Whereas, Judge Amy Coney Barrett has served on the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit since 2017; and

Whereas, Amy Coney Barrett was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and grew up in Metairie, Louisiana; after graduating from St. Mary's Dominican High School in 1990, she attended Rhodes College and graduated magna cum laude in 1994 with a bachelor of arts degree in English literature; she then studied law at Notre Dame Law School, graduating first in her class summa cum laude in 1997 with a juris doctorate degree and serving as executive editor of the Notre Dame Law Review; and

Whereas, upon completion of her law school studies, Amy Coney Barrett served as judicial law clerk for Judge Laurence Silberman of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit from 1997 to 1998 and Justice Antonin Scalia of the United States Supreme Court from 1998 to 1999; and

Whereas, Judge Amy Coney Barrett has worked in both private trial and appellate litigation in Washington, D.C.; during this time, she also worked for more than fifteen years in academia, including at her alma mater, Notre Dame Law School, and has been published in several prominent journals including the Columbia Law Review, Virginia Law Review, and Texas Law Review; and

Whereas, Judge Amy Coney Barrett has earned accolades and bipartisan praise for her character and work ethic and has demonstrated a steadfast dedication to upholding the United States Constitution as written and not legislating from the bench; her excellent judicial record shows she will protect the rights of Americans and defend the rule of law. Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Senate to take such actions as are necessary to confirm the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the United States Supreme Court; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and to the Honorable Bill Cassidy and the Honorable John Kennedy.

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. 3412. A bill to require a guidance clarity statement on certain agency guidance, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-297).

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

S. 4222. A bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to require Federal agencies to submit to the Comptroller General of the United States a report on rules that are revoked, suspended, replaced, amended, or otherwise made ineffective (Rept. No. 116-298).

By Mr. WICKER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with amendments:

S. 2894. A bill to establish a National Shipper Advisory Committee (Rept. No. 116-299).

S. 3191. A bill to increase the capacity of research and development programs of the Federal Government that focus on industries of the future, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-300).

S. 3248. A bill to reauthorize the United States Anti-Doping Agency, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-301).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. ROMNEY, and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. 4902. A bill to designate the United States courthouse located at 351 South West Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah, as the "Orrin G. Hatch United States Courthouse"; considered and passed.

By Ms. HASSAN:

S. 4903. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to encourage entrepreneurship by providing loan deferment and loan cancellation for founders and employees of small business startups, and for other purposes, to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 4904. A bill to amend the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 to ensure crime victims are not denied compensation because of rape kit backlogs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARASSO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. REED, Mr. THUNE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. DAINES, Mr. PETERS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. SINEMA, Mr.

BROWN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. Res. 775. A resolution designating September 30, 2020, as "Impact Aid Recognition Day" to recognize and celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Impact Aid program; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, Mr. BROWN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. WARREN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. JONES, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. KAINÉ, and Ms. SMITH):

S. Res. 776. A resolution designating the week beginning September 13, 2020, as "National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 2533

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2533, a bill to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to exclude certain payments to Alaska Native elders for determining eligibility for certain programs, and for other purposes.

S. 2633

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2633, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide coverage for wigs as durable medical equipment under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 3067

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3067, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to combat the opioid crisis by promoting access to non-opioid treatments in the hospital outpatient setting.

S. 3684

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3684, a bill to make supplemental appropriations for the Departments of Agriculture, the Interior, Homeland Security, Labor, and Commerce for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, and for other purposes.

S. 4166

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4166, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to secure medical opinions for veterans with service-connected disabilities who die from COVID-19 to determine whether their service-connected disabilities were the principal or contributory cases of death, and for other purposes.

S. 4225

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4225, a bill to establish authority to destroy counterfeit devices offered for import, and for other purposes.

S. 4349

At the request of Mr. KAINÉ, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4349, a bill to address behavioral health and well-being among health care professionals.

S. 4494

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4494, a bill to amend title VI of the Social Security Act to extend the period with respect to which amounts under the Coronavirus Relief Fund may be expended.

S. 4625

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4625, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to encourage and expand the use of prescribed fire on land managed by the Department of the Interior or the Forest Service, with an emphasis on units of the National Forest System in the western United States, and for other purposes.

S. 4657

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4657, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate one week each year as "Buddy Check Week" for the purpose of outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks for veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 4678

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4678, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the credit for electricity produced from certain renewable resources, and for other purposes.

S. 4740

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4740, a bill to support public health infrastructure.

S. 4757

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 4757, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to establish additional requirements for dealers, and for other purposes.

S. 4854

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4854, a bill to provide payments for home health services furnished via visual or audio telecommunication systems during an emergency period.

S. 4860

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Montana

(Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) were added as cosponsors of S. 4860, a bill to exempt payments made from the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account from sequestration under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

S. 4898

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4898, a bill to amend title VI of the Social Security Act to extend the period during which States, Indian Tribes, and local governments may use Coronavirus Relief Fund payments.

S. RES. 98

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 98, a resolution establishing the Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program for the placement in offices of Senators of children, spouses, and siblings of members of the Armed Forces who are hostile casualties or who have died from a training-related injury.

S. RES. 684

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 684, a resolution calling on the Government of Cameroon and separatist armed groups from the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions to end all violence, respect the human rights of all Cameroonians, and pursue a genuinely inclusive dialogue toward resolving the ongoing civil conflict in Anglophone Cameroon.

S. RES. 754

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 754, a resolution requesting information on the Government of Azerbaijan's human rights practices pursuant to section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

S. RES. 755

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 755, a resolution requesting information on the Government of Turkey's human rights practices pursuant to section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. ROMNEY, and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. 4902. A bill to designate the United States courthouse located at 351 South West Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah, as the "Orrin G. Hatch United States Courthouse"; considered and passed.

S. 4902

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

SECTION 1. ORRIN G. HATCH UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The United States courthouse located at 351 South West Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah, shall be known and designated as the “Orrin G. Hatch United States Courthouse”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the United States courthouse referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Orrin G. Hatch United States Courthouse”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 775—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 30, 2020, AS “IMPACT AID RECOGNITION DAY” TO RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IMPACT AID PROGRAM

Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. REED, Mr. THUNE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. DAINES, Mr. PETERS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. BROWN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 775

Whereas September 30, 2020, marks the 70th anniversary of the date on which President Harry S Truman signed the Act of September 30, 1950 (commonly known as the “Impact Aid Act”) (64 Stat. 1100; chapter 1124), which established the Impact Aid program;

Whereas the community served by the Impact Aid program considers the Impact Aid program to be the “original” Federal elementary and secondary education program;

Whereas the Impact Aid program is administered by the Secretary of Education;

Whereas the Impact Aid program reimburses local educational agencies for the loss of revenue and other costs associated with the presence of tax-exempt Federal property within the boundaries of those local educational agencies;

Whereas payments under the Impact Aid program are dispersed directly to local educational agencies, which allocate those payments based on local context and needs to provide a quality education to the students served by those local educational agencies;

Whereas, in 2020, nearly 880,000 children, including children of individuals in the uniformed services (as defined in section 101 of title 37, United States Code), children residing on Indian lands, children in low-rent public housing, and children of civilians working or living on Federal land, are “federally connected children” who are served by local educational agencies that are eligible for basic support payments under the Impact Aid program;

Whereas there are 4,800,000 acres of federally owned land within the boundaries of local educational agencies for which those local educational agencies are eligible to receive Federal property payments under the Impact Aid program;

Whereas, in fiscal year 2020, \$1,486,112,000 will be provided under the Impact Aid pro-

gram to more than 1,100 local educational agencies that together enroll more than 10,000,000 students;

Whereas, in 1965, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.), which amended the Act of September 30, 1950 (commonly known as the “Impact Aid Act”) (64 Stat. 1100; chapter 1124);

Whereas, in 1994, Congress passed the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-382; 108 Stat. 3518), which repealed the Act of September 30, 1950 (commonly known as the “Impact Aid Act”) (64 Stat. 1100; chapter 1124), and codified the Impact Aid program in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.);

Whereas Congress has continued to demonstrate support for the Impact Aid program by reauthorizing that program 16 times between 1950 and 2020;

Whereas, to formalize and energize the broad, bipartisan support for the Impact Aid program, the Senate Impact Aid Coalition was established in 1996 and the House Impact Aid Coalition was established in 1995; and

Whereas the Federal obligation on which the Impact Aid program is based is the same in September 2020 as it was when the Impact Aid program was established 70 years before, in September 1950: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 30, 2020, as “Impact Aid Recognition Day” to recognize the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Impact Aid program; and

(2) recognizes the importance of—

(A) the Impact Aid program under title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7701 et seq.); and

(B) the objective of that program to ensure that all children educated in federally impacted school districts receive a high-quality education and have access to the opportunities needed to reach their full potential.

SENATE RESOLUTION 776—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 13, 2020, AS “NATIONAL DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS RECOGNITION WEEK”

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, Mr. BROWN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. WARREN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. JONES, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. KAINE, and Ms. SMITH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 776

Whereas direct support professionals, including direct care workers, personal assistants, personal attendants, in-home support workers, and paraprofessionals, are key to providing publicly funded, long-term support and services for millions of individuals with disabilities;

Whereas, during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (referred to in this preamble as “COVID-19”) pandemic, many direct support professionals continue to arrive for work every day in order to ensure the health and safety of individuals with disabilities;

Whereas direct support professionals provide essential services that ensure all individuals with disabilities are—

(1) included as a valued part of the communities in which those individuals live;

(2) supported at home, at work, and in the communities of the United States; and

(3) empowered to live with the dignity that all people of the United States deserve;

Whereas, by fostering connections between individuals with disabilities and their families, friends, and communities, direct support professionals ensure that individuals with disabilities thrive, thereby avoiding more costly institutional care;

Whereas direct support professionals build close, respectful, and trusting relationships with individuals with disabilities and provide a broad range of personalized support to those individuals, including—

(1) helping individuals make person-centered choices;

(2) assisting with personal care, meal preparation, medication management, and other aspects of daily living;

(3) assisting individuals in accessing the community and securing competitive, integrated employment;

(4) providing transportation to school, work, religious, and recreational activities;

(5) helping with general daily affairs, such as assisting with financial matters, medical appointments, and personal interests;

(6) assisting individuals in the transition from isolated or congregate settings or services to living in the communities of their choice; and

(7) helping to keep individuals with disabilities safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic, including by volunteering to quarantine with individuals whom they care for to reduce spread of the disease;

Whereas there is a documented critical and increasing shortage of direct support professionals throughout the United States;

Whereas the majority of direct support professionals are employed in home and community-based settings, and that trend is expected to increase over the next decade;

Whereas many direct support professionals—

(1) are the primary financial providers for their families;

(2) are hardworking, taxpaying citizens who provide a critical service in the United States; and

(3) continue to earn low wages, receive inadequate benefits, and have limited opportunities for advancement, resulting in high turnover and vacancy rates that adversely affect the quality of support, safety, and health of individuals with disabilities; and

Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, 527 U.S. 581 (1999)—

(1) recognized the importance of the deinstitutionalization of, and community-based services for, individuals with disabilities; and

(2) held that, under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S. 12101 et seq.), a State must provide community-based services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities if—

(A) the community-based services are appropriate;

(B) the affected individual does not oppose receiving the community-based services; and

(C) the community-based services can be reasonably accommodated after the community has taken into account the resources available to the State and the needs of other individuals with disabilities in the State: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning September 13, 2020, as “National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week”;

(2) recognizes the dedication and vital role of direct support professionals in enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities of all ages;

(3) appreciates the contribution of direct support professionals in supporting individuals with disabilities and their families in the United States;

(4) commends direct support professionals for being integral to the provision of long-term support and services for individuals with disabilities;

(5) encourages the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor to collect data specific to direct support professionals; and

(6) finds that the successful implementation of public policies affecting individuals with disabilities in the United States can depend on the dedication of direct support professionals.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2688. Mr. PORTMAN (for Mr. PETERS) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2216, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to formally recognize caregivers of veterans, notify veterans and caregivers of clinical determinations relating to eligibility for the family caregiver program, and temporarily extend benefits for veterans who are determined ineligible for the family caregiver program, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2688. Mr. PORTMAN (for Mr. PETERS) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2216, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to formally recognize caregivers of veterans, notify veterans and caregivers of clinical determinations relating to eligibility for the family caregiver program, and temporarily extend benefits for veterans who are determined ineligible for the family caregiver program, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures for Veteran Caregivers Act” or the “TEAM Veteran Caregivers Act”.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF ADMINISTRATION OF CAREGIVER PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) FORMAL RECOGNITION OF CAREGIVERS.—

(1) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report regarding the feasibility and advisability of formally recognizing all caregivers of veterans by identifying any caregiver of a veteran in the electronic health record of the veteran.

(B) CAREGIVERS RECOGNIZED.—The recognition of caregivers described in subparagraph (A) shall include recognition of—

(i) any family caregiver who is approved as a provider of personal care services for an eligible veteran under the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under subsection (a) of section 1720G of title 38, United States Code; and

(ii) any caregiver of a covered veteran participating in the program of general caregiver support services under subsection (b) of such section.

(C) TIMELINE.—If the Secretary determines that formally recognizing all caregivers of veterans as described in subparagraph (A) is feasible and advisable, the report required by such subparagraph shall include a timeline for implementing such recognition.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—If the Secretary determines that formally recognizing all care-

givers of veterans as described in paragraph (1)(A) is feasible and advisable, the Secretary shall implement such recognition in accordance with the timeline included in the report required by such paragraph.

(b) NOTIFICATIONS, EXTENSION OF BENEFITS, AND DISCHARGE FROM FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM.—Section 1720G(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(12)(A) The Secretary shall notify the individuals described in subparagraph (C) regarding decisions affecting the furnishing of assistance under this subsection using standardized letters, as the Secretary determines such notifications and letters to be appropriate.

“(B) A notification provided under subparagraph (A) shall include the elements required for notices of decisions under section 5104(b) of this title to the extent that those elements apply to such notification, unless, not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of the Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures for Veteran Caregivers Act, the Secretary determines that it would not be feasible to include such elements in such notifications and submits to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report setting forth the reasons for such determination.

“(C) The individuals described in this subparagraph shall include—

“(i) an individual who submits an application for the program established under paragraph (1);

“(ii) an individual determined by the Secretary to be an eligible veteran pursuant to such an application; and

“(iii) a family caregiver of an eligible veteran who is—

“(I) approved as a provider of personal care services under paragraph (6)(B); or

“(II) designated as a primary provider of personal care services under paragraph (7)(A).

“(13)(A) If the Secretary determines that a veteran receiving services under the program established under paragraph (1) is no longer eligible for such program solely because of improvement in the condition of the veteran—

“(i) the effective date of discharge of the veteran from the program shall be not earlier than the date that is 60 days after the date on which the Secretary provides notice of such lack of eligibility under paragraph (12)(A) to the relevant individuals described in paragraph (12)(C); and

“(ii) the Secretary shall extend benefits under the program established under paragraph (1) for a family caregiver of the veteran described in paragraph (12)(C)(iii), including stipends under paragraph (3)(A)(ii)(V), if such an extension is determined appropriate by the Secretary, for a 90-day period following discharge of the veteran from the program.

“(B) This paragraph shall not be construed to limit the authority of the Secretary—

“(i) to prescribe regulations addressing other bases for—

“(I) the discharge of a veteran from the program established under paragraph (1); or

“(II) the revocation of the designation of a family caregiver of a veteran as a primary provider of personal care services under paragraph (7)(A); or

“(ii) to provide advance notice and extended benefits under the program, as appropriate, if another basis for discharge of a veteran described in subclause (I) of clause (i) or revocation of a designation described in subclause (II) of such clause applies.”.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I have 5 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 BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANUFACTURING, TRADE, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

The Subcommittee on Manufacturing, Trade, and Consumer Protection of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 30, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

TRIBUTE TO COLLEEN HEALY

Mr. LEE. Madam President, in a city divided by politics, a nation riven by disease, and an era defined by partisan opportunism, it is vital to remember that there are among us, mercifully, on Capitol Hill, a few men and women who embody the very highest ideals of honesty, charity, public service, and personal integrity.

As chairman of the Joint Economic Committee for the past 2 years, I have had the privilege of knowing one of these indispensable patriots.

I rise today, before the end of my term as chairman of the Joint Economic Committee and at the end of her 40th year of service on the Joint Economic Committee, to commend to all of my colleagues the personal and professional merits of Ms. Colleen Healy.

Colleen was born in Port Allegany, PA, to Bob and Theresa Healy and is a sister to Bob, Barry, Brian, and Bret. She attended Port Allegany Union High School, where she participated in the school band, chorus, student government, and the Spanish club. As a senior, she was selected by her classmates to compete for the title of Pennsylvania State Laurel Queen of 1969.

Colleen next attended Penn State, where she earned her B.A. in Spanish and Latin American Studies. After graduating and teaching Spanish for several years in Florida, she came to Washington in 1977, first working for Representative Joseph Ammerman of Pennsylvania as his executive secretary. Colleen then found her calling in the Joint Economic Committee, where she has made an indelible mark on generations of Representatives, Senators, and staff ever since.

Colleen has now served on the JEC staff for more than half the time the committee has even been in existence. All great institutions, of course, depend on institutional memory. The Joint Economic Committee depends on Colleen Healy. That is why for decades the first decision every incoming JEC chair has made, whether the chair happens to be from the House or the Senate, happens to be a Democrat or a Republican, the first decision made over and over again is retaining Colleen's invaluable services as financial director.

Colleen is the reason the JEC is known across Capitol Hill for being one of the most cooperative and congenial committees to work for, to work with, or to serve on because both sides trust Colleen. They also know they can trust each other. That has a ripple effect that is undeniably positive.

Staffers trust that they can always go to Colleen with their questions and their problems, whether it is about the committee process or procedure, and receive gracious, knowledgeable, consistent, honest answers.

But even more impressive than her acumen is her essential kindness and grace. Colleen is known to get a flag flown over the Capitol for each new baby born to a coworker. Staffers past and present joke that you can't walk 10 minutes with Colleen from her office in the Dirksen Building and get very far because she has befriended literally everyone across the Capitol complex, remembering personal details about their lives and their families and stopping to talk with each person along the way.

From Members to staffers, to interns and custodians, Colleen never misses an opportunity to make every single person feel important and valued and necessary. That, again, has ripple effects that are always positive in any organization and certainly are on the JEC.

As one former coworker put it, when you talk to Colleen, you are instantly made to feel like the most special, loved, and cared-for person on Earth.

When you step into her office, you know she is ready to laugh, listen, or cry with you.

As another has said, despite the length of time she has worked in Washington, DC, Colleen still exudes warmth and joy—a spirit that permeates the committee and touches everyone she meets. This in a city not necessarily known for those traits.

And though she lives it out quietly, she gives witness to her Catholic faith

each and every day. Mother Teresa once advised: "Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier." I can think of no better way to describe how Colleen Healy lives her life.

In the words of the JEC vice chair, Representative DON BEYER, "Colleen is the JEC's administrator, historian, sage, and most important, the heart and soul of the committee. She is respected and beloved by decades of JEC Senate and House Members of both parties, as well as generations of staff. Her decades of service have been invaluable."

We are all better and happier for it.

I thank Colleen for her service to the committee, and I hope we are lucky enough to get another 40 years with her serving on the Joint Economic Committee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I am here on the floor of the Senate tonight to talk about the encouraging progress we have seen in finding a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus that has disrupted all of our lives and caused such great damage over the past year.

From the early days of this coronavirus pandemic, a public-private partnership has employed scientists who have worked around-the-clock to prevent people from getting infected by developing effective vaccines. We saw the results of this effort in the last week with announcements from Pfizer and now Moderna that their interim success rates were above 90 percent during their trials. Other companies have vaccines at various stages of development, and there is hope that they will have similar results.

Getting safe and effective vaccines across the finish line will be a monumental achievement. Not only are we witnessing unprecedented progress in creating an effective widespread vaccine, we are doing so at a speed unheard of in modern medical history. This result is going to be our best hope of getting out of this pandemic. With cases rising not only across the country but around the world, we are running out of other tools needed to stop the pandemic. I support the social distancing, wearing of masks, PPE, the testing, but I believe widespread inoculation is the most effective way to avoid the negative economic and social impacts the virus and the subsequent mitigation efforts have caused.

If these vaccines receive the expected emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration over the coming weeks and months, this will be a testament to the unprecedented support that Congress has provided for vaccine development, the Trump administration's innovative approach to cut bureaucratic redtape with Operation Warp Speed, and the

commitment and ingenuity of our researchers, our scientists, and our manufacturers.

The bipartisan CARES Act we passed here in March with unanimous support provided \$27 billion in funding for countermeasures against COVID, including funding this important vaccine development research. It was money well spent.

Thanks to these funds and the innovative approach by the administration, we have been able to invest in building the infrastructure to begin manufacturing these vaccines now so that if the vaccine is approved, we can quickly ramp up distribution. This two-track approach also involves ramping up large-scale clinical trials, which are critical to furthering our scientific understanding of this pandemic and verifying the safety and effectiveness of these vaccines. By using these CARES Act funds to invest in both research and trials and in manufacturing at the same time, we are able to ensure that the trials are thorough and methodical while also ensuring that if and when approved there is vaccine ready to be distributed.

At the same time, the Food and Drug Administration, which is the Federal agency responsible for approving the use of any new vaccine, has followed the science and moved cautiously. As an example, they have actually raised the standards needed for giving an emergency use authorization for a vaccine. Normally, a vaccine only needs to be effective about 50 percent of the time to be approved under the EUA, emergency use authorization, but with the coronavirus vaccine, the standard is much higher. By requiring companies to collect more rigorous information to show longer lasting results from their respective vaccine candidates, this will help ensure greater confidence in the system, and I am grateful that they took these additional careful steps.

This progress on the vaccine is critical for our economic recovery as well. When a vaccine and therapeutics are authorized by the FDA and made widely available and people actually get vaccinated, all of us will feel safer returning to the workplace, retail establishments, restaurants, churches and other places of worship, and schools, as well as feeling more comfortable gathering with friends and family. We will finally be able to truly reopen and get millions of Americans back to work. In short, a widely available vaccine is our best bet for getting America back to normal—something we all are desperate for.

Last month, I received a briefing from CTI Clinical Trial and Consulting Services, a research company that is based in my hometown of Cincinnati, OH. I met with them to receive a briefing to find out what is going on in Ohio and what they are doing around the country. CTI is a global leader in actually executing these clinical trials that we always talk about for these vaccines and therapeutics, and right now

they are helping to conduct clinical trials on a potential COVID vaccine being developed by a number of companies, including Janssen, J & J. That is Janssen, Johnson & Johnson.

I was impressed with the progress they had made in their phase 1 and phase 2 trials for the J & J vaccine, as well as the precautions they are taking with regard to safety and privacy of participants in the trial. In fact, the previous trial of this vaccine found 99 percent of participants developed antibodies to COVID-19, and 98 percent still had these antibodies in their system after 29 days. These are encouraging figures that suggest that this J & J vaccine could prove to be another useful tool in our toolkit to fight COVID-19, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

CTI explained to me that they were focused on encouraging more people to join their trials. I asked if it would help if I signed up, and they said yes. Along with tens of thousands of other participants, I am now joining this trial for this promising new vaccine. Like other participants in the program, I don't know if I got the vaccine or if I got a placebo.

I enrolled in this vaccine trial for really three reasons. One is because I think it is so important to get this vaccine moving, and these trials are really important to having that be successful. In my view, again, the vaccine is the most effective way for us to defeat this coronavirus.

Second, I enrolled because I want to encourage others to join these trials around the country. If you are interested, go online. Look at the vaccine trials and join one in your community.

And, third, I hope it will convince my fellow Ohioans and others that getting vaccinated makes sense.

There is a concerning Gallup poll from last month that found that only half of Americans are comfortable getting a COVID-19 vaccine, and 50 percent of us are not comfortable at this point getting vaccinated. Actually, that is down from August, when two-thirds of Americans said they would be willing to be vaccinated. This concerns me a lot.

I suspect in part this is happening because of the rhetoric we have heard from some public officials casting doubt on a vaccine solely because it may be approved by the Trump administration's FDA. We need to stop playing politics with people's health and let the science and the data determine which vaccines get approved. The FDA is being very cautious, and they are being driven by science. Casting doubt on the efficacy of a vaccine to try to score political points is dangerous and needs to stop.

Public confidence in vaccines is declining at exactly the time that we need these vaccines the most, and we need to do what we can to reverse that trend. My hope is that being involved firsthand I can use my platform as a Senator to help give people confidence

that these new vaccines being developed are safe and effective. The more folks participate in these trials, the sooner they will have the complete data to finalize this phase of the trial and move on to the FDA approval process.

But just as important as participating in these vaccine trials is what we do here as legislators in Congress to ensure that these vaccines can continue to be developed and deployed safely and rapidly. As I mentioned earlier, the CARES Act provided \$27 billion for the development of vaccines and other countermeasures—an unprecedented show of support from Congress in our fight to defeat the underlying healthcare challenges of this pandemic.

Unfortunately, since that bill was passed—the CARES bill—way back in March, 8 months ago, we have been unable to focus on following up with more funding to help this effort. Twenty-seven billion dollars is a lot of money, but it only gets us so far in an effort like this.

What is also missing from the uses for this \$27 billion is the ability to fund a campaign to explain to Americans that there is a safe and effective vaccine out there that they can use, that the science has been followed. As I mentioned, there is a lot of vaccine hesitancy right now. It existed before this pandemic. Unfortunately, it has been made worse by some elected officials trying to politicize this science-driven effort.

That is why I am working on bipartisan legislation to support a national awareness campaign that would empower HHS to cut through the politics and promote the scientific advancements we have made in order to increase public confidence.

We don't have a vaccine yet, and we are still facing another round of shutdowns, with little help to support those who will be impacted by it. That is the reason we need to do more here in Washington right now to ensure that the healthcare response to this pandemic does not falter, because this crisis is getting worse, not better. In my home State of Ohio and around the country, we are seeing this, and we can make a difference here.

In Ohio, the number of daily cases has risen every day for the past month. We are seeing double what we saw just a few weeks ago.

In the United States, we are now averaging more than 100,000 new cases per day, double the rate from just a month ago. As was predicted, it got colder, people are inside more, and the third wave has arrived.

Unfortunately, we have also seen an increase in Ohio in hospitalizations, in ICU patients, and, sadly, in fatalities along with these new cases.

We need to do more to help the economy, too, and that is another reason we need a COVID-19 package—a stimulus package—because as the pandemic has worsened, the impressive economic growth we were seeing has slowed down

at a time when the economy is still down 10 million jobs since February. What we really don't want is for those ten million people, in a slowdown of the economy, to become long-term unemployed and who may never reenter the workforce. And, of course, certain sectors—like hospitality, restaurants, hotels, travel, and entertainment—are still struggling badly, with no end in sight, as some States are beginning to re-implement stricter social distancing measures and even to close down these facilities in order to counter the spread of the virus.

I am pleased that Leader McCONNELL has called on Congress to work together to pass another coronavirus response package before the end of the year. We can't afford to wait any longer. It is my hope that my Democratic colleagues recognize the urgency as well. And I have talked to a number of them who do. We have to refrain from making this political at this point. We have to figure out how to work together to find common ground.

If we can come together and get a bipartisan coronavirus bill passed before the end of this year that takes a commonsense approach targeting the healthcare challenges of this pandemic, targeting the economic consequences, we will not only help the men and women working tirelessly in labs around the country to fight this disease, but we will send a clear message to the American people that we are with them in this fight.

And as we continue this critical national effort, let's be sure we are doing our part here in Congress to pass legislation that provides additional funding for treatments and therapies for the coronavirus so that we can be sure we have the resources necessary to treat the virus as people get it.

The time is now for us to put the partisanship aside and figure out how we can work together to give the American people a little hope, to address the healthcare crisis that is in all of our States, and to ensure that the economic consequences are not devastating for the people we represent.

I urge my colleagues to come together and to do that before we recess for the holidays.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

INTERNET OF THINGS CYBERSECURITY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2020

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1668, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1668) to establish minimum security standards for Internet of Things devices owned or controlled by the Federal Government, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding?

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

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read three times and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 1668) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5901, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5901) to establish a program to facilitate the adoption of modern technology by executive agencies, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

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

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read three times and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 5901) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

TEAM VETERAN CAREGIVERS ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 540, S. 2216.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2216) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to formally recognize caregivers of veterans, notify veterans and caregivers of clinical determinations relating to eligibility for caregiver programs, and temporarily extend benefits for veterans who are determined ineligible for the family caregiver program, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 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 "Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures for Veteran Caregivers Act" or the "TEAM Veteran Caregivers Act".

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF ADMINISTRATION OF CAREGIVER PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF CAREGIVERS.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, when determined feasible by the Secretary, shall formally recognize all caregivers of veterans by identifying any caregiver of a veteran in the electronic health record of the veteran.

(2) INCLUSION.—Caregivers recognized under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) any family caregiver who is approved as a provider of personal care services for an eligible veteran under the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under subsection (a) of section 1720G of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) any caregiver of a covered veteran participating in the program of support services for caregivers under subsection (b) of such section.

(b) STANDARDIZED LETTERS REGARDING CERTAIN DETERMINATIONS UNDER FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM.—

Section 1720G(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(12)(A) The Secretary shall notify the individuals described in subparagraph (B) regarding decisions affecting the furnishing of assistance under this subsection using standardized letters, as the Secretary determines such notifications and letters to be appropriate.

"(B) The individuals described in this subparagraph shall include—

"(i) an individual who submits an application for the program required by paragraph (1);

"(ii) an individual determined by the Secretary to be an eligible veteran pursuant to such an application; and

"(iii) a family caregiver of an eligible veteran who is—

"(I) approved as a provider of personal care services under paragraph (6)(B); or

"(II) designated as a primary provider of personal care services under paragraph (7)(A)."

(c) TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF BENEFITS FOR FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM.—Upon determining that a veteran who was receiving services under the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under section 1720G(a) of title 38, United States Code, is no longer clinically eligible for purposes of such program, the Secretary shall extend benefits under such program, including stipends under paragraph (3)(A)(ii)(V) of such section, for a period of time determined by the Secretary if such an extension is determined appropriate by the Secretary.

Mr. PORTMAN. I further ask that the committee-reported substitute amendment be withdrawn; that the Peters substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; that the committee-reported title amendment be considered and agreed to; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was withdrawn.

The amendment (No. 2688) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures for Veteran Caregivers Act".

ures for Veteran Caregivers Act" or the "TEAM Veteran Caregivers Act".

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF ADMINISTRATION OF CAREGIVER PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) FORMAL RECOGNITION OF CAREGIVERS.—

(1) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report regarding the feasibility and advisability of formally recognizing all caregivers of veterans by identifying any caregiver of a veteran in the electronic health record of the veteran.

(B) CAREGIVERS RECOGNIZED.—The recognition of caregivers described in subparagraph (A) shall include recognition of—

(i) any family caregiver who is approved as a provider of personal care services for an eligible veteran under the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under subsection (a) of section 1720G of title 38, United States Code; and

(ii) any caregiver of a covered veteran participating in the program of general caregiver support services under subsection (b) of such section.

(C) TIMELINE.—If the Secretary determines that formally recognizing all caregivers of veterans as described in subparagraph (A) is feasible and advisable, the report required by such subparagraph shall include a timeline for implementing such recognition.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—If the Secretary determines that formally recognizing all caregivers of veterans as described in paragraph (1)(A) is feasible and advisable, the Secretary shall implement such recognition in accordance with the timeline included in the report required by such paragraph.

(b) NOTIFICATIONS, EXTENSION OF BENEFITS, AND DISCHARGE FROM FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM.—Section 1720G(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

"(12)(A) The Secretary shall notify the individuals described in subparagraph (C) regarding decisions affecting the furnishing of assistance under this subsection using standardized letters, as the Secretary determines such notifications and letters to be appropriate.

"(B) A notification provided under subparagraph (A) shall include the elements required for notices of decisions under section 5104(b) of this title to the extent that those elements apply to such notification, unless, not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of the Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures for Veteran Caregivers Act, the Secretary determines that it would not be feasible to include such elements in such notifications and submits to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report setting forth the reasons for such determination.

"(C) The individuals described in this subparagraph shall include—

"(i) an individual who submits an application for the program established under paragraph (1);

"(ii) an individual determined by the Secretary to be an eligible veteran pursuant to such an application; and

"(iii) a family caregiver of an eligible veteran who is—

"(I) approved as a provider of personal care services under paragraph (6)(B); or

"(II) designated as a primary provider of personal care services under paragraph (7)(A).

"(13)(A) If the Secretary determines that a veteran receiving services under the program

established under paragraph (1) is no longer eligible for such program solely because of improvement in the condition of the veteran—

“(i) the effective date of discharge of the veteran from the program shall be not earlier than the date that is 60 days after the date on which the Secretary provides notice of such lack of eligibility under paragraph (12)(A) to the relevant individuals described in paragraph (12)(C); and

“(ii) the Secretary shall extend benefits under the program established under paragraph (1) for a family caregiver of the veteran described in paragraph (12)(C)(iii), including stipends under paragraph (3)(A)(ii)(V), if such an extension is determined appropriate by the Secretary, for a 90-day period following discharge of the veteran from the program.

“(B) This paragraph shall not be construed to limit the authority of the Secretary—

“(i) to prescribe regulations addressing other bases for—

“(I) the discharge of a veteran from the program established under paragraph (1); or

“(II) the revocation of the designation of a family caregiver of a veteran as a primary provider of personal care services under paragraph (7)(A); or

“(ii) to provide advance notice and extended benefits under the program, as appropriate, if another basis for discharge of a veteran described in subclause (I) of clause (i) or revocation of a designation described in subclause (II) of such clause applies.”

The bill (S. 2216), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The committee-reported title amendment was agreed to as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to formally recognize caregivers of veterans, notify veterans and caregivers of clinical determinations relating to eligibility for the family caregiver program, and temporarily extend benefits for veterans who are determined ineligible for the family caregiver program, and for other purposes.”

IMPACT AID RECOGNITION DAY

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of S. Res. 775, submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 775) designating September 30, 2020, as “Impact Aid Recognition Day” to recognize and celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Impact Aid program.

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

Mr. PORTMAN. I know of no further debate on the measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 775) was agreed to.

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

NATIONAL DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of S. Res. 776, submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 776) designating the week beginning September 13, 2020, as “National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week”.

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

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 776) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2020

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, November 18; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Vaden nomination; finally, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the remaining cloture motions filed on Thursday, November 12, ripen at 11 a.m. tomorrow.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam 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 7:24 p.m., stands adjourned until Wednesday, November 18, 2020, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate November 17, 2020:

THE JUDICIARY

TOBY CROUSE, OF KANSAS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF KANSAS.

BENJAMIN JOEL BEATON, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY.

KRISTI HASKINS JOHNSON, OF MISSISSIPPI, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI.