



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015

No. 165

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Spirit of God, who brought light from darkness and order from chaos, we praise Your Holy Name. Lead our lawmakers, using their daily experiences of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, victory and defeat for Your glory. Bless their labor, providing for their needs and preparing tables of peace and confidence for them. As they rejoice because of Your faithfulness, protect them with the shield of Your love.

Lord, fill all of our hearts with Your joy and give us Your peace. Thank You for continuing to be our ever-present help in turbulent times.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I remember a recent time when President Obama tried to spin Americans on ObamaCare. The best he could muster then was a condescending, sort of cringe-inducing message that likely turned off more people than it converted. He even said that Americans who already had health insurance “may not know that they’ve got a better deal now [under ObamaCare] than they did, but they do.”

As I said, it was condescending and cringe-inducing. It was so out of touch with the priorities of America’s middle class.

Well, it looks as though the President is going to try again today with a series of regional TV interviews. He will do so with headlines such as these as a backdrop: CBS, “Affordable Care Act not so affordable”; AP, “More than half of health law’s insurance co-ops are closing.” Here is a headline about the President’s home State: “Some Obamacare marketplace prices see double-digit jump in Illinois.” And here is one about mine: “Health co-op closes, 51,000 need new insurance.” This is on top of the massive premium increases so many Kentuckians have faced.

This isn’t just a Kentucky story or an Illinois story. In every corner of the country, we see story after story about sharply rising premiums. The largest insurers in Tennessee have rates going up 36 percent. A large insurer in Oklahoma is raising premiums by 35 percent. In Hawaii, families are looking at increases of 26 and 34 percent. It is easy to glaze over the numbers, but this is real money coming out of the pockets of real families. This is money that could help send a child to college or put Thanksgiving dinner on the table, but instead it will go to insurance bills made unnecessarily expensive in part because of ObamaCare’s costly rules and regulations.

Perhaps the President will settle today for trying to convince Americans

that ObamaCare’s Web site is at least working better than in years past, but that just means it will be a little easier for middle-class families to pay more for unaffordable health insurance and higher out-of-pocket costs. That is hardly the makings of better headlines or better outcomes for the American people.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, ObamaCare is working, as the New York Times indicated in a strong column this week showing how dramatically the rates of uninsurance have dropped since this bill passed. The initial posting of premiums doesn’t tell the whole story. The law requires the Department of Health and Human Services to post only the proposed increases that exceed 10 percent. Many of those proposed rates have gone through a review process at the State level, and after that review, States will reduce many of those rates. Remember, we are talking only about the States that had an increase of more than 10 percent. Almost all the States had increases that were far less than that.

The health reform law caps 85 percent of exchange enrollees’ premiums as a share of their income, and because of the health law, insurance companies must spend at least 80 cents of every dollar on health services. Prior to this law passing, these health insurance companies spent huge amounts of their money on salaries and other things that didn’t relate to the health of their enrollees, and now 80 percent of every dollar must be spent on the enrollees. This has resulted in rebates totaling \$9 billion paid to consumers since 2011. Eighty cents of every dollar is spent on

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



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health services rather than administrative costs and profits.

Addressing insurance premium increases in the individual market was a key reason we enacted the health reform bill in the first place. Before the health reform law, patients were subject to premium increases, cancellations, denials for preexisting conditions, and arbitrary limits on how much care insurance would cover.

Thanks to this health reform law, proposed premium increases are seeing the light of day and are subject to scrutiny, which wasn't the way it was before.

Under the health reform law, insurance companies cannot deny coverage or charge more because of a preexisting condition or for simply being a woman. Insurance companies cannot arbitrarily cut off benefits when you really need them.

TRIBUTE TO WADE HENDERSON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the true test of leadership is whether one leaves behind the conviction that others will carry on. Yesterday Wade Henderson, one of the fathers of the civil rights movement, announced that he will retire from the position as president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and the Leadership Conference Education Fund to make room for future leaders.

Wade Henderson has inspired a new generation to hold our country to its most sacred values: liberty and justice for all. Wade has been a true leader. For the past 20 years he has been a tireless advocate for justice and equality. His conviction, skill, and expertise can be found in every major civil rights victory over the past two decades.

Wade has led the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights through the successful passage of the Help America Vote Act of 2002; the Voting Rights Act reauthorization of 2006; the ADA Amendments Act in 2008; Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act in 2009; Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009; Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010; and the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010.

From the passage of the hate crimes laws in the early 1990s to efforts to end racial profiling and pass comprehensive immigration reform, Wade Henderson has carried the weight and responsibility of the modern civil rights movement on his shoulders.

As Wade transforms and transitions into the next stage of his life, I have no doubt he will continue to be a champion of people of color, women, children, organized labor, persons with disabilities, seniors, the LGBT community, and faith communities.

Today I congratulate Wade Henderson for his years of service to our Nation and the world. I wish him continued success in all of his future endeavors.

Will the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 2685, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 118, H.R. 2685, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I come before the Senate to express my strong support for proceeding to the fiscal year 2016 Defense appropriations bill. This bill provides vital funding for the men and women of our armed services at a time of serious and growing threats to our own national security and at a time of troubling instability and violent conflicts in many countries around the world.

Proceeding would allow the Senate an opportunity to debate defense funding in an open and transparent manner and to meet our constitutional obligations. I am truly perplexed to hear some of my dear friends and colleagues on the other side of the aisle suggest that there is a Republican plan to enact only the Defense appropriations bill and then proceed to a continuing resolution for all of the other vital appropriations bills. It would be an understatement to say that continuing resolutions are certainly not the preferred option of the Appropriations Committee, and I say that as a proud member of that committee. Continuing resolutions create uncertainty, they lock in last year's priorities, and they continue to fund programs that should be eliminated. They are not effective ways to govern.

I want to be clear. Supporting an individual appropriations bill in no way suggests that the Senate is somehow giving up on passing the other 11 subcommittee appropriations bills, whether they are brought to the floor individually or as an omnibus package.

Members of the Appropriations Committee now have working numbers as a result of the budget agreement. We are working together diligently in a bipartisan, bicameral manner to craft a bipartisan omnibus that can be supported by both Chambers.

Democrats and Republicans came together to pass a budget agreement just a few short days ago, and our ongoing negotiations prove our sincerity and determination to move ahead with individual bills and in crafting an omni-

bus. We have already made great progress this year. As our chairman, THAD COCHRAN, has noted previously, this is the first time in 6 years that the Appropriations Committee has approved all 12 of its bills. Many of those bills, due to the leadership on the Democratic side of my dear friend BARBARA MIKULSKI, and others, have been bipartisan when they were reported by our committee. I would note that we completed our work despite terribly strict budget constraints months ago.

Now, we are in a new stage. We have a bipartisan, 2-year budget agreement that has provided some much needed relief to some of the budget caps, while keeping us on a fiscally responsible path.

This is the third time the Senate has attempted to take up this vital appropriations bill. The last time, my Democratic friends objected because there was no bipartisan, bicameral budget agreement. In the absence of such an agreement, they said they could not proceed with a bill. Now, I didn't agree with that rationale, but I understood it. I do not understand the situation we find ourselves in today. We have a budget agreement—a bipartisan, bicameral budget agreement. I do not understand why we cannot move forward with the Defense appropriations bill and, I hope, other bills individually and then ultimately an omnibus bill for those that we simply run out of time to consider this year. Next year, due to this budget agreement, I hope we can bring each and every one of the individual appropriations bills before the Senate for debate and amendment the way we used to do, and that is our goal.

December 11 is quickly approaching, and that is the date when the current continuing resolution expires. We must act before then to ensure that the Federal Government remains open. We must act to ensure that vital Federal programs are funded and not operating under yet another continuing resolution, which is such poor policy. That is what we are trying to prevent.

Let's get the Defense appropriations bill approved. Then, I hope we can bring up at least one or two or perhaps three other appropriations bills. In the meantime, we are already working on the omnibus bill.

As chairman of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, I have already met with my ranking member, Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island, and with our counterparts on the House side to begin the negotiations on our bill. We are operating under a very tight timeframe that will require Members to work around the clock and a good-faith effort from all sides. That is what I am asking for today: for Members on the other side of the aisle to take the majority leader, the Republican leader, at his word, to pass this bill—this vitally needed bill—and then to go on to a second individual appropriations bill, all the while we are working in a bipartisan way to craft an omnibus bill.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the importance of advancing the fiscal year 2016 appropriations bills. Let me reiterate that it is simply wrong for any of my Democratic colleagues to assume that proceeding to the Defense appropriations bill somehow suggests that there is no interest by our leader in passing an omnibus that will include the other vital bills funding essential education, biomedical research, transportation, housing, agriculture, energy, environmental, and other important programs.

I urge my colleagues to support proceeding to this vital bill. To fail to do so once again, for the third time, despite the existence of the budget framework that we have agreed to, and to fail to do so just days before we honor our Nation's veterans would be a grave disservice to those who serve in our military today.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Seeing no one seeking the floor, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, for months, we have called for Senate Democrats to stand and support our troops and pass the Defense appropriations legislation. In fact, this is the first time—the first time since 2009—that all 12 appropriations bills were reported out of committee, and most with strong bipartisan support.

I serve on the Appropriations Committee. In fact, I serve on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. But today we are once again considering opening debate on the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2016, a bill that passed out of the Appropriations Committee on June 11 with a very strong bipartisan vote of 27 to 3.

As we approach Veterans Day next week, today could mark the third time that Democrats have blocked this critical legislation to fund our troops. This comes at a time when our troops are actively engaged in multiple theaters abroad and they need the critical support of our Nation's growing mission overseas. But rather than passing this vital funding bill, my Democratic colleagues would rather play politics and perpetuate the obstruction that plagues their party. The minority leader's constituents in Nevada deserve more. They deserve better. Montanans deserve more. The American people deserve more.

So here we are debating, for the third time, simply to proceed on Defense appropriations legislation and to open it up for debate. Let's be clear. The way the process works is we have to have first a vote to bring the bill to the floor to begin deliberation. This, the great-

est deliberative body in the world, can't even deliberate on the Defense appropriations bill because our friends across the aisle are blocking it. It is time to open it up for debate, open it up for amendments. This is the process of the Senate. The American people and the troops deserve more.

It appears that the Democratic leader and his Democratic colleagues would rather huddle in back rooms somewhere and concoct yet another deal behind closed doors versus in full daylight in transparency on the Senate floor because they would rather negotiate in private than engage in an open and honest debate in front of the American people.

Unfortunately, today the Senate Democrats will put partisan politics ahead of funding the troops. The senior Senator from New York, the likely next Democratic leader, has already foretold that Democrats would rather throw together another massive spending package than to allow open consideration of each part of the Nation's budget. No wonder we are \$19 trillion dollars in debt. Senator SCHUMER said:

We could pass a defense bill and then they could say, "Well, we'll do a [continuing resolution] on the rest of it," violating the 50-50 deal. We need to negotiate an omnibus all at once and all together.

I reject that. Montanans know firsthand the importance of supporting our men and women in uniform. The passage of this legislation is critical to carrying out our missions in an increasingly dangerous world, and it is important regarding missions we support in Montana. This Defense appropriations bill protects the Montana Air National Guard C-130 mission by moving forward with the Avionics Modernization Program, or AMP Increments 1 and 2, which are improvements from the original costly AMP program. This will ensure the C-130s at the Montana National Guard will be certified to continue flying by 2020 and provide a pathway for a full-scale avionics upgrade that addresses outdated components. It also funds key engine modifications for those C-130s.

The Senate Democrats would prefer to once again obstruct regular order in the same fashion they did during the past few years, which became the hallmark—it became the trademark of a failed Democrat-led Senate majority. So as the Senate heads home for the weekend, I challenge my Democratic colleagues to look at their veterans, to look their active duty troops and military families in the eye and ask themselves: Did I serve these selfless men and women or the Washington establishment? I think we know which one they will choose.

I encourage my Senate Democratic colleagues to change course. We have a chance to change course on this upcoming vote. Vote yes on moving this critical defense legislation forward.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time in a quorum call before the 11 a.m. vote today be charged equally against each side.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, at 11 o'clock the Senate is going to vote on the Defense appropriations bill. This is a bill I have worked on with Senator COCHRAN of Mississippi. He not only chairs the Appropriations Committee but the Subcommittee on Defense, which I serve as ranking member on as well.

The effort in this bill is extraordinary because it comprises virtually 60 percent of the domestic discretionary spending of our government. It, of course, deals with the Department of Defense and intelligence agencies. I just want to say we have worked on this on a bipartisan basis from the start. It has been a real pleasure to work with Senator COCHRAN. I commend him for his leadership and his gentility and thank him for all of the good work he has put into this bill.

It is going to be a procedural vote that we anticipate is not going to allow this bill to go forward. It is not a reflection on the substance of the bill at all. Though we may disagree with one or two provisions in the bill—and even as one of the authors I can say that—the fact is that what we are trying to do now is position ourselves to complete the work of last week's budget agreement.

I think there is an understanding, at least at this moment, of how we will move forward, but I say to my colleagues that we can stand behind the substance of this bill. Procedurally, we may be delaying it today, but ultimately it will pass and I look forward to supporting it at that time.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak up to 10 minutes.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I would like to address my remarks to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, my Democratic colleagues. Yesterday I spent almost a whole day working with Democratic colleagues on a variety of proposals to try to get bipartisan results in the Senate. We have had more bipartisan results this year than most people think, whether it is the progress we have made on No Child Left Behind or on the trade bill or on the doc fix or on changing the way we pay doctors or on the USA Freedom Act, or on the Defense authorization bill. It is a long list.

I was working to get bipartisan results yesterday because that is what I am supposed to do as a United States Senator. I am not sent here to posture or to make a political point. I am sent here—given this privilege—in order to create an environment where we can solve problems for the benefit of the taxpayers, for the benefit of the American people. So that is how I spent my time yesterday. I do not think any other Republican spent more time than I did working with colleagues on the Democratic side to do that, which is why I am addressing my remarks to my Democratic friends.

What they have proposed to do is block our moving to the appropriations bill for the defense of this country for the third time—for the third time. There is no justification whatsoever to do that. What I am saying to my friends is don't go there, because if you continue to block appropriations bills, you are going to set in motion an irreversible trend toward partisanship in this Senate and I am going to lead it. I am going to lead it.

Instead of spending my time working with Democrats to get bipartisan results, we are going to go in another direction. Now, why would I say that? Because I am not here to be partisan. Let me give you the example of the appropriations bill that Senator FEINSTEIN from California and I have worked on. We worked on that bill in a bipartisan way. I think even she would say she wrote about as much of it as I did. There's a page full of things she thought are important for our country that are part of the bill. There are probably more than 75 Senators who wrote us letters—about half of them Democratic Senators—who wrote us letters saying: These are important provisions in the Energy and Water Appropriations bill. Those provisions are in our bill. They are ready to be considered.

Twice, the Democrats have kept us from considering the Defense Appropriations bill. Today, they are going to do it again. What they are saying to us is that we are going to come up with any reason—any excuse—not to have a normal appropriations process. The last time Democrats argued: We did not have enough money. The way you deal with not enough money, if that is

your opinion, is you bring a bill to the floor, you vote on it, you pass it if you can, you send it to the President, if the President disagrees with you, he vetoes it. It comes back and we negotiate and we have a compromise.

That is the way it works. You don't just jam something through because you have the power to stop something or the power to jam it through. That is the way you pass ObamaCare. That is the way you make sure the country has no respect for what we are trying to do. But that is what the Democrats did with appropriations this year and they got a result. I am not unhappy with the result, and I voted for the budget agreement. But what it does is it creates additional spending for defense and nondefense discretionary funding for the Energy and Water appropriations bill. I am pleased to see that because that money goes for ports, locks, and dams. That money goes to the Office of Science so we can have revolutions in manufacturing that create jobs. Money that can help with our biomedical research that we need to do. There are important things we need to do, and this bill will help us do them. But why would we not begin to debate that? Why would we not let the other Senators debate it? All we are proposing is to begin to do some of what in December we should have done in June and July.

The majority leader knows he can't put every one of the 12 appropriations bill on the floor. There is not enough time left this year. Why is there not enough time? Because Democrats blocked it in June. They kept us from going to the bills even though this is the first time in 6 years that all 12 appropriations bills have passed the Appropriations Committee.

Why is that important? That is what we do here. Our job is to review the purse, to decide what to spend—more for this lock, less for that project—and keep the budget in balance when we can. That is our job. They blocked it twice and they are getting ready to block it again with a vote today.

I'm saying, don't go there because you are going to set in motion an irreversible course in this Senate, and I'm going to lead it. I am going to use whatever skills and powers I have to do that.

All of these Democratic provisions don't have to be in the Energy and Water appropriations bill. They don't have to be in any of the bills because we have the majority and you don't. So if they're going to play that kind of game, we can play it too. I am not one who usually does, but I am able to play. I am able to play or I wouldn't have gotten here.

So I want to say to my friends on the other side: Don't go there. Vote to put the bill on the floor. Vote to give us a chance to have amendments.

Why would the other 70 Senators not want to have a chance to have a say about the appropriations bill? Thirty of us are on the Appropriations Com-

mittee. We did our work. We approved the bill—in our case by a vote of 26 to 4. It is a bipartisan bill. Why would we not put bills like that on the floor and let the other 70 Senators have their say? What are they here for if they don't want to have a say about appropriations? They might as well be home watching television. They should be here deciding the issues that face our country.

I hope my friends on both sides of the aisle can tell I am not happy this morning with the direction things are taking. I don't like the fact that I spent all day working with Democratic colleagues to get bipartisan results and they come along with a tactic—for the third time—that says: If we don't get everything we want, we are not going to have an appropriations process.

Well, we will see how that goes. And it will go not in a way that is good for the country, not in a way that is good for the Senate, but it will allow the people who have a majority in the Senate a chance to assert themselves and write the bills. At least we can do that.

There is really no reason we need to have 75 Senators' ideas about priorities in the Energy and Water appropriations bill if the majority doesn't want to. There is no reason to have the ranking members' opinions in any of these appropriations bills if the majority doesn't want to.

The way we have worked in our committee is—and I have worked with the Senator from California for several years, and she is a terrific person and a wonderful Senator—we work together. Now why should we stop that process when the bills come to the floor?

So through the Chair I respectfully ask my colleagues to think again. Don't do this. Don't send us a signal that we are never going to have another normal appropriations process in the United States Senate. The American people don't want that. We don't want that, and I can assure you my friends on the other side don't want that.

So my hope is that one way or another the majority leader and the Democratic leader have a conversation. And that the Senate comes to its rational senses and begins a normal appropriations process, with as much time as we have between now and the end of our time here in December. Which would be a signal to all of us that we are going to work in a bipartisan way on a normal appropriations process for the good of the country. And that we are not just going to try to think up any excuse we can not to move an appropriations bill to the floor.

Two years ago the majority leader simply wouldn't bring the bills to the floor. This time the minority leader has blocked the bills from coming to the floor. Let's get back to work. For heaven's sake, that is what we are here for. I am ready to go to work. I much prefer the way I worked yesterday, working with my colleagues. But I am

prepared to work in another way if that is what we need to do to get some balance in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I compliment the distinguished Senator from Tennessee for his remarks. I extend my appreciation for his strong leadership in developing and bringing to the floor of the Senate the Defense appropriations bill for fiscal year 2016.

Specifically, I urge the Senate to do as he suggests. Let's get this bill before the Senate, offer amendments if Senators have suggestions for changes in the bill, and move ahead to completing action on this bill on time so we can predict with some certainty what our obligations are going to be and we can more thoughtfully with a sense of confidence know that we are doing the right thing to protect the security interests of our country, our citizens, and our interests around the world.

We have before us an effort to move to the consideration of the Department of Defense appropriations bill for fiscal year 2016. The bill provides \$514.1 billion in base budget funding and \$58.6 billion in overseas contingency operations funding for the Department of Defense.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has worked on a bipartisan basis to write and approve 12 individual appropriations bills this year for the first time since 2009. Senators should have the opportunity to debate, amend, and approve the Defense appropriations bill. The legislation is a bipartisan national security measure that provides the resources that are necessary to protect our Nation, support our servicemembers and their families, and meet current and future threats to our national security.

We have no greater priority than protecting our national security interests here at home and abroad. I urge Senators to cooperate and support our efforts and to vote to proceed to the consideration of this bill. I am hopeful that the leadership can get together and work out a time that is convenient and appropriate for carrying out this responsibility.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The 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 motion to proceed to H.R. 2685, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, James M. Inhofe, John Hoeven, John Thune, Lamar Alexander, Richard Burr, Jerry Moran, John Cornyn, James E. Risch, Mike Crapo, Steve Daines, Jeff Flake, Cory Gardner, John Boozman, Thad Cochran, Pat Roberts, 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 motion to proceed to H.R. 2685, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, 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. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

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

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 298 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Donnelly	Moran
Ayotte	Enzi	Murkowski
Barrasso	Ernst	Paul
Blunt	Fischer	Perdue
Boozman	Flake	Portman
Burr	Gardner	Risch
Capito	Grassley	Roberts
Cassidy	Hatch	Rounds
Coats	Heller	Sasse
Cochran	Hoeven	Scott
Collins	Inhofe	Sessions
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Kirk	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Cruz	Lee	Toomey
Daines	McCain	Wicker

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Heitkamp	Nelson
Bennet	Hirono	Peters
Blumenthal	Kaine	Reed
Booker	King	Reid
Brown	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cantwell	Leahy	Schumer
Cardin	Manchin	Shaheen
Carper	Markey	Stabenow
Casey	McCaskill	Tester
Coons	McConnell	Udall
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden
Heinrich	Murray	

NOT VOTING—5

Boxer	Rubio	Vitter
Graham	Sanders	

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

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I enter a motion to reconsider the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the Defense appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

Mr. McCONNELL. I withdraw the motion to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to H.R. 2029.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 98, H.R. 2029, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, for the information of all Senators, there will be a rollcall vote on the motion to proceed to the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill shortly after lunch. The chairman of that committee, Senator KIRK, is working with the ranking member to move that bill across the floor next week. They will have a Senate substitute to the bill pending, and Senators will then further amend. If Senators cooperate in moving things along and scheduling votes on amendments to the bill, we can vote on passage on Tuesday night so that Senators can commemorate Veterans Day back home with their constituents.

Obviously, this is going to require some cooperation from all Members. However, I encourage those Senators with amendments to the MILCON-VA bill to work with Senator KIRK and Senator TESTER to get them in the queue for floor consideration.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

STOP SANCTUARY POLICIES AND PROTECT AMERICANS ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, 2 weeks ago, the Senate was unable to proceed to consider a very important piece of legislation called the Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act. The goal of this legislation is to protect our communities from criminals who violate our laws and who pose a danger to those communities—often minority communities themselves. The aim of this legislation is to restore law and order across the country by holding those accountable who are defying Federal law and refusing to cooperate with the Federal Government when it comes to communicating the status of people who are illegally present in the country who have committed other more serious crimes and refusing to honor Federal detainees.

As we discussed the need for this bill, several of my colleagues highlighted the importance of this issue, but unfortunately, we lost that vote because only 54 Senators voted to proceed to the bill and obviously we needed 60 votes.

I am concerned that this debate does not focus on the people harmed the most because of the status quo, and that is why I have come here to the floor to talk about the larger problem of violent crime committed by those who are here illegally and are not being punished according to our laws. I also want to highlight the importance of the victims and families across the country who are suffering because we have not taken the appropriate action to stop these criminals.

There is one person in particular whom I wish to talk about today. My plan is to come to the floor and tell these stories one at a time over the next few weeks.

This is Javier Vega, Jr., who grew up in La Feria, a small town of about 7,000 people in South Texas. Javier was known by the name Harvey to his friends, interestingly enough, and he spent his entire life thinking of ways to help others before himself.

From a young age, he knew he wanted to serve in the military, and so he volunteered for the Marine Corps and embarked on a military career after graduating from La Feria High School. Harvey thrived in the Marine Corps. So after leaving the Marines and working day and night to put himself through college, he decided the next step in his public service was to join the U.S. Border Patrol.

Harvey's mother said that he approached his work at the Border Patrol just like everything else he pursued in life—with diligence, dedication to hard work, and trying just simply to be the best he could be. He was proud to help protect his fellow neighbors and serve our country, and he worked tirelessly to do so.

But, tragically, Harvey's service to his country was cut short. Last summer he was out at one of his favorite fishing spots with his family. He loved fishing. It was a family tradition, and Harvey wanted to pass along his love for this pastime to his sons. Shortly after he and his family members cast their lines into the water on that Sunday afternoon, he was ambushed by two men who tried to rob him, and, heartbreakingly, the encounter turned violent.

Harvey's lifelong commitment to protecting those around him—something he seemed born to do—kicked in instantly. As Harvey and his father, and eventually his mother, tried to fend off the attackers, tragically Javier "Harvey" Vega, Jr., was killed. His father, Javier senior, was shot in the hip and still suffers from the wounds inflicted that afternoon.

This was supposed to be another normal weekend fishing with the family. But instead, this normal weekend—or

what was supposed to be a normal weekend of fishing for Javier and his family—turned deadly.

Who were the killers? They were two illegal immigrant criminals who had repeatedly violated our laws, and by that I don't mean they just entered the country without the appropriate visa. Both had been deported multiple times but managed to repeatedly find their way back into the country, even after committing a long list of crimes.

In fact, according to some witnesses, these two men had been terrorizing the community for months, committing armed robberies and carjackings, and, clearly, they were capable of attacking and killing a hard-working father on a fishing trip with his family.

This is a difficult topic for some because some people would like to mischaracterize what we are trying to do with this legislation as somehow being anti-immigrant. But indeed, legal immigrants and people who live in the communities along South Texas—many of them have had family members come here from Mexico and elsewhere over the years—recognize how much people who illegally enter the country and commit multiple crimes can terrorize communities and victimize the very people whom those who block this legislation say they want to protect.

I don't raise this issue or this story lightly, but the country should know that for the family of Javier Vega, Jr., this is their reality. Illegal immigrant criminals who were deported multiple times attacked them and killed their son—their father, their brother, and their friend. Their lives will never be the same.

A number of our colleagues voted to block our ability to even consider this important legislation that seeks to merely enforce existing Federal law and to defund those jurisdictions that defy Federal law, and this is the consequence of doing nothing—people like Javier Vega, Jr., being victimized by criminals who violate our laws over and over and over, and when we catch them and they are deported, they simply come back into the country and victimize more people and more communities and kill people like Javier Vega, Jr.

The lives of the Vega family will never be the same, and I know they don't want other families in Texas or elsewhere around the country to have to suffer like they have suffered.

It doesn't seem like a lot to ask—that our Federal laws be enforced to protect our communities from criminals. That is all the legislation attempted to do. Yet there was a concerted effort across the aisle to filibuster the bill and prevent us from even considering this legislation, along with any suggestions our colleagues might have for improving it.

The goal of the bill, the Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act, is not to keep legal immigrants from entering the United States or to

disparage law-abiding immigrants. Even the victim's mother, Marie, someone with justifiable, personal anger, noted that this tragedy does not mean that her family is against immigration—far from it. This legislation is narrowly targeted to address the root cause of the tragedies like the one I have been talking about, by targeting criminal illegal immigrants who repeatedly ignored the rule of law and who live with virtual impunity in our country and victimize people like the Vega family.

We can't, in good faith, address immigration reform until the American people see us doing more to enforce our existing laws. I have been here for a while, and I have heard the arguments across the aisle that our colleagues would say: Well, the only thing we need to do to fix problems like what the Vega family experienced and otherwise is to pass comprehensive immigration reform. But the American people simply don't have enough confidence in us if we are unwilling to take the necessary steps to see that the laws on the books are already enforced—the very laws that would protect people like Javier Vega, Jr., and his family.

We have a lot of work to do to regain the public's confidence, because we can do other things that I believe we need to do to fix our broken immigration system. It is imperative, it is our responsibility, and it is something we referred to in our oath—that we will uphold and defend the laws and the Constitution of the United States. It is our responsibility to make sure that local governments comply with Federal laws and do not prevent the Department of Homeland Security from doing its job in enforcing them.

America's law enforcement community, including heroes like Harvey, put their lives on the line every day to protect our citizens. They work tirelessly to try to protect our safety.

I hope our colleagues will come to their senses and stand up for those who provide for our public safety and not contribute to a situation where other families, such as the Vega family, will lose a loved one to the sort of career criminals whom I was referring to earlier who killed Javier Vega, Jr.

I have recently joined with Congressman FILEMON VELA to send a letter to the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection requesting that they reclassify the death of Javier Vega, Jr., as a line-of-duty fatality. Everybody in law enforcement knows that you are never truly off duty, and Javier's brave actions that fateful day back in 2014 should be classified as a death occurring in the line of duty, just like every other law enforcement officer.

I look forward to hearing back from the Commissioner on this soon. I am thankful to Paul Perez, president of the National Border Patrol Council in Kingsville, and to the Rio Grande Valley Union of the National Border Patrol Council for helping the Vega family highlight this issue.

We have a duty to help our brave men and women in law enforcement do their job by passing this legislation and to regain some of the lost confidence the American people used to have in our ability to actually do our job and to keep illegal immigrant criminals and repeat offenders off our streets.

This issue is not going away. There are countless other stories in Texas and across the country, such as the story of Kate Steinle, out in San Francisco, who tragically was murdered by the same sort of repeat illegal immigrant criminal who killed Harvey Vega.

There are a lot more stories to tell—a lot more stories that I hope we will tell in the coming days. It is our duty as Members of Congress to put a stop to this, and I pledge to keep fighting on behalf of the Vega family for legislation that will do just that.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

(The remarks of Mr. KAINE pertaining to the introduction of S. 2256 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are not in a quorum call.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, do I have a limitation on speaking time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no limitation.

Mr. COATS. I thank the Chair.

WASTE OF THE WEEK

Madam President, this is my weekly "Waste of the Week" speech. It is time for another one.

Let me just say up front this involves Department of Defense spending. Now, I am a strong advocate. I am an Army veteran. I have served on the Senate Armed Services Committee for nearly two terms. I am a strong advocate of a strong national defense, but it doesn't mean we give a blank check to the Department of Defense. It means we have to scrutinize their expenditures and their engagement in spending taxpayers' dollars just as carefully as we scrutinize every other agency. Everybody is involved in terms of finding the best and most effective way of using taxpayer dollars, hopefully without going into debt to do so and hopefully directed to those issues of priority and necessity that we have to fund. The Department of Defense of course is one of those. Although, as I said, it doesn't mean they get a blank check.

I am deeply disappointed that my Democratic friends across the aisle have denied us the opportunity to take up the Department of Defense appropriations bill, where we would have the opportunity to offer amendments to strike money or to save money that could be used for essential, necessary

efforts in spending by the Department of Defense.

Clearly every agency has to do some triage if we are ever going to get control of our out-of-control budget and our out-of-control plunge into deficit spending year after year, with the debt ever growing. I just heard today that we are now at \$18.5 trillion in debt, and that is going to come back to haunt us in future generations.

So the triage involves defining what is essential. Is this an essential expenditure that only the Federal Government can make? Defense spending falls into that category; that is, something that we can't leave to the States. Secondly, there is a lot we would like to do that may be necessary but is not urgent, a priority, or essential—when we have the money to do it. The third category is, Why in the world are you doing that in the first place? How can we define those items that are not necessary and take those funds and use them? Either give them back to the taxpayer or put them toward something that is essential rather than continuing to raise the funding, keeping all of the "why we are we doing this in the first place?" stuff funded year after year. We are not being given the opportunity to do that.

It is beyond this Senator's comprehension that, having established the caps with the agreement that passed last week—which I couldn't vote for because it kept adding more to our debt and didn't fully address the real problem of entitlement spending. But nevertheless, the decision was made, and we had to pass it. Now it is simply a process of allocating the money within the limits of how much can be spent. That is what we are supposed to be able to do, of course, in committee.

We are also supposed to have the opportunity as Members of the Senate to bring forward amendments, to bring forward policy issues, to debate on the floor, and hopefully to improve the bill, making it better, more cost effective, and efficient.

OK. Here we go—waste of the week. I think this is the 20th-something time I have been on this floor during this year. Every week the Senate is in session, I come and do the waste of the week. This week it addresses, as I said, the Department of Defense. I want to highlight what a recent inspector general Department of Defense report found: over \$40 million of overspending by the Department of Defense to build one gas station in Afghanistan.

The special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction found that the Department of Defense Task Force for Stability and Business Operations actually spent \$43 million on a single natural gas fueling station in Afghanistan. The station was originally projected to cost \$3 million—and we will talk about how ever got to \$3 million, let alone how in the world this could have gotten to a total of \$43 million.

According to the IG report, DOD spent this money "to fund the con-

struction and to supervise the initial operation of the station. Specifically, it spent approximately \$12.3 million in direct costs"—I guess that was building the station—"and \$30 million in overhead costs."

We are digging in to find out what those overhead costs were, but somebody came away with a pretty good profit margin just by submitting bills for \$30 million in overhead costs which apparently were approved and spent and given to the contractors.

To make matters worse, the inspector general's office found that the reasons the gas station needed to be built in the first place were not legitimate. They said there is zero evidence that the Department of Defense conducted the prior research necessary to identify potential obstacles before initiating this \$43 million project. Wouldn't you think somebody would have said: Wait a minute. What is this for? Where is it going to be? How much is it going to cost? Is it worth it? What is the projected spending? Is it going to be worth doing this? Does it make any sense? The IG office said there was zero evidence in the DOD's research that there could be a potential obstacle in going forward with this. One of those obstacles is Afghanistan doesn't have the pipeline infrastructure to get the gas to the gas station. Another key obstacle is that on average it would cost more to convert a vehicle in Afghanistan to use compressed natural gas than the average Afghan earns in a single year. What all this means is that the Department of Defense built a gas station that doesn't consistently have gas or customers, all for \$43 million.

Most outrageously, the original \$3 million allocated to this project was over and above the international norm for building this kind of compressed natural gas station. The International Energy Agency analyzed global construction costs for similar fueling stations and found that construction costs ranged from \$200,000 to \$500,000 per station. It did acknowledge that in non-industrialized countries such as Afghanistan, costs would be on the high-end. OK. The high-end is \$500,000. It still raises the question, If nobody is going to use it or we can't get gas to the station to put into the vehicles, why are we doing this in the first place? It also raises the question, Why did it cost \$3 million in projected construction costs when the average high-end is \$500,000 per station in places like Afghanistan? What do you get for \$3 million? What they say you get for \$3 million ended up costing \$12 million, and then the final bill is \$43 million. What do you get?

As you can see on this photograph, you get one of these out in the desert in Afghanistan. It is a little bit blurry. There is the structure. You have some pumps here. They actually did want to prove that some cars use this, so there are a couple of vehicles pictured out there in the desert. There is a telephone pole, I guess, out there. You can

see we are not talking about the mid-
dle of a city.

So that is what you get. That is what you get, folks, for \$43 million of expenditures. This is almost beyond the pale. It is almost something that you come down here and say: This can't be true. You can't make this stuff up. This is an example, though, I am afraid, of a lot of other overspending which we are going to dive into. But this one example alone illustrates that someone is making some very bad decisions and that taxpayers' dollars were not, at the least, properly stewarded by someone.

American taxpayers deserve an answer to this fraud, to this waste. Why did we pay \$43 million to build this gas station when there was no research justifying building it in the first place? They want an explanation of why this particular project was \$40 million over budget, and even the budgeted price was significantly higher—8 to 10 times higher—than the projected average cost of building something like this in a third-world country. Taxpayers need an explanation of how and why this could have ever happened, and there needs to be a full investigation. We need and will demand answers.

What has been illustrated is a perfect example of why not only my constituents but the American public feels that Washington can no longer be trusted and that no one in Washington gets it. Well, I get it. I get it, and we ought to all get it. We ought to be just as outraged as our constituents in terms of our performance here. This is totally unacceptable.

As has been said, this Senator is one of the biggest supporters of a strong national defense as anyone standing on this Senate floor, but we are weakening our defense and not allocating our money to the essentials that we need to support our soldiers in the essential tasks they have and the equipment they need. We are doing this kind of stuff, and it has to stop.

Our waste of the week is now totaling over \$117 billion of identified waste, and who knows what the total would be if we could comb through every agency. Our former colleague Tom Coburn used to say there is a good \$1 trillion if added all up. I don't know if it reaches that or not, but we are well on the way. We are at \$117 trillion, and these are the things I have identified and addressed coming to the floor this year.

Hopefully my colleagues will pay attention. We can't get the big things done. The President won't sign anything or engage in anything relative to the real gorilla in the room that is going to take us down economically, which are the runaway entitlements. Despite all the efforts, many of them bipartisan, the President has said: No, no, no, no, no, not on my watch.

The spending is continuing to go up, but the least we can do until we get somebody more responsible as our leader in the White House and until we have the will and courage to take on

what we all know needs to be done to get our fiscal house back in order—in the meantime, we can at least stop this egregious spending and waste of taxpayer dollars through fraud and abuse.

I am going to continue to do this. Next week we have lined up in our office what we will do, coming down virtually every day to do this and not run out of examples of how taxpayers' dollars are being wasted.

As you can tell, I am getting worked up about all this. Somebody needs to get worked up about this because it is not happening and we are spending money, and the public has given up and thrown up their hands and said we are dysfunctional, and they are right.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. UDALL and Mr. HEINRICH pertaining to the introduction of S. 2254 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam President, I yield to my colleague from Michigan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

TRIBUTE TO AMY JISHI

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I rise to recognize the heroic efforts of Amy Jishi, a Michigander who serves as a transportation security inspector at Detroit Metropolitan International Airport. I just spoke to her a few moments ago on the phone and thanked her for her brave actions.

Recently, while leaving work at the airport Amy observed an accident at a traffic light. She noticed that one of the cars was leaking gasoline and a fire had started underneath it. Without hesitation, Amy selflessly placed herself in harm's way to offer assistance and to warn others about the fire, and she worked to free the driver from the vehicle, despite a stuck door, and was able to free him shortly before the car burst into flames. Afterwards, Amy told a reporter, "When I saw the accident, the only thought that went through my mind was to help them."

Amy is a lifelong resident of Dearborn Heights and has worked with the Transportation Security Administration in Detroit for 8 years. She and her TSA colleagues across the Nation work to keep the American people and the traveling public safe each and every day.

As a member of the Senate Homeland Security committee, it is a privilege to hear the stories of the men and women at the Department of Homeland Security who work around the clock and around the world to keep our country safe. These individuals are dedicated to

public service and are willing to put Americans' safety and well-being above their own, and they deserve the recognition, as well as the resources and policies that will continue to position them for success in the mission they take so seriously and personally.

I would like to recognize Amy's selfless action, quick thinking, and dedication to her fellow Americans. Because of her actions, a young driver was able to walk away from what would have been a terrible tragedy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. I thank the Presiding Officer.

SAVE BENEFITS ACT

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, exactly 3 weeks ago the Social Security Administration made a very quiet announcement. Next year, for just the third time since 1975, seniors who receive Social Security won't be getting an annual cost-of-living increase.

Two-thirds of seniors depend on Social Security for the majority of their income. For 15 million Americans, Social Security is all that stands between them and poverty. But not one of these Americans—not one—will see an extra dime next year. Millions of other Americans whose benefits are pegged to Social Security—millions who receive veterans' benefits, disability benefits, and other monthly payments—won't see an extra dime either.

These are tough times—but not for everyone. According to most recent data from the Economic Policy Institute, CEOs at the top 350 American companies received on average a 3.9-percent pay increase last year. That is a lot of money because the average CEO pay at one of the top 350 American companies was a cool \$16.3 million in 2014. On average, they got more than half a million dollars each in pay raises. So CEOs get huge pay raises while seniors, veterans, and others who have worked hard—70 million of them—will get nothing. Why? It is not an accident; it is the result of deliberate policies set right here in Congress.

Social Security is supposed to be indexed to inflation so that when prices go up, benefits will go up, too. But Congress's formula looks at the spending habits of only about a quarter of the country, and the formula isn't geared to what older Americans actually spend. Projections for costs of core goods and services, projections that remove the components of prices that are the most uncertain and erratic, show that inflation is up about 2 percent, but seniors, who usually get a boost on January 1, won't see an extra dime next year, mostly because of falling gasoline prices, which just don't mean as much to millions of seniors who don't commute to work. Meanwhile, seniors who are trying to cover things such as rent and exploding prescription drug prices are left out in the cold. It is all Federal policy.

What about those huge CEO bonuses? They are also the consequence, in part,

of congressional policy. A report released just last week from the Center for Effective Government and the Institute for Policy Studies details how taxpayers subsidized CEOs' huge pay packages through billions of dollars in giveaways, including subsidies such as special tax-deferred compensation accounts and a crazy loophole that allows corporations to write off obscene bonuses as a business expense.

Companies can make their own decisions on how much to compensate their executives, but because of the laws Congress has passed, American taxpayers are forced to subsidize these multimillion-dollar pay packages.

It is time for Congress to make different choices. If we do nothing, on January 1 more than 70 million seniors, veterans, and other Americans won't get an extra dime. While Congress sits on its hands and pretends there is nothing we can do for seniors or vets, while Congress claims there just isn't any money to fix the problem, American taxpayers will keep right on subsidizing billions of dollars' worth of bonuses for highly paid CEOs. It is a choice. Congress can spend taxpayer money subsidizing billions of dollars for bonuses for corporate executives or Congress can use that very same money to help 70 million people who live on Social Security, veterans' benefits, and disability payments. Congress makes the choice.

That is why I am here today, along with a number of my colleagues, to introduce the Senior and Veterans Emergency Benefits Act. The SAVE Benefits Act will give seniors on Social Security, veterans, those with disabilities, and others a one-time payment equivalent to an average increase of 3.9 percent—the same tax-subsidized pay increase top CEOs received last year.

We can increase pay for seniors and vets without adding a single penny to the deficit simply by closing one of the many tax loopholes that subsidize these giant pay packages for executives. In fact, according to the Chief Actuary of the Social Security Administration, closing this loophole will create enough revenue to help seniors and vets and there will still be enough money left over to help extend the life of the Social Security trust fund. This should be a bipartisan act. Nobody wants to see seniors struggle to pay their grocery and utility bills. Everybody should want to extend the life of Social Security.

Both Democrats and Republicans have expressed contempt for this tax loophole. Back in 1993, Congress passed section 162(m)—a Tax Code provision designed to rein in excessive corporate compensation—but the provision includes so many loopholes, most corporations just get around them. In fact, in 2006 Republican Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY said that “sophisticated folks are working with Swiss-watch-like devices to game this Swiss-cheese-like rule.” In 2009 Republican Senator JOHN MCCAIN and Democratic Senator

Carl Levin introduced a bill to shut down access to this loophole for corporate stock options. Just last year, the Republican chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee included reform of this loophole as part of his flagship tax reform bill. So let's just do it. Let's close the loophole, and let's use the money to give seniors and vets the support they need.

Think about what this change would mean. That 3.9 percent is worth about \$581 a year, a little less than \$50 a month. I know that is a rounding error for those top corporate executives who are pulling in an average of over \$16 million each. But Social Security payments average only about \$1,250 a month, and millions of seniors who rely on those checks are barely scraping by. A \$581 increase could cover almost 3 months of groceries for seniors or a year's worth of out-of-pocket costs on critical prescription drugs for Medicare beneficiaries. That \$50 a month is worth a heck of a lot to the 70 million Americans who would have just a little more in their pockets as a result of this bill. In fact, according to an analysis from the Economic Policy Institute, that little boost could lift more than a million people out of poverty.

We all know someone who lives on Social Security—every single one of us. We know family members, a friend, a neighbor, people who worked hard all their lives and who now rely on Social Security checks to get by. Giving seniors a little help with their Social Security and stitching up these corporate tax write-offs isn't just about economics; it is about our values. For too long we have listened to a handful of powerful folks who have had one message: Cut taxes for those at the top, cut rules and regulations that keep businesses honest, and let everybody else fight over the scraps. We have tried that approach, and now we have a retirement crisis. Guaranteed pensions are gone, and 401(k)s and IRAs have been decimated by the stock market. Fewer and fewer people can afford to save for the future. We tried it, and it was a complete failure.

These same powerful folks will tell you there is nothing we can do to help 70 million seniors, veterans, Americans with disabilities, and others who will not see an extra dime this year. They will say we can't afford it. They will say we can't do anything to expand Social Security. They will say we need to gut Social Security in order to save it. They will say all of this, exactly at the same moment that we continue to shovel billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies out the door for corporations to boost pay to their highest paid executives.

That is the problem. The money is there, only right now it goes to a handful of CEOs because that is where the law written by Congress sends it. But Congress can make a different choice—a choice that reflects our deepest values, a choice to give a boost to 70 million Americans who have earned one, a

choice to lift over 1 million people out of poverty, and a choice to extend the life of Social Security. It is all about choices—millionaire and billionaire CEOs or retirees, vets, and disabled Americans.

I ask my colleagues to support the SAVE Benefits Act. January 1 will be here soon, and we need to make a choice now.

Madam President, I yield to my colleague from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts.

We spend a lot of time here on the floor of the Senate talking about how our States are different. That happens in the House of Representatives where I served as well. But there is one thing that certainly unites all of our States and, frankly, one thing that unites all of the front desks of our Senate offices, and that is this: We have all been flooded with phone calls from the thousands upon thousands of constituents in each one of our districts who are furious that they are going to get no increase in Social Security at the beginning of next year. Despite the fact that prices for virtually everything that fixed income seniors are paying for are going up, they are getting absolutely nothing to try to compensate them for those cost of living increases.

We are hearing from people like Kevin in Bridgeport, who said:

Dear Senator Murphy, I am a lifelong resident of Bridgeport. . . . I am 63 years old . . . living on SSDI due to a rare disease of the spinal cord. . . . Since my only source of income is SSDI, I am concerned about the recent announcement that there is going to be no COLA increase for 2016. If there is anything you can do to reverse this decision, millions of Americans like myself would be greatly helped and greatly appreciative.

Or there is Fred from Wolcott, who said:

I understand the lower gas prices have kept the CPI lower with the result [being] no [Social Security] increase in 2016. Many of us do not drive or drive a limited amount and the lower gas prices do not place additional funds in our pocket.

Meanwhile, the cost of beef, chicken, eggs and milk etc., the things we live on have risen, and have reduced our purchasing power. Many on Social Security have no other form of income.

Adeline of New Fairfield, CT, says:

My husband and I were very disappointed that we did not receive our cost of living raise in our check. . . . Please let that be the last time. With all the medical deductibles and food and clothes and taxes going up, it gets discouraging. . . . We are up in age and not in the best of health and because of that we are unable to get a job. [Social Security is what we depend on.]

These stories can be multiplied millions of times over, and all over our districts. What are we going to do about it? Are we going to sit here, as we do with issue after issue, and offer no response to the millions of our constituents who are telling us that they are going to have trouble making ends meet? Or are we going to make a

choice? Are we going to make a choice to end an unjustifiable loophole that allows corporations to hand over millions of dollars to their CEOs virtually tax-free or are we going to invest in the millions of seniors and disabled across this country who are going to have a hard time living and making ends meet if we don't make the change involved in the piece of legislation that we are announcing today? The SAVE Benefits Act is going to save the lives of seniors who without a cost of living increase are going to have trouble affording medication and food. It really comes at no cost to the corporations that are right now receiving an unjustifiable tax benefit—one that Congress really never intended.

Congress passed and has accepted as part of our tax law for 20 years this provision that doesn't allow companies to take a tax benefit for salaries over \$1 million. It is not surprising that companies found a way around that provision because it exempted performance-based pay. So bonuses and stock options could be handed over with full tax benefit, and that became the standard for compensation packages. All of a sudden it wasn't about salary any longer, and it became about this performance-based pay.

You live in a world today in which there is this perverse system—the more corporations pay their CEOs, the lower their tax bill is.

It is not going to hurt corporations to simply have to pay taxes on the bonuses above \$1 million that they send to their CEOs and big executives. They are going to continue paying their CEOs a lot of money. A lot of them live in Connecticut. I don't have any fear that there is going to be a rapid diminution in the amount of money that CEOs are making, but at least those companies will pay taxes on those exorbitant salaries. We will be able to use that money to make sure that their customers—the people who are buying the goods that these big companies make—actually have the purchasing power with which to enter and be active in the economy.

I guess that is the piece of economics that I will end on here. By putting \$50 more a month into the hands of frail, poor seniors and disabled, you are providing an enormous economic benefit to the economy, because all of that money is going to go into the economy.

Let me tell you what a senior living at or below the poverty line is going to do with \$50 a month. They are going to put it into food. They are going to put it into medicine. They are going to put it into Main Street businesses. The fact is that when you decide instead to subsidize salaries of above \$1 million, that money isn't going back into the Main Street economy. Maybe a portion of it is, but a lot of it is ending up in giant accrued pensions and savings accounts or in offshore investments—not in the Main Street economy.

This is not just the right thing to do for these seniors who are crying out to

every single one of our offices to do something about this unjustifiable lack of a COLA, but it is the right thing to do for the economy at large because the money is going to find its way into all sorts of crevices and corners of this economy that badly need that kind of infusion.

I wish to thank Senator WARREN for introducing this legislation. I wanted to come down to the floor to lend my voice to it and for it on behalf of the hundreds and hundreds of seniors in Connecticut who are contacting and calling our office asking for the Senate to do something.

With that, let me yield to my colleague and friend from Connecticut, Senator BLUMENTHAL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I am grateful to my colleague and friend from Connecticut for quoting some of the literally hundreds of letters that both of our offices have been receiving from Social Security recipients and also from veterans in my State. I suspect my colleagues from Massachusetts have been receiving the same letters. I want to thank Senator WARREN for her leadership on this issue but also Senator REED, who joined me some years ago in seeking to close the loophole that is fundamentally undermining not only the fairness but the effectiveness of our Tax Code.

Let's understand what this loophole means to us as taxpayers. The performance pay loophole means that effectively unlimited corporate tax deductions are provided for executive pay. Put aside the issue of whether this pay makes sense or is fair, whether you agree or disagree with these gargantuan amounts. Who should pay for those extraordinary amounts of compensation? This loophole means that you and I as taxpayers are the ones who shoulder at least part of the burden. We do it because the money lost to the Federal Government as a result of this tax deduction must somehow be gained in some other way. Guess where it comes from. It comes from you and me—not from those corporations that can deduct it. It comes from you and me.

Senator REED and I have sought over the years to close this loophole to make sure that the tax-deferred compensation for corporate executives and the performance pay loophole are effectively closed and the Tax Code is made fair. But Senator WARREN has introduced a new and profoundly important element to this fight. And that is this: How should we use the proceeds from closing this loophole? The answer is this: In recognition of the reality that current economic burdens are falling hardest on people who least can afford them—seniors, veterans, and families who depend entirely or in significant part on benefits through Social Security and the VA—should be given the benefit of closing this loophole. Why? First of all, because it is the right thing to do.

The current measures of the cost of living fail to measure the cost of living for them. That is because we don't all buy the same thing. The index or the formula that is used to calculate costs-of-living increases fail to measure the real economic burden on certain groups, namely our seniors and our veterans. You have heard very eloquently and powerfully from my colleagues, from Senator WARREN and Senator MURPHY, about the impact on our Social Security recipients.

I am here as the ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to say that those benefits affect 25,000 veterans in Connecticut who receive VA compensation for a service-connected disability, more than 2,000 survivors or dependent children who receive VA compensation, and 4.3 million veteran beneficiaries nationwide. They earned their benefits through their sacrifice and service to this country.

This issue is about keeping faith with our veterans and making sure we leave no veteran behind. They earned those benefits through their service as well as sacrifice—sometimes unimaginable sacrifice. They earned those benefits through injury and wounds on the battlefield, and those benefits are necessary to ensure a smooth transition into civilian life for service-disabled veterans and their families who often face enormous and staggering additional costs and a reduced ability to work.

To ensure that these vital benefits correspond to the actual cost of food, housing, clothing, gas, and other basic elements of daily life, the VA is authorized to adjust them—adjust them for inflation—and the index they use is the one that Social Security relies on as well. That is the connection to veterans. And that volatile formula, as I have said, too often fails to reflect the actual cost of living for this group of people, leaving millions of our veterans, as well as our seniors, without a realistic chance to keep pace.

Our disabled veterans deserve better. It is that simple. They deserve better than what is happening to them right now. They deserve real compensation that recognizes rising real-world costs, escalating living expenses that are painfully squeezing them, as well as our seniors, and they deserve a fair raise and a fair choice.

I urge my colleagues to join with us. Close this loophole, make the Tax Code fairer to all taxpayers, and also make sure our seniors and veterans get what they need and deserve, to live with the basic necessities that are essential to them. We need to keep faith with our veterans and make sure the greatest Nation in the world recognizes the greatest of its heroes, our veterans.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor to my colleague and great friend from Hawaii, Senator HIRONO.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, last month the Social Security Administration announced some disappointing news. For only the third time in 40 years Social Security beneficiaries will not receive a cost-of-living or COLA increase in January 2016.

In Hawaii, one out of four seniors relies on Social Security as their only source of income. They are struggling to keep a roof over their heads, pay for medicine, and buy groceries—basic necessities. Many Hawaii seniors have told me their stories about how costs for essential goods keep rising while the Social Security checks do not.

Meanwhile, by contrast—and we heard this from my esteemed colleague the Senator from Massachusetts—the CEOs of the wealthiest companies in America are doing great. The average CEO at America's top 350 companies saw a raise of 3.9 percent just last year. Since the economic recovery of 2009, these CEOs have seen their pay increase by a whopping 54.3 percent. I have nothing against hard-working people, including CEOs, getting a raise. If CEOs came up with a good idea and they are managing a successful company, that is great for them, their companies, and one hopes for the company's employees, but did you know taxpayers are partly footing the bill for CEO pay raises?

The Tax Code today has a “performance pay” loophole that provides tax subsidies for high-level corporate executive compensation packages. That is why I am proud to join Senator WARREN and others in introducing the SAVE Benefits Act. Our bill would provide a modest cost-of-living increase next year, the same 3.9 percent increase our Nation's top CEOs received this year. This would mean an average payment increase of about \$580 for our seniors. This is money that makes a huge difference to all of our seniors. This one-time COLA payment would also apply to veterans' benefits—as my colleague RICHARD BLUMENTHAL just focused upon—Federal disability insurance, and equivalent State or local retirement programs. To pay for this one-time COLA, our bill would close the tax giveaways to the wealthiest CEOs. Closing the performance pay loophole is a bipartisan idea, even supported by the former chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means in his tax reform proposal.

In the long run, we should also modernize the formula Social Security uses to calculate COLAs each year, and that is why I introduced the Protecting and Preserving Social Security Act, which would base COLAs on a more accurate formula of what seniors actually buy, the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly or CPI-E. The CPI-E gives more weight to items seniors actually buy, such as medicine, housing, and home energy costs rather than electronics or clothing that younger workers buy more of. My bill would pay for the CPI-E by requiring millionaires and billionaires to pay the same rate into the So-

cial Security trust fund that everybody else pays year-round. Otherwise, under the current law, once workers earn more than \$118,500 in the year, they stop paying the payroll taxes that support the Social Security trust fund.

I was on the Senate floor last month and shared the story of one of my constituents from with Wahiawa, and it bears repeating. She wrote to me recently and said:

I find it incredible that there are people who actually believe that Social Security is too generous. The average Social Security benefit is a whopping \$14,000 a year, and we've only seen an average 2 percent COLA over the past five years. I can assure you my health care costs have far exceeded that tiny increase.

Congress needs to listen to seniors like her and act to provide this modest one-time increase to help seniors make ends meet in 2016 and to change the way COLA is calculated. I urge my colleagues to join me in letting seniors in Hawaii and seniors all across the country have this one-time boost to their Social Security payments.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the SAVE Benefits Act as well as the Protecting and Preserving Social Security Act.

I yield the floor to my colleague from Massachusetts, Senator MARKEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Hawaii for her eloquent statement on this very important issue, and I thank the Senator from Massachusetts Senator WARREN for once again, as usual, putting her finger right on the heart of a huge issue in our country.

We have seniors, veterans, and SSI recipients across our country who will receive zero this year in terms of an increase in their benefits that they have so rightly earned by their service to our country. What Senator WARREN is essentially saying is, Who really built this country? Who made this great country the place that we live in today? The truth is grandma and grandpa built this country. Grandma and grandpa got up every single day, went to work, built this incredible economy, and now that they are in retirement, grandma and grandpa are being told for the next year they don't get a raise. They don't get anything. They don't get a cost-of-living adjustment. They don't get any increase at all. They built this country. The veterans who are seniors, they protected this country. The veterans who are disabled, they built this country, they protected this country.

What Senator WARREN has done so accurately is essentially point out that there was a big loophole in our laws, and that loophole is a corporate compensation loophole that allows unlimited corporate deductions for executive performance pay.

What have we learned over the last 20 years in America? The rich are getting richer, but the people at the bottom

are not. All this bill says, quite simply, is, Let's have the raise go to the seniors for 1 year. Let's have the raise go to grandma and grandpa. Let's give them a reward for the incredible benefits that have been flowing disproportionately to the upper 1 percentile. Let's give them the 3.9-percent raise. Let's give them the kind of comfort and thanks they deserve for all of their hard work.

What happens too often in Congress is that grandma and grandpa just get forgotten. There is a constant debate over whether grandma and grandpa are getting too much in Medicare, too much in Medicaid, and too much in Social Security benefits. “We must solve that problem,” say too many people here and around the country.

No, grandma and grandpa are not the problem. By their hard work every single day for their entire lives, by getting up, going to work, and creating these great families who make us the greatest country on the planet, they are the ones who created this incredible wealth that we have in our society.

I think we all owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Senator WARREN because she has found a quite brilliant way to frame this debate on the Senate floor and for our country because it really does force us to all step back and ask the question of who contributed the most to our country over the last generation—a small handful of people at the top or everyone in the country who got up every single day who are the people we now call grandma and grandpa. I don't think we should be shortchanging them. I think Senator WARREN's bill is the right way to solve that problem in order to make sure they get what they deserve. I thank Senator WARREN for her great leadership on this issue.

I yield to the Senator from Montana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I want to speak on the MILCON-VA bill. We have 1 minute. We are going to take a giant leap of faith that the majority is going to do the right thing by our veterans and by this country. I will vote to proceed on this bill with the hope that Members of this body are finally ready to honor our commitment we made to the veterans of this country.

As everyone knows, for most of the year, the Senate Appropriations Committee was crafting appropriations bills that fit under disastrous spending caps put forward by the majority's budget resolution. As a member of the VA appropriations subcommittee, I was especially concerned that because of the budget resolution, we were underfunding the VA by over \$850 million. This shortchange to our veterans would have been a disgrace.

Back in May when I introduced an amendment in the committee to provide an additional \$857 million to the VA—\$857 million the VA needs to do its job—every Republican on the Appropriations Committee voted against my

amendment. I find it troubling that there are some so quick to send our troops into harm's way but neglect them when they return from war. That is exactly what happened, and we saw an appropriations bill that underfunded veterans health.

The good news is that under the budget agreement we voted on this last week, that Senators in this body supported, we are going to fix the problem. It is now time to show the American people that we can govern responsibly by standing up for our veterans.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I know of no further debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2029.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 299 Leg.]

YEAS—93

Alexander	Feinstein	Murphy
Ayotte	Fischer	Murray
Baldwin	Flake	Nelson
Barrasso	Franken	Paul
Bennet	Gardner	Perdue
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Peters
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Booker	Hatch	Reed
Boozman	Heinrich	Reid
Brown	Heitkamp	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Cantwell	Hirono	Rounds
Capito	Hoeven	Sasse
Cardin	Inhofe	Schatz
Carper	Isakson	Schumer
Casey	Johnson	Scott
Cassidy	Kaine	Sessions
Coats	King	Shaheen
Cochran	Kirk	Shelby
Collins	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Lankford	Sullivan
Corker	Leahy	Tester
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Manchin	Tillis
Crapo	Markey	Toomey
Cruz	McCaín	Udall
Daines	McCaskill	Warner
Donnelly	McConnell	Warren
Durbin	Menendez	Whitehouse
Enzi	Mikulski	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Wyden

NOT VOTING—7

Boxer	Moran	Vitter
Graham	Rubio	
Merkley	Sanders	

The motion was agreed to.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business. The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2029) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Appropriations, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Army as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Army Corps of Engineers and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, and for construction and operation of facilities in support of the functions of the Commander in Chief, \$663,245,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$109,245,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, architect and engineer services, and host nation support, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Army determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, naval installations, facilities, and real property for the Navy and Marine Corps as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, \$1,619,699,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$91,649,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Air Force as currently authorized by law, \$1,389,185,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$89,164,000 shall be

available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Air Force determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, installations, facilities, and real property for activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments), as currently authorized by law, \$2,290,767,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That such amounts of this appropriation as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to such appropriations of the Department of Defense available for military construction or family housing as the Secretary may designate, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes, and for the same time period, as the appropriation or fund to which transferred: Provided further, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$160,404,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$197,237,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$20,337,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Army National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$138,738,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$5,104,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Air National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$113,595,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$9,318,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Army Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the

Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the reserve components of the Navy and Marine Corps as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$36,078,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$2,208,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air Force Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$65,021,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$13,400,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Air Force Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

For the United States share of the cost of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program for the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations (including international military headquarters) and for related expenses for the collective defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area as authorized by section 2806 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$120,000,000, to remain available until expended.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$99,695,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$393,511,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$16,541,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$353,036,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for construction, including acquisition,

replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$160,498,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$331,232,000.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

For expenses of family housing for the activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments) for operation and maintenance, leasing, and minor construction, as authorized by law, \$58,668,000.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE ACCOUNT

For deposit into the Department of Defense Base Closure Account 1990, established by section 2906(a) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), \$251,334,000, to remain available until expended.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. None of the funds made available in this title shall be expended for payments under a cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contract for construction, where cost estimates exceed \$25,000, to be performed within the United States, except Alaska, without the specific approval in writing of the Secretary of Defense setting forth the reasons therefor.

SEC. 102. Funds made available in this title for construction shall be available for hire of passenger motor vehicles.

SEC. 103. Funds made available in this title for construction may be used for advances to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, for the construction of access roads as authorized by section 210 of title 23, United States Code, when projects authorized therein are certified as important to the national defense by the Secretary of Defense.

SEC. 104. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to begin construction of new bases in the United States for which specific appropriations have not been made.

SEC. 105. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used for purchase of land or land easements in excess of 100 percent of the value as determined by the Army Corps of Engineers or the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, except: (1) where there is a determination of value by a Federal court; (2) purchases negotiated by the Attorney General or the designee of the Attorney General; (3) where the estimated value is less than \$25,000; or (4) as otherwise determined by the Secretary of Defense to be in the public interest.

SEC. 106. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used to: (1) acquire land; (2) provide for site preparation; or (3) install utilities for any family housing, except housing for which funds have been made available in annual Acts making appropriations for military construction.

SEC. 107. None of the funds made available in this title for minor construction may be used to transfer or relocate any activity from one base or installation to another, without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 108. None of the funds made available in this title may be used for the procurement of steel for any construction project or activity for which American steel producers, fabricators, and manufacturers have been denied the opportunity to compete for such steel procurement.

SEC. 109. None of the funds available to the Department of Defense for military construction or family housing during the current fiscal year may be used to pay real property taxes in any foreign nation.

SEC. 110. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to initiate a new installa-

tion overseas without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 111. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated for architect and engineer contracts estimated by the Government to exceed \$500,000 for projects to be accomplished in Japan, in any North Atlantic Treaty Organization member country, or in countries bordering the Arabian Gulf, unless such contracts are awarded to United States firms or United States firms in joint venture with host nation firms.

SEC. 112. None of the funds made available in this title for military construction in the United States territories and possessions in the Pacific and on Kwajalein Atoll, or in countries bordering the Arabian Gulf, may be used to award any contract estimated by the Government to exceed \$1,000,000 to a foreign contractor: Provided, That this section shall not be applicable to contract awards for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a United States contractor exceeds the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a foreign contractor by greater than 20 percent: Provided further, That this section shall not apply to contract awards for military construction on Kwajalein Atoll for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid is submitted by a Marshallese contractor.

SEC. 113. The Secretary of Defense shall inform the appropriate committees of both Houses of Congress, including the Committees on Appropriations, of plans and scope of any proposed military exercise involving United States personnel 30 days prior to its occurring, if amounts expended for construction, either temporary or permanent, are anticipated to exceed \$100,000.

SEC. 114. Not more than 20 percent of the funds made available in this title which are limited for obligation during the current fiscal year shall be obligated during the last 2 months of the fiscal year.

SEC. 115. Funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for construction in prior years shall be available for construction authorized for each such military department by the authorizations enacted into law during the current session of Congress.

SEC. 116. For military construction or family housing projects that are being completed with funds otherwise expired or lapsed for obligation, expired or lapsed funds may be used to pay the cost of associated supervision, inspection, overhead, engineering and design on those projects and on subsequent claims, if any.

SEC. 117. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any funds made available to a military department or defense agency for the construction of military projects may be obligated for a military construction project or contract, or for any portion of such a project or contract, at any time before the end of the fourth fiscal year after the fiscal year for which funds for such project were made available, if the funds obligated for such project: (1) are obligated from funds available for military construction projects; and (2) do not exceed the amount appropriated for such project, plus any amount by which the cost of such project is increased pursuant to law.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 118. Subject to 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, such additional amounts as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to: (1) the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction in "Family Housing" accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund; or (2) the Department of Defense Military

Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction of military unaccompanied housing in "Military Construction" accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund: Provided, That appropriations made available to the Funds shall be available to cover the costs, as defined in section 502(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, of direct loans or loan guarantees issued by the Department of Defense pursuant to the provisions of subchapter IV of chapter 169 of title 10, United States Code, pertaining to alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing, military unaccompanied housing, and supporting facilities.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 119. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, amounts may be transferred from the accounts established by sections 2906(a)(1) and 2906A(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), to the fund established by section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374) to pay for expenses associated with the Homeowners Assistance Program incurred under 42 U.S.C. 3374(a)(1)(A). Any amounts transferred shall be merged with and be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the fund to which transferred.

SEC. 120. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds made available in this title for operation and maintenance of family housing shall be the exclusive source of funds for repair and maintenance of all family housing units, including general or flag officer quarters: Provided, That not more than \$35,000 per unit may be spent annually for the maintenance and repair of any general or flag officer quarters without 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, except that an after-the-fact notification shall be submitted if the limitation is exceeded solely due to costs associated with environmental remediation that could not be reasonably anticipated at the time of the budget submission: Provided further, That the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) is to report annually to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress all operation and maintenance expenditures for each individual general or flag officer quarters for the prior fiscal year.

SEC. 121. Amounts contained in the Ford Island Improvement Account established by subsection (h) of section 2814 of title 10, United States Code, are appropriated and shall be available until expended for the purposes specified in subsection (i)(1) of such section or until transferred pursuant to subsection (i)(3) of such section.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 122. During the 5-year period after appropriations available in this Act to the Department of Defense for military construction and family housing operation and maintenance and construction have expired for obligation, upon a determination that such appropriations will not be necessary for the liquidation of obligations or for making authorized adjustments to such appropriations for obligations incurred during the period of availability of such appropriations, unobligated balances of such appropriations may be transferred into the appropriation "Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense", to be merged with and to be available for the same time period and for the same purposes as the appropriation to which transferred.

SEC. 123. Amounts appropriated or otherwise made available in an account funded under the headings in this title may be transferred among projects and activities within the account in ac-

cordance with the reprogramming guidelines for military construction and family housing construction contained in Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation 7000.14-R, Volume 3, Chapter 7, of February 2009, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 124. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated or expended for planning and design and construction of projects at Arlington National Cemetery.

SEC. 125. For an additional amount for "Military Construction, Army", \$34,500,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Army's Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2016 submitted to Congress: Provided further, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: Provided further, That, not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 126. For an additional amount for "Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$34,320,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Navy's Unfunded Priority List for fiscal year 2016: Provided further, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: Provided further, That, not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 127. For an additional amount for "Military Construction, Army National Guard", \$51,300,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Army's Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2016 submitted to Congress: Provided further, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: Provided further, That, not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 128. For an additional amount for "Military Construction, Army Reserve", \$34,200,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: Provided, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Army's Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2016 submitted to Congress: Provided further, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: Provided further, That, not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 129. Of the unobligated balances available from prior Appropriations Acts (other than appropriations that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement or as being for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to a concurrent resolution on the budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985) the following funds are hereby rescinded from the following accounts and programs in the specified amounts:

"Military Construction, Army", \$85,000,000;

"Military Construction, Air Force", \$86,400,000; and
"Military Construction, Defense-Wide", \$133,000,000.

(RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 130. Of the unobligated balances made available in prior appropriations Acts for the fund established in section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374), \$65,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

SEC. 131. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this or any other Act may be used to consolidate or relocate any element of a United States Air Force Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer (RED HORSE) outside of the United States until the Secretary of the Air Force (1) completes an analysis and comparison of the cost and infrastructure investment required to consolidate or relocate a RED HORSE squadron outside of the United States versus within the United States; (2) provides to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress ("the Committees") a report detailing the findings of the cost analysis; and (3) certifies in writing to the Committees that the preferred site for the consolidation or relocation yields the greatest savings for the Air Force: Provided, That the term "United States" in this section does not include any territory or possession of the United States.

TITLE II

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the payment of compensation benefits to or on behalf of veterans and a pilot program for disability examinations as authorized by section 107 and chapters 11, 13, 18, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; pension benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 15, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; and burial benefits, the Reinstated Entitlement Program for Survivors, emergency and other officers' retirement pay, adjusted-service credits and certificates, payment of premiums due on commercial life insurance policies guaranteed under the provisions of title IV of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 541 et seq.) and for other benefits as authorized by sections 107, 1312, 1977, and 2106, and chapters 23, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, \$166,271,436,000, to remain available until expended, of which \$87,146,761,000 shall become available on October 1, 2016: Provided, That not to exceed \$15,562,000 of the amount appropriated for fiscal year 2016 and \$16,021,000 of the amount made available for fiscal year 2017 under this heading shall be reimbursed to "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration", and "Information Technology Systems" for necessary expenses in implementing the provisions of chapters 51, 53, and 55 of title 38, United States Code, the funding source for which is specifically provided as the "Compensation and Pensions" appropriation: Provided further, That such sums as may be earned on an actual qualifying patient basis, shall be reimbursed to "Medical Care Collections Fund" to augment the funding of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners as authorized.

READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

For the payment of readjustment and rehabilitation benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 21, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 41, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, \$32,088,826,000, to remain available until expended, of which \$16,743,904,000 shall become available on October 1, 2016: Provided, That expenses for rehabilitation program services and assistance which the Secretary is authorized to

provide under subsection (a) of section 3104 of title 38, United States Code, other than under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of that subsection, shall be charged to this account.

VETERANS INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

For military and naval insurance, national service life insurance, servicemen's indemnities, service-disabled veterans insurance, and veterans mortgage life insurance as authorized by chapters 19 and 21, title 38, United States Code, \$169,080,000, to remain available until expended, of which \$91,920,000 shall become available on October 1, 2016.

VETERANS HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM FUND

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the program, as authorized by subchapters I through III of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: Provided further, That, during fiscal year 2016, within the resources available, not to exceed \$500,000 in gross obligations for direct loans are authorized for specially adapted housing loans.

In addition, for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, \$164,558,000.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the cost of direct loans, \$31,000, as authorized by chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: Provided further, That funds made available under this heading are available to subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed \$2,952,381.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, \$367,000, which may be paid to the appropriation for "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration".

NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For administrative expenses to carry out the direct loan program authorized by subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, \$1,134,000.

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION MEDICAL SERVICES

For necessary expenses for furnishing, as authorized by law, inpatient and outpatient care and treatment to beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs and veterans described in section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, including care and treatment in facilities not under the jurisdiction of the Department, and including medical supplies and equipment, bioengineering services, food services, and salaries and expenses of healthcare employees hired under title 38, United States Code, aid to State homes as authorized by section 1741 of title 38, United States Code, assistance and support services for caregivers as authorized by section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, loan repayments authorized by section 604 of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-163; 124 Stat. 1174; 38 U.S.C. 7681 note), and hospital care and medical services authorized by section 1787 of title 38, United States Code; \$1,134,197,000, which shall be in addition to funds previously appropriated under this heading that become available on October 1, 2015; and, in addition, \$51,673,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2016, and shall remain available until September 30, 2017: Provided, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2016, under this heading, \$1,400,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018: Provided further, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the

Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a priority for the provision of medical treatment for veterans who have service-connected disabilities, lower income, or have special needs: Provided further, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall give priority funding for the provision of basic medical benefits to veterans in enrollment priority groups 1 through 6: Provided further, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may authorize the dispensing of prescription drugs from Veterans Health Administration facilities to enrolled veterans with privately written prescriptions based on requirements established by the Secretary: Provided further, That the implementation of the program described in the previous proviso shall incur no additional cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs: Provided further, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2016, under this heading, not less than \$900,000,000 shall be available for highly effective Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) clinical treatments including clinical treatments with modern medications that have significantly higher cure rates than older medications, are easier to prescribe, and have fewer and milder side effects.

MEDICAL SUPPORT AND COMPLIANCE

For necessary expenses in the administration of the medical, hospital, nursing home, domiciliary, construction, supply, and research activities, as authorized by law; administrative expenses in support of capital policy activities; and administrative and legal expenses of the Department for collecting and recovering amounts owed the Department as authorized under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, and the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq.), \$6,524,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2016, and shall remain available until September 30, 2017: Provided, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2016, under this heading, \$100,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

For necessary expenses for the maintenance and operation of hospitals, nursing homes, domiciliary facilities, and other necessary facilities of the Veterans Health Administration; for administrative expenses in support of planning, design, project management, real property acquisition and disposition, construction, and renovation of any facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department; for oversight, engineering, and architectural activities not charged to project costs; for repairing, altering, improving, or providing facilities in the several hospitals and homes under the jurisdiction of the Department, not otherwise provided for, either by contract or by the hire of temporary employees and purchase of materials; for leases of facilities; and for laundry services, \$5,074,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2016, and shall remain available until September 30, 2017: Provided, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2016, under this heading, \$250,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH

For necessary expenses in carrying out programs of medical and prosthetic research and development as authorized by chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, \$621,813,000, plus reimbursements, shall remain available until September 30, 2017.

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

For necessary expenses for the National Cemetery Administration for operations and maintenance, not otherwise provided for, including uniforms or allowances therefor; cemeterial expenses as authorized by law; purchase of one passenger motor vehicle for use in cemeterial operations; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and repair, alteration or improvement of facilities

under the jurisdiction of the National Cemetery Administration, \$266,220,000, of which not to exceed \$26,600,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary operating expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs, not otherwise provided for, including administrative expenses in support of Department-Wide capital planning, management and policy activities, uniforms, or allowances therefor; not to exceed \$25,000 for official reception and representation expenses; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, \$311,591,000, of which not to exceed \$10,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017: Provided, That funds provided under this heading may be transferred to "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration".

BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

For necessary operating expenses of the Board of Veterans Appeals, \$107,884,000, of which not to exceed \$10,788,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017.

GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES, VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

For necessary operating expenses of the Veterans Benefits Administration, not otherwise provided for, including hire of passenger motor vehicles, reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, and reimbursement of the Department of Defense for the cost of overseas employee mail, \$2,697,734,000: Provided, That expenses for services and assistance authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of section 3104(a) of title 38, United States Code, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines are necessary to enable entitled veterans: (1) to the maximum extent feasible, to become employable and to obtain and maintain suitable employment; or (2) to achieve maximum independence in daily living, shall be charged to this account: Provided further, That, of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed \$160,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

For necessary expenses for information technology systems and telecommunications support, including developmental information systems and operational information systems; for pay and associated costs; and for the capital asset acquisition of information technology systems, including management and related contractual costs of said acquisitions, including contractual costs associated with operations authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, \$4,106,363,000, plus reimbursements: Provided, That \$1,115,757,000 shall be for pay and associated costs, of which not to exceed \$34,800,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017: Provided further, That \$2,512,863,000 shall be for operations and maintenance, of which not to exceed \$175,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017: Provided further, That \$477,743,000 shall be for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement, and shall remain available until September 30, 2017: Provided further, That amounts made available for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement may not be obligated or expended until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Chief Information Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs submits to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a certification of the amounts, in parts or in full, to be obligated and expended for each development project: Provided further, That amounts made available for salaries and expenses, operations and maintenance, and information technology systems development, modernization, and

enhancement may be transferred among the three subaccounts after the Secretary of Veterans Affairs requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: Provided further, That amounts made available for the “Information Technology Systems” account for development, modernization, and enhancement may be transferred among projects or to newly defined projects: Provided further, That no project may be increased or decreased by more than \$1,000,000 of cost prior to submitting a request to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress to make the transfer and an approval is issued, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed: Provided further, That funds under this heading may be used by the Interagency Program Office through the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a standard data reference terminology model: Provided further, That, of the funds made available for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement for VistA Evolution, not more than 25 percent may be obligated or expended until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs submits to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, and such Committees approve, a report that describes: (1) the status of and changes to the VistA Evolution program plan dated March 24, 2014 (hereinafter referred to as the “Plan”), the VistA 4 product roadmap dated February 26, 2015 (“Roadmap”), and the VistA 4 Incremental Life Cycle Cost Estimate, dated October 26, 2014; (2) any changes to the scope or functionality of projects within the VistA Evolution program as established in the Plan; (3) actual program costs incurred to date; (4) progress in meeting the schedule milestones that have been established in the Plan; (5) a Project Management Accountability System (PMAS) Dashboard Progress report that identifies each VistA Evolution project being tracked through PMAS, what functionality it is intended to provide, and what evaluation scores it has received throughout development; (6) the definition being used for interoperability between the electronic health record systems of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, the metrics to measure the extent of interoperability, the milestones and timeline associated with achieving interoperability, and the baseline measurements associated with interoperability; (7) progress toward developing and implementing all components and levels of interoperability, including semantic interoperability; (8) the change management tools in place to facilitate the implementation of VistA Evolution and interoperability; and (9) any changes to the governance structure for the VistA Evolution program and its chain of decisionmaking authority: Provided further, That the funds made available under this heading for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement, shall be for the projects, and in the amounts, specified under this heading in the report accompanying this Act.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

For necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General, to include information technology, in carrying out the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), \$126,766,000, of which \$12,676,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017.

CONSTRUCTION, MAJOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406 and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, including planning, architectural and engineering services, construction management services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite

utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, where the estimated cost of a project is more than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, or where funds for a project were made available in a previous major project appropriation, \$1,027,064,000, of which \$967,064,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2020, and of which \$60,000,000 shall remain available until expended: Provided, That except for advance planning activities, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and other capital asset management related activities, including portfolio development and management activities, and investment strategy studies funded through the advance planning fund and the planning and design activities funded through the design fund, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and salaries and associated costs of the resident engineers who oversee those capital investments funded through this account, and funds provided for the purchase of land for the National Cemetery Administration through the land acquisition line item, none of the funds made available under this heading shall be used for any project which has not been approved by the Congress in the budgetary process: Provided further, That funds made available under this heading for fiscal year 2016, for each approved project shall be obligated: (1) by the awarding of a construction documents contract by September 30, 2016; and (2) by the awarding of a construction contract by September 30, 2017: Provided further, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall promptly submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a written report on any approved major construction project for which obligations are not incurred within the time limitations established above: Provided further, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2016, under this heading, \$490,700,000 for Veterans Health Administration major construction projects shall not be available until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs:

(1) Enters into an agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to serve as the design and construction agent for Veterans Health Administration projects with a Total Estimated Cost of \$250,000,000 or above.

(2) That such an agreement will designate the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as the design and construction agent to serve as—

(A) the overall construction project manager, with a dedicated project delivery team including engineers, medical facility designers, and professional project managers;

(B) the facility design manager, with a dedicated design manager and technical support;

(C) the design agent, with standardized and rigorous facility designs;

(D) the architect/engineer designer; and

(E) the overall construction agent, with a dedicated construction and technical team during pre-construction, construction, and commissioning phases.

(3) Certifies in writing that such an agreement is in effect and will prevent subsequent major construction project cost overruns, provides a copy of the agreement entered into (and any required supplementary information) to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, and a period of 60 days has elapsed.

CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including planning and assessments of needs which may lead to capital investments, architectural and engineering services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, or for any of the purposes set forth in

sections 316, 2404, 2406 and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, where the estimated cost of a project is equal to or less than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, \$378,080,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020, along with unobligated balances of previous “Construction, Minor Projects” appropriations which are hereby made available for any project where the estimated cost is equal to or less than the amount set forth in such section: Provided, That funds made available under this heading shall be for: (1) repairs to any of the nonmedical facilities under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department which are necessary because of loss or damage caused by any natural disaster or catastrophe; and (2) temporary measures necessary to prevent or to minimize further loss by such causes.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF STATE EXTENDED CARE FACILITIES

For grants to assist States to acquire or construct State nursing home and domiciliary facilities and to remodel, modify, or alter existing hospital, nursing home, and domiciliary facilities in State homes, for furnishing care to veterans as authorized by sections 8131 through 8137 of title 38, United States Code, \$100,000,000, to remain available until expended.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF VETERANS CEMETERIES

For grants to assist States and tribal organizations in establishing, expanding, or improving veterans cemeteries as authorized by section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, \$46,000,000, to remain available until expended.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 201. Any appropriation for fiscal year 2016 for “Compensation and Pensions”, “Readjustment Benefits”, and “Veterans Insurance and Indemnities” may be transferred as necessary to any other of the mentioned appropriations: Provided, That, before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and such Committees issue an approval, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 202. Amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016, in this Act or any other Act, under the “Medical Services”, “Medical support and compliance”, and “Medical Facilities” accounts may be transferred among the accounts: Provided, That any transfers between the “Medical Services” and “Medical Support and Compliance” accounts of 1 percent or less of the total amount appropriated to the account in this or any other Act may take place subject to notification from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the amount and purpose of the transfer: Provided further, That any transfers between the “Medical Services” and “Medical Support and Compliance” accounts in excess of 1 percent, or exceeding the cumulative 1 percent for the fiscal year, may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: Provided further, That any transfers to or from the “Medical Facilities” account may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

SEC. 203. Appropriations available in this title for salaries and expenses shall be available for services authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code; hire of passenger motor vehicles; lease of a facility or land or both; and

uniforms or allowances therefore, as authorized by sections 5901 through 5902 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 204. No appropriations in this title (except the appropriations for “Construction, Major Projects”, and “Construction, Minor Projects”) shall be available for the purchase of any site for or toward the construction of any new hospital or home.

SEC. 205. No appropriations in this title shall be available for hospitalization or examination of any persons (except beneficiaries entitled to such hospitalization or examination under the laws providing such benefits to veterans, and persons receiving such treatment under sections 7901 through 7904 of title 5, United States Code, or the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.)), unless reimbursement of the cost of such hospitalization or examination is made to the “Medical Services” account at such rates as may be fixed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 206. Appropriations available in this title for “Compensation and pensions”, “Readjustment benefits”, and “Veterans insurance and indemnities” shall be available for payment of prior year accrued obligations required to be recorded by law against the corresponding prior year accounts within the last quarter of fiscal year 2015.

SEC. 207. Appropriations available in this title shall be available to pay prior year obligations of corresponding prior year appropriations accounts resulting from sections 3328(a), 3334, and 3712(a) of title 31, United States Code, except that if such obligations are from trust fund accounts they shall be payable only from “Compensation and Pensions”.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 208. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, during fiscal year 2016, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, from the National Service Life Insurance Fund under section 1920 of title 38, United States Code, the Veterans’ Special Life Insurance Fund under section 1923 of title 38, United States Code, and the United States Government Life Insurance Fund under section 1955 of title 38, United States Code, reimburse the “General operating expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration” and “Information Technology Systems” accounts for the cost of administration of the insurance programs financed through those accounts: Provided, That reimbursement shall be made only from the surplus earnings accumulated in such an insurance program during fiscal year 2016 that are available for dividends in that program after claims have been paid and actuarially determined reserves have been set aside: Provided further, That, if the cost of administration of such an insurance program exceeds the amount of surplus earnings accumulated in that program, reimbursement shall be made only to the extent of such surplus earnings: Provided further, That the Secretary shall determine the cost of administration for fiscal year 2016 which is properly allocable to the provision of each such insurance program and to the provision of any total disability income insurance included in that insurance program.

SEC. 209. Amounts deducted from enhanced-use lease proceeds to reimburse an account for expenses incurred by that account during a prior fiscal year for providing enhanced-use lease services, may be obligated during the fiscal year in which the proceeds are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 210. Funds available in this title or funds for salaries and other administrative expenses shall also be available to reimburse the Office of Resolution Management of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication under section 319 of title 38, United States Code, for all services provided at rates which will recover actual costs but not to exceed \$43,700,000 for the

Office of Resolution Management and \$3,400,000 for the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication: Provided, That payments may be made in advance for services to be furnished based on estimated costs: Provided further, That amounts received shall be credited to the “General Administration” and “Information Technology Systems” accounts for use by the office that provided the service.

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 211. Of the amounts made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016 for the Office of Rural Health under the heading “Medical Services”, including any advance appropriation for fiscal year 2016 provided in prior appropriation Acts, up to \$20,000,000 may be transferred to and merged with funds appropriated under the heading “Grants for Construction of State Extended Care Facilities”.

SEC. 212. No funds of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be available for hospital care, nursing home care, or medical services provided to any person under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, for a non-service-connected disability described in section 1729(a)(2) of such title, unless that person has disclosed to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in such form as the Secretary may require, current, accurate third-party reimbursement information for purposes of section 1729 of such title: Provided, That the Secretary may recover, in the same manner as any other debt due the United States, the reasonable charges for such care or services from any person who does not make such disclosure as required: Provided further, That any amounts so recovered for care or services provided in a prior fiscal year may be obligated by the Secretary during the fiscal year in which amounts are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 213. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, proceeds or revenues derived from enhanced-use leasing activities (including disposal) may be deposited into the “Construction, Major Projects” and “Construction, Minor Projects” accounts and be used for construction (including site acquisition and disposition), alterations, and improvements of any medical facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such sums as realized are in addition to the amount provided for in “Construction, Major Projects” and “Construction, Minor Projects”.

SEC. 214. Amounts made available under “Medical Services” are available—

(1) for furnishing recreational facilities, supplies, and equipment; and

(2) for funeral expenses, burial expenses, and other expenses incidental to funerals and burials for beneficiaries receiving care in the Department.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 215. Such sums as may be deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to “Medical Services”, to remain available until expended for the purposes of that account: Provided, That, for fiscal year 2016, up to \$27,000,000 deposited in the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Care Collections Fund shall be transferred to “Information Technology Systems”, to remain available until expended, for development of the Medical Care Collections Fund electronic data exchange provider and payer system.

SEC. 216. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into agreements with Indian tribes and tribal organizations which are party to the Alaska Native Health Compact with the Indian Health Service, and Indian tribes and tribal organizations serving rural Alaska which have entered into contracts with the Indian Health Service under the Indian Self Determination and Educational Assistance Act, to provide healthcare, including behavioral health and

dental care. The Secretary shall require participating veterans and facilities to comply with all appropriate rules and regulations, as established by the Secretary. The term “rural Alaska” shall mean those lands sited within the external boundaries of the Alaska Native regions specified in sections 7(a)(1)–(4) and (7)–(12) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1606), and those lands within the Alaska Native regions specified in sections 7(a)(5) and 7(a)(6) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1606), which are not within the boundaries of the municipality of Anchorage, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the Kenai Peninsula Borough or the Matanuska Susitna Borough.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 217. Such sums as may be deposited to the Department of Veterans Affairs Capital Asset Fund pursuant to section 8118 of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to the “Construction, Major Projects” and “Construction, Minor Projects” accounts, to remain available until expended for the purposes of these accounts.

SEC. 218. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to implement any policy prohibiting the Directors of the Veterans Integrated Services Networks from conducting outreach or marketing to enroll new veterans within their respective Networks.

SEC. 219. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a quarterly report on the financial status of the Veterans Health Administration.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 220. Amounts made available under the “Medical Services”, “Medical Support and Compliance”, “Medical Facilities”, “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration”, “General Administration”, and “National Cemetery Administration” accounts for fiscal year 2016 may be transferred to or from the “Information Technology Systems” account: Provided, That, before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

SEC. 221. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or any other Act for the Department of Veterans Affairs may be used in a manner that is inconsistent with: (1) section 842 of the Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, the District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006 (Public Law 109-115; 119 Stat. 2506); or (2) section 8110(a)(5) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 222. Of the amounts made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016, in this Act or any other Act, under the “Medical Facilities” account for non-recurring maintenance, not more than 20 percent of the funds made available shall be obligated during the last 2 months of that fiscal year: Provided, That the Secretary may waive this requirement after providing written notice to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 223. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016 for “Medical Services”, “Medical Support and Compliance”, “Medical Facilities”, “Construction, Minor Projects”, and “Information Technology Systems”, up to \$266,303,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111-84; 123 Stat. 3571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described

by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417; 122 Stat. 4500): Provided, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress: Provided further, That section 223 of Title II of Division I of Public Law 113-235 is repealed.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 224. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs which become available on October 1, 2016, for “Medical Services”, “Medical Support and Compliance”, and “Medical Facilities”, up to \$265,675,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111-84; 123 Stat. 3571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417; 122 Stat. 4500): Provided, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 225. Such sums as may be deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, for healthcare provided at facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417; 122 Stat. 4500) shall also be available: (1) for transfer to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111-84; 123 Stat. 3571); and (2) for operations of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417; 122 Stat. 4500).

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 226. Of the amounts available in this title for “Medical Services”, “Medical Support and Compliance”, and “Medical Facilities”, a minimum of \$15,000,000 shall be transferred to the DOD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, as authorized by section 8111(d) of title 38, United States Code, to remain available until expended, for any purpose authorized by section 8111 of title 38, United States Code.

(INCLUDING RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 227. (a) Of the funds appropriated in division I of Public Law 113-235, the following amounts which become available on October 1, 2015, are hereby rescinded from the following accounts in the amounts specified:

- (1) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Services”, \$1,400,000,000.
- (2) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Support and Compliance”, \$150,000,000.
- (3) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Facilities”, \$250,000,000.

(b) In addition to amounts provided elsewhere in this Act, an additional amount is appropriated to the following accounts in the amounts specified to remain available until September 30, 2017:

- (1) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Services”, \$1,400,000,000.
- (2) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Support and Compliance”, \$100,000,000.

(3) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Facilities”, \$250,000,000.

SEC. 228. The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of all bid savings in major construction projects that total at least \$5,000,000, or 5 percent of the programmed amount of the project, whichever is less: Provided, That such notification shall occur within 14 days of a contract identifying the programmed amount: Provided further, That the Secretary shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 14 days prior to the obligation of such bid savings and shall describe the anticipated use of such savings.

SEC. 229. The scope of work for a project included in “Construction, Major Projects” may not be increased above the scope specified for that project in the original justification data provided to the Congress as part of the request for appropriations.

SEC. 230. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a quarterly report that contains the following information from each Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Office: (1) the average time to complete a disability compensation claim; (2) the number of claims pending more than 125 days; (3) error rates; (4) the number of claims personnel; (5) any corrective action taken within the quarter to address poor performance; (6) training programs undertaken; and (7) the number and results of Quality Review Team audits: Provided, That each quarterly report shall be submitted no later than 30 days after the end of the respective quarter.

SEC. 231. Of the funds provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016 for “Medical Services” and “Medical Support and Compliance”, a maximum of \$5,000,000 may be obligated from the “Medical Services” account and a maximum of \$154,596,000 may be obligated from the “Medical Support and Compliance” account for the VistA Evolution and electronic health record interoperability projects: Provided, That funds in addition to these amounts may be obligated for the VistA Evolution and electronic health record interoperability projects upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 232. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide written notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 15 days prior to organizational changes which result in the transfer of 25 or more full-time equivalents from one organizational unit of the Department of Veterans Affairs to another.

SEC. 233. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide on a quarterly basis to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress notification of any single national outreach and awareness marketing campaign in which obligations exceed \$2,000,000.

SEC. 234. Not more than \$4,400,000 of the funds provided in this Act under the heading “Department of Veterans Affairs—Departmental Administration—General Administration” may be used for the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs.

SEC. 235. None of the funds available to the Department of Veterans Affairs, in this or any other Act, may be used to replace the current system by which the Veterans Integrated Service Networks select and contract for diabetes monitoring supplies and equipment.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 236. Of the discretionary funds made available in title II of division I of Public Law 113-235 for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016, \$198,000,000 are rescinded from “Medical Services”, \$42,000,000 are rescinded from “Medical Support and Compliance”, and \$15,000,000 are rescinded from “Medical Facilities”.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 237. (a) There is hereby rescinded an aggregate amount of \$55,000,000 from the total budget authority provided for fiscal year 2016 for discretionary accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs in—

- (1) this Act; or
- (2) any advance appropriation for fiscal year 2016 in prior appropriation Acts.

(b) The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a report specifying the account and amount of each rescission not later than 30 days following enactment of this Act.

(RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 238. Of the unobligated balances available within the “DOD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund”, \$50,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 239. Of the discretionary funds made available in title II of division I of Public Law 113-235 for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2015, \$1,052,000 are rescinded from “General Administration”, and \$5,000,000 are rescinded from “Construction, Minor Projects”.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 240. (a) There is hereby rescinded an aggregate amount of \$90,293,000 from prior year unobligated balances available within discretionary accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(b) No funds may be rescinded from amounts provided under the following headings:

- (1) “Medical Services”;
- (2) “Medical and Prosthetic Research”;
- (3) “National Cemetery Administration”;
- (4) “Board of Veterans Appeals”;
- (5) “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration”;
- (6) “Office of Inspector General”;
- (7) “Grants for Construction of State Extended Care Facilities”; and
- (8) “Grants for Construction of Veterans Cemeteries”.

(c) No amounts may be rescinded from amounts that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

(d) The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a report specifying the account and amount of each rescission not later than 30 days following enactment of this Act.

SEC. 241. Section 2302(a)(2)(A)(viii) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting “or under title 38” after “of this title”.

SEC. 242. The Department of Veterans Affairs is authorized to administer financial assistance grants and enter into cooperative agreements with organizations, utilizing a competitive selection process, to train and employ homeless and at-risk veterans in natural resource conservation management.

SEC. 243. Section 312 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c)(1) Whenever the Inspector General, in carrying out the duties and responsibilities established under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), issues a work product that makes a recommendation or otherwise suggests corrective action, the Inspector General shall—

- “(A) submit the work product to—
- “(i) the Secretary;
- “(ii) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;
- “(iii) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives;
- “(iv) if the work product was initiated upon request by an individual or entity other than

the Inspector General, that individual or entity; and

“(v) any Member of Congress upon request; and

“(B) the Inspector General shall submit all final work products to—

“(i) if the work product was initiated upon request by an individual or entity other than the Inspector General, that individual or entity; and

“(ii) any Member of Congress upon request; and

“(C) not later than 3 days after the work product is submitted in final form to the Secretary, post the work product on the Internet website of the Inspector General.

“(2) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize the public disclosure of information that is specifically prohibited from disclosure by any other provision of law.”.

SEC. 244. None of the funds provided in this Act may be used to pay the salary of any individual who (a) was the Executive Director of the Office of Acquisition, Logistics and Construction, and (b) who retired from Federal service in the midst of an investigation, initiated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, into delays and cost overruns associated with the design and construction of the new medical center in Aurora, Colorado.

SEC. 245. Of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the “Medical Services” account for fiscal year 2016 in this Act of any other Act, not less than \$10,000,000 shall be used to hire additional caregiver support coordinators to support the programs of assistance and support for caregivers of veterans under section 1720G of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 246. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs in this Act may be used in a manner that would—

(1) interfere with the ability of a veteran to participate in a State-approved medicinal marijuana program;

(2) deny any services from the Department to a veteran who is participating in such a program; or

(3) limit or interfere with the ability of a health care provider of the Department to make appropriate recommendations, fill out forms, or take steps to comply with such a program.

TITLE III

RELATED AGENCIES

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, including the acquisition of land or interest in land in foreign countries; purchases and repair of uniforms for caretakers of national cemeteries and monuments outside of the United States and its territories and possessions; rent of office and garage space in foreign countries; purchase (one-for-one replacement basis only) and hire of passenger motor vehicles; not to exceed \$7,500 for official reception and representation expenses; and insurance of official motor vehicles in foreign countries, when required by law of such countries, \$75,100,000, to remain available until expended.

FOREIGN CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS ACCOUNT

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, such sums as may be necessary, to remain available until expended, for purposes authorized by section 2109 of title 36, United States Code.

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR

VETERANS CLAIMS

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for the operation of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims as authorized by sections 7251 through

7298 of title 38, United States Code, \$32,141,000: Provided, That \$2,500,000 shall be available for the purpose of providing financial assistance as described, and in accordance with the process and reporting procedures set forth, under this heading in Public Law 102-229.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE—CIVIL

CEMETERIAL EXPENSES, ARMY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for maintenance, operation, and improvement of Arlington National Cemetery and Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, including the purchase or lease of passenger motor vehicles for replacement on a one-for-one basis only, and not to exceed \$1,000 for official reception and representation expenses, \$70,800,000, of which not to exceed \$28,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018. In addition, such sums as may be necessary for parking maintenance, repairs and replacement, to be derived from the “Lease of Department of Defense Real Property for Defense Agencies” account.

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

TRUST FUND

For expenses necessary for the Armed Forces Retirement Home to operate and maintain the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi, to be paid from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, \$64,300,000, of which \$1,000,000 shall remain available until expended for construction and renovation of the physical plants at the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 301. Funds appropriated in this Act under the heading “Department of Defense—Civil, Cemeterial Expenses, Army”, may be provided to Arlington County, Virginia, for the relocation of the federally owned water main at Arlington National Cemetery, making additional land available for ground burials.

SEC. 302. Amounts deposited during the current fiscal year to the special account established under 10 U.S.C. 4727 are appropriated and shall be available until expended to support activities at the Army National Military Cemeteries.

TITLE IV

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 401. No part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall remain available for obligation beyond the current fiscal year unless expressly so provided herein.

SEC. 402. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for any program, project, or activity, when it is made known to the Federal entity or official to which the funds are made available that the program, project, or activity is not in compliance with any Federal law relating to risk assessment, the protection of private property rights, or unfunded mandates.

SEC. 403. Such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016 for pay raises for programs funded by this Act shall be absorbed within the levels appropriated in this Act.

SEC. 404. No part of any funds appropriated in this Act shall be used by an agency of the executive branch, other than for normal and recognized executive-legislative relationships, for publicity or propaganda purposes, and for the preparation, distribution, or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television, or film presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before Congress, except in presentation to Congress itself.

SEC. 405. All departments and agencies funded under this Act are encouraged, within the limits of the existing statutory authorities and funding, to expand their use of “E-Commerce” technologies and procedures in the conduct of their business practices and public service activities.

SEC. 406. Unless stated otherwise, all reports and notifications required by this Act shall be submitted to the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

SEC. 407. None of the funds made available in this Act may be transferred to any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government except pursuant to a transfer made by, or transfer authority provided in, this or any other appropriations Act.

SEC. 408. (a) Any agency receiving funds made available in this Act, shall, subject to subsections (b) and (c), post on the public Web site of that agency any report required to be submitted by the Congress in this or any other Act, upon the determination by the head of the agency that it shall serve the national interest.

(b) Subsection (a) shall not apply to a report if—

(1) the public posting of the report compromises national security; or

(2) the report contains confidential or proprietary information.

(c) The head of the agency posting such report shall do so only after such report has been made available to the requesting Committee or Committees of Congress for no less than 45 days.

SEC. 409. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to maintain or establish a computer network unless such network blocks the viewing, downloading, and exchanging of pornography.

(b) Nothing in subsection (a) shall limit the use of funds necessary for any Federal, State, tribal, or local law enforcement agency or any other entity carrying out criminal investigations, prosecution, or adjudication activities.

SEC. 410. (a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Defense in this Act may be used to construct, renovate, or expand any facility in the United States, its territories, or possessions to house any individual detained at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, for the purposes of detention or imprisonment in the custody or under the control of the Department of Defense.

(b) The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply to any modification of facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

(c) An individual described in this subsection is any individual who, as of June 24, 2009, is located at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and who—

(1) is not a citizen of the United States or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

(2) is—

(A) in the custody or under the effective control of the Department of Defense; or

(B) otherwise under detention at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

This Act may be cited as the “Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016”.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

AMENDMENT NO. 2763

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I call up my substitute amendment, a bipartisan bill for VA-MILCON.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Illinois [Mr. KIRK] proposes an amendment numbered 2763.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

AMENDMENT NO. 2764 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2763

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I call up my first-degree amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Illinois [Mr. KIRK] proposes an amendment numbered 2764 to amendment No. 2763.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To clarify the term "congressional defense committees")

At the appropriate place in title IV, insert the following:

SEC. . For the purposes of this Act, the term "congressional defense committees" means the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

Mr. McCONNELL. Well, amazingly enough, our colleagues across the aisle just voted to proceed to an individual appropriations bill. We have been trying to do this for months. Finally, they have approved going to an appropriations bill. This should not be breaking news, goodness gracious, but it is newsworthy because of what has been going on around here for the last 2 or 3 months. Democrats have repeatedly blocked the Senate from even debating individual appropriations bills. They never had a good excuse, of course, and the excuses kept changing as each previous excuse got debunked, but nevertheless they kept it up month after month. Well, finally that seems to have changed today. Maybe we can assume that this is the end of the filibuster summer, in November, a partisan season of obstructionist Democratic filibustering in which they have blockaded government funding bills entirely—all of them. Nearly every one of those bills was bipartisan.

Our Democratic friends, as they voted for them in committee, would send out press releases praising the bills, and then when they got out here on the floor, they all blocked them. They said no to funding for bridges and infrastructure. They said no to funding for energy conservation and clean water. They said no to funding for absolutely anything at all, especially for our troops.

You know, it is particularly jarring when you consider some of the things written recently by President Obama's own Defense Secretary in an op-ed entitled "U.S. Military Needs Budget Cer-

tainty in Uncertain Times." Here is what this Obama administration Cabinet Secretary said:

While Washington struggles to get its house in order, the challenges around the world continue. China continues its dubious and destabilizing land-reclamation activities in the South China Sea. Islamic State continues its barbarous campaign. Russia continues to violate the sovereignty of Ukraine and pour gasoline on the Syrian conflict. In this uncertain security environment, the U.S. military needs to be agile and dynamic.

This is the Defense Secretary of the President's administration.

What it has now is a straitjacket. At the Defense Department, we are forced to make hasty reductions when choices should be considered carefully and strategically.

This is President Obama's Defense Secretary talking about the necessity for these bills that are being blocked by his own party.

Here is the way he continues in his op-ed. He said:

I appeal to Congress to act on a long-term budget deal—

We did that—

that will let the American troops and their families know we have the commitment and the resources to see them succeed, and send a global message that the United States will continue to plan and build for the finest fighting force the world has ever known.

This is the Secretary of Defense in the Democratic administration. Sounds like he is lecturing the guys on the other side here who are the obstacle.

In spite of these pleas from the Secretary of Defense, we are still unable to get on a defense appropriations bill. One Member of the other side said that funding our troops was wasting the Senate's time—wasting the Senate's time.

We have seen them all filibustered repeatedly. They just did so again this morning. At a time when a vast number of threats face our country, as Secretary Ash Carter alluded to, our colleagues across the aisle actually voted to filibuster the bill that funds our troops and our military one more time. Democrats filibustered for months on end to hold hostage the men and women who voluntarily put themselves in harm's way, for reasons that shifted constantly and had little to do with our troops.

Mr. CORNYN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. McCONNELL. I will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would ask the distinguished majority leader whether he finds it ironic—and perhaps he has a better word than "ironic" to describe the situation we find ourselves in—that three separate times the Democrats have filibustered the funding that provides the resources to our troops to fight our Nation's battles and keep us safe, but then a few short days before Veterans Day, they decide to allow us to finally get on a veterans and military construction bill. I would hope it is not because they had second thoughts about going home on Wednes-

day and giving patriotic speeches about their support for our troops and military but then realizing what a spot they have put themselves in. I wonder if the majority leader shares my view that that is at least ironic, and perhaps "cynical" would be a more appropriate description.

Mr. McCONNELL. Yes, I would say to my colleague from Texas, they were afraid to feel the heat next Wednesday on Veterans Day, having stopped a veterans appropriations bill. Frankly, I hope they still feel a little heat on stopping the Defense bill because the vast number of veterans in our country don't just care about their own well-being after they served, they care about the well-being of those who are still serving.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for one additional question?

Mr. McCONNELL. I will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would ask the majority leader, having been through what we have been through here in just this last week in establishing spending caps for this year and next in this bipartisan and bicameral Budget Act, if he can think of any possible rationale for the Democrats filibustering the Defense appropriations bill, when, in fact, those spending caps are subject to a law which the President has now signed into law, and which were the subject of this bipartisan, bicameral agreement that passed just last week.

Mr. McCONNELL. Well, you know, as each obstacle has been removed, as each reason for filibustering these bills earlier is removed, they come up with a new one. We obviously last week agreed on how much we were going to spend, so the question of spending has been removed. The 302(b) allocations were completed yesterday. Our friends on the other side said they were happy with them. They are running out of excuses, but the end result is the same: They are still not allowing us to go forward on the Defense bill.

I would say to my friend and colleague from Texas that I heard these conspiracy theories that we had some trick to play here. I made it clear not only to my counterpart the Democratic leader but to other Democratic Senators that there is no nefarious scheme. We thought, all objections having been removed, the appropriate thing to do would be to try—by pursuing regular order, try to pass some of the appropriations bills, given the limited amount of time we have left. Yet they kept on doing the same thing with the exception of the veterans bill. It is a mystery.

The level of dysfunction the other side seems to be promoting is bad for the institution and bad for the country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. If the Senator will yield for a question, I ask the distinguished majority leader if it is still true that in order to accomplish this delusional scheme that our friends across the aisle have somehow dreamed up as a way to block this funding for our troops, even if that were true—which it is not, as you have pointed out—isn't it still true for an appropriations bill to become law it requires the signature of the President of the United States? So it would literally be impossible to do what they have dreamed up in their delusional state when they are accusing us of this sort of a scheme and plan, which is absolutely false.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yes, my friend from Texas is entirely right. There would be no way—consistent with the Constitution that James Madison wrote—that they would in the end not have some considerable sway over how this episode ends.

What I think it says, more than anything, is how committed to dysfunction our friends on the other side are—dysfunction for the sake of dysfunction. The American people are sick and tired of that. They want to see us do our work like adults, serious adults taking the responsibility we have been given by our constituents to do our very best for this country.

This is the same party on the other side that I remember lecturing everyone else about the dangers of the filibuster. Apparently they weren't very serious because it is obviously their new best friend now. This is the same party we remember bashing legislative "hostage-taking," but apparently they weren't serious about that either because they basically have become experts.

Look, the Democrats may never be able to fully remove the stain of this filibuster summer gridlock gambit from their party's reputation, but they can work with us now to finally start turning the page.

I ask my friends on the other side: When are we going to get back to normal if not now? When, if not now, when we have agreed to all of the contentious parts of the appropriations process. Every excuse has been wiped away. We have settled our own budget agreement. We have agreed on topline budget numbers. We have settled on subcommittee allocations, and we have just proceeded to an individual appropriations bill at long last.

It is time for the appropriations process to finally be allowed to move forward, time for the Senate to finally be able to get back to regular order. It is time for each of us to get back to work, not just because it is the right thing for our country, not just because it is the right thing for the brave men and women who are voluntarily putting themselves in harm's way, but it is the best way for Senators of both parties to have the most say in the process, for the American people to be best represented, with their Members debating

each appropriations bill on the floor with the opportunity for amendments to be offered.

A lot of work went into developing these appropriations bills—the occupant of the chair is on that committee. Most passed the committee with bipartisan support. That was certainly true of the Defense appropriations bill. It passed out of the Appropriations Committee 27 to 3. It was similarly true of the appropriations bill that funds veterans, which passed the committee with bipartisan support. That is the bill we just voted to proceed to.

It would support veterans by funding the health care and the benefits they rely on. It would support military families by funding the housing, schools, and health care facilities that serve them. It would provide support for women's health, for medical research, for veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury. It would do a lot of good in many of our home States too. In my State it would provide funding for design work at a new VA medical center in Louisville, a special operations headquarters at Fort Campbell, and an educational facility at Fort Knox.

The bill would do right by our veterans. We should pass it. With continued cooperation, we can pass it by Veterans Day. Then the appropriations process can continue after we pass this bill. It is obvious why we started with a Defense appropriations bill first. While this morning's filibuster was deeply regrettable, to say the least, we have the option to reconsider that bill and we will. We are going to keep working to ensure its passage.

Look, as we approach Veterans Day, I ask my colleagues to consider this. We have an all-volunteer force in this country. The young men and women who sign up to defend our Nation don't ask for a lot, but our Nation certainly asks a lot of them. These mothers and brothers and friends and neighbors aren't legislative poker chips, and helping them isn't a "waste of the Senate's time." These are Americans who deserve our support. Let's put the past in the past and unite to finally give it to them. Both parties did so in committee a few months ago and both parties could do so now.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

GETTING THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNTRY DONE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I had the pleasure of listening to the Republican leader's speech a few minutes ago. I understand he has two-thirds of his caucus who voted against the budget agreement and he has to kind of play to his audience. I think the words he used were: We are the party of dysfunction.

All you have to do is read the newspaper to find out that is not the case. The fact is, it has been shown time and time again in recent years the party that is not working is the Republican Party. There is no more evidence of that when you see who is running for President. All you have to do is look and see what happened in recent weeks in the House of Representatives, where the Speaker of the House of Representatives, when asked a week before he resigned: How do you put up with those people over there, and he said: If you are around garbage long enough, you can't smell it.

So let's not talk about us being the party of dysfunction.

The Republican leader has complained about delay. I don't know what kind of glasses he is wearing, we were ready to negotiate in June. We kept saying that over and over again. Right now we don't have anything we can move forward on. Let's sit down and talk. They refused to talk time and time again. We asked for consent agreements. They refused to do that.

Time was marching on. The debt ceiling was fast approaching where, if we had not advanced that, this country would have basically shut down and it would have had a dramatic negative effect on the world economy.

Please, I say to my Republican colleagues, don't talk about delay. We haven't delayed anything. These bills that are going to be in the form of an omnibus, they should have been done one at a time, but you couldn't do it because they were spending everything for defense and nothing for nondefense. So with the budget agreement, as we have said, we wanted to make sure sequestration was taken care of—and it was. Drastic cuts in sequestration are gone for 2 years. We wanted to make sure if there was any increase in defense the middle class got equal parity, and they did. We are satisfied where we are, but the time for casting blame is gone and my friend the Republican leader should stop trying to blame it on us. We didn't do it. We are not the party of dysfunction.

From the very beginning we sought funding levels that were fair to the middle class and to the military. The military is going to get their money. Everybody knows that. The Presiding Officer knows it. Everybody knows it, but it is not a bad deal that the middle class also gets enough to take care of them. Republicans seem compelled, as they did this morning, to once again fund one part of the government they like—the Pentagon—without doing anything for the needs of the rest of the country: the middle class, those people here at home.

We can give a speech just as patriotic as my Republican friend. We believe in the military. They have made great sacrifices for all of us, but we don't need to give great speeches about how patriotic we are. What we need to do is get the business of the country done, and that has not happened. Hopefully,

with this step forward and being on this Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill, we can do that.

Democrats opposed the motion to invoke cloture on the Defense bill this morning because Republicans again were compelled to do everything they could for the Pentagon and ignore the rest of the country, but this afternoon we have been willing to move ahead the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill. It is the right thing to do. That bill has both defense and domestic matters contained in it. It is a non-controversial bill, and it will give us an opportunity to start the appropriations process. It doesn't seem fair to us that we would rush forward and do the Defense bill, which is more than 50 percent of all the money this country spends in a year—more than 50 percent of the discretionary spending that we have to appropriate.

Now we have a December 11 deadline and we have to fund all the government to avoid a shutdown. So I hope we are considering this Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. The Appropriations Committee will be working together to put together funding—likely in an omnibus—for the rest of the government. Dealing with the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill is a small step to rebuild trust and experience in working together.

Democrats are willing partners to carry out the budget agreement Congress passed last week, but we will continue to fight for the needs of the middle class while we continue to fight and make sure the military is taken care of and also continue to fight poison pill riders.

Mr. President, we have a number of people on the floor. Is anyone seeking recognition?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 552 AND S. 966

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to ask the Senate to take up and pass two bipartisan no-cost bills that will help small businesses with one of their most urgent needs; that is, access to credit. Specifically, I am referring to Senator Risch's bill to enhance the SBA support for startup firms, which is called the Small Business Investment Company Capital Act, and the bill I have sponsored with Senator ISAKSON, the Commercial Real Estate and Economic Development Act, which is also known as the CREED Act.

Both of these bills have broad bipartisan support. In April, almost 6 months ago, the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship voted unanimously to pass both of these bills. I had introduced the CREED Act with my friend from Georgia Senator ISAKSON to reinstate a new version of a successful no-cost program at the SBA known as 504 refinancing. That program had expired before many of the small businesses that needed

help could benefit. Congress had created this refinancing program during the financial crisis when small business lending was frozen. As real estate values declined, many small businesses, even those that were performing well and were current on their mortgage payments, were unable to refinance their loans through traditional methods. Small businesses with equity in their properties were often unable to access that equity for additional operating capital.

That 504 refinancing program worked. For the short time that it was active, SBA and its loan partners were able to help a lot of those small businesses. More than 2,300 small firms refinanced \$5 billion of small business debt. Unfortunately, the program expired in September of 2012, even though there was still significant demand for this type of financing. In fact, on the last day this program was authorized, more than 400 businesses from around the country applied.

There is still a significant demand for this lending today. We keep hearing from small businesses that they would benefit greatly from this type of financing. In particular, it would help the many small businesses who are paying too much in interest because they took out their loans during the recession. As one lender in New Hampshire said:

During the crisis, businesses took whatever financing they could get. The banks wouldn't commit to long terms. Today the rates are much better, [so businesses holding those loans are paying too much].

Now, while the economy is better and lending to small businesses is starting to recover, many banks today either cannot or will not refinance or renew an existing commercial real estate loan on terms as beneficial as the 504 refinancing loan could.

We know there is real need for this program. We have heard it from small businesses, and we have heard it from groups that work directly with small businesses. I have a chart here that shows a number of those groups we have heard from. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Bankers Association support the legislation. The National Association of Development Companies; the National Small Business Association; the Consumer Bankers Association; the Small Business Majority; Women Impacting Public Policy, which does so much to support women-owned businesses; the Association of Women's Business Centers; and then we have a whole list of those development companies that support this legislation. I won't read through those development companies, but these are all organizations and businesses that want to see us start this program again because they have small businesses that need this lending.

I have a number of letters here that I will just hold up and show. We have a whole packet of letters, and I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD these letters.

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

GSDC
AUG. 4, 2015.

Hon. JEANNE SHAHEEN,
Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER SHAHEEN: Thank you for introducing S. 966, the Commercial Real Estate and Economic Development Act of 2015 (CREED Act). This bill is important to small businesses in New Hampshire and across the country. It would re-instate the 504 Refi program, a two-year initiative that permitted refinancing of existing commercial real estate debt using the Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 loan program.

We also want to thank the Members of the Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship for voting unanimously to pass the bill out of Committee on April 23, 2015. That was three months ago, and we are counting on the full Senate to pass the bill because it is an important source of financing for small businesses. We need to get it up and running again as soon as possible.

The biggest impact of the SBA 504 Refi program is to allow small businesses access to equity in their business real estate thereby allowing the bank and SBA 504 to consolidate shorter term, higher interest rate loans. This directly benefits the small business by 1) lowering interest payments and monthly payments, 2) locking in low rate mortgage payments for 20 years, 3) freeing up working assets (Accounts Receivable, Inventory, FF&E—Furniture, fixtures, and equipment) allowing the business access to working capital to support business growth and the hiring of new employees.

The SBA 504 Refi program is only available to existing businesses that are financially viable with experienced management and all loan payments current. This is not a bailout for big businesses on the brink of collapse but rather a credit enhancement for small businesses with equity in real estate that banks are not willing to leverage without the assistance of the SBA 504 Refinance program. The small business owner is savvy enough to realize the significant benefit of the program and is willing to pay the small fees to cover all costs, if they only had the opportunity.

Below are three specific examples of small businesses that benefited from the SBA 504 Refi program.

1. A building supply company headquartered in Merrimack, NH, that was significantly impacted by the recession with sales decreasing over 30% from 2007 to 2010. The business's \$1,000,000 LOC (line of credit) was demanded by the bank with payment due in full in less than 6 months. The SBA 504 Refinance program allowed the business to access the equity in their real estate by taking out a new 90% LTV mortgage (50% new bank, 40% SBA) providing 1) sufficient funds to pay off the \$1,000,000 LOC, 2) convert short term working capital with higher interest rate to long term lower interest debt with a fixed rate, and 3) free up access to new working capital. The new bank provided a new \$250,000 LOC and a new \$200,000 term loan.

2. A manufacturing company that provides drilling and routing services to high-tech industries located primarily throughout the northeastern United States and has its headquarters located in a 9,620 SF manufacturing facility in an Industrial Park in Salem, NH. The company's original \$575M mortgage required monthly P&I payments of \$4,500 (priced @5.65%) and the SBA 504 Refi program refinanced their mortgage and reduced monthly mortgage payments to approximately \$3,950 creating an annual savings of

over \$6,600. The interest rate on the new mortgage was also decreased to 4.25% with the assistance of the SBA 504 Refinance program. This 504 Refi transaction allowed the Bank to reduce its mortgage exposure to the customer by \$250M, which in turn allowed the Bank to consolidate three term loans and provide a single \$460M term loan, creating an additional \$3,000 yearly savings at a lower interest rate. Finally, debt consolidation and SBA 504 refinance allowed the Bank to grant the customer a new \$50M RLOC for working capital needs to keep the customer operating during the slow winter months.

3. A grocery store located in Littleton, NH. The store carries a full line of grocery store products as well as natural, organic and locally produced goods. With the assistance of the SBA 504 Refi program the business was able to access equity in their real estate and consolidate eight short term mortgages and equipment terms loans totaling \$3,231,000 reducing payments by \$114,000 per year. With this annual savings the business was able to add long term financial stability to costs and free up working capital to allow the business to hire new employees. This business has seen steady growth and is planning to expand in 2015.

There are more small businesses that could use this financing. Please urge the Senate to pass this bill.

Thank you,

SCOTT GARDINER,
Executive Vice President, Granite State
Economic Development Corp.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Washington, DC, Aug. 19, 2015.

Hon. JEANNE SHAHEEN,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. JOHNNY ISAKSON,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS SHAHEEN AND ISAKSON: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, supports S. 966, the "Commercial Real Estate and Economic Development Act of 2015," (CREED Act) which would help provide small business owners with much needed access to capital when attempting to refinance their commercial real estate loans.

Many small business owners are challenged to refinance real estate loans structured as balloon payments and collateralized by devalued assets when the loan matures. Even though the small business borrower may be current on their payments, the financial institution experiencing tightened lending standards and increased oversight by examiners may not have a choice but to either force the business into foreclosure, or take a loss by writing down the loan.

S. 966 would help small businesses and financial institutions overcome these hurdles by allowing small businesses to refinance eligible debt with a Small Business Administration 504 loan, at no expense to taxpayers.

More than ninety-six percent of the Chamber's members are small businesses with fewer than one hundred employees. The Chamber thanks you for introducing S. 966, the CREED Act, and looks forward to working with you on its passage.

Sincerely,

R. BRUCE JOSTEN.

SEPT. 25, 2015.

Sen. BOB CASEY,
393 Russell Senate Office Building,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Sen. PAT TOOMEY,
248 Russell Senate Office Building,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR CASEY AND SENATOR TOOMEY: On behalf of Northeastern Economic Development Co. in Pennsylvania, I write to share my enthusiasm for S. 966, the CREED Act. This bill was unanimously voted out of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship in April and has been waiting to be passed by the full Senate for more than three months. The bill is bi-partisan and has zero cost.

I urge you to push for quick consideration of this bill in the Senate and vote in favor it so that Pennsylvania small businesses, and small businesses everywhere, can once again have access to this valuable program.

The CREED Act will reinstitute a program that permits conventional loans to be refinanced with the SBA's 504 loan program. When this refinancing was in place from mid-2011 to September 2012, more than 2,300 small business owners were able to refinance existing equipment or owner-occupied real estate debt. During this economically challenging time, these entrepreneurs refinanced \$5 billion of their own capital to reinvest in their business and create jobs. One of the states to use this program the most was Pennsylvania—roughly \$68 million in loans went to small businesses that refinanced existing loans on essential fixed assets.

While large businesses have equal access to capital as they did before the recession, small businesses still have a tight credit market. This valuable refinancing tool is needed to help America's 28 million small businesses grow. The demand is certainly there—over 400 businesses applied to the refinancing program on its final day, but were left out from participating when it closed. With interest rates at historic lows, reinstituting the refinancing program will give small business owners a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lock in a fixed-rate refinanced loan and be able to use those savings to reinvest and grow their businesses. We hope with your leadership, this program will be available to them again.

Thank you in advance for your support of S. 966, the CREED Act, and for your continued support of small businesses.

Sincerely,

STEPHEN URSICH,
Executive Director.

CSRA BUSINESS,
OCT. 26, 2015.

Sen. JOHNNY ISAKSON,
131 Russell Senate Office Building,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR ISAKSON, We the non-profit SBA Certified Development Companies in the State of Georgia, are jointly writing you this letter to thank you for your support and co-sponsorship of S. 966 (the CREED Act) and to ask you to assist in the passage of the bill that is expected to be introduced on the floor of the Senate in the coming days. We as a group unanimously support this legislation which is a badly needed rule change to the SBA-504 loan program that we all operate in our various communities which would allow small business owners throughout our state to tap into the equity in their buildings and refinance debt at our current low historical rates.

This bill was unanimously voted out of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship in April and has been waiting to be passed by the full Senate for more than four months. As you well know, the bill is bipartisan and has zero cost to the taxpayers.

As one of the lead cosponsors of this bill, you understand the benefits it will provide to small businesses. The CREED Act will reinstitute a program that permits conventional mortgages and other loans to be refinanced with the SBA's 504 loan program if a small business owner can demonstrate sufficient equity and cash flow exists. When this refinancing was in place from mid-2011 to September 2012, more than 2,300 small business owners were able to refinance their owner-occupied business real estate debt.

While large businesses have equal access to capital as they did before the recession, small businesses still have a tight credit market. This valuable refinancing tool is needed to help America's 28 million small businesses grow. The demand is certainly there—over 900 businesses applied to the refinancing program on the final day it was in place. With interest rates at historic lows, reinstituting the refinancing program will give small business owners the same opportunity consumers have had—to refinance into a low fixed-rate loan and be able to use those savings to reinvest and grow their businesses. We hope with your leadership, this program will be available to them again.

It is our understanding that some have suggested that this program be held to accounting standards outside of the current federal budgeting procedure. The process of how the budget is managed is a contentious one and one that should not hold this bill hostage. That issue should be handled through the Senate Budget Committee and not a bipartisan bill that gives small businesses an opportunity to grow.

We know the performance of the loans that were refinanced during the downturn while program was in place, have outperformed OMB projections and the regular default rates on standard SBA loans. SBA implemented credit safeguards by making the program available only to businesses who have been in business two or more years and by not allowing business to refinance debt that has been past due in the year prior to application.

We appreciate your leadership on S. 966, the CREED Act, and ask for your assistance in its passage in the Senate.

Sincerely,

RANDY GRIFFIN, President,
CSRA Business Lending, Augusta,
On Behalf of the Attached.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. The support for this bill is so broad, as indicated by this chart and as indicated by these letters, because the need is so great. There is no reason we shouldn't take up and pass this bill. It has been approved by the committee—the small business committee. It has broad bipartisan support. It is cosponsored by Senators FISCHER, AYOTTE, COONS, CANTWELL, HIRONO, FRANKEN, and CASEY. I thank them for their support, and I thank the small business committee for its work.

Mr. President, like so many of the important bills that go through the Senate, this bill has been paired, as I said earlier, by the chairman of the small business committee, Senator VITTER, with another no-cost small business bill which is authored by Senator RISCH from Idaho. That bill, along with the CREED Act, will provide no-cost solutions that will help small businesses in this country get the credit they need to fuel our growth.

Again, both of these bills passed unanimously out of the small business committee. I believe the time has come

to pass them in the Senate. They have been held up for too long.

At this time I want to yield to my colleague, who is going to talk about the hold problem we have been facing on this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would like to be recognized to ask my colleague from New Hampshire a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, it has been more than 4 years since the Senate overwhelmingly passed a bipartisan resolution ending the ability of Senators to place secret holds as a way to block passage of legislation and confirmations of nominees. The resolution—which I worked on with our colleague from Iowa Senator GRASSLEY for more than a decade, and Senator MCCASKILL joined in these efforts—overwhelmingly passed the Senate by a 92-to-4 vote. Under the resolution, Senators who object to requests to pass legislation by unanimous consent are supposed to record their opposition by sending notice to the cloakroom and to the Secretary of the Senate, notifying colleagues of their objection. The objection is then listed in the Senate Calendar on a page—I took today's with the title "Notice of Intent to Object to Proceeding."

Mr. President, if you look at the page in the Senate Calendar where holds on bills are supposed to be listed, right now you will find a single entry on the page. It concerns a public hold that I placed on the intelligence authorization legislation last July. I wish I could say the reason that only one objection to a unanimous consent request is listed in the Senate Calendar is that my objection is the only hold placed on a bill in the past few months.

Regrettably, that does not seem to be the case. For example, my colleague from New Hampshire has been talking about her bill, known as the CREED Act, S. 966. It was hotlined back on June 18 to determine if any Senator objected to passing that bill by unanimous consent. An objection was made after the bill was hotlined back in June, but the objecting Senator was not publicly identified as the timely objection was made. My understanding is that Senator SHAHEEN and her staff subsequently learned that multiple Senators had objected to passing her bill by unanimous consent, but not one of those Senators made their objection public through the notice requirements that were part of the bipartisan resolution.

I think it is important to note that Senator SHAHEEN's CREED Act was determined to have no cost to Federal taxpayers. It is funded entirely by fees paid by the borrowers and lenders under the SBA 504 Loan Program. It strikes me as a very good bill that would benefit America's economy.

I gather there are some Senators who might not agree about the value of the

program, which, of course, is their right as Senators. But if they object to passing a bill, Senators ought to be publicly accountable. That is how we voted—92 to 4. They shouldn't be able to hide opposition behind anonymous objection. Senator GRASSLEY and I and Senator MCCASKILL and others have said: Look, public business has got to be done in public. So Senator GRASSLEY and I have publicly announced our holds by putting statements in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and I don't think that Western civilization has exactly been harmed as a result of this kind of transparency and accountability.

I would like to ask my colleague Senator SHAHEEN, given her interest in living up to both the letter and the spirit of the bipartisan resolution, whether it is her intent to state a unanimous consent request at this time to ensure the kind of transparency and accountability that was envisioned in the bipartisan resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I thank my colleague from Oregon for pointing out the fact that people who want to hold up legislation that has broad bipartisan support are supposed to make themselves publicly known. It took us months to figure out who was actually holding up this bill. So I do intend to ask unanimous consent to move the bill forward. I appreciate the Senator pointing out the change we have agreed to as a Senate in how we handle those holds and that the people holding up the legislation should be public so the public understands who is objecting and has a chance to weigh in with the people who are objecting.

Mr. President, with that said, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 104, S. 552, and Calendar No. 107, S. 966, en bloc; that the bills be read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I want to address the unanimous consent request, and I am delighted to continue the ongoing conversation we have been having about this for many months now with the minority staff on the small business committee and with the office of the Senator from New Hampshire.

I might preface my comments by observing that I used to own and operate my own small business. I helped launch a little community bank in eastern Pennsylvania, western New Jersey. I have some firsthand personal experience both as a small business borrower and as a small business lender, and that experience informs my judgment about this and other things.

I should also point out that this is a unanimous consent request to consider

two bills together en bloc. I have made it clear that I have no objection to S. 552, but I do have some concerns about S. 966 that I want to address.

Let me be clear about what this does. This legislation would reactivate an expired program that requires taxpayers to guarantee certain loans. By the way, taxpayers are already on the hook for over \$3 trillion of loans we force them to guarantee through many different programs. This would bring back to life another taxpayer loan guarantee program. It does it by specifically requiring taxpayers to guarantee loans that would refinance existing debt.

So this particular legislation that we are considering today is about the refinancing of existing debt. It is not taking on new debt for the purpose of expanding an existing business or something like that; it is refinancing existing debt.

As the Senator observed, this would sort of reincarnate a program that was launched in 2010. This was launched in 2010 because we were still in the very early days of recovering from a severe financial crisis. It was designed intentionally to be temporary—to require taxpayers to finance these loans for small businesses but only for this 2-year period. And that is what happened.

Here are my problems with this. I have two problems. One is the cost this imposes on taxpayers. I have heard it described as a no-cost program on several occasions. That is absolutely not true. The fact is that no small business goes through the hassle of applying for and participating in this program unless it can get the loan at a lower rate than what is generally available from banks. That difference between this taxpayer-subsidized lower rate and a market rate is the cost to the taxpayers. You don't have to take my word for it; that is what the Congressional Budget Office said. I will say more on that in a moment. In addition, the parent program that provides similar types of loans has lost \$300 million for taxpayers over just the last several years. How is that no cost?

The second concern I have is that there is no job requirement whatsoever in this particular legislation, unlike the existing program—the parent program, if you will, the 504 program that never suspended. That has an explicit job requirement for additional taxpayer liabilities. This one doesn't. It explicitly exempts the business borrowing this money from having to create or even retain so much as a single job.

So I would like to modify the unanimous consent request, and my modification does three things: No. 1, it allows the resumption of the program. That is the first thing it does. It allows this program to resume, which is the intention of the Senator from New Hampshire, I believe. But what it also does, after 1 year of resumption, is require that we begin to have some taxpayer protections on this. Specifically,

the form that would take would be to require the Office of Management and Budget to certify that the program doesn't cost money on a fair value basis. The fair value basis is taking into account the fact that not all credits are equal. For instance, the corner pizza shop is not as creditworthy as the Treasury of the United States of America. So a true cost of a loan differs between that which you would extend to the Treasury of the United States of America and the local pizza shop. If you don't have a differential between those two, then someone is getting the wrong rate. And if you lend to the pizza shop at the same rate you lend to the Federal Government, you are surely not being compensated adequately for the risk you are taking.

So this methodology, the fair value methodology, is the same one we use when we quantify the cost of the TARP program, when we quantify the cost of GSE guarantees, and when we quantify IMF liabilities. That is what I am suggesting we use.

The Congressional Budget Office has weighed in with their views on fair value accounting, and they said:

When the government extends credit, the associated market risk of those obligations is effectively passed along to taxpayers, who, as investors, would view that risk as having a cost. Therefore, the fair-value approach offers a more comprehensive estimate of federal costs.

That is the second thing we do. First, we extend the program and allow it to resume. Secondly, we impose fair value, which is to say an honest assessment of the true cost to taxpayers. Finally, my suggestion is that we enact the very same jobs test that the parent legislation—the alternative, similar legislation, the 504 program—requires, and that is, for every \$65,000 of new risk that taxpayers are being forced to take, let's at least make sure we are creating or retaining at least one job. Think about the alternative. Someone could go out and refinance an existing loan at a lower rate because the government—the taxpayers—is subsidizing the rate. They could use the savings to buy automation equipment and actually eliminate jobs. How could that make any sense at all?

My modification would restore the program, would provide some protection to taxpayers, and would require job creation in the process.

I ask that the Senator modify her request, that the bills be passed en bloc, and that my amendment to S. 966, which is at the desk, be agreed to.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator so modify?

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Reserving the right to object to the modification, let me point out that Senator TOOMEY's objection to this bill is not only wrong, it is inconsistent. The Senator is not objecting to Senator RISCH's bill, S. 552, which is also being considered today. He not seeking to amend it, even though it would increase small business assistance and also require taxpayer guarantee.

We have also recently passed bills that increase small business assistance, including Senator VITTER's disaster legislation and an increase to the cap for the SBA 7(a) Loan Program. The fact is that the amendment Senator TOOMEY is proposing is really not a compromise. Let me take a few minutes to explain why.

This amendment would essentially gut the pre-legislation, the 504 refinancing program, and it would prevent it from ever helping small businesses.

I appreciate Senator TOOMEY's experience as a small business owner. My husband and I started out our married life as small business owners. We had a family business. It did very well by us. I learned a lot about the challenges facing small business. One of the major ones is access to credit.

What Senator TOOMEY is talking about would single out this legislation and gut the intent of this legislation, and that is not what small businesses need.

I want to read a letter that we received from nine lenders—the nonprofit SBA certified development companies in the State of Georgia that worked with this program—about their assessment of what Senator TOOMEY is proposing. They say:

It is our understanding that some have suggested that this program be held to accounting standards outside of the current federal budgeting procedure. The process of how the budget is managed is a contentious one and one that should not hold this bill hostage. . . . We know the performance of the loans that were refinanced during the downturn while [the] program was in place have outperformed OMB projections and the regular default rates on standard SBA loans. SBA implemented credit safeguards by making the program available only to businesses who have been in business two or more years and by not allowing businesses to refinance debt that has been past due in the year prior to the application.

That is the end of the quote from the letter, and it was submitted as part of the package of letters I submitted earlier.

What Senator TOOMEY's proposal would do is single out this program and make it subject to a budget standard that would artificially raise the cost of programs meant to help small businesses, farmers, students, and so many others get access to credit.

I understand the Senator from Pennsylvania wanting to change budget rules for credit programs. Certainly, if he has a concern about that, he should try to do that. I am happy to have that debate. But this isn't the right place to do it. We shouldn't be holding small businesses hostage.

The Budget Committee recently started a series of hearings on budget reforms, and I think that is the right venue for this discussion.

I would point out that Senator ENZI, who chairs the Budget Committee, voted for this legislation. He was part of the vote in the Small Business Committee that passed this legislation.

I would also like to note that the CREED Act, as passed by the com-

mittee, was supported by a number of organizations from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

I will quote again from one of the letters we received from one of those lenders from Pennsylvania, NEDCO. They said:

I write to share my enthusiasm for the CREED Act. . . . I urge you to push for quick consideration of this bill in the Senate and vote in favor of it so that Pennsylvania small businesses, and small businesses everywhere, can once again have access to this valuable program. . . . While large businesses have equal access to capital as they did before the recession, small businesses still have a tight credit market. . . . With interest rates at historic lows, reinstituting the refinancing program will give small business owners a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lock in a fixed-rate refinanced loan and be able to use those savings to reinvest and grow their businesses.

The letter goes on. That is just one lender. Across Pennsylvania, the program had a big impact while it was up and running. In fact, Pennsylvania was the 12th most active State, with more than \$64 million in loans and more than 1,700 jobs supported in about the 18 months of the program.

We did amend the bill in the Small Business Committee to address some of the concerns from Republican Members about its budget implications. Those changes have been made. They have been vetted by our committee. But now, after months of delay, Senator TOOMEY has proposed an amendment that is not a good-faith effort at compromise, from my perspective, that would effectively prevent the program from ever helping small businesses that we need to help.

For all of these reasons, I object, and I would again ask unanimous consent to take up and pass both bills as reported by the committee of jurisdiction.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). Objection is heard to the modification.

Is there objection to the original request?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I am a little surprised and disappointed to be accused of not operating in good faith when I attempted to reach a compromise by allowing one of these two bills to go exactly as the proponent advocated.

I would be happy to extend fair value accounting treatment to the Risch bill as well. The Senator from New Hampshire is concerned about consistency. Let's consistently apply honest accounting for the risks we are imposing on taxpayers. And to think that is not an appropriate conversation to have at a time when we are asking taxpayers to take new risks—I don't know what better time there could be, especially after we have saddled taxpayers with over \$3 trillion of guarantees that they have been obligated to already.

If somehow my modifications would make it impossible to make the loans,

that should tell us something about this program. In other words, if we say that they can't proceed with a loan if a fair and honest accounting, as prescribed by CBO, shows it to be in a loss, then apparently they are concerned about the program being at a loss—as well they should be since the most closely related program has lost hundreds of millions of dollars for taxpayers.

So I think this is exactly the time to have this conversation. We have been having this conversation for months with the Senator from New Hampshire's staff and the small business committee's minority staff. If we can reach an agreement on this, as I said before, I am happy to allow this program to resume, but it should be done in a way that it actually creates jobs and actually does provide some protection to taxpayers. So since we can't agree to that today, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I understand Senator TOOMEY has objected to my unanimous consent request, but I do think it is important to point out that in fact the amendment he has proposed would essentially undermine the program. That is why I say that is not an amendment that is a real effort to improve the bill. In fact, it is not being offered on any other of these kinds of programs—didn't offer it on Senator VITTER's legislation, on increasing the SBA 7(a) program cap.

If that is a conversation he wants to have as a member of the Budget Committee and for the Budget Committee to start talking about that, that is very appropriate, but that should not undermine the efforts of small businesses to get the lending they need. In fact, this is a program that has a history. It has a history that shows that it has a lower default rate than other SBA loan programs. In Pennsylvania alone, it created 1,700 jobs during the time it was in effect.

So I think there is the possibility to get to some agreement, even though we have already made some reforms to this bill in committee, but I don't think gutting the program in a way that makes it ineffective is the way to do that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first, I thank the senior Senator from New Hampshire for her advocacy for small business. We work together on a number of different small business issues dealing with capital, and I appreciate her advocacy. Her partnership has helped us in Michigan on some very important things on which I hope we are going to be able to move forward, so I thank her.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. President, I want to speak today about the importance of having access to quality, affordable health care. The

Affordable Care Act has fixed a lot of what has been wrong with our broken health care system in the past. We no longer have to be afraid of someone in our family getting sick and being dropped from our insurance plan. Being a woman is no longer viewed as a pre-existing condition. Young people are able to stay on their parents' plan while they are looking for a job with full health benefits. That has certainly affected people in my family, as I am sure everyone in the Chamber and certainly those across the country have felt this, as they are supporting young people who are moving from high school or college and looking for a job. And we are slowing the growth of health insurance premiums. And, as we have this first week of open enrollment and Americans are heading to healthcare.gov to sign up and get covered, we know we now have 17.6 million more Americans enrolled in the Affordable Care Act who know that if the kids get sick tonight, they will be able to make sure they can go to a doctor and get the health care they need. If they themselves get sick, they won't just be relying on emergency rooms, which are the most expensive way to get regular health care. They will have the peace of mind of knowing they are covered if there is cancer discovered or if there is an accident or something else happens in their family.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the number of people who are uninsured has fallen to 9.2 percent. I would like to see that still lower, but the good news is that it is half of what it was just 2 years ago. So in 2 years we have seen the number of people without health insurance cut in half—I think that is good news—even before the opening of the marketplace and State exchanges.

Thanks to the ACA, the rate of uninsured children dropped to 6 percent last year, which is the lowest in history. We have the lowest number of children who are now in a situation where they don't have health care coverage. Unfortunately, just as Americans are reviewing their options right now during the open enrollment period, Republicans are looking to pull the rug out from under these children and their families.

A few weeks ago Republicans in the House passed what is called a budget reconciliation bill that essentially, bottom line, guts the Affordable Care Act, removing major provisions that help families get access to quality affordable health care coverage. According to the nonpartisan budget office, the bill on the whole “would increase premiums . . . by roughly 20 percent above what would be expected under current law” and cause 16 million people of the 17.6 to lose health insurance. Why in the world would we want to pass this bill? I don't know why in the world the House wanted to pass this bill, but why in the world would we want to pass a bill that will roughly increase premiums by 20 percent above what they otherwise would be and

knock 16 million people off their health insurance? Unfortunately, we are going to have that bill in front of us very shortly. I hope we are all going to vote no.

Of those who lose insurance, up to 20 percent of them—over 3 million—are children. After achieving the lowest rates of uninsured children in history, we are going to have in front of us a bill that would require elimination of 3 million children from being able to get health insurance.

The bill also eliminates the Prevention and Public Health Fund. As they say, we know that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of care. It is much better to focus on healthy outcomes, to focus on reducing obesity, diabetes, heart disease, strokes, and all of those things that allow us on the front end to do prevention and public health and wellness rather than picking up the pieces. It would eliminate that thought.

In Michigan these funds have been used to help prevent tobacco use and to promote awareness of the importance of children getting immunized against debilitating and deadly diseases, to name just a few things. Critically important, the House bill strips funding for Planned Parenthood. The budget office again estimates that up to 25 percent—one out of four—people currently being served by clinics for preventive health care would face reduced access to care. It makes absolutely no sense to roll back preventive health care for women, to roll back prevention that allows us to create opportunities for people with information and tools they need to be healthy rather than getting diseases down the road. Certainly, it makes no sense to raise premiums by 20 percent or to see 16 million people lose their health care.

I hope when that budget reconciliation bill comes before the Senate that we will say no and allow millions of Americans to continue to have the peace of mind of knowing they will have access to the medical care they need for themselves and their families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

F-35 PROCUREMENT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of the current plan to procure around 2,500 F-35s for our men and women in uniform.

Recently, I understand the chairman of the Armed Services Committee called upon Congress to cut the number of F-35s our Armed Forces will produce. Usually, I fully agree with the chairman's astute assessment of national security matters. In fact, I think he is a terrific chairman. In particular, I applaud his vital work in drawing attention to this administration's lack of effective strategies to eliminate the current threats posed by the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and the so-called Islamic State.

Nevertheless, I must respectfully disagree with his call to reduce the number of F-35s to be acquired by our Nation's military. In doing so, I reiterate my full support for the existing program of record, which calls for the procurement of 1,763 F-35s for the Air Force, 420 for the Marines, and 260 for the Navy.

As we assess the question of F-35 procurement, we should remember how the Department of Defense determined the number of aircraft it would purchase in the first place. I can assure you, this decision was neither hasty nor taken lightly. The Pentagon based its estimates on a thorough review of our Nation's airpower readiness and the capabilities needed to deter and defeat future threats to our national security. The Department's procurement request doesn't reflect an arbitrary estimate but the number of F-35s needed to keep our Nation safe.

If we reduce the number of F-35s to be acquired by the military, we hamstring our own ability to defend ourselves against America's enemies. Despite the formidable war-winning capabilities of the F-35, this weapon system cannot be in more than one place at once. One F-35 aircraft cannot simultaneously deter Russian aggression in Eastern Europe, patrol free waters in the South China Sea, target the Islamic State of the Middle East, and provide critical air support for our allies in Afghanistan. With every aircraft we cut, we are spreading our defenses thin, putting our national security at risk, and limiting the ability of our men and women in uniform to complete their mission.

Now is the worst time imaginable to limit production of the F-35. Not only does the quantity and magnitude of threats facing our Nation continue to increase, so does the number of locations from which these threats emanate. Moreover, when the Department of Defense made the initial assessment for F-35 procurement, we did not face the exponential growth of threats which continue to metastasize under the Obama administration's failed foreign policy. In this sense, the military's request to procure just under 2,500 aircraft is not only reasonable but actually highly conservative.

As some of my colleagues discuss reducing the number of F-35s we provide to our Nation's military, they should remember to consider the economies of scale. With every single aircraft we cut, the individual cost of each F-35 actually increases, but if we keep current procurement levels the same, the price of each aircraft remains the same. We should be actively looking for ways to lower costs, not raise them.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the F-35 Joint Program Office, its program executive officer, Lt. Gen. Christopher Bogdan, and its industry partners, we are finding ways to drive down costs and make the F-35 more affordable. They are doing a terrific job. In fact, the pricetag for the F-35 in our

country is actually decreasing. Currently, each aircraft costs roughly \$104 million to produce, but with the projected purchase of over 3,500 jet fighters worldwide, I believe that price will continue to fall.

At full production, the price of the F-35 will be comparable to the cost of new versions of the aircraft it is designed to replace; namely, the F-16 and the F/A-18, which raises another question. Why is it vital to replace our aging aircraft with the F-35? Why don't we just purchase new and improved versions of aircraft which are already in the fleet? The answer is simple. No matter how many improvements and modifications we make to the design of the A-10, F-16, and F/A-18 aircraft, they will never be stealth aircraft, nor will they ever match the capabilities of a fifth-generation jet fighter.

Stealth technology is absolutely critical to the future of our Armed Forces. Stealth fighters are the only aircraft capable of penetrating airspace protected by advanced area denial anti-aircraft systems. Both Russia and China are developing these advanced anti-aircraft systems, and both nations appear willing to sell their technology to potential adversaries, including Iran. Because of Russia's propensity to proliferate weapon systems to rogue regimes and China's startling advancement in technology to include the J-31 stealth aircraft and the PL-15 air-to-air missile, it is all but inevitable that our forces will routinely encounter these sophisticated systems in both the near- and the long-term. Because stealth technology is the most effective means of defeating these anti-aircraft systems, we hold a solemn duty to our servicemembers to provide them with the superior capabilities of the F-35.

I will not deny that the F-35 has had its fair share of problems. Its development program was not well-planned, and along the way there were abundant technical hurdles, cost overruns, and program execution concerns, but as is the case in the development of any breakthrough technology, setbacks are not only probable, they are expected. What matters now is how we react to these setbacks to make the program a success.

We have now rounded the corner and are on the cusp of fielding the most remarkable strike aircraft ever developed. The F-35 will help our Nation reclaim its technological edge at a critical time. Our enemies have been working tirelessly to match our military might, and they have made significant progress in achieving parity with our current technology systems, but the F-35 will widen the technological gap once again. Its superior capabilities will put us far ahead of our adversaries, and we can stay one step ahead by keeping procurement numbers for the F-35 at their current levels.

In all of my years of public service, the F-35 is the most impressive weapon system I have ever seen. I am con-

vinced this platform will give our Air Force, Navy, and Marine aviators the military advantage they need to protect us against tyranny, deter our foes, and protect our cherished liberties for years to come. I urge my colleagues to support this program, including the military's initial procurement request.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

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

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, what is the business before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is considering H.R. 2029.

Mr. MCCAIN. Which is?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The MILCON-VA appropriations bill.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS
BILL

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, we are now considering the MILCON-VA appropriations bill. Obviously, anything we do for our veterans is something that is laudable to all of us, but earlier a very interesting vote took place in the U.S. Senate, when the Department of Defense appropriations bill which funds the appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, et cetera—in other words, the Defense appropriations bill which provides for the training, the equipment, the pay, the medical care, all of those vital necessities for the men and women who are serving in the military—a sufficient number of my colleagues, I believe all but one on the other side of the aisle, decided to vote against moving to that legislation.

I want the record to be clear, all but one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, as I understand it, voted against moving to the legislation which provides the funding for the defense of this Nation and the men and women who serve it—items that are vitally important to the men and women who are serving, items such as military personnel. The committee recommends \$3 billion for pay allowances and other personnel costs for Active Reserve and Guard troops activated for duty in Afghanistan and other contingencies, counterterrorism partnership funds, a money provision that recommends \$300 million for the Ukrainians who are now being dismantled by Vladimir Putin. The committee, as I mentioned, recommends money for pay allowances and other personnel costs for Active, Reserve, and Guard troops activated for duty in Afghanistan and other contingency operations. The recommendation includes funding for subsistence, permanent change of station, travel, and special pays, including imminent danger pay, family separation allowance, and hardship duty pay.

I will have some other selections, but I think the American people ought to know what my colleagues on the other

side of the aisle just voted against. They voted against paying allowances and personnel costs for the Active, Reserve, and Guard troops activated for duty in Afghanistan, including funding for subsistence, permanent change of station, travel, and special pays, including imminent danger pay. We won't fund the men and women serving in imminent danger. We decided not to fund them. That is amazing—truly amazing.

One of the programs in here is the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund. There is item after item listed here. These appropriations are for the men and women in the armed services. These appropriations include their pay, their benefits, their weapons, and their means to carry out their duties in dangerous times.

Other programs in here include countering violent extremism online, the European Reassurance Initiative, and, as I mentioned, Ukraine and counterterrorism. All of these provisions are contained in probably what is the most important obligation that we have. I don't know of a greater obligation that we have to the American people and the security of the Nation. If there is any doubt about what is going on in the world, one might just want to look back at what happened in the last couple of days—the loss of a Russian airliner under very suspicious circumstances, the continued pouring of weapons and capabilities into Syria by the Russians and Iranians, and the continued gains made by ISIS in many parts of the world, including even as far away as parts of Africa and Afghanistan.

Do any of my colleagues know of the strategy that the United States has to address these issues? They can't because there is none. But here we are doing our duty—our constitutional obligation—to provide for the men and women who are serving and defending this Nation. And for obscure reasons—perhaps the Democrats, my colleagues and friends on the other side of the aisle, will come to the floor and explain why they would not go to a piece of legislation that protects this Nation and the men and women who serve it.

I am sure that in about 6 days—I believe it is—on November 11, Veterans Day, every one of my colleagues, like me, will go and be part of the celebration of the men and women who served and sacrificed.

What do you have to say about the men and women who are now serving? What you just did was to vote to not fund, train, equip, and defend these men and women, and without this, their lives are in greater danger. So don't go back and say that you are doing everything you can to defend this Nation. You are not.

Right now we have a very turbulent political situation in America. We have people who are now leading in the polls and perhaps have never held public office. The approval rating of Congress is at 12 percent or lower, and sometimes I

hear some of my colleagues wonder why we are held in such low esteem. If we can't even fund the men and women in the military and take care of their needs, who in the world will we take care of?

I believe the Republican leader voted in a way so that we can reconsider the vote. We need to reconsider the vote. We need to vote, and we need to be on record that we have done our barest of duties—our fundamental duty as elected officials, which is to ensure the security of this Nation.

Right now my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who voted not to move forward with this legislation have a lot of explaining to do on Veterans Day—a lot of explaining to do as to why they wouldn't take up the legislation that takes care of their change of station, their pay, their benefits, and takes care of their health care. It is all in this legislation, and yet my colleagues, for reasons which I do not understand, did not vote to take up this legislation.

I say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Where are your priorities? Where are they? Is it somehow to gridlock this legislation because you want a certain piece of legislation brought up instead of this one? Is it for some other obscure reason or is it because you don't give a damn?

This is an embarrassing time for me in this body, when we have enough Senators to prevent us from taking up what are our barest minimal requirements of our obligations, which are to provide for the defense of this Nation and the men and women who serve it. It is foolish, cynical, and dangerous to hold defense legislation hostage until every one of their political demands is met simply because of that.

Veterans Day is 1 week away. I urge my Democratic colleagues to stop treating our national defense as a tool for extracting political leverage. Let's return to the bipartisan tradition of providing for the common defense. That is what the men and women serving in the military deserve and require from us, it is what Americans expect from us, and it is what the Constitutional demands of us.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, it is always a pleasure to spend these late afternoons—sometimes Thursday afternoons—when the current Presiding Officer gets stuck presiding, when I come to the floor to talk, yet again, about funding—paying for—these roads and highways, bridges and transit systems that we use. I thank the Chair for being here. As I look around, some-

times we have more than a few folks on the floor, but I think a lot of people are headed for home on Thursday afternoon when we have no more votes.

Looking back over the last several days, there are actually a couple of things to feel good about. Last week we passed very important legislation improving the strength of our cyber defenses and our ability to fend off some of the 24/7 attacks that are being visited on financial institutions, on our military, on colleges and universities, on research operations, and on businesses in our country. I am very proud of the bipartisan work we did on cyber security, information sharing, and some of the new technologies that are being deployed to help fend off attacks from the bad guys around the world. I felt very good about that.

Not everybody likes the 2-year budget agreement that has been worked out in rough form. But I like to say about a friend, when you ask him how he is doing, he says: Compared to what? The idea of living from week to week, not knowing if we are going to have to shut down the government, continuing to spend enormous amounts of human time and capital getting ready for a shutdown and hoping it won't happen but preparing for the worst and having to do that month after month—I think we have, for the most part, said we are not going to do that for the next 2 years. Whether one likes every morsel or portion of the budget deal, I think we can pretty much all say: Compared to what? Well, it is better than the path we were on.

Today, as we prepare to take up over the next couple of weeks transportation policy for our country and transportation funding to fund that policy, there is the late-breaking news this morning from the House of Representatives that they have taken a very modest transportation bill including authorization—it is probably a two-part deal where we actually authorize transportation policy and then we try to figure out how to pay for it.

Too often in the past we have decided to pay for it by bailing out the transportation trust fund. The legislation we passed and I voted against here in the Senate last month on transportation—during the last Congress I chaired the Senate subcommittee on transportation infrastructure. I am I think the No. 2 Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee. I am a former Governor. I spent 8 years as Governor in my own State of Delaware. We focused on transportation infrastructure. I chaired the National Governors Association for a year. So I have looked at these issues nationally as well as a Governor.

But if we look at the authorization bill—again, that is one of the two parts of our legislation, to authorize programs. A lot of what we did in the Senate, coupled with what they did in the House, was pretty darn good. I was very proud of it. I want to give shout-outs to some of my colleagues, including Senator BOXER and Senator INHOFE.

I don't always think of them as two people who work well together, but on transportation and infrastructure, they do. They provide very good leadership, and they were good enough to let the rest of us join in. I think we had a good policy or set of policies that we can be proud of. I will just run through a couple of them here, using of this chart.

I have made a big focus on freight transportation. It is not just people who use roads, highways, bridges, and transit to get places, but we move an enormous amount of freight in this country. We move it on barges—actually, I don't know how many people think of that—or ships. We move a fair amount on airplanes. We move a fair amount on trains. We also move a great deal of our freight by roads, highways, and bridges.

The legislation we passed out of the Environment and Public Works Committee on I believe a unanimous vote makes good progress on the freight transportation side, trying to make our roads, highways, and bridges more reliable, more affordable, and more efficient. That is good.

The legislation we passed out of committee, which I think is mirrored in the House Transportation bill, is that we prioritized bridge safety. I think something like one out of every four bridges in our country, deemed so by people a lot smarter than me, are not safe. So in our legislation, we focused on bridge safety and we focused on large facilities, large projects of national importance—not little projects but big ones of national importance, regional importance.

The Transportation authorization legislation from the House and from the Senate also increases baseline funding and funding for public transportation. And it focuses on clean air funding toward the most dangerous diesel emissions to increase the bang for the buck, if you will. If you ever go by road projects, highway or bridge projects and transit projects, you will often see this yellow equipment that is almost always powered by diesel, and they put out—those vehicles put out a lot of pollution. We provide some money here in the authorization legislation to say that can't be good for us. It can't be good for the people who work around there and live around there. Let's see if we can't get some reduction in those emissions.

The other thing I liked about our authorization bill is research grants that go to States to see if we can't find a better alternative to user fees, which we have historically traditionally used, and to eventually replace the gas tax or something that makes more sense. It could be something called a road user charge, it could be tolling in conjunction with public-private partnerships, but just to look at the alternatives to user fees like the gas tax and diesel tax, which has not been raised for 22 years.

Let's see what we have next. The last time we raised the user fees in this

country—part of me wishes I could be doing this speech surrounded by former Presidents who have supported the use of user fees. I think we go back a long time, actually, when I was a little kid, before the Presiding Officer was born. Dwight Eisenhower, the President who brought us the State highway system, was an advocate of user fees. Since then we have had other Presidents—let me think of another President who thought that was a—Bill Clinton thought user fees were appropriate. I want to say George Herbert Walker Bush might have been one who thought that things that are worth having—that folks who use our roads, highways, and bridges ought to pay for it. I think there might have been one more. Ronald Reagan supported that notion as well. So in a bipartisan way, Democrats and Republicans have said for a long time that if we really want to have a better transportation system, we have to pay for it.

The idea is that folks who use that system and the businesses that use that transportation system have some responsibility to pay for it. That has been the way we have done it for a long time. Maybe someday, when we have the ability to do these vehicle-miles-traveled deals, where we don't have to worry about privacy concerns, figure out how many miles every car, truck, van in the country travels and be able to assess a user fee—I don't know if we are going to be able to do it. We have been trying for a long time. Maybe somebody will be able to do it, but concerns have been raised about doing that as well.

Anyway, since 1993, what has been happening? Maintenance costs continue to rise. We raised the gas tax in 1993 to 18.3 cents per gallon. We raised the Federal tax on diesel to I think 24.3 cents. What has happened in the last 22 years, believe it or not, is the cost of concrete has gone up a lot. The cost of asphalt has gone up a lot. The cost of steel and the cost of labor has gone up a lot. And the gas tax and the diesel tax have stayed right where they were 22 years ago.

The gas tax has lost almost 40 percent of its purchasing power—18.3 cents in 1993 is today worth about a dime. I think the 24.3 cent diesel tax is now worth somewhere between 10 and 15 cents. We have done nothing about it. We have not even been willing to consider indexing these user fees to the rate of inflation.

Has the highway trust fund eroded? Not everybody knows we have a highway or transportation trust fund. We do. Not everybody understands it is largely fed by user fees. Not everybody understands that when we run out of money in the transportation trust fund, we have to—if we are going to still build roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems, we have to do something about it. What we often-times do is we move money from the general fund for our country and move that money over to fill up the trans-

portation trust fund or the highway fund. When we run out of money in the general fund, we go around the world with a tin cup in hand and borrow money from all kinds of people, including the Chinese. We say: We would like to borrow some money from you, and, by the way, we don't want you to be mucking around in the South China Sea and all those other places where I used to fly around. We don't want you to be inflating your currency. We don't want you to be dumping your stuff on the American markets.

And the Chinese say: Well, we thought you wanted to borrow money, so get off our backs.

We don't want to be in that situation.

There is a growing need for road repair, as I mentioned earlier. One out of four bridges is bad. Two out of every 10 miles of highway surfaces are not good.

We have vehicles that are more fuel efficient. That is a good thing. We adopted CAFE legislation, and Senator FEINSTEIN was good enough to let some of us help her write that. But probably over the next 10 years or so we are going to continue to require more energy-efficient vehicles.

There has been a reduction in the annual miles driven. A lot of the millennial generation don't want to have a car. I remember as a kid growing up—maybe the Presiding Officer growing up couldn't wait to have and drive a car. That sure was my generation.

We have an aging system that needs to be addressed. In the face of congressional inaction, what have we done to pay for our transportation system? Well, we use budget gimmicks. We are pretty good at pension smoothing. Our pensions must be pretty smooth, because we have used that. We have used unrelated offsets to pay for some. Say, for example, monies that go to TSA to supposedly provide for safer travel in our airlines and airways, we are going to use that money instead to go into transportation—money that should be used to strengthen our ability to monitor traffic coming across our borders, a lot of vehicular traffic, a lot of trade. We are going to raise those Customs fees, but we are not going to use it to build up our defenses along our border and other stuff that probably has no relationship with transportation. That is what we have done—gimmicks.

It is not an easy thing to think about, but these are some numbers that we ought to look at. We bailed out the transportation trust fund in 2008 to the tune of \$8 billion. We bailed it out again in 2009, \$7 billion; the next year, 2010, almost \$20 billion; 2013, over \$6 billion; and we really got into the bail-out business in 2014, \$23 billion; and for the current year, 2015, \$10 billion. Add it all up, it is about \$75 billion in bail-outs. We moved money from the general fund. That means we don't have money to spend on other things that are legitimate needs in our country, and we are using it to pay for things that ought to be actually paid for by

the folks and businesses that use our roads, highways, and bridges.

Now, a lot of people are saying to me: Why should we raise the user fees? Why should we raise the gas tax or the diesel tax? Because it is fair. The notion that people and businesses that use these roads and highways and bridges ought to pay for them, to me, that seems fair. Frankly, it seemed fair in this country for about 60 years. We seem to have gotten away from that. We need to get back to that.

Here are a couple of questions—or the same question asked several times. Why raise the gas tax and fix the trust fund? This is \$324. What is that number? That is how much the average driver in this country spends a year in vehicle repairs, such as replacement of tires, axles, wheel rims—you name it. I have seen it actually as high as \$500, but we will take the low range of \$324. We pay for it one way or the other, and that is how much we spend on average in vehicle repair.

Again, the same question: Why raise the gas tax and fix the trust fund? The number 42 shows up. That is because that is how many hours a year we spend sitting in traffic. These are not my numbers. Every year Texas A&M updates this number, and they say that in Washington, DC, and up the road from where Senator COONS and I live, in New York City, where some of our family members live, or Denver or L.A., it is about 82 hours per year sitting in traffic, wasting gas, and putting out harmful emissions.

This is the number of billions of gallons of gas we waste just sitting in traffic every year—2.9 billion gallons of gas a year. That is a lot.

I don't know if it is the last poster that we have, but it is not a bad one to close on. One of the major roles of government is to provide a nurturing environment for job creation and job preservation. It is not the main role of government, but a major role of government is to provide a nurturing environment for job creation and preservation. We don't create jobs. Senators, Governors, and county executives don't create jobs, no matter how talented they are. Presidents don't create jobs. What we do is create a nurturing environment to help support job creation and job growth. What does that include? A world-class workforce, young people and not-so-young people coming out of colleges and universities who can read, write, think, and use math and technology, and who have a good work ethic—public safety and rule of law, affordable energy, affordable health care, access to foreign markets, and also the ability to move goods and products from place to place in this country and through our export markets.

McKinsey has a piece of their operation that does consulting and it is called McKinsey Global Institute. They have done a little bit of thinking and calculating to see if we actually made robust investments—not just little in-

vestments, not just creeping from year to year borrowing money from the general fund but actually making robust investments.

What would it do? We are talking about \$150 to \$180 billion of annual investments from all sources—State, local, and Federal—and to do this for 15 to 20 years. What would it do in terms of employment and GDP? Here is what it would do. Those kinds of investments in our transportation system would raise GDP anywhere from 1.4 to 1.8 percent per year. In addition to that, it would add almost 2 million jobs. Half of those jobs would be men and women going to work building highways, roads, bridges, and transit systems. We would have a more efficient economy—an economy to move products and goods more effectively, more efficiently, and more productively.

We say thanks very much to the McKinsey Global Institute. If we did this, a lot of people would be put to work building our roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems. They haven't been working much because we have underfunded transportation investment now for years at the local, State, and Federal levels. If we had funded it in a more appropriate and robust way, then a lot of people who have been on the sidelines who are either unemployed or underemployed would be doing something productive with their lives and at the same time strengthen our economy.

I see my colleague has been waiting patiently for me to finish. I will close with these words. Someone said to me: How do you feel that the House seems to have come up with a little bit more money?

We are not sure what the pay-fors are that they are using. Somehow we found some magic money in the Federal Reserve, and I hope it is legitimate. I hope there are no unintended consequences that we are aware of, but we will find out about that over the next several days, I hope. I am not outraged.

I was, frankly, outraged by what we passed here a month or so ago—so grossly underfunded, 3 years of not very thoughtful funding. What we hear from the House is that it is more robust, and I am happy to take a look at that. But it is not a user fee approach. It basically doesn't say: OK, those who use our highways, roads, and bridges ought to pay for those. We strayed from that. It is sort of a grab bag from places that have nothing to do with transportation. We are going to use that money, and it is only for a short while. We will be back in the soup again in 4 or 5 years.

This Senator thinks we can do better than that. It is not just me who is disappointed. People are disappointed, but we will live to fight again another day. It is too bad that we didn't take advantage of this day and seize the day.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, it is my desire to address the Senate about a particular serious problem that faces us. I ask unanimous consent that I be granted 7 minutes as in morning business.

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

GUANTANAMO BAY DETENTION FACILITIES

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise today regarding President Obama's most recent, egregious attempt to close the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base detention facilities and relocate enemy combatants, i.e., terrorists, to the United States.

Who are we talking about here when we say enemy combatants with regard to our national security and the problems that this may pose? We still have some high-level terrorists at Gitmo. It reminds me of the five terrorists that we let out sometime ago in exchange for a Sgt. Bergdahl. These are high-level terrorists. Khalid Shaikh Mohammed we know is the mastermind of 9/11. Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, the USS *Cole* bomber. I was a member of the Intelligence Committee when that happened, and I was concerned that we didn't connect the dots with regards to our national security and our national safety. That certainly was the case. We have Hambali, who is the Bali bomber. We have four coconspirators with Khalid with regards to 9/11—Ramzi bin al-Shibh, Mustafa Ahmed al-Hawsawi, Abd al Aziz Ali, and Walid bin Attash.

These are folks that are still determined to do great harm to the United States. I don't think they changed their minds.

The President's determined effort to close Gitmo began his first days in office when he signed Executive Order 13492, requiring the close of Gitmo within 1 year. Fortunately, for the security of the United States, the Congress stood up to this Executive order and stopped it, and the President's attempt to close Gitmo was also met by strong objections from all across the country, even in his home State of Illinois. Illinois turned its back on a plan to transfer detainees to a state-run prison, the Thompson Correctional Facility.

More importantly, the Congress laid down its first marker on prohibiting the President from transferring or releasing detainees to the United States through the Supplemental Appropriations Act passed in June of 2009. Every year since then—7 years—the Congress has maintained this prohibition.

This year's National Defense Authorization Act continues to enforce the will of the American people and the Congress. Yet just yesterday the President's Press Secretary announced blithely that the President is not bound by Congress—and I would include the American people—and the President will do what he wants to do by another Executive order if he determines that is the best approach.

National Security Advisor Susan Rice has just been quoted as saying: "I

can't say with certainty that we're 100 percent going to get there, but I can tell you we're going to die trying." That is a pretty bold statement.

What the President wants to do doesn't equate with national security. I think he wants to fulfill his campaign promise and preserve his alleged legacy and simply close Gitmo, not taking a hard look at what may take place.

Now I have gone head-to-head with this administration on many issues but none are as close to my strong belief and commitment to protect the United States, the people of Kansas, and all Americans. It does not make sense to locate terrorists at Fort Leavenworth, KS, which is the intellectual center of the Army, and to pose a threat to that community. I have often said that the first obligation of any Member of Congress is to protect our national security. Allowing Gitmo terrorists to set foot in the United States is in direct violation, in my view, of that commitment, and we should not stand for this President or any future President to threaten our security by Executive order.

It is regrettable that I have to be here making this speech at all in response to the administration and the news that suddenly appears in the Nation's press that there were people visiting Colorado, Fort Leavenworth, and Charleston, SC.

In September, in response to the administration's visit to Kansas, I placed a hold on the administration's nominee to serve as Secretary of the Army. I don't like doing this. I have no personal bias whatsoever with regard to this person politically or the ability to do the job. I did so with purpose and respect. I articulated this to the Army. I articulated this to my good friend and colleague John McHugh, who was the Secretary of Army, to the Department of Defense and the Secretary of Defense. During my conversations I was reminded that the administration could not implement any parts of this study without explicit authorization from Congress. So if and when a study is produced—if there is a plan, and we don't know if there is a plan—the administration would come before Congress to ask for that authority and the money. Guess what; no money can be spent on that. So it seems to me that is already a violation.

The administration's threat to act by Executive order yesterday speaks to the exact opposite of the understanding that I have. Congress has listened to the American people and done what is necessary to uphold national security and prohibit this administration from behaving in an unleashed fashion.

I know the President is resolute. He reminded us of that fact by signing 223 Executive orders during his Presidency. It is not so much the number of Executive orders but Executive orders that are in direct violation or in opposition to the intent of the Congress.

I just don't think this should be determined by ignoring the Congress and

simply issuing an Executive order. That is not the way to go. It just raises all this dust in opposition, and people like me come to the floor extremely worried about what this could bring.

I remember before 9/11, when I made the statement that the oceans no longer protected us. Our threat level remains high today. The threat of ISIS grows, stability in Syria continues to erode, Russia is advancing in the Middle East, and Iran continues to churn its nuclear reactors.

We cannot, it seems to me, we must not act politically. We must not take action simply because of "legacy" and a political campaign promise. Instead, we must act conscientiously. The only conscientious way forward on this issue is to maintain detention at Guantanamo Bay. To do otherwise would be a violation of U.S. law, not to mention a bull's-eye on Fort Leavenworth, where we have the intellectual center of the Army and the Army Command and General Staff College. That is not wise. That does not make any sense.

Let me say that there is another issue the President has brought up, and that is the issue of recruitment. We hear this from people who honestly believe that if we close Gitmo, somehow it will take away the incentive for various terrorist groups to recruit other terrorists from this country and all across Europe, all around the world, saying: Oh my goodness, we have terrorists at Gitmo, and when will the United States close that so that we can close our recruiting?

If we have terrorists located in the United States, it seems to me that the recruiting would simply be this: All right, Gitmo is closed, but we have our brothers at Fort Leavenworth, we have our brothers in Charleston, and we have our brothers in Colorado. What do you think would happen with regard to what they would do in response to that, not only to recruit people but to act? This goes back to the welfare of all Americans, not to mention those in Colorado, Kansas, and South Carolina. This is a bad idea—a very bad idea.

I hope those of us in the Congress will maintain our vigilance and make sure that no money will ever be authorized or appropriated with regard to taking terrorists from Gitmo and locating them in the United States. We must not do it. It is the wrong decision. It is a bad decision. I don't know why the President is so stubborn about it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to shine a spotlight on apprentices, one of our Nation's oldest forms of education and still one of the smartest investments we can make as a nation. The week we are in the middle of right now—this very week—is National Apprenticeship Week. I am honored to be joined today by Senator FRANKEN, who will also be making remarks in support of the value of apprenticeships.

In this body, we often discuss the importance, the value of expanding early childhood education, strengthening our public schools, and making college more affordable. Indeed, these investments are critical, but let's not forget about what I call the other 4-year degree. It is a degree that guarantees you a well-paying job and a career path after graduation. It is a degree that gives you experience that employers demand and teaches you skills that last a lifetime. It is a degree that provides a paycheck even while you are still in school. And it is a degree that leaves you debt-free. But where is the catch? Well, you might have to wake up early every day. You might have to work on nights and weekends. You will definitely have to complete thousands of hours of hands-on on-the-job training and 4, 5, or more years of work in your trade. In many apprenticeship programs, if you miss even a few days of work, that is it, you are done. On-the-job training, years of work experience, and a limited number of absences does not sound like a typical college curriculum, and it is not. It is an apprenticeship.

Broadly defined, apprenticeships are programs that train workers in highly skilled occupations by providing instruction and on-the-job training. After apprentices complete their programs, they receive journeyman papers and are set up for a job with the employer, the union, or the association that sponsored the program. These programs are long, challenging, and competitive. An appropriate question at the outset is, Do they work?

Well, ask Ed Woodrum, an instructor at the Carpenters Joint Apprenticeship Center in New Castle, DE. Ed tells the story of Scotty. Scotty is a Delawarean who was literally living on the streets, destitute, who was blessed to land an opportunity through the Challenge Program, a not-for-profit rehabilitation and skills organization in Wilmington which I know well and have always supported and have enjoyed seeing the impact of their work, both the materials they introduce and the impacts on the lives of the young men and women they train.

The Carpenters have a partnership with the Challenge Program, and through that relationship Scotty began working as an apprentice with the Carpenters. Fast-forward to today, years later, and Scotty is still a journeyman with the Carpenters. He recently got engaged, he owns a car, and he is living in a townhouse in Wilmington. So do apprenticeship programs work? In Scotty's case, it transformed his life.

If you want to know if they really work, ask Jim Maravelias with Laborers Local 199, also from Delaware. The laborers apprenticeship program requires 4,000 hours in the field and at least five core classes in heavy construction, although most apprentices take over a dozen classes in that time. Jim has seen his laborers journey men and women go on to leadership and

management roles in construction as foremen or shop stewards or business agents. Jim knows how important apprenticeships are not only for the construction industry but for the lives and futures of the Delawareans who are so deeply affected positively by their apprenticeship experience. As Jim puts it, through these apprentices, “we offer them a career, not just a job.”

So do apprenticeship programs work? Ask Tony Papili, my friend from the Glasgow area who runs the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 74. Fresh out of college with a traditional bachelor's degree, Pip went back to school as an apprentice. Today Pip know from firsthand experience how valuable apprenticeship programs are, which is why Local 74 trains fitters, plumbers, HVAC service technicians, welders, and instrument technicians. Local 74's program is no cakewalk. Once an applicant is accepted, they are committed to 5 years of night classes, on top of the 8,500 hours they will spend in the field learning their trade before becoming a journeyman.

Apprenticeship programs are not just difficult, they are competitive too. Take the program at the IBEW 313 in New Castle, DE, of which Doug Drummond is one of the leaders and a trustee. The IBEW's apprenticeship program is the largest in Delaware today with 120 active apprentices. Each year, 313's apprenticeship program has 2,500 applicants competing for just 1 of 24 open spots. That is a 1-percent acceptance rate.

The fitters, the electricians, and the carpenters in these programs are just some of the 1,100 Delawareans actively working through apprenticeship programs with lots of different businesses, unions, and organizations. Last year, my home State saw 119 apprentices complete their programs and get their journeyman papers. So far, 109 have gotten their papers this year, and we want to see these numbers continue to steadily rise.

Right now, across the entire country, over 440,000 aspiring journeymen are working through apprenticeship programs, knowing that if they put in the time and effort, they will earn an opportunity to unlock a steady, high-paying job. On average, the starting salary for an apprentice is \$50,000, which is several thousand dollars more than the average starting salary for a college graduate with a bachelor's degree, and typically there is no debt for an apprentice.

The benefits of apprenticeship programs are sustainable. Over the course of their career, American workers who complete an apprenticeship program can expect to earn \$300,000 more than their peers who don't go through a comparable program. If that is not the ticket to the middle class, I don't what is.

I want to commend today the 150,000 employers across this whole country who host apprentices, who partner with apprenticeship programs. Businesses

are not doing it as a public service; they are investing in apprenticeships because they typically get \$1.50 in return for every \$1 they invest. Tony Papili and the members of Local 74 pay for their own apprenticeship program out of pocket. They take money that would otherwise go to a pay raise or their benefits and put it back into the program. The electricians at Local 313 put in over 1 million hours of work a year, and for every hour they work, they put 55 cents back into their apprenticeship program. These are significant investments. More importantly, they are smart investments that are helping to fill a much needed gap in the American workforce with high-quality, high-paying jobs and by helping train workers for skilled trades and the vital manufacturing jobs of this century.

Strengthening America's 21st-century workforce is essential to the competitiveness of our economy in the world today and to the continued revitalization of our manufacturing sector. That is why it is one of the four core pillars of the Manufacturing Jobs for America Initiative, which includes a number of additional proposals to strengthen career development and on-the-job training programs.

Last year's reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which was a real win for job-training programs across the country, included five different policy ideas, many of them bipartisan, which came from the Manufacturing Jobs for America Initiative. I would like to see this momentum continue by making a sustained commitment to expanding apprenticeship programs.

The thousands of hours of on-the-job experience produce journeymen with a keen understanding of the techniques and the tools they need to do their jobs, and it makes them safer, more skilled, and more productive employees. Employers know this too. Electrical contractors in Delaware are hiring journeyman straight out of the IBEW's apprenticeship program because they know they are well trained, well equipped, and ready to work. Same for the pipefitters.

Pip said he is training apprentices to be “smarter and better skilled than the last generation,” but he adds, “I don't think people realize what we do to train these young men and women to become journeymen in the field.” Pip is right. That is why after I get off the 5 o'clock train I am taking home to Wilmington tonight, my first stop will be a trade and apprenticeship open house at Delcastle High School.

I urge my colleagues to learn about the apprenticeship programs in your States. Go and visit employers who depend on apprentices and talk to your constituents who have gone through these programs. I know you will be impressed.

Too often we define “education” too narrowly here. We talk about education as a ticket to the middle class,

but we often don't include apprenticeship programs. That has to change. Apprenticeship programs work.

Ed Woodrum with the Carpenters sees it as simple math. He describes apprenticeship programs as “opportunity plus resources plus support which equals changed lives.” Ed is right.

That is why I am so proud to join Senator FRANKEN in cosponsoring Senator MURRAY's bipartisan resolution honoring the inaugural National Apprenticeship Week this week. I am also proud to join President Obama and Delaware's own Vice President JOE BIDEN in support of their goal to double the number of apprenticeships in 5 years—a goal all of us should share. I especially want to recognize and thank the Vice President for his effective and long leadership in reviewing our Nation's job-training programs and finding ways to meaningfully improve them.

I commend the administration's efforts to expand access to registered apprenticeships to make it easier for apprentices to turn their experience into college credit. Besides apprenticeships, there are very few other Federal programs we know that are estimated to return \$27 in economic productivity for every dollar we invest. Budgets are tight today, and we are all looking for smart, cost-effective investments that create jobs and that can help revitalize manufacturing. That is why apprenticeship programs deserve our continued support.

Before I yield the floor, I want to thank my colleague Senator FRANKEN for his passionate, engaged, and sustained leadership on making sure that community colleges and apprenticeship programs work for the working men and women of this country and help create new opportunities for manufacturing jobs that are high-skill, high-wage, and high-quality for folks all over this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I would like to return the kind words of my colleague from Delaware and thank him for his leadership in this whole field of manufacturing and filling the skills gap that we see all over this country and getting young people and getting people in midcareer trained up to do jobs that manufacturers and people in the IT industry and other industries need to fill.

I rise today to recognize the very first week of November as the very first ever National Apprenticeship Week. I want to talk a little bit about the benefits of apprenticeship training programs, about what I hear in my State of Minnesota, and about my bill, the Community College to Career Fund Act, which would expand apprenticeship training programs through partnerships between employers and community and technical colleges.

When I travel around my State—and I am sure the Presiding Officer hears

this in Louisiana as well—I hear over and over again that employers are desperate to hire good people with the right skills for jobs that pay well.

Today there are over 6,500 open manufacturing jobs in my State. And other sectors such as IT, health care—and mechanics for the aerospace industry, for airplanes—these sectors in our economy are experiencing similar problems. They cannot find workers with the necessary training and the right skills to fit jobs that are there. These jobs are there. This is what is called the skills gap. I am sure that my friend, the Presiding Officer from Louisiana, sees the skills gap in his State as well.

One Minnesota employer, Kimberly Arrigoni of Haberman Machine in Oakdale, MN, put it this way:

For my company specifically it no longer is a capacity issue because of equipment, but one with people. We are limited in what we can produce and ship out the door. . . . Imagine what this very ripple effect is causing my state and our country as a whole.

She is right, by the way. I visited Haberman Machine, and it is a very good precision machine tooling company. It is a family-owned business, and it is great. They have jobs they want to fill, but people aren't being trained up fast enough.

There are many registered apprenticeship programs nationwide in more than 1,000 occupations that prepare workers with the skills they need for tomorrow's jobs, yet they don't get the support they need. I have a bill that would address that and provide that support. My bill, the Community College to Career Fund Act, would encourage apprenticeship training programs by supporting public-private partnerships among communities, technical colleges, and businesses. These partnerships create job-training programs that provide direct hiring opportunities for students, and they give businesses the trained workforce they desperately need at little or no cost to the student. Programs such as the one supported by my bill will help employers fill available jobs, they will help students get those jobs and graduate with very little or no college debt, and they help our economy stay competitive globally. This is a win, win, win.

Labor Secretary Tom Perez has described apprenticeship programs as college "without the debt" or "earn while you learn."

In Minnesota we have many great examples of such programs. I want to talk a little bit about one of them.

Erick Ajax is the co-owner of EJ Ajax Metalforming Solutions in Fridley, MN. This is the third generation of Ajaxes. It was Ajax and Son, but the son, I think, is too old to be called a son anymore. Erick is third generation.

They make 70 percent of North America's appliance hinges. His company has over 70 employees—one for every percent, evidently, of our appliance industry. Half of his employees were

trained, hired, and had their college tuitions fully paid through his earn while you learn registered apprenticeship program. To do this, Erick partnered with local community and technical colleges to find and train students, including veterans, women, first-generation Americans, and ex-offenders.

I went to his factory floor, and he introduced me to an ex-offender who had been working there at EJ Ajax for 6 years. He just bought his first home because of a training program he had taken that had been made available through a community technical college.

For all of these categories I am talking about, I met first-generation Americans who have great middle-class jobs, got their training, and received degrees. There was a veteran who has his bachelor's degree now, paid for by Erick, by the company. These are full-time, high-paying, solid, middle-class jobs.

Because Erick fully covered college tuition for his employees, some of his veteran employees were able to transfer their GI bill benefits to their spouses and their children to help pay for them to go to college. This is a great answer to our college affordability, our vexing college affordability problem that we all talk about. Erick Ajax's employees are evidence that apprenticeship training programs work. They increase their career opportunities, they provide businesses with skilled workers, they generate higher paying jobs, and they help our competitiveness globally.

Did you know that individuals who have completed registered apprenticeship programs earn, on average, a starting salary of \$50,000 a year and \$300,000 more over their careers than their peers who did not participate in registered apprenticeship programs? In fact, the apprenticeships can be the start of a pathway to business leadership positions.

Take Martin Senn, who is Swiss. Martin is the CEO of the Zurich Insurance Group, a Swiss company with offices around the world. The last I checked, it was one of the Fortune 500 companies—well, actually, in the Fortune 200 companies in 2012. I don't know exactly where it is now, but Martin is CEO of a huge company. Like many Swiss executives, he is a believer in apprenticeship programs.

When he was asked why Swiss executives choose to implement apprenticeship programs in the United States, he said: "I started my career as an apprentice and know first-hand how powerful such a program can be in inspiring young people to achieve their full potential."

From apprentice to CEO, I would like to see more of these success companies involving U.S. companies here at home. Not all apprentices are going to become CEOs, but apprenticeship programs—their training programs—are providing a proven path for workers to

enter the middle class and for business owners to develop a high-skilled workforce to fill today's available jobs.

So as we recognize the first ever National Apprenticeship Week, I invite my colleagues to take a close look at my Community College to Career Fund Act. Let's expand the apprenticeship training model so we can better serve the needs of our students seeking good-paying jobs and of our businesses looking for qualified employees.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, finally we see the light at the end of the tunnel, and it is not a train. It is, in fact, the eventual and necessary passage of the Ex-Im reauthorization bill.

As you know, last week the Ex-Im bill passed the House by a vote that was 72 percent in favor. We have been told for months and months as we debate the Ex-Im Bank that this bill could not possibly pass the House as a stand-alone bill. Remarkably, when that myth was put to the test, we found out that not just 51 percent, but 72 percent of the House supports reauthorization of the Ex-Im bill.

Last night we faced another challenge for the Ex-Im bill which was, in fact, a series of amendments on the Ex-Im portion of the Transportation bill. Once again, we exceeded expectations by having supermajorities on almost—in fact, all of those amendments suffering defeat at a very wide margin. So now what we know is we have a bill that continues to have broad-based support and continues to represent the necessary steps that need to be taken to reauthorize and reopen the Ex-Im Bank.

Let's just recount history. The Export-Import Bank has been closed for over 3 months, preventing needed support for small business across the country. Many of those small businesses—guess where they are? They are in States such as North Dakota. A lot of people, such as my colleague from Washington State who has come on the floor—I think everybody understands the significance of exports to States on the Pacific Rim and understands that story, but I don't think anyone really thinks about the Ex-Im Bank in conjunction with places such as North Dakota. So I wish to take a few moments today to talk about small business, to talk about the people who have been dramatically affected by the closure of the Ex-Im Bank and why it is so important that we understand, appreciate, and not have a long-term history that does not move the Ex-Im Bank forward.

Let's start out by talking about the 5,800 small businesses around the country that depend on the Export-Import Bank to finance export deals and how many of them right now have no support as this issue has languished in the Senate. I think we all know that small business makes up a large percentage of that economic opportunity in the United States. That is true in North Dakota and true to a greater extent because probably 95 percent of all employers in North Dakota qualify as small businesses. For many of these businesses, if they do not have help exporting their products, that help, which the Export-Import Bank provides, they can't grow. With more than 95 percent of all consumers in the world living outside the United States, if businesses in the United States do not export, if they are not competitive, we will lose economically.

Several of my colleagues have been on the floor talking about manufacturing and talking about economic opportunity. At the end of the day this is about small business, but it is also about the jobs that small business create. So we have seen companies such as GE and Boeing, which use, interestingly enough, 16 suppliers in North Dakota that are dependent on the work GE and Boeing does—and their necessary reaction to the failure of this Congress to appropriately and timely reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank has been to look for other ways to encourage their business growth, and that encouragement has not been in this country. They have had to look overseas.

So it is critically important we understand the idea of a supply chain. Everybody says: Well, this is a bank for big business. This is a bank for these people. That is just pure nonsense. In every one of those deals that is done for one of these major manufacturers, inside that deal are literally thousands of small businesses and hundreds of thousands of jobs created in those small businesses as they support the supply chain.

I want to talk about a number of the export-import uses in my State and brag a bit about the work they do because they are on the cutting edge with a lot of their technologies. The first business I want to talk about is Amity Technology. It is a 20-year-old family-owned company based in Fargo that sells farm manufacturing equipment to companies around the world. They began in August of 1977. They sold their first business to Case International and then built Amity in the winter of 1996.

What I love to tell about this story is these brothers—one of whom I went to college with—come from the family who actually created the Bobcat. So they have been entrepreneurs, they have been inventors, they have been innovators, and they have driven a lot of jobs in North Dakota.

Amity is a big user of the Ex-Im Bank. It is the largest distributor of sugar beet equipment, working with some of the world's largest farm equip-

ment companies around the world. With agriculture markets slowing down, business is harder to come by and so it is particularly important they have all the tools in their arsenal. Without the help of the Export-Import Bank, the company, which employs 70 North Dakotans, could quickly lose out on at least 10 percent of their business and face tough questions about the future of their exports.

The next business I want to talk about is WCCO Belting in Wahpeton. Wahpeton is a small community in the far southeastern corner of our State. It is a 60-year-old, family-owned rubber supply company often used in farm equipment that is supplied to every major farm equipment company in the world.

For 12 years, the Export-Import Bank has allowed WCCO Belting to continue to export opportunities it had previously been ignoring. The Bank has supported over \$850,000 in exports from the belting company since 2007. The company employs 200 employees who generate more than 60 percent of their annual revenue from customers that are located outside of the United States. That would not be possible if it were not for the Ex-Im Bank; if that 60 percent of their business is driven by the opportunity that the Ex-Im Bank gives them.

I want to talk about JM Grain. That is a small grain company in Garrison. They are a young family-owned pea, lentil, and chickpea distributing company that supplies their products to top packaging and food companies around the world. When you look at their numbers, \$15 million—in fact, 70 percent of the company's annual revenue for almost a decade—has been backed by the Ex-Im Bank. It has allowed JM Grain to pursue export opportunities to top manufacturing and packaging food ingredient companies that demand buyers to provide financing for 90 to 100 days—something they could not do on their own.

Incidentally, they could not find a private bank that would be willing to do it. Without the Export-Import Bank, JM Grain would not have been able to pursue exports to such high-quality, high-selling companies because it would have to significantly cut its price or risk going under.

The company now has doubled or tripled the pay of its workers, retaining its workforce throughout the oil boom, which has been awfully tough in North Dakota given high living costs, and has been able to hire top technological workers. It is incredible. It is an incredible story, but it is a story that would not be possible without the Ex-Im Bank. It is responsible for \$10 million of the company's annual \$15 million in revenue. Without the Export-Import Bank, the company would risk losing sales to competitive exporting companies abroad, including companies from India, China, and South America.

The last company I want to talk about is Equipment Wholesalers based

in Fargo, ND, and Sioux Falls, SD. They sell equipment such as John Deere tractors in the United States and abroad. Equipment wholesalers told us if the Export-Import Bank is not reauthorized, it will have a negative impact on the company's sales. How great is that? Well, it will be a 35- to 40-percent impact on their sales. Imagine that. Just because of the inactivity of Congress, we have risked 35 to 40 percent of this company's business. The company acknowledges it has already lost business to companies in Germany that have access to Germany's export-import agency. They say without the Export-Import Bank being reauthorized, Equipment Wholesalers will lose even more business.

While our businesses are left at a disadvantage because the Export-Import Bank expired, foreign—foreign—export-import banks, including those in India and China and 60 other places around the world, are hugely benefiting. In fact, they are wondering what is going on in the United States, but we are not going to let any grass grow under our feet as we run to daylight and a take advantage of the inaction in Washington, DC. They are already stepping in and filling our place.

If we do not reauthorize the Export-Import Bank to support American businesses and manufacturers, China and India will step in. There is no doubt about it. They are already doing it. In fact, during the recent downturn in both of those economies, the first investment they made was putting billions more in their export credit agencies. Do you know why? Because it made business sense. It made sense to their balance of trade. It made sense to their economy to support their manufacturers, especially in an environment where we weren't supporting ours.

Last week my bipartisan bill with Senator KIRK, which would reauthorize this agency, passed with the support of more than 70 percent of the House. Just yesterday—again, I will repeat—the Export-Import Bank reauthorization was attached to the House Transportation bill. Despite efforts to once again derail the Export-Import Bank from people who believed they could kill it altogether with amendments, over two-thirds—and in most cases those same House Members who tried to kill it—voted against those Export-Import Bank-killing amendments.

Doesn't that tell us something? Doesn't that tell us that the vast majority of people here are not ideologues; that they look at the facts? They say: In what world would you not support exports?

We used to do this in State government when I was attorney general and when I served on the Industrial Commission. We would talk about North Dakota's economy and we would say: What do we do to grow economies? We say: We have new wealth creation. I am not picking on retail businesses. Retail businesses typically, unless we are inviting Canadians, which we do, to come

down and spend money, they are not new wealth creation. It is those things that bring new dollars to our State. If you look at new wealth creation in this country and look at what creates wealth in this country, guess what it is. It is exports. It is having a favorable balance of trade. It is making sure we are a country that believes in reaching out to the 95 percent of the consumers in this world and saying to them: We produce the best quality agricultural products, we produce the best quality manufacturing products, we are the top supplier and the most trusted source of products in the world, but we need the tools to make those sales, and the Ex-Im Bank is a critical tool. It is part of that structure of trade infrastructure that we need to make this work.

I hope, I sincerely hope—because I don't know whether I am going to be here when we go through this again—I hope the lessons of the last 3 months have been learned. I hope the lessons we have been preaching since really this spring—that we cannot let this Bank expire and there will be dire consequences if we do—have been learned and that the Ex-Im Bank and the people at the Ex-Im Bank, but more importantly that our American businesses that rely on the Export-Import Bank, our jobs that rely on the Export-Import Bank, and our opportunities created by the Export-Import Bank, are never forgotten; that they are never left behind.

Once again we have cleared yet another hurdle. The light is at the end of the tunnel. We believe we are ready, willing, and excited about the opportunity of once again opening the doors of the Export-Import Bank and welcoming American business in and saying once again, “America is open for business” to the rest of the world.

Mr. President, I yield the floor to my friend from Washington.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from North Dakota for coming to the floor again to talk about the Export-Import Bank and today specifically outlining how this program of credit insurance helps finance the sales of U.S. products in overseas markets, particularly for small businesses.

She and I, obviously, are stalwarts on what are economic opportunities in a global economy. We want to make things in the United States of America and we want to sell them to overseas markets. So we are here today to thank our House colleagues for standing up and defeating amendments last night that would kill the Export-Import Bank as a part of a package in the transportation deal. We are proud of those Senators who have supported this in the Senate, but we are especially proud of those House Members who went to the extent of getting a discharge petition to demonstrate that 313 Members of the House of Representatives support this policy.

My colleague and I are not giving up on trying to emphasize to people we have waited way too long to get this done and now we should not wait one moment longer. We should make sure this part of a transportation bill—while not necessarily our choice for how this gets done—finally gets over the finish line so we can put our small businesses back to work.

As my colleague said, small businesses are the key to her State's economy. Well, they are really the key to the U.S. economy. Fifty percent of all U.S. jobs are provided by small businesses. So that is why we have talked about this issue as it relates to those job providers.

If you are in North Dakota and Washington State and you are growing an agricultural product, you show me the bank that is going to finance that sale. I know maybe people don't think about agricultural products when it comes to Ex-Im Bank, but that is exactly what we have in mind because our States produce so many agricultural products.

The fact is small businesses need global customers. Why? Because if we are just going to grow product for the United States of America, we are not going to be growing much job opportunity. Ninety-five percent of consumers live outside the United States, and we want to make sure we are selling to them, but when we are selling to a country in Africa or we are selling to a country in Asia and you go to that bank in North Dakota or even in Walla Walla, WA, or someplace, and you say: Listen, I want you to help me do a deal with this buyer in a very small country, they want to know, what the securitization is. The securitization of that issue is usually all the capital of that company, which means they are not going to do the sale or they are going to try to find a bank that is also not going to do it because they do not have the security to put behind that.

That is why credit insurance was created—to help those sales actually happen. That is why this is such an important issue to small businesses. People think, well, OK, we get it, you are concerned about jobs. This is not just about the jobs in our State today, although we care immensely about that; this is about the way the Senator from North Dakota and I view the economy of the future. We view it as an economy that is taking opportunity of what is happening with the growth of the middle class outside the United States, that and selling them U.S.-made and U.S.-grown products.

Less than 3 percent of small businesses today are exporters. How are we going to get them to be exporters? We want them to take risks. How are we going to get them to take risks if they can't get financing for their products? If 95 percent of consumers live outside the United States, that is where the rising growth is happening, that is where the big opportunity is, and we want our small businesses to do something about it. Yet we take away the

one tool that has been there to help small businesses finance those. It was a big mistake. My colleague talked about that.

There were more than 3,300 small business deals approved by the Export-Import Bank in 2014, so that was a lot of economic opportunity. I have met people from many of those companies. They warm my heart and make me believe the United States of America can win at any economic opportunity it sets its mind to.

When I think about a Yakima company that makes music stands—Manhasset has been in the music stand business for 40 years. They are selling music stands all over the United States of America. They get up every morning, they go into that factory, and they try to figure out how they are going to improve their processes, how they are going to improve access. But if you say to them that every sale they make to an overseas market has to be backed with their own capital—from Manhasset—how long will it take before someone comes in and competes with them and basically knocks them off and defeats them? It is not going to take long.

What they have to do is constantly grow their market opportunities and stay ahead of technology investments, even with a music stand, the best techniques, the best practices, and get your reputation as the best product and advertise and continue to dominate in the marketplace. That is what selling and exporting are all about.

The two of us come from export States, Washington State being a major exporter and North Dakota being an exporter. We know in our DNA that we have to compete. We want our small businesses to compete, and that is why both of our States have been big users of the Export-Import Bank, and we want these deals.

In helping to support those small businesses, the Export-Import Bank has done \$10 billion worth of exports. Isn't this what we want? Isn't this what we want in the United States of America, to help small businesses grow and become exporters? They are winning. They want their products to be purchased by overseas consumers.

When they don't support the Export-Import Bank, they are saying: I want to make it really, really, really hard or impossible for you to make that sale, because you are going to have to go find somebody to finance it. And we all know that people would rather do a lot more financing of dark derivative markets than helping small businesses get their deals done.

We are so happy that our colleagues in the House of Representatives last night defeated 10 amendments to kill the Export-Import Bank and that it is now traveling over here as part of a transportation package that will go to conference, and hopefully in the next 2 weeks we will be able to rectify this issue and put our small businesses back to work. This is so important not just

for the companies using the Export-Import Bank today but because my colleague and I know we have to grow our economy. We know we do great work and we produce great products. We need to make sure that in the developing world, we can access the opportunity to get our foot in the door and make the sale. Don't stop us from doing that. Let's finally get this Bank reauthorized and get on our way to growing a stronger economy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I want to make one final point, along with my colleague from Washington State. I don't know how many times the Senator from Washington and I have been on the floor telling the story of the Ex-Im Bank, about what the problems have been since we have closed the Bank for business, talking about what this means for small business, trying to reflect the amazement we get from our small businesses: Why is this happening when we return money to the Treasury and this doesn't cost anything?

I find it curious that as many times as we have been down here, there has been no one down here arguing the counterpoint. There has been no one down here willing to ask us to yield for a question about why we believe what we believe about the Ex-Im Bank. There is no one down here challenging what we are saying about the Ex-Im Bank. I find that interesting, and I think it is a lesson maybe for the future—let's not mess around with jobs; let's not mess around with people.

I think everybody thinks they are picking on some kind of large corporation, but the reality is that those large corporations in many ways can wait this out or they can devise a business plan that gives them a workaround from the Ex-Im Bank or they can assemble their materials someplace other than the United States. But my small businesses, the ones I just outlined, don't have that choice, and they don't have a big line of credit they can use to just wait this out. They don't have the ability to wait.

It is one thing to say we are all about small business and helping small business. We hear it every time. The two great lines that are used here: We care about the middle class and we care about small business. But as it relates to the Ex-Im Bank, there has been no activity here that would actually prove the point that we care about small business.

So I want to say I do find it extraordinarily curious that we have gone unchallenged in this whole discussion. No one really wants to take us on because at the end of the day there is no argument on the other side. Yet we have closed this Bank for over 3 months. We have closed this Bank and this opportunity for America's manufacturers, America's small businesses, and all of the great people who work there.

Just know that I am so grateful for the work of my colleague from Washington. She has been an incredible leader. I thank her for everything she has done. She is an expert on the Export-Import Bank but also a woman who has been in business most of her life and who understands the critical importance of the Ex-Im Bank.

So let's not unlearn this lesson. Let's make sure this never happens again and that we never disrupt Americans' economic opportunity the way we have by shutting down the Export-Import Bank for the last 3 or 4 months.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I ask to speak as in morning business.

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

SOLUTIONS TO DEFORESTATION

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I rise to talk about one of the solutions to one of the driving forces behind global climate change; that is, deforestation. After fossil fuel combustion, deforestation is the single largest contributor to human-induced climate change, but the exciting thing is that we have proven cost-effective solutions at hand that can go a long way in addressing this problem.

Forests in the United States and around the world provide important services to people—services that are not adequately or appropriately valued by the free market, creating a market failure. These services include many things that we all take for granted—clean air, clean water, wildlife habitats, and long-term carbon sinks that absorb and sequester carbon pollution for years. Because these functions of a healthy forest ecosystem don't have a dollar sign attached to them, they are often not incorporated into decisions made by businesses, consumers, and governments, but just because they don't have a pricetag does not mean they are without value. In fact, the 2008 study pegged the cost of deforestation to the global economy at between \$2 trillion and \$5 trillion per year.

As the U.S. Forest Service put it, "When our forests are undervalued, they are increasingly susceptible to development pressures and conversion. Recognizing forest ecosystems as natural assets with economic and social value can help promote conservation and more responsible decisionmaking."

I agree. Adequately valuing forests, and the services they provide offers many benefits to local populations to the climate. Limiting deforestation and forest degradation will not reduce global carbon pollution and slow the pace of climate change. It will also

help to safeguard the livelihoods of the more than 1.6 billion people who the U.N. estimates depend on forest services.

What is more, tropical forests are the source of over one-quarter of all modern medicines. Forests impede the transmission of insect- and animal-borne infectious diseases. So beyond the economic benefits, we know that keeping our forests intact can improve the livelihoods of billions of people while avoiding drastic increases in global temperatures.

Thankfully there are good solutions available to address deforestation. We can start by properly enforcing laws that are already on the books. I plan on working with my colleagues to ensure that we fully fund the agencies charged with enforcing the ban on illegally sourced timber and paper included in the 2008 amendments to the Lacey Act.

When the leaders, environmental ministers, finance ministers, and climate negotiators from all nations meet in Paris later this month, I hope they will keep in mind the many advantages of reducing forest loss in rainforest nations and other developing countries. I hope my colleagues will recognize the crucial role that the United States can play in sharing our best practices and helping to build capacity in those countries so we will all be better stewards of our natural environment.

A changing climate brings with it a unique set of challenges, but it is not too late to take the necessary steps to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. There is good news to be had. We have at our disposal a wide range of solutions for reining in our emissions of carbon pollution. Addressing deforestation is one of the most effective and cost-effective ways to slow global warming, while enhancing the lives and livelihoods of the hundreds of millions of people who rely on forests and the services they provide.

CLEAN POWER PLAN

Mr. President, I wish to talk about another aspect of climate change and another reason for hope. Two weeks ago the Clean Power Plan was published in the Federal Register, meaning that it is now the law of the land. This is the signature achievement of President Obama's efforts to reduce carbon pollution. It will reduce carbon emissions from the power sector by 32 percent by the year 2030. The power sector is the source of some of the most cost-effective emissions reductions, and the Clean Power Plan is the most critical and vital step toward putting the United States on a path to a low-carbon economy.

Powerplants are the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions in the Nation, accounting for more than 30 percent of all U.S. carbon pollution. There are currently no limits to the amount of carbon pollution that can be emitted from powerplants. I want to repeat that. There is no limit under the law before the Clean Power Plan to the

amount of carbon pollution that can be put into the air.

This is despite having landmark legislation already in the books called the Clean Air Act. The Clean Air Act requires the Federal Government to regulate airborne pollutants. It doesn't require or allow the Federal Government to select from among a menu of airborne pollutants and decide which ones will be most cost-effective or most important to regulate. It says the EPA is charged with taking airborne pollutants and regulating them, to place limits on them. It is a mistake that over the last 20 years, even though we have recognized that carbon is an airborne pollutant, that it is not regulated under the Clean Air Act.

The Clean Power Plan fixes this problem. It is an innovative and flexible solution that gives States the right to develop their individual plans. This is also an important point. The first iteration of the Clean Power Plan was a little more of a blunt instrument. It was geographically constrained. It was powerplant constrained. Therefore, a lot of States, a lot of utility companies came back and said: Look, there are going to be individual instances where it is going to be very difficult to reduce carbon pollution at a particular site because it is rural, because it has already been capitalized, because we can't get the financing to reduce the carbon pollution at a particular site, but if you allow us to work what they call outside of the fence and you allow us State by State to reduce in the aggregate the amount of carbon pollution put into the air, then we can make this work. We can still have what they call good power quality, which is to say you don't want undulations in power quality to the point where you have blackouts and brownouts. That was industry. That was regulators. That was a public utilities commission. That was energy companies coming back and saying this is not workable.

The EPA came up with a scenario where we are still regulating carbon pollution under the Clean Air Act, but we are doing it in a way that is totally workable for every State and every energy portfolio in every region in every State. It gives States the rights to develop their own individual plans to cut carbon pollution from the energy sector. The Clean Power Plan has sent a signal to the rest of the world that the United States is serious about preventing catastrophic changes to our climate.

The American public knows that climate change is a problem and large majorities want us to act. A Stanford poll found 83 percent of Americans, including 61 percent of Republicans, say that if nothing is done to reduce emissions, global warming will be a serious problem in the future. Now, 77 percent of Americans say the Federal Government should be doing a substantial amount to combat climate change, and 67 percent of Americans support EPA action to curb carbon pollution.

In other words, 67 percent of Americans support the EPA action that is being undertaken right now. They support the Clean Power Plan. They may not know the details, but they understand the basic premise which is that the Clean Air Act is the law of the land. It was passed a long time ago with large bipartisan majorities. The basic idea that the Federal Government has some simple responsibilities, and one of them is to keep us safe from air and water pollution, is a bipartisan consensus not in this Chamber, unfortunately, and not in the other Chamber, unfortunately, but across the country, everybody understands that carbon is a pollutant, and we should try to reduce it over time as much as we possibly can.

I think it is time we acknowledge that the electricity industry is already changing. We are rapidly moving away from fossil fuels as the dominant source of electricity generation. Soon even low-priced natural gas may not be able to compete with wind and solar energy. We should be celebrating these advances and devoting ourselves to finding ways to accelerate this transition, not throwing up roadblocks.

The truth is the Clean Power Plan is merely accelerating market trends that are already underway. Listen to this. Through the first 9 months of this year, over 60 percent of new U.S. capacity additions were renewable energy. More than 60 percent of the new power generation in the United States over the last 9 months has been clean energy. That is the change that is happening. That is the clean energy revolution.

In 1998, when I was in the State legislature and I was helping to work on net energy metering laws, solar tax credits, and a renewable portfolio standard, this was aspirational. This was something we hoped we would eventually achieve, but 60 percent of new generation this year in the United States is clean energy. It is already happening.

As wind and solar prices fall, they are increasingly competitive with new fossil generation in more and more places around the country. To my colleagues who warn of massive price shocks from the transition to clean energy, I point out that we are already underway with our transition, and the massive price shocks have not happened. The Clean Power Plan is the most important power tool that we have in our arsenal to fight climate change.

To my colleagues who are trying to stand in the way of making real progress toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions, I say this: When you are ready to be constructive and work on a comprehensive energy policy, to work on a comprehensive climate policy, we are open.

I have continued to come to the floor of the Senate over the last several months, over the year of 2015, and have said this is an issue that has unfortunately become incredibly partisan.

This is an issue where we have Democrats coming to the floor offering constructive solutions and an empty side of the Chamber on the other side, but this is the challenge of our generation. This is our obligation as the indispensable Nation. The United States has to lead. The Senate has to have a real debate on climate and energy policy, and we need Republicans to step up. This issue is crying for Republican leadership, and I am looking forward to the day—hopefully very soon—where we will have it, where we will have a serious negotiation.

I understand that not all of my ideas will win out, not all of the progressive perspectives will win out, but that is the legislative process. We need a dance partner. We look forward to that moment.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

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

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today the Senate voted on a motion to proceed to H.R. 2685, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act. I would have voted yes.

Funding our military and keeping Americans safe used to be a point of bipartisan consensus in Washington. Unfortunately, for the third time this year, Senate Democrats have blocked a bill that provides funding for American men and women in uniform, their housing, health care, and benefits. Although we will ultimately need additional funding to confront the vast array of national security threats we face in this century, this bill includes important funding we need now for procurement, modernization, construction to maintain our military bases, and vital funds for the intelligence community who work in secret as our first line of defense. It also includes funds for ongoing operations against ISIS, Al Qaeda, and terrorist organizations globally who seek to do us harm.

As they have shown on issue after issue, President Obama, his administration, and Washington Democrats are not serious about confronting the challenges we face as a nation. We need

new leadership in Washington that will restore American strength and keep the American people safe.

RECOGNIZING THE USS "PITTSBURGH"

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I wish to honor the skilled, brave, and determined sailors who served aboard the USS *Pittsburgh*.

The third of four naval vessels named after the Steel City, the USS *Pittsburgh* was a Baltimore-class heavy cruiser that served 6 months in the Pacific theatre during World War II. In that short time, the cruiser earned two battle stars. However, her greatest accomplishment was assisting in the rescue of the crew of a disabled ship in enemy waters.

In March 1945, Japanese bombers began an air raid on a task force assigned to the U.S. 5th Fleet. This attack severely damaged the aircraft carrier USS *Franklin* and set it ablaze. The USS *Franklin* lost 725 crew members, with another 264 injured in the bombing, and it was left stranded in the water just 50 miles from the Japanese coast. The USS *Pittsburgh* quickly came to the rescue, saving 34 men from the water. Along with another ship, a light cruiser, the USS *Santa Fe*, the USS *Pittsburgh* was able to tow the carrier to safety while fighting off enemy attacks.

The crew of the USS *Franklin* was highly decorated for their bravery during the fight, but the crew of the USS *Pittsburgh* has never received any honors for their bravery. Today I rise to recognize and honor the crew of the USS *Pittsburgh* for their heroism and bravery displayed rendering aid and assistance to the USS *Franklin* on March 19, 1945.

Along with this heroic action, the USS *Pittsburgh* faced another big fight against a different kind of enemy: Mother Nature. On June 5, 1945, the ship encountered a typhoon and suffered extensive damage, including loss of its bow, but was kept afloat because of her skilled crewmembers' damage control efforts. The USS *Pittsburgh*'s captain maneuvered the boat entirely by cleverly manipulating the ship's engines until the storm subsided, returning to Guam a few days later.

I would especially like to recognize three veterans of the USS *Pittsburgh* who are still living in southwestern Pennsylvania. Their names are: Robert McKnight, seaman 1st class, of Connelville, Fayette County; George Jock, seamen 1st class, of Somerset, Somerset County; and Paul Gaudi, seaman 1st class, of Jeanette, Westmoreland County.

I thank them and their fellow USS *Pittsburgh* crew members for their valiant heroism and service to our country. I ask unanimous consent that the additional information that was obtained with the help of the Congressional Research Service and National Archives be printed in the RECORD.

Lastly, I appreciate having the opportunity to provide my remarks about the USS *Pittsburgh* and its crew's unique and extraordinary contributions to our Nation's history in World War II. It is an honor to serve in the U.S. Senate on behalf of the great city for which this cruiser was named and represent those veterans who served aboard her.

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

On the morning of 19 March, 1945, while a part of Fast Carrier Task Group 58.2, the U.S.S. PITTSBURGH was ordered by Commander Cruiser Division TEN to "Proceed to FRANKLIN and render all possible assistance".

The PITTSBURGH cleared the formation and proceeded at 30 knots to the vicinity of the burning carrier FRANKLIN, which had been severely damaged, both by a Japanese bomb and by the following internal explosions and fires which were still raging.

After picking up 34 of her men from the water during the approach, the carrier was taken in tow at 1402, 19 March, in position Latitude 30°-10' N., Longitude 133°-50, E., 57 miles southeast of the southern tip of Shikoku, Japan; and towed for 22½ hours away from the coast of Japan in southwest, southeasterly and south directions, a distance of approximately 120 miles, until the FRANKLIN could proceed under her own power.

At the commencement of the towing operation the FRANKLIN had a list to starboard of about 15°; had no power, or steering control, and her rudder was jammed right 3°. The list of the carrier away from the wind, which was blowing from an easterly direction, caused her to sail up into the wind, making towing on southerly courses most difficult and prohibiting steering a given course away from Japan for any continuous length of time.

At 1550 our speed by pitometer log was 6¼ knots, however speed varied from 1½ knots to 8 knots.

At about 2300 the FRANKLIN's starboard list was corrected and became about 5° to port. With the change in list to port, the sail area of the carrier was reduced and it was possible to keep a steady course of 155° (T) and maintain a fairly constant speed between 6 and 7 knots.

At 0245, 20 March, the FRANKLIN began to turn over her engines, and by 0400 she was making turns for 4.5 knots, and we were making 7.5 knots through the water.

At 0930, the FRANKLIN gained steering control, and towing speed was gradually increased to 13.7 knots with the FRANKLIN engines assisting.

At 1233, in position 160 miles from Shikoku (Latitude 30°-14.5 N., Longitude 134°-23.2 E.) the tow was cast off and the FRANKLIN proceeded under her own power.

The PITTSBURGH assisted in repelling two air attacks during the towing operation. The first attack occurred while in process of passing the tow wire, and the second attack after the carrier had been taken in tow. Neither attack was successful, and two Japanese planes were shot down by Combat Air Patrol.

The FRANKLIN is of about 27,000 tons displacement, and so far as I know this is the first large carrier to be towed any from the scene of action to safety.

No damage was suffered by this vessel during the towing operation.

Sufficient praise cannot be given the commanding officer of the FRANKLIN and his heroic rescue crew, who, in spite of all odds, fought fires, repaired machinery and righted

the heavy initial list. The cooperation of the FRANKLIN was complete, and made bringing her to safety possible.

The SANTA FE went alongside the FRANKLIN, transferred personnel, and assisted in line handling while ammunition was exploding and fires were raging. The destroyer MILLER (DE535), likewise, repeatedly and with great courage went alongside the FRANKLIN and under her stern to put down fires and cool her bulkhead with water.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO PETE GARDZINA

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Pete Gardzina. Pete is the transition assistance adviser for the Montana National Guard and an honorable representation of the passion and service we honor in Montana.

Pete aids in the readjustment of our veterans after they return from their deployment. This form of outreach not only touches the lives of Montana's service men and women, but the families they are returning to. He works alongside the Veterans' Affairs Committee and community organizations to build a network of support for returned veterans. This network offers continued support for those who fought for us and the freedoms we take for granted every day.

Pete has helped improve the lives of multiple veterans by ensuring that, when they return, they are well taken care of, are quickly connected to the right people, and are supported throughout their adjustment back into civilian life.

I am so grateful to have someone in our community with such passion for serving Montana's servicemembers and veterans. On behalf of the many veterans Pete has helped and their families, it is my honor to recognize his service. I am truly grateful to have someone in Montana fighting for those who fought for us.●

TRIBUTE TO GRADY TARBUTTON

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Grady Tarbutton on his retirement after over 8 years of service to Washoe County Senior Services. It gives me great pleasure to recognize his years of hard work and dedication to this important community in northern Nevada.

Mr. Tarbutton first began his career working to aid seniors at the Washington County Department of Disability, Aging, and Veterans' Services in Oregon, as the senior program coordinator. In 2005, he moved to Portland, OR, and served as the community services manager for Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services. He began his tenure as director for Washoe County Senior Services in November of 2007, sacrificing countless hours to build the department and offer an array of key resources to our senior community. His commitment to our seniors stands as a shining example of

true selflessness and empathy for those in need.

With the help of Mr. Tarbutton's leadership, Washoe County Senior Services offers a variety of assistance to help Nevada's seniors, including guidance on community senior centers, health programs, food services, housing and care options, legal services, and Federal programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and veterans benefits. The department also offers Meals on Wheels, which is an important program that provides meals and support for seniors in need. This department truly goes above and beyond, providing seniors with the tools necessary to create a higher quality of life through steadfast support and help.

Mr. Tarbutton's work has had a great impact on Washoe County's residents. Through his unwavering commitment and tireless work ethic, Nevada's seniors and their families have had an unparalleled support system, ready to assist in times of difficulty or uncertainty. I have visited the Washoe County Senior Center and have witnessed firsthand the positive impact Washoe County Senior Services has on this center's residents. The strong foundation Mr. Tarbutton has built will be felt for years to come.

As a member of both the Senate Special Committee on Aging and the Senate Committee on Finance, I understand the importance of assisting the needs of Nevada's seniors and ensuring our communities are equipped to serve our State's aging population. Washoe County's seniors have benefited greatly from the work of this organization. This community is fortunate to have had someone like Mr. Tarbutton there as an ally and friend.

Today I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in thanking Mr. Tarbutton for his dedication to Washoe County Senior Services. He exemplifies the highest standards of leadership and service and should be proud of his long and meaningful career. I wish him well in all of his future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO VICTORIA NAPOLES

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Victoria Napoles on her retirement after decades of service to the Las Vegas Latin Chamber of Commerce. I am proud to recognize Ms. Napoles, who has contributed so much to the success of this important entity in southern Nevada.

Throughout her 25 years of service to the Las Vegas Latin Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Napoles worked diligently to establish the chamber as a tireless force in helping Las Vegas' Hispanic business community. As senior executive vice president to the chamber, she spent countless hours working to bring southern Nevada's entrepreneurs numerous networking opportunities and to establish positive relationships in all corners of the Hispanic community. During her service, she was responsible for coordinating events, luncheons, and

galas, as well as leading the organization in the development of a leadership structure, strategic planning, goal creation, and financial management. Her determination and resilience in gaining sponsors to support the chamber contributed to making it the successful entity that it is today. Her efforts also established an important partnership with the Clark County School District, bringing Nevada's Hispanic youth positivity and support for their futures. I am proud to have attended multiple Latin Chamber of Commerce events where I have spoken with the men and women who participate in this chamber, and I can attest to the incredible role they play within our community. The immense amount of work Ms. Napoles has done for the Las Vegas Latin Chamber of Commerce has not gone unnoticed.

Businesses across southern Nevada, both large and small, are fortunate to have had someone like Ms. Napoles working as an ally. Her unwavering work ethic and commitment greatly impacted this community, helping it to grow and prosper. Even in difficult economic times, Ms. Napoles was there with creativity and ingenuity to maintain the success of Nevada's Hispanic businesses. The strong foundation she built throughout her tenure will be felt for years to come.

I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in thanking Ms. Napoles for all of her hard work and dedication in making Las Vegas' Hispanic business community and Las Vegas' Latin Chamber of Commerce the best they can be. I would also like to congratulate her on her retirement after a long and meaningful career. I wish her well in all of her future endeavors.●

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-3463. A communication from the Assistant Director for Legislative Affairs, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Home Mortgage Disclosure (Regulation C)" (RIN3170-AA10) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3464. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Flood Elevation Determinations" ((44 CFR Part 67) (Docket No. FEMA-2015-0001)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3465. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Division of Corporate Finance, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "CROWDFUNDING" (RIN3235-AL37) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 3, 2015;

to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3466. A communication from the Deputy Director, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare and Medicaid Programs; CY 2016 Home Health Prospective Payment System Rate Update; Home Health Value-Based Purchasing Model; and Home Health Quality Reporting Requirements" (RIN0938-AS46) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3467. A communication from the Deputy Director, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program; End-Stage Renal Disease Prospective Payment System, and Quality Incentive Program" (RIN0938-AS48) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3468. A communication from the Deputy Director, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program; Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment and Ambulatory Surgical Center Payment Systems and Quality Reporting Programs; Short Inpatient Hospital Stays; Transition for Certain Medicare-Dependent, Small Rural Hospitals under the Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment System; Provider Administrative Appeals and Judicial Review" (RIN0938-AS42 and RIN0938-AS11) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3469. A communication from the Deputy Director, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program; Revisions to Payment Policies under the Physician Fee Schedule and Other Revisions to Part B for CY 2016" (RIN0938-AS48) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3470. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the establishment of the danger pay allowance; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3471. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the elimination of the danger pay allowance; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3472. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the status of the Government of Cuba's compliance with the United States-Cuba September 1994 "Joint Communiqué" and on the treatment of persons returned to Cuba in accordance with the United States-Cuba May 1995 "Joint Statement"; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3473. A communication from the Director of Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Listing of Color Additives Exempt From Certification; Spirulina Extract; Confirmation of Effective Date" (Docket No. FDA-2014-C-1552) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2015; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3474. A communication from General Counsel, Corporation for National and Community Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Volunteers in Service to America" (RIN3045-AA36) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 2, 2015; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3475. A communication from the Chair of the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Inspector General's Semiannual Report for the six-month period from April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3476. A communication from the Chairman, Board of Trustees, and the President, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Center's financial statements, supplemental schedules of operations, and independent auditor's report for years ended September 28, 2014, and September 29, 2013, and a report relative to the Center's schedule of expenditures of federal awards and independent auditor's reports for the year ended September 28, 2014; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC-3477. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to expenditures from the Pershing Hall Revolving Fund for fiscal year 2015; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-3478. A communication from the Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Red Snapper Management Measures; Correction" (RIN0648-BE91) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3479. A communication from the Deputy Chief Financial Officer, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Schedule of Fees for Access to NOAA Environmental Data, Information, and Related Products and Services" (RIN0648-BE86) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1298. A bill to provide nationally consistent measures of performance of the Nation's ports, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114-164).

By Mr. COCHRAN, from the Committee on Appropriations:

Special Report entitled "Further Revised Allocation to Subcommittees of Budget Totals from the Concurrent Resolution for Fiscal Year 2016" (Rept. No. 114-165).

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with amendments:

S. 2152. A bill to establish a comprehensive United States Government policy to encourage the efforts of countries in sub-Saharan Africa to develop an appropriate mix of power solutions, including renewable energy, for more broadly distributed electricity access in order to support poverty reduction,

promote development outcomes, and drive economic growth, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger, of Iowa, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Iowa.

Leonard Terry Strand, of South Dakota, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Iowa.

Julien Xavier Neals, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

Gary Richard Brown, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

Mark A. Young, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. REID (for Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, and Ms. BALDWIN)):

S. 2242. A bill to repeal section 3003 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. COATS, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 2243. A bill to amend the fresh fruit and vegetable program under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to include canned, dried, frozen, or pureed fruits and vegetables; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2244. A bill to reform the Federal Crop Insurance Act and reduce Federal spending on crop insurance; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. GARDNER:

S. 2245. A bill to exclude the Internal Revenue Service from the provisions of title 5, United States Code, relating to labor-management relations; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCOTT:

S. 2246. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to exempt the Internal Revenue Service from certain labor-management relations requirements; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 2247. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to assist States to rehabilitate or replace certain bridges, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

S. 2248. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to coordinate Federal congenital heart disease research efforts and to improve public education and awareness of congenital heart disease, and for other purposes; to the

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE:

S. 2249. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to impose criminal penalties for the unsafe operation of unmanned aircraft; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 2250. A bill to authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to Major Charles S. Kettles of the United States Army for acts of valor during the Vietnam War; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. NELSON, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2251. A bill to provide for a supplementary payment to Social Security beneficiaries, supplemental security income beneficiaries, and recipients of veterans benefits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 2252. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit the Secretary of the Treasury to issue prospective guidance clarifying the employment status of individuals for purposes of employment taxes and to prevent retroactive assessments with respect to such clarifications; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. REED, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2253. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide veterans affected by closures of educational institutions certain relief and restoration of educational benefits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2254. A bill to modify the requirements applicable to locatable minerals on public domain land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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

S. 2255. A bill to amend the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act to restrict the debt collection practices of certain debt collectors; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 2256. A bill to establish programs for health care provider training in Federal health care and medical facilities, to establish Federal co-prescribing guidelines, to establish a grant program with respect to naloxone, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. CANTWELL (by request):

S. 2257. A bill to prepare the National Park Service for its Centennial in 2016 and for a second century of protecting our national parks' natural, historic, and cultural resources for present and future generations and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. Kaine, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. UDALL, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. REID):

S. Res. 307. A resolution recognizing National Native American Heritage Month and celebrating the heritages and cultures of Native Americans and the contributions of Native Americans to the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. Res. 308. A resolution expressing support for the designation of October 20, 2015, as the "National Day on Writing"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CORKER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COATS, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. GARDNER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. Kaine, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SASSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 309. A resolution relative to the death of Fred Thompson, former United States Senator for the State of Tennessee; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. REID):

S. Con. Res. 24. A concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for the unveiling of the marble bust of Vice President Richard Cheney on December 3, 2015; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 248

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 248, a bill to clarify the rights of Indians and Indian tribes on Indian lands under the National Labor Relations Act.

S. 264

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 264, a bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 352

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 352, a bill to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate, and for other purposes.

S. 417

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 417, a bill to encourage spectrum licensees to make unused spectrum available for use by rural and smaller carriers in order to expand wireless coverage.

S. 553

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 553, a bill to marshal resources to undertake a concerted, transformative effort that seeks to bring an end to modern slavery, and for other purposes.

S. 578

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 578, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 591

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 591, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the new markets tax credit, and for other purposes.

S. 857

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 857, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of an initial comprehensive care plan for Medicare beneficiaries newly diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, and for other purposes.

S. 865

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms.

HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 865, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the disability compensation evaluation procedure of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for veterans with mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

S. 966

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 966, a bill to extend the low-interest refinancing provisions under the Local Development Business Loan Program of the Small Business Administration.

S. 1056

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1056, a bill to eliminate racial profiling by law enforcement, and for other purposes.

S. 1110

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 1110, a bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to publish in the Federal Register a strategy to significantly increase the role of volunteers and partners in National Forest System trail maintenance, and for other purposes.

S. 1133

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1133, a bill to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration.

S. 1500

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1500, a bill to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, and for other purposes.

S. 1520

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1520, a bill to protect victims of stalking from violence.

S. 1685

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1685, a bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to extend to private land use restrictions its rule relating to reasonable accommodation of amateur service communications.

S. 2002

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2002, a bill to strengthen our mental health system and improve public safety.

S. 2040

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr.

RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2040, a bill to deter terrorism, provide justice for victims, and for other purposes.

S. 2044

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2044, a bill to prohibit the use of certain clauses in form contracts that restrict the ability of a consumer to communicate regarding the goods or services offered in interstate commerce that were the subject of the contract, and for other purposes.

S. 2045

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2045, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

S. 2134

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2134, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide educational assistance to certain former members of the Armed Forces for education and training as physician assistants of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to establish pay grades and require competitive pay for physician assistants of the Department, and for other purposes.

S. 2196

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2196, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the non-application of Medicare competitive acquisition rates to complex rehabilitative wheelchairs and accessories.

S. 2220

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2220, a bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to provide for a special enrollment period for pregnant women, and for other purposes.

S. 2235

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2235, a bill to repeal debt collection amendments made by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015.

S. 2240

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2240, a bill to improve the control and management of invasive species that threaten and harm Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 113

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr.

KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 113, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee should recommend the issuance of, and the United States Postal Service should issue, a commemorative stamp in honor of the holiday of Diwali.

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 113, *supra*.

S. RES. 282

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 282, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of American Diabetes Month.

S. RES. 299

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 299, a resolution honoring the life, legacy, and example of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the twentieth anniversary of his death.

S. RES. 302

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 302, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate in support of Israel and in condemnation of Palestinian terror attacks.

S. RES. 304

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 304, a resolution recognizing November 28, 2015, as "Small Business Saturday" and supporting efforts to increase awareness of the value of locally owned small businesses.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

S. 2248. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to coordinate Federal congenital heart disease research efforts and to improve public education and awareness of congenital heart disease, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, every 15 minutes in America, a baby is born with a congenital heart defect. Many of these congenital heart defects are simple and can be easily corrected. Others are complex; some can require a lifetime of specialized medical care.

If you want to know what fear and powerlessness feels like, imagine being a young parent, listening to a doctor tell you that your new baby—who appears so perfect to you—has a threatening heart problem.

Fortunately, congenital heart defects aren't as deadly as they once were. In the 1950s, only 20 percent of American babies with congenital heart defects survived infancy. Today, 90 percent survive. Many children born with serious heart defects grow up to be adults with active, productive lives.

That progress didn't happen by accident. It happened because Americans made a decision in the 1960s to reduce these mortality numbers. We invested in research that led to better understanding and better treatments of the heart, from infancy to old age.

That investment in research has paid off in many ways. Some heart conditions that used to kill adults quickly often are managed now with medications and life style changes. The number of Americans with congenital heart disease living full, healthy lives increases by about 5 percent every year. About 2 million Americans are living with congenital heart disease today. We have come a long way—but there is more that we can do.

We know that the sooner a baby with a congenital heart defect is diagnosed and treated, the better the chances are to live a long and healthy life. But, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 30 percent of babies with critical congenital heart defects aren't diagnosed in the first few days, when treatment is most effective; 1 in 200 babies die from complications that might have been avoided if their heart disease had been detected.

In 2009, I introduced the Congenital Heart Futures Act to study people of all ages with congenital heart disease and coordinate research. That bill expired this year.

Today I am introducing the Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act of 2015. This bill will save lives by allowing us to build on the knowledge we have gained about congenital heart defects and the best ways to treat them.

My bill directs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study

people of all ages with congenital heart disease. The CDC would make the results of its research available to congenital heart disease researchers and to Congress. We will enable some of the best scientific and medical minds in America to evaluate the best ways to diagnose and treat congenital heart disease.

Many adults living with congenital heart disease are not aware they need specialized care throughout their lives. And fewer than 10 percent of adults with complex congenital heart disease receive the care they need.

The Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act directs the CDC to create a public awareness campaign to educate both patients and doctors about congenital heart disease and the need for lifelong specialized care for those living with congenital heart defects.

Finally, my bill directs the National Institutes of Health to conduct a review of ongoing research on congenital heart disease, identify areas of greatest need for research, and identify plans for future research.

We are not powerless when it comes to congenital heart challenges. We have made tremendous progress in my lifetime. Millions of Americans with congenital heart defects are living happy, healthy lives today because of that progress.

The Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act bill will help us better understand what congenital heart disease looks like in the United States and what we can do to help those living with this disease live longer. This bill will save lives and ultimately it will save taxpayers money—a lifetime of specialized heart care is expensive.

I would like to thank Senator CASEY for joining me in introducing this bill, and Representatives BILIRAKIS from Florida and ADAM SCHIFF from California in the House for introducing the companion bill. I look forward to working with them on this issue that affects so many families.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2248

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE COHORT STUDY AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.

Section 301 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 241) is amended by adding at the end the following—

“(f) NATIONAL CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE COHORT STUDY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall plan, develop, implement, and submit annual reports to the Congress on surveillance and research activities of the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention, including a cohort study to improve understanding of the epidemiology of congenital heart disease (referred to in this subsection and subsection (g) as ‘CHD’) across the lifespan, from birth to adulthood, with particular interest in the following:

“(A) Health care utilization and natural history of those affected by CHD.

“(B) Demographic factors associated with CHD, such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, and family history of individuals who are diagnosed with the disease.

“(C) Outcome measures, such that analysis of the outcome measures will allow derivation of evidence-based best practices and guidelines for CHD patients.

“(2) PERMISSIBLE CONSIDERATIONS.—The study under this subsection may—

“(A) gather data on the health outcomes of a diverse population of those affected by CHD;

“(B) consider health disparities among those affected by CHD which may include the consideration of prenatal exposures; and

“(C) incorporate behavioral, emotional, and educational outcomes of those affected by CHD.

“(3) PUBLIC ACCESS.—Subject to paragraph (4), the data generated from the studies under this subsection shall be made available to CHD researchers subject to appropriate privacy protections, and aggregate data from such studies shall be made available to the public.

“(4) PATIENT PRIVACY.—The Secretary shall ensure that the study under this subsection is carried out in a manner that complies with the requirements applicable to a covered entity under the regulations promulgated pursuant to section 264(c) of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996.

“(g) CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall establish and implement an awareness, outreach, and education campaign regarding CHD across the lifespan. The information expressed through such campaign may—

“(A) emphasize that CHD is the most prevalent birth defect;

“(B) identify CHD as a condition that affects those diagnosed throughout their lives; and

“(C) promote the need for pediatric, adolescent, and adult individuals with CHD to seek and maintain lifelong, specialized care.

“(2) PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.—The campaign under this subsection shall—

“(A) utilize collaborations or partnerships with other agencies, health care professionals, and patient advocacy organizations that specialize in the needs of individuals with CHD; and

“(B) include the use of print, film, or electronic materials distributed via television, radio, Internet, or other commercial marketing venues.”.

SEC. 3. CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE RESEARCH.

Section 425 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 285b-8) is amended by adding the end the following:

“(d) REPORT FROM NIH.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act of 2015, the Director of NIH, acting through the Director of the Institute, shall provide a report to Congress—

“(1) outlining the ongoing research efforts of the National Institutes of Health regarding congenital heart disease; and

“(2) identifying—

“(A) future plans for research regarding congenital heart disease; and

“(B) the areas of greatest need for such research.”.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2254. A bill to modify the requirements applicable to locatable minerals on public domain land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Hardrock Mining Reform and Reclamation Act of 2015.

First, I thank Senator HEINRICH, who will be here with me in a moment, for working with me on this bill. He is a dedicated conservation Senator from the West and really cares about this issue, and we have both been working together on this bill. I so much appreciate all of his hard work and his commitment to this important legislation. I also thank Senator BENNET and Senator WYDEN for their hard work and support on this bill. I also thank our New Mexico colleague, Congressman BEN RAY LUJÁN, for his efforts on the House side.

We are proposing this bill for one reason: to reform the mining law of 1872. It is a matter of simple fairness, it is a matter of common sense, and it is a reform that is long overdue.

The 1872 mining law played a historic role in the settling of the West. It encouraged mining for silver, gold, copper, uranium, and other minerals on public lands. It helped the West to grow, but there was a price—one we are still paying. It did almost nothing to compensate the public, it did nothing to protect the environment, and it did nothing to require mines to clean up the mess. It did nothing to require those mines to clean up the mess. The legacy is clear—thousands of abandoned mines, contaminated land, polluted streams, costly cleanup, and taxpayers stuck with the bill. We have a 19th-century law which is totally inadequate to 21st-century challenges.

The spill at the Gold King mine earlier this year tells the story. With terrible damage in my State, in other States, and in the Navajo Nation, this is a disaster on many levels—to our water, our economy, and to our culture.

Mistakes were made at the Gold King mine. We have to do all we can to make sure they are not made again and to make sure our communities are fairly compensated for losses. That is why Senator HEINRICH and I introduced the Gold King Mine Spill Recovery Act of 2015.

The Gold King mine disaster is also a wake-up call. The mine is still there; the owners are not. There are up to 500,000 abandoned mines in our country. They are a ticking timebomb. They are leaking toxins into our rivers and streams in the West and have been for decades. It will cost tens of billions of dollars to fix this. The estimates are anywhere from \$20 billion to \$54 billion, with a “b”—billions. A mining royalty will bring fairness to taxpayers and help pay for the cleanup.

I have pushed for—and will keep pushing for—mining reform, first in the House and now in the Senate because I believe in the simple principle that the polluter pays. The polluter pays, but under current law the mining companies do not pay—not for the minerals they take, not for the damage they have done. This cannot continue. They cannot continue to reap all the benefits and hundreds of millions of dollars while taxpayers continue to shoulder all the burden. This goes against every notion of simple fairness. Working Americans know this, middle-class families know this, and both sides of the aisle know this.

The 1872 mining law also basically gives away Federal land for \$5. Less than what a working American pays for lunch, mining companies can buy an acre of Federal land if they discover a valuable mineral deposit. So there is no surprise here. Hard rock mining companies don't want reform. They have had a free ride for a long time—no wonder they want to keep it—but it is long past time for that ride to end.

Coal, oil, and gas companies have paid royalties for many decades. Hard rock mining companies, including foreign mining companies, should do the same. Our bill will require that they do that. It is not a radical idea. The oil industry pays a small fee on every barrel of oil, the coal industry pays a small fee on each ton of coal, and the sky has not fallen in. And when disasters happen, from oil spills to abandoned coal mines, these industries bear some of the cost.

History may explain why the 1872 law was created, but it is hard to see now why it should continue. What began as an effort to settle the West has become a gravy train for multibillion-dollar companies and not just American companies but foreign ones as well. We know the taxpayers are getting short-changed. We just don't know how much.

In 2011 I asked the General Accounting Office for the numbers. They couldn't say. Not only do the hard rock mining companies not pay, they do not disclose, and under current law they do not have to—not how much they extract from Federal lands, not where the minerals are sold, not the overall value. Yet at the same time, oil, gas, and coal brought in \$11.4 billion in Federal revenue.

We need to get this done. We can't keep asking working Americans and struggling communities to foot the bill while mining companies reap the profits. Let us be clear. The silver and gold on public lands are a natural resource. They belong to the American people. They should be an investment for public good, not a giveaway for private gain.

After my father left office after 8 years as Secretary of the Interior, he was asked what were his big regrets, and he said mining reform was his greatest unfinished business. Fifty years later we still need to do this and

we still need to do it now. We have an outdated law. Special treatment for the profits of large hard rock mining companies is not a reason to keep it, at least not to the taxpayers of my State.

It is time to stop giving away the store. It is time to reform the mining law of 1872. It is the right thing to do. It is the fair thing to do. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and let us get this done.

Mr. President, I was just in a press conference with Senator HEINRICH and Senator BENNET where we talked, and one of the questions that was asked was: How are you working at building bipartisan support and is there bipartisan support? I want to say a word on that because we have seen very solid bills pass here in Washington with bipartisan support. One of the ones I wanted to point out was in 2007 in the House. Nick Rahall had a mining reform bill. He had Republican cosponsors by the names of Wayne Gilchrest and Representative Christopher Shays—24 Republicans in the House—and the bill was passed 244 to 166. PAUL RYAN, who was in my class when I came into Congress in 1998—we arrived at the same time and PAUL is now the Speaker over in the House—voted yes for mining reform back in 2007 on this Rahall bill.

So I think if you look at the history, this is a bill where we need to work with both sides of the aisle, and I hope and wish Congressman RYAN—Speaker RYAN—the best and I hope he will join us in this effort to reform this long outdated law.

With that, I see my good friend and partner in this, Senator HEINRICH, is on the floor, so I yield the floor at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I want to begin by thanking my colleague the senior Senator from New Mexico TOM UDALL for the incredible leadership he has shown on this issue. I know it is something near and dear to his heart and something he absolutely and truly cares about. We have had a good team working on this over the course of the last couple of months. Senator MICHAEL BENNET of Colorado has been a great contributor to this effort. Congressman BEN RAY LUJÁN of northern New Mexico has taken a leadership effort on a similar effort in the House, and today we are joined by Senator RON WYDEN of Oregon on this legislation as well.

As many folks know, in August a large plume of bright orange mine waste spilled into the Animas River, which leads into the San Juan, and polluted the Four Corners region from Colorado to New Mexico and through the Navajo Nation.

If you take a look at this photo, which was shared with me by the president and vice president of the Navajo Nation, this is not what you want to see when you look at the river that you take your drinking water from or the

river that you use for irrigation or the place you go fishing or recreate and kayak on. This is not how our mountain streams in the Southwest are supposed to look. I think visually this got the attention of people all around the country as to the scope and scale of this problem.

After the mine spill, I toured affected communities in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation. I met with impacted residents, including farmers in Aztec and Shiprock, San Juan County leaders, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye, Vice President Jonathan Nez, and the attorney general, Ethel Branch. In the Southwest, water is by far our most precious resource, so you can imagine the kind of impact this disaster had on our communities.

My colleagues in the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Committee on Indian Affairs have now held hearings to investigate the Environmental Protection Agency's actions which led to this spill and to seek to bring proper oversight to the Agency's response. Last week, the Department of the Interior released a report of its independent technical evaluation of the EPA's action. The evaluation found that the EPA did not properly appreciate the engineering complexity of trying to clean up the Gold King mine and that it could in fact have prevented what we see here.

I share the anger and frustration that not only my colleagues but, more importantly, our constituents have expressed over this terrible accident. It is why Senator UDALL and I have introduced separate pieces of legislation specifically to make these communities whole. We need to continue to demand the EPA act with urgency to protect the health and the safety of the affected communities and to repair the damage inflicted on this watershed. That is our first and top priority.

We are doing a disservice to the American people by not also taking action to address the thousands—thousands—of other similarly contaminated abandoned mines that literally litter the West and are leaking toxins into our watersheds—into the watersheds that provide drinking water and irrigation to our communities all across the West.

There are estimates that 40 percent of western watersheds have been polluted by toxic mining waste and that reclaiming and cleaning up abandoned mines to make this right is going to cost tens of billions of dollars.

This latest disaster was all too familiar for those of us from the Four Corners region and to many people around the West. Back in 1975, in an even larger accident than the Gold King blow-out, a tailings pile near Silverton, CO, spilled 50,000 tons of tailings laden with toxic heavy metals into the Animas River Watershed—the watershed that drains from Colorado into New Mexico, into the San Juan and through the Navajo Nation in Arizona as well.

In 1979, a breached dam at a uranium mill tailings disposal pond near Church

Rock in New Mexico on the Navajo Nation sent more than 1,000 tons of solid radioactive waste and 93 million gallons of acidic liquid into the Rio Puerco.

Disastrous blowouts and spills like these are easy to see. They get the media's attention, but the toxins leaking silently out of thousands of abandoned hard rock mines are doing even more damage to our watersheds each and every day.

For decades before the spill, the Gold King mine actually leached water laced with heavy metals and sulfuric acid into Cement Creek, which is a tributary of the Animas. Over the last 10 years, an average of 200 gallons of highly polluted water each and every minute, or more than 100 million gallons per year, flowed out of this mine and into the Animas River via Cement Creek. The Gold King and other abandoned mines in the San Juan Mountains in southwestern Colorado continue to pollute the Animas and the San Juan Watershed as we speak.

Beyond the immediate cleanup of the Gold King spill, it is high time we as a Congress overhaul our abandoned mine cleanup policies to make future disasters less likely and to address the thousands and thousands of abandoned mines that are polluting our watersheds.

The Navajo Nation, which was perhaps most affected by the Gold King mine blowout, has more than 500 abandoned uranium mines. Last month, I met with officials at the Navajo Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation and Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Office and learned about their efforts to clean up these literally hundreds of sites. I visited a large uranium tailings disposal pile in Shiprock—in the town of Shiprock—that sits close to the San Juan River.

If you look at this map, this is the San Juan River. This is the community of Shiprock. We have the high school, the fairgrounds, and the residential area all around a permanent tailings disposal site—something that is going to require stewardship for literally hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

Melvin Yazzie, a senior reclamation specialist with the department, also took me through an abandoned uranium mine site in the Red Valley Chapter of the Northern Navajo Nation. Carrying a Geiger counter, he showed me the abandoned mine and a nearby house that was constructed using materials contaminated with radioactive materials.

Here we see Mr. Yazzie with his Geiger counter. This is obviously no longer occupied, but it gives us a sense of the impact to members of the Navajo Nation, some of whom literally have their homes built with the spill-over, the rock materials that came out of these mines, and live with that irradiation each and every day.

The Navajo Government is doing its best to address this legacy of uranium mining and milling, but they do not

have anywhere close to enough resources or funding necessary to clean up the waste from decades and decades of uranium mining.

A large reason why the Navajo Nation lacks adequate resources and why communities all across Indian Country and the entire West are dealing with pollution from abandoned mines and lack resources is that we have not updated our Federal laws on hard rock mining in 143 years.

During the era of manifest destiny, the Federal Government encouraged Americans to settle newly acquired lands in the West by passing laws—laws like the Timber and Stone Act of 1878 and the Desert Land Act of 1878, laws like the Homestead Act, which my grandparents took advantage of. Some of these laws gave away public lands and resources to private users with no strings attached and often no price tag attached.

The General Mining Act of 1872 came along during this era of unrestrained western expansion. It allowed individuals and companies to claim ownership of minerals in the public domain—minerals owned by us as a nation, such as gold, silver, copper, uranium, molybdenum, and others—simply by locating a mineral source, staking a claim, and paying \$5 for an acre of land. Miners did not have to consider environmental impacts or make any plans to clean up the waste, which has created the pollution and contamination we confront today. This law drew thousands of people to the West. My father and my mother's father both made a living working in hard rock mining. But shortsighted policy also left behind a scarred legacy on our lands.

Unlike other 19th-century western settlement laws which have long since been reformed or replaced, the Mining Act of 1872 remains on the books today. While developers of resources such as oil, natural gas, and coal all pay royalties to return fair value to taxpayers for our public resources, hard rock mining companies still mine publicly owned minerals for free—for free—and we still don't have a plan to address a century of pollution from abandoned mines.

We desperately need to bring our mining laws out of the 19th century and into the 20th century. That is why I am joining my colleagues—Senator UDALL of New Mexico, Senator BENNET of Colorado, and Senator WYDEN of Oregon—to introduce legislation to reform our outdated and ineffective Federal policy on abandoned mines and on hard rock mining. Our legislation will require that reasonable royalties and fees from hard rock mining be used to create a dedicated funding stream for cleaning up mine waste. A reclamation program will allow States, tribes, and nonprofit organizations to collaborate on projects to restore fish and wildlife habitat affected by past hard rock mining and to repair watersheds that are the very center of our economy in the West, the source of our essential agri-

cultural and drinking water supply for western communities up and down the spine of the Rockies.

This legislation will also reform the permitting process for new mines. Hard rock mining companies will need to protect water and wildlife resources and provide financial assurance that they can actually fund reclamation cleanup and restoration efforts after their mines close so that in the future we don't have this legacy of abandoned hard rock mines.

These are simply, commonsense reforms—reforms that, frankly, Congress should have adopted decades ago.

I appreciate the value of the hard rock mining industry. My own family has benefited from it, and I recognize that the industry continues to provide good-paying jobs in States throughout the West. Some mining companies are already stepping up to help clean up old mining waste sites. I look forward to working with industry stakeholders to find practical ways to bring our policies into the 21st century. We cannot wait for more disasters like the Gold King mine spill for us to act. We cannot continue to do nothing while thousands of abandoned hard rock mines drain toxic metals into our rivers, water supplies, and our drinking water each and every day. We must come together and press forward for pragmatic reforms to our outdated Federal hard rock mining laws.

By Mr. Kaine (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 2256. A bill to establish programs for health care provider training in Federal health care and medical facilities, to establish Federal co-prescribing guidelines, to establish a grant program with respect to naloxone, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I rise to discuss a bill I am introducing called the Co-prescribing Saves Lives Act.

All across the Nation, and certainly all across my Commonwealth, we are seeing the scourge of prescription drug abuse and a heroin epidemic. These opioids are having major impact in communities everywhere in Virginia, from the coal mines of Appalachia to rural communities in the Shenandoah Valley, to right here in suburban Fairfax County.

I have heard, as have my colleagues, stories from parents who have buried children, from companies that can't find employees who can pass drug tests, and certainly from law enforcement officials, including judges, prosecutors, police officials, and sheriffs, who talk about the dramatic expansion of opioid addiction in this country. The numbers are kind of shocking. When I came to the Senate and started doing tours around the State in the spring of 2013, I really wasn't schooled about this, and I started to hear stories.

Heroin and opioids now account for 25,000 American deaths a year. In Virginia, and in much of the United

States, the deaths from opioid overdoses are now exceeding deaths from motor vehicle accidents. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in the United States fatal opioid-related drug overdose rates have quadrupled since 1990 and have never been higher than they are right now.

The question is, How do we address this crisis? Obviously, the answer is there is no single answer. There are a lot of things that have to be done. The Federal Government, State and local communities, faith communities, non-profit organizations, families, individuals educating themselves—there are a lot of answers, but we have to move forward with steps that we know can reduce overdose deaths.

There is some good news. There are advances that can help us do this, and one of the advances has been the development of a drug called naloxone, which is a medicine that is safe and effective as an antidote to all opioid-related overdoses, including heroin, prescription opioids, and fentanyl. It is a critical tool—it has been proven to be a critical tool since its development in preventing fatal opioid overdoses.

One of the neat things about naloxone is if you come across somebody who is in respiratory failure from an overdose or for some other reason, you can administer naloxone to that individual, and if it is not an overdose, it doesn't have any side effects. It can bring somebody back from the overdose-caused respiratory failure, but it doesn't have any negative side effects if it turns out the person is suffering from something else.

In Virginia there is an organization called Project REVIVE! that trains people to administer naloxone. In one of our communities in Russell County in Southwest Virginia, about a year ago I took the training with a lot of family members and others—just 2 hours of training—to learn how to do this.

Since naloxone has been developed and come into more common usage beginning in the late 1990s, it has saved more than 26,000 people who have been in the throes of an overdose. Naloxone has brought them back to life. I think a lot of professionals—public safety professionals and health care professionals around the country—have seen how effective it is.

One answer to our overdose problem is to co-prescribe naloxone when someone is getting a prescription for an opioid. Opioids have legitimate uses, to manage pain. So when somebody is getting a prescription for that, co-prescribe naloxone so they have the antidote right there in case of an overdose.

There are overdoses from people who are using drugs inappropriately and grabbing somebody else's prescriptions and using opioids, but there are also quite a few overdoses where people who are legitimately prescribed the drug—and they are usually prescribed it for pain—they develop a tolerance to the drug. The package may say to take one

pill every 6 hours, but the pain is strong, and after 3 hours they start to feel it again and somebody thinks, OK, the drug has worn off now so I can take another one. So a person can start to take too many because of pain symptoms, and they get into an overdose situation for that reason too. If a person has a naloxone co-prescribed, they can have the antidote right there that they can administer themselves, or someone else can, if they get into an overdose situation.

Many communities, States, national organizations, and medical organizations have supported co-prescribing naloxone to patients who are taking opioids as a critical part of this overdose problem, and we have guidelines. Not everybody who gets an opioid prescription needs naloxone. My wife broke and dislocated her shoulder two Good Fridays ago, and she was prescribed a powerful opioid pain killer. She used about a day and a half's worth of it. It made her sick to her stomach so she quit using it. Not everybody who gets prescribed a prescription opioid needs naloxone, but there are certain warning signs—the medical profession has developed the warning signs—and if you have the warning signs, you should get the co-prescription. Developing these guidelines helps physicians, pharmacists, and other providers determine who is at risk and whom we should be proactive with regarding a co-prescription.

What this bill does is the following: It improves access to naloxone by encouraging physicians to co-prescribe in a couple of circumstances, to co-prescribe this lifesaving drug alongside opioid prescriptions and make it more widely available in Federal health settings.

The Co-prescribing Saves Lives Act would require that the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Defense, and Veterans Affairs would establish physician education co-prescribing guidelines for all Federal health centers, including VA hospitals, DOD hospitals, the Indian Health Service, and federally qualified health centers. So within Federal health care facilities, if there is going to be an opioid prescription to somebody in a high-risk situation, there would be a mandate that naloxone would be prescribed as well.

This bill is based upon work that has already been done in the Federal Government. The VA especially has been a real leader in setting up these co-prescription guidelines. In addition, the bill would provide a program of grants through State departments of health that are interested in doing the co-prescribing guidelines for private physicians not in Federal settings in their States. The funding would allow States to purchase naloxone, to provide copay assistance for uninsured patients, and to fund training for health professionals and patients. Grant funding could also support State innovation and provide for community outreach. The kind of program where I trained

last summer, Project REVIVE!, is just a community program trying to battle opioid overdose deaths in the coalfields of Appalachia. That would be the kind of program that if other States wanted to do that, could be eligible for grant funding.

In closing, this is just one solution. Obviously, the real solutions, the important ones, are still around prevention. Why do Americans get prescribed so many more opioids than folks in other nations? What do we do about prescriptions when the quantities that are given are too big and then we end up with a lot of unused opioids that can be taken by young people or stolen and sold? There are a lot of issues we have to solve, but there is this bit of good news; that naloxone saves lives and it is easy to administer. It doesn't have a negative effect. If we can broaden access to naloxone for those who have been prescribed opioids—we have saved lives in the past and we are going to save a lot more.

I will conclude by saying there is a dad in Northern Virginia—a guy by the name of Don Flattery—who has been very public about the loss of his son, Kevin, who was a 26-year-old graduate of UVA in 2014. He talked about his son, the family, the advantages they had, and his educational track record of success at UVA, but then he fell into the just bottomless pit of opioid prescription, opioid addiction, and he perished in 2014. What Don said is that "I feel we need to keep personalizing what is happening. We are not addressing shocking, obtuse statistics—we are speaking about my son, your daughter, our neighbors . . . they are real people with real lives, and their losses are the face of the epidemic we must stop."

That is what this bill intends to play a part in.

By Ms. CANTWELL (by request):
S. 2257. A bill to prepare the National Park Service for its Centennial in 2016 and for a second century of protecting our national parks' natural, historic, and cultural resources for present and future generations and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I am pleased to introduce, by request, the Administration's legislative proposal the National Park Service Centennial Act.

The bill authorizes or expands several authorities to assist the National Park Service in managing the over 400 units of the National Park System as it prepares for the centennial anniversary of the agency's establishment in 1916.

While I may not agree with every provision in the administration's proposed bill, I believe it is important for this legislative proposal to be considered in the Senate, which is why I agreed to introduce it by request. At the same time, I will continue to work with other Senators on both sides of the aisle to develop a bipartisan consensus on a national park centennial

bill so that the Senate can consider and pass a bill before the National Park Service’s centennial anniversary next year.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the administration’s letter to the Senate transmitting the legislative proposal and a section-by-section summary of the bill prepared by the Department of the Interior be printed in the RECORD.

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

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, DC, August 31, 2015.
Hon. JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.,
President of the Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Enclosed is a draft of a bill entitled, the “National Park Service Centennial Act.” Also enclosed is a section-by-section analysis of the bill. We recommend that the bill be introduced, referred to the appropriate committee for consideration, and enacted.

The National Park Service (NPS) will celebrate its centennial in 2016. As we look ahead to the next century, there are a number of key authorities that need to be authorized, clarified, or expanded to allow us to better serve the American people.

Title I, the Centennial Declaration, would recognize that the NPS has responsibility not only for administering the units of the National Park System, but for programs that provide financial and technical assistance to states, communities, and individuals to protect our national heritage. Title I would also direct the Secretary of the Interior to utilize these financial and technical assistance programs to further the conservation and enjoyment of the natural and cul-

tural heritage of the Nation for the benefit and inspiration of the public.

Titles II–IV of the proposed legislation would implement part of the President’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Budget request to Congress. Title II would establish a National Park Centennial Challenge Fund of up to \$100 million for FY 2016, FY 2017, and 2018 to be used for signature projects that will help prepare the national parks for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment.

Title III would provide a mandatory appropriation of \$300 million to the NPS Construction Account for FY 2016, FY 2017, and FY 2018, to correct deficiencies in NPS infrastructure and facilities.

Title IV would establish the Centennial Land Management Investment Fund, consisting of a mandatory appropriation equal to \$100 million for FY 2016, FY 2017, and FY 2018 to provide funding for the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to jointly establish a competitive program available to the four Federal land management agencies for projects that enhance visitor services and outdoor recreational opportunities, restore lands and waters, repair facilities or trails, or increase energy and water efficiency.

Title V would direct the National Park Foundation (NPF) to establish a special account known as the Second Century Endowment for the NPS, consisting of gifts or bequests provided for this purpose, for projects and activities that further the mission of the NPS.

Title VI would establish the NPS Second Century Fund in the Treasury, which would be funded through additional lodging or camping fees and funds collected from purchases of the lifetime pass for citizens 62 years of age or older.

Title VII would clarify or expand authorities for activities that the NPS are already conducting to allow us to better serve the American people. This includes providing

clear authority for the interpretation and education work of the NPS by consolidating a number of disparate authorities currently used, and directing the Secretary to ensure that management of National Park System units and related areas is enhanced by the availability and utilization of a broad program of the highest quality interpretation and education. Title VII would also raise the age limit for participation in the Public Lands Corp from 25 to 30 and extend the direct-hire authority from 120 days to 2 years, consistent with Department of the Interior resource assistant direct-hire authority. And, this title would remove the \$3.5 million authorization ceiling for the Volunteers in the Parks to accommodate the funding needed to support this growing program.

Title VIII would establish the NPS Visitor Services Management Authority (VMSA), and authorize the Secretary to establish a program to allow the VMSA to award and manage contracts for the operation of commercial visitor services programs and activities.

Title IX would authorize the Secretary to enter into agreements for the creation of reproductions of a museum object in which the object and its intellectual property rights are under the control of the Secretary. The Administration is developing additional language related to the protection of NPS intellectual property, which we intend to transmit under separate cover.

Title X would redesignate the Secretary of the Interior and the Director of the NPS as ex officio members of the NPF board. It also would authorize appropriations of \$25 million for each of FY 2016 through FY 2026 to NPF that would be used to leverage additional non-federal funds to support our national parks.

The effect of this draft bill on the deficit is:

FISCAL YEARS											
(dollars in millions)											
2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
45	312	476	386	67	–71	–11	–52	81	–38	–92	1,103

The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGO) Act of 2010 provides that revenue and direct spending legislation cannot, in the aggregate, increase the on-budget deficit. If such legislation increases the on-budget deficit and that increase is not offset by the end of the congressional session, a sequestration must be ordered. This proposal would increase direct spending, is therefore subject to the Statutory PAYGO Act, and should be considered in conjunction with all other proposals that are subject to the Act.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised that there is no objection to the enactment of the enclosed draft legislation from the standpoint of the Administration’s program.

Sincerely,
SALLY JEWELL.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CENTENNIAL ACT
SECTION-BY-SECTION SUMMARY
TITLE I—CENTENNIAL DECLARATION

Recognizes that the National Service has responsibility not only for administering the units of the National Park System, but also for programs that provide financial and technical assistance to states, communities and individuals to protect our national heritage.

Reaffirms and directs the Secretary of the Interior to utilize these financial and technical assistance programs to further the conservation and enjoyment of the natural and

cultural heritage of the nation for the benefit and inspiration of the public.

TITLE II—NATIONAL PARK CENTENNIAL
CHALLENGE FUND

Establishes in the Treasury a fund to be known as the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund, which will consist of an annual appropriated amount equal to the qualified donations received in the same fiscal year not to exceed \$100 million for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2018. The fund will be used for signature projects identified as ones that will help prepare the National Parks for another century of conservation, preservation and enjoyment.

TITLE III—SECOND CENTURY INFRASTRUCTURE
INVESTMENT

Provides a mandatory appropriation of \$300 million to the National Park Service Construction Account for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2018, to correct deficiencies in National Park Service infrastructure and facilities.

TITLE IV—CENTENNIAL LAND MANAGEMENT
INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Establishes in the Treasury a fund to be known as the Centennial Land Management Investment Fund, consisting of a mandatory appropriation equal to \$100 million for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2018. The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture are required to establish jointly a competitive program available to the four federal land man-

agement agencies for projects that enhance visitor services and outdoor recreational opportunities, restore lands and waters, repair facilities or trails, or increase energy and water efficiency.

TITLE V—NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION
ENDOWMENT

Establishes in the National Park Foundation a special account to be known as the Second Century Endowment for the National Park Service, consisting of gifts or bequests provided for this purpose. The National Park Foundation may use the funds deposited in the Endowment for projects and activities approved by the Secretary that further the mission and purposes of the National Park Service.

TITLE VI—NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SECOND
CENTURY FUND

Establishes in the Treasury an account to be known as the National Park Service Second Century Fund, with funds remaining available to the Secretary of the Interior until expended and available without further appropriation. Funds may only be used if matched, on a 1-to-1 basis, by nonfederal donations to the National Park Service for specified projects and programs.

Funds the account with two sources of funding: (1) fees in addition to the daily cost of lodging or camping within a unit of the national park system; and (2) funds from amounts above \$10.00 that are collected from purchases of the lifetime pass for citizens 62

years of age or older (passes would be available at the same cost as the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass).

TITLE VII—NATIONAL PARK NEXT GENERATION STEWARDS

NPS Interpretation and Education Authority

Provides clear authority for the interpretation and education work of the National Park Service by consolidating a number of disparate authorities currently used.

Directs the Secretary of the Interior to ensure that management of National Park System units and related areas is enhanced by the availability and utilization of a broad program of the highest quality interpretation and education.

Public Lands Corps Amendments

Raises the age limit for participation in the Public Lands Corps from 25 to 30. This section also would provide non-competitive hiring status to a former Public Lands Corps member from the current 120 days after the member's service is completed to a period of up to two years.

Volunteers in Parks

Removes the \$3.5 million authorization ceiling for the Volunteers in the Parks to accommodate the funding needed to support this growing program.

TITLE VIII—NATIONAL PARK SERVICE VISITOR SERVICE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to establish the National Park Service Visitor Services Management Authority (VMSA) to award and manage contracts for the operation of commercial visitor services programs and activities.

Authorizes the establishment of a VSMA operating board, a director of the VSMA, and the hiring of staff.

Authorizes the use of funds collected by the VSMA from the contracts awarded to be available for expenditure by the VSMA in furtherance of the purposes of the law.

TITLE IX—INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to enter into agreements for the creation of reproductions of a museum object in which the object and its intellectual property rights are under the control of the Secretary. The agreements may include provisions for the collection of fees or royalties, which can be retained and used by the park or repository where the museum object is held.

TITLE X—NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior and the Director of the National Park Service as ex officio members of the National Park Foundation board.

Authorizes appropriations of \$25 million for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2026 to National Park Foundation, and prohibits the use of these funds for administrative expenses of the Foundation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 307—RECOGNIZING NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH AND CELEBRATING THE HERITAGES AND CULTURES OF NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICANS TO THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH,

Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KAINE, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. UDALL, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. REID) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 307

Whereas from November 1, 2015, through November 30, 2015, the United States celebrates National Native American Heritage Month;

Whereas National Native American Heritage Month is an opportunity to consider and recognize the contributions of Native Americans to the history of the United States;

Whereas Native Americans are descendants of the original, indigenous inhabitants of what is now the United States;

Whereas the Bureau of the Census estimated that in 2010, there were more than 5,000,000 individuals of Native American descent in the United States;

Whereas Native Americans maintain vibrant cultures and traditions and hold a deeply rooted sense of community;

Whereas Native Americans have moving stories of tragedy, triumph, and perseverance that need to be shared with future generations;

Whereas Native Americans speak and preserve indigenous languages, which have contributed to the English language by being used as names of individuals and locations throughout the United States;

Whereas Congress has consistently reaffirmed the support of the United States of tribal self-governance and self-determination and the commitment of the United States to improving the lives of all Native Americans by—

- (1) enhancing health care and law enforcement resources; and
- (2) improving the housing and socioeconomic status of Native Americans;

Whereas the United States is committed to strengthening the government-to-government relationship that the United States has maintained with the various Indian tribes;

Whereas Congress has recognized the contributions of the Iroquois Confederacy, and the influence of the Iroquois Confederacy on the Founding Fathers in the drafting of the Constitution of the United States with the concepts of—

- (1) freedom of speech;
- (2) the separation of governmental powers; and
- (3) the system of checks and balances between the branches of government;

Whereas, with the enactment of the Native American Heritage Day Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-33; 123 Stat. 1922), Congress—

- (1) reaffirmed the government-to-government relationship between the United States and Native American governments; and
- (2) recognized the important contributions of Native Americans to the culture of the United States;

Whereas Native Americans have made distinct and important contributions to the United States and the rest of the world in many fields, including the fields of agriculture, medicine, music, language, and art;

Whereas Native Americans have distinguished themselves as inventors, entrepreneurs, spiritual leaders, and scholars;

Whereas Native Americans have served with honor and distinction in the Armed Forces, and continue to serve in the Armed Forces in greater numbers per capita than any other group in the United States;

Whereas the United States has recognized the contribution of the Native American code talkers in World War I and World War II, who used indigenous languages as an unbreakable military code, saving countless lives in the United States; and

Whereas the people of the United States have reason to honor the great achievements and contributions of Native Americans and their ancestors: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the month of November 2015, as National Native American Heritage Month;

(2) recognizes the Friday after Thanksgiving as “Native American Heritage Day” in accordance with section 2(10) of the Native American Heritage Day Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-33; 123 Stat. 1923); and

(3) urges the people of the United States to observe National Native American Heritage Month and Native American Heritage Day with appropriate programs and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 308—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF OCTOBER 20, 2015, AS THE “NATIONAL DAY ON WRITING”

Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. ROBERTS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 308

Whereas people in the 21st century are writing more than ever before for personal, professional, and civic purposes;

Whereas the social nature of writing invites people of every age, profession, and walk of life to create meaning through composing;

Whereas more and more people in every occupation consider writing to be essential and influential in their work;

Whereas writers continue to learn how to write for different purposes, audiences, and occasions throughout their lifetimes;

Whereas developing digital technologies expand the possibilities for composing in multiple media at a faster pace than ever before;

Whereas young people are leading the way in developing new forms of composing by using different forms of digital media;

Whereas effective communication contributes to building a global economy and a global community;

Whereas the National Council of Teachers of English, in conjunction with its many national and local partners, honors and celebrates the importance of writing through the National Day on Writing;

Whereas the National Day on Writing celebrates the foundational place of writing in the personal, professional, and civic lives of the people of the United States;

Whereas the National Day on Writing highlights the importance of writing instruction and practice at every educational level and in every subject area;

Whereas the National Day on Writing emphasizes the lifelong process of learning to write and compose for different audiences, purposes, and occasions;

Whereas the National Day on Writing honors the use of the full range of media for composing, from traditional tools like print, audio, and video to Internet website tools like blogs, wikis, and podcasts; and

Whereas the National Day on Writing encourages all people of the United States to write, enjoy, and learn from the writing of others: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of October 20, 2015, as the "National Day on Writing";

(2) strongly affirms the purposes of the National Day on Writing; and

(3) encourages educational institutions, businesses, community and civic associations, and other organizations to celebrate and promote the National Day on Writing.

SENATE RESOLUTION 309—RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF FRED THOMPSON, FORMER UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Mr. McCONNELL (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CORKER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COATS, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. GARDNER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SASSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 309

Whereas Fred Thompson was born in Alabama in 1942, and grew up in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee;

Whereas Fred Thompson graduated from Memphis State University in 1964 and Vanderbilt University School of Law in 1967, was admitted to the Tennessee bar and served as an assistant U.S. Attorney;

Whereas Fred Thompson was appointed by Senator Howard Baker, Jr., to serve as minority counsel to the Senate Watergate Committee in 1973;

Whereas Fred Thompson continued to practice law and in 1977 helped expose government corruption in Tennessee;

Whereas Fred Thompson was first elected to the United States Senate in 1994 and served as a Senator from the State of Tennessee until 2003;

Whereas following his service as Senator, Fred Thompson continued to pursue his acting career, which began in 1985 with the movie "Marie" in which he played himself;

Whereas Fred Thompson was known for his integrity, humility and dedication to public service: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable Fred Thompson, former member of the United States Senate.

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the Senate adjourns today, it stand adjourned as a further mark of respect to the memory of the Honorable Fred Thompson.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 24—AUTHORIZING THE USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL IN THE CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER FOR THE UNVEILING OF THE MARBLE BUST OF VICE PRESIDENT RICHARD CHENEY ON DECEMBER 3, 2015

Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. McCONNELL, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. REID) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 24

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL FOR THE UNVEILING OF THE MARBLE BUST OF VICE PRESIDENT RICHARD CHENEY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center is authorized to be used for a ceremony to unveil the marble bust of Vice President Richard Cheney on December 3, 2015.

(b) PREPARATIONS.—The Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Police Board shall take such action as may be necessary with respect to physical preparations and security for the ceremony described in subsection (a).

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2763. Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

SA 2764. Mr. KIRK proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, *supra*.

SA 2765. Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. FLAKE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, *supra*; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2766. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, *supra*; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2767. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, *supra*; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2768. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, *supra*; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2769. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, *supra*; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2763. Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) proposed an

amendment to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Army as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Army Corps of Engineers and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, and for construction and operation of facilities in support of the functions of the Commander in Chief, \$663,245,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$109,245,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, architect and engineer services, and host nation support, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Army determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, naval installations, facilities, and real property for the Navy and Marine Corps as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, \$1,619,699,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$91,649,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Air Force as currently authorized by law, \$1,389,185,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$89,164,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Air Force determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, installations, facilities, and real property for activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments), as currently authorized by law, \$2,290,767,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That

such amounts of this appropriation as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to such appropriations of the Department of Defense available for military construction or family housing as the Secretary may designate, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes, and for the same time period, as the appropriation or fund to which transferred: *Provided further*, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$160,404,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$197,237,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$20,337,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Army National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR NATIONAL GUARD

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$138,738,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$5,104,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Air National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$113,595,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$9,318,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Army Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the reserve components of the Navy and Marine Corps as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$36,078,000, to

remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$2,208,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE RESERVE

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air Force Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$65,021,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That, of the amount appropriated, not to exceed \$13,400,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Air Force Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

For the United States share of the cost of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program for the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations (including international military headquarters) and for related expenses for the collective defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area as authorized by section 2806 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$120,000,000, to remain available until expended.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$99,695,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY

For expenses of family housing for the Army for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$393,511,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$16,541,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$353,036,000.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$160,498,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for operation and maintenance, in-

cluding debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$331,232,000.

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

For expenses of family housing for the activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments) for operation and maintenance, leasing, and minor construction, as authorized by law, \$58,668,000.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE ACCOUNT

For deposit into the Department of Defense Base Closure Account 1990, established by section 2906(a) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), \$251,334,000, to remain available until expended.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. None of the funds made available in this title shall be expended for payments under a cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contract for construction, where cost estimates exceed \$25,000, to be performed within the United States, except Alaska, without the specific approval in writing of the Secretary of Defense setting forth the reasons therefor.

SEC. 102. Funds made available in this title for construction shall be available for hire of passenger motor vehicles.

SEC. 103. Funds made available in this title for construction may be used for advances to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, for the construction of access roads as authorized by section 210 of title 23, United States Code, when projects authorized therein are certified as important to the national defense by the Secretary of Defense.

SEC. 104. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to begin construction of new bases in the United States for which specific appropriations have not been made.

SEC. 105. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used for purchase of land or land easements in excess of 100 percent of the value as determined by the Army Corps of Engineers or the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, except: (1) where there is a determination of value by a Federal court; (2) purchases negotiated by the Attorney General or the designee of the Attorney General; (3) where the estimated value is less than \$25,000; or (4) as otherwise determined by the Secretary of Defense to be in the public interest.

SEC. 106. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used to: (1) acquire land; (2) provide for site preparation; or (3) install utilities for any family housing, except housing for which funds have been made available in annual Acts making appropriations for military construction.

SEC. 107. None of the funds made available in this title for minor construction may be used to transfer or relocate any activity from one base or installation to another, without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 108. None of the funds made available in this title may be used for the procurement of steel for any construction project or activity for which American steel producers, fabricators, and manufacturers have been denied the opportunity to compete for such steel procurement.

SEC. 109. None of the funds available to the Department of Defense for military construction or family housing during the current fiscal year may be used to pay real property taxes in any foreign nation.

SEC. 110. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to initiate a new installation overseas without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 111. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated for architect and engineer contracts estimated by the Government to exceed \$500,000 for projects to be accomplished in Japan, in any North Atlantic Treaty Organization member country, or in countries bordering the Arabian Gulf, unless such contracts are awarded to United States firms or United States firms in joint venture with host nation firms.

SEC. 112. None of the funds made available in this title for military construction in the United States territories and possessions in the Pacific and on Kwajalein Atoll, or in countries bordering the Arabian Gulf, may be used to award any contract estimated by the Government to exceed \$1,000,000 to a foreign contractor: *Provided*, That this section shall not be applicable to contract awards for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a United States contractor exceeds the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a foreign contractor by greater than 20 percent: *Provided further*, That this section shall not apply to contract awards for military construction on Kwajalein Atoll for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid is submitted by a Marshallese contractor.

SEC. 113. The Secretary of Defense shall inform the appropriate committees of both Houses of Congress, including the Committees on Appropriations, of plans and scope of any proposed military exercise involving United States personnel 30 days prior to its occurring, if amounts expended for construction, either temporary or permanent, are anticipated to exceed \$100,000.

SEC. 114. Not more than 20 percent of the funds made available in this title which are limited for obligation during the current fiscal year shall be obligated during the last 2 months of the fiscal year.

SEC. 115. Funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for construction in prior years shall be available for construction authorized for each such military department by the authorizations enacted into law during the current session of Congress.

SEC. 116. For military construction or family housing projects that are being completed with funds otherwise expired or lapsed for obligation, expired or lapsed funds may be used to pay the cost of associated supervision, inspection, overhead, engineering and design on those projects and on subsequent claims, if any.

SEC. 117. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any funds made available to a military department or defense agency for the construction of military projects may be obligated for a military construction project or contract, or for any portion of such a project or contract, at any time before the end of the fourth fiscal year after the fiscal year for which funds for such project were made available, if the funds obligated for such project: (1) are obligated from funds available for military construction projects; and (2) do not exceed the amount appropriated for such project, plus any amount by which the cost of such project is increased pursuant to law.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 118. Subject to 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, such additional amounts as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to: (1) the De-

partment of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction in "Family Housing" accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund; or (2) the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction of military unaccompanied housing in "Military Construction" accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund: *Provided*, That appropriations made available to the Funds shall be available to cover the costs, as defined in section 502(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, of direct loans or loan guarantees issued by the Department of Defense pursuant to the provisions of subchapter IV of chapter 169 of title 10, United States Code, pertaining to alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing, military unaccompanied housing, and supporting facilities.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 119. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, amounts may be transferred from the accounts established by sections 2906(a)(1) and 2906A(a)(1) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), to the fund established by section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374) to pay for expenses associated with the Homeowners Assistance Program incurred under 42 U.S.C. 3374(a)(1)(A). Any amounts transferred shall be merged with and be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the fund to which transferred.

SEC. 120. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds made available in this title for operation and maintenance of family housing shall be the exclusive source of funds for repair and maintenance of all family housing units, including general or flag officer quarters: *Provided*, That not more than \$35,000 per unit may be spent annually for the maintenance and repair of any general or flag officer quarters without 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, except that an after-the-fact notification shall be submitted if the limitation is exceeded solely due to costs associated with environmental remediation that could not be reasonably anticipated at the time of the budget submission: *Provided further*, That the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) is to report annually to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress all operation and maintenance expenditures for each individual general or flag officer quarters for the prior fiscal year.

SEC. 121. Amounts contained in the Ford Island Improvement Account established by subsection (h) of section 2814 of title 10, United States Code, are appropriated and shall be available until expended for the purposes specified in subsection (i)(1) of such section or until transferred pursuant to subsection (i)(3) of such section.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 122. During the 5-year period after appropriations available in this Act to the Department of Defense for military construction and family housing operation and maintenance and construction have expired for obligation, upon a determination that such appropriations will not be necessary for the liquidation of obligations or for making au-

thorized adjustments to such appropriations for obligations incurred during the period of availability of such appropriations, unobligated balances of such appropriations may be transferred into the appropriation "Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense", to be merged with and to be available for the same time period and for the same purposes as the appropriation to which transferred.

SEC. 123. Amounts appropriated or otherwise made available in an account funded under the headings in this title may be transferred among projects and activities within the account in accordance with the reprogramming guidelines for military construction and family housing construction contained in Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation 7000.14-R, Volume 3, Chapter 7, of February 2009, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 124. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated or expended for planning and design and construction of projects at Arlington National Cemetery.

SEC. 125. For an additional amount for "Military Construction, Army", \$34,500,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Army's Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2016 submitted to Congress: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: *Provided further*, That, not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 126. For an additional amount for "Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$34,320,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Navy's Unfunded Priority List for fiscal year 2016: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: *Provided further*, That, not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Navy shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 127. For an additional amount for "Military Construction, Army National Guard", \$51,300,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Army's Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2016 submitted to Congress: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: *Provided further*, That, not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 128. For an additional amount for "Military Construction, Army Reserve", \$34,200,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Army's Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2016 submitted to Congress: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: *Provided further*, That, not

later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 129. Of the unobligated balances available from prior Appropriations Acts (other than appropriations that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement or as being for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism pursuant to a concurrent resolution on the budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985) the following funds are hereby rescinded from the following accounts and programs in the specified amounts:

“Military Construction, Army”, \$45,000,000;
“Military Construction, Air Force”, \$46,400,000; and
“Military Construction, Defense-Wide”, \$80,500,000.

(RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 130. Of the unobligated balances made available in prior appropriations Acts for the fund established in section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374), \$65,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

SEC. 131. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this or any other Act may be used to consolidate or relocate any element of a United States Air Force Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer (RED HORSE) outside of the United States until the Secretary of the Air Force (1) completes an analysis and comparison of the cost and infrastructure investment required to consolidate or relocate a RED HORSE squadron outside of the United States versus within the United States; (2) provides to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress (“the Committees”) a report detailing the findings of the cost analysis; and (3) certifies in writing to the Committees that the preferred site for the consolidation or relocation yields the greatest savings for the Air Force: *Provided*, That the term “United States” in this section does not include any territory or possession of the United States.

SEC. 132. For an additional amount for “Military Construction, Air Force”, \$21,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Air Force’s Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2016 submitted to Congress: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: *Provided further*, That not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Air Force shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 133. For an additional amount for “Military Construction, Air National Guard”, \$6,100,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Air Force’s Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2016 submitted to Congress: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: *Provided further*, That not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Air Force shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 134. For an additional amount for “Military Construction, Air Force Reserve”, \$10,400,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020: *Provided*, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction projects, in priority order, identified in the Department of the Air Force’s Unfunded Priority List for Fiscal Year 2016 submitted to Congress: *Provided further*, That such funding is subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: *Provided further*, That not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Air Force shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

TITLE II

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the payment of compensation benefits to or on behalf of veterans and a pilot program for disability examinations as authorized by section 107 and chapters 11, 13, 18, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; pension benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 15, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; and burial benefits, the Reinstated Entitlement Program for Survivors, emergency and other officers’ retirement pay, adjusted-service credits and certificates, payment of premiums due on commercial life insurance policies guaranteed under the provisions of title IV of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 541 et seq.) and for other benefits as authorized by sections 107, 1312, 1977, and 2106, and chapters 23, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, \$166,271,436,000, to remain available until expended, of which \$87,146,761,000 shall become available on October 1, 2016: *Provided*, That not to exceed \$15,562,000 of the amount appropriated for fiscal year 2016 and \$16,021,000 of the amount made available for fiscal year 2017 under this heading shall be reimbursed to “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration”, and “Information Technology Systems” for necessary expenses in implementing the provisions of chapters 51, 53, and 55 of title 38, United States Code, the funding source for which is specifically provided as the “Compensation and Pensions” appropriation: *Provided further*, That such sums as may be earned on an actual qualifying patient basis, shall be reimbursed to “Medical Care Collections Fund” to augment the funding of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners as authorized.

READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

For the payment of readjustment and rehabilitation benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 21, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 41, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, \$32,088,826,000, to remain available until expended, of which \$16,743,904,000 shall become available on October 1, 2016: *Provided*, That expenses for rehabilitation program services and assistance which the Secretary is authorized to provide under subsection (a) of section 3104 of title 38, United States Code, other than under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of that subsection, shall be charged to this account.

VETERANS INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

For military and naval insurance, national service life insurance, servicemen’s indemnities, service-disabled veterans insurance, and veterans mortgage life insurance as authorized by chapters 19 and 21, title 38, United States Code, \$169,080,000, to remain available until expended, of which \$91,920,000 shall become available on October 1, 2016.

VETERANS HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM FUND

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the program, as authorized by subchapters I through III of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code: *Provided*, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: *Provided further*, That, during fiscal year 2016, within the resources available, not to exceed \$500,000 in gross obligations for direct loans are authorized for specially adapted housing loans.

In addition, for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, \$164,558,000.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the cost of direct loans, \$31,000, as authorized by chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code: *Provided*, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading are available to subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed \$2,952,381.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, \$367,000, which may be paid to the appropriation for “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration”.

NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For administrative expenses to carry out the direct loan program authorized by subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, \$1,134,000.

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION MEDICAL SERVICES

For necessary expenses for furnishing, as authorized by law, inpatient and outpatient care and treatment to beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs and veterans described in section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, including care and treatment in facilities not under the jurisdiction of the Department, and including medical supplies and equipment, bioengineering services, food services, and salaries and expenses of healthcare employees hired under title 38, United States Code, aid to State homes as authorized by section 1741 of title 38, United States Code, assistance and support services for caregivers as authorized by section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, loan repayments authorized by section 604 of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-163; 124 Stat. 1174; 38 U.S.C. 7681 note), and hospital care and medical services authorized by section 1787 of title 38, United States Code; \$3,104,197,000, which shall be in addition to funds previously appropriated under this heading that become available on October 1, 2015; and, in addition, \$51,673,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2016, and shall remain available until September 30, 2017: *Provided*, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2016, under this heading, \$1,400,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018: *Provided further*, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a priority for the provision of medical treatment for veterans who have service-connected disabilities, lower income, or have special needs: *Provided further*, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall give priority funding for the provision of basic medical benefits to veterans in enrollment priority groups 1 through 6: *Provided further*, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may authorize the

dispensing of prescription drugs from Veterans Health Administration facilities to enrolled veterans with privately written prescriptions based on requirements established by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That the implementation of the program described in the previous proviso shall incur no additional cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs: *Provided further*, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2016, under this heading, not less than \$900,000,000 shall be available for highly effective Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) clinical treatments including clinical treatments with modern medications that have significantly higher cure rates than older medications, are easier to prescribe, and have fewer and milder side effects.

MEDICAL SUPPORT AND COMPLIANCE

For necessary expenses in the administration of the medical, hospital, nursing home, domiciliary, construction, supply, and research activities, as authorized by law; administrative expenses in support of capital policy activities; and administrative and legal expenses of the Department for collecting and recovering amounts owed the Department as authorized under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, and the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq.), \$6,524,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2016, and shall remain available until September 30, 2017: *Provided*, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2016, under this heading, \$100,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

For necessary expenses for the maintenance and operation of hospitals, nursing homes, domiciliary facilities, and other necessary facilities of the Veterans Health Administration; for administrative expenses in support of planning, design, project management, real property acquisition and disposition, construction, and renovation of any facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department; for oversight, engineering, and architectural activities not charged to project costs; for repairing, altering, improving, or providing facilities in the several hospitals and homes under the jurisdiction of the Department, not otherwise provided for, either by contract or by the hire of temporary employees and purchase of materials; for leases of facilities; and for laundry services, \$5,074,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2016, and shall remain available until September 30, 2017: *Provided*, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2016, under this heading, \$250,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018.

MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH

For necessary expenses in carrying out programs of medical and prosthetic research and development as authorized by chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, \$621,813,000, plus reimbursements, shall remain available until September 30, 2017.

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

For necessary expenses of the National Cemetery Administration for operations and maintenance, not otherwise provided for, including uniforms or allowances therefor; cemeterial expenses as authorized by law; purchase of one passenger motor vehicle for use in cemeterial operations; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and repair, alteration or improvement of facilities under the jurisdiction of the National Cemetery Administration, \$266,220,000, of which not to exceed \$26,600,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary operating expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs, not otherwise provided for, including administrative expenses in support of Department-Wide capital planning, management and policy activities, uniforms, or allowances therefor; not to exceed \$25,000 for official reception and representation expenses; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, \$311,591,000, of which not to exceed \$10,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017: *Provided*, That funds provided under this heading may be transferred to "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration".

BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

For necessary operating expenses of the Board of Veterans Appeals, \$107,884,000, of which not to exceed \$10,788,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017.

GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES, VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

For necessary operating expenses of the Veterans Benefits Administration, not otherwise provided for, including hire of passenger motor vehicles, reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, and reimbursement of the Department of Defense for the cost of overseas employee mail, \$2,697,734,000: *Provided*, That expenses for services and assistance authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of section 3104(a) of title 38, United States Code, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines are necessary to enable entitled veterans: (1) to the maximum extent feasible, to become employable and to obtain and maintain suitable employment; or (2) to achieve maximum independence in daily living, shall be charged to this account: *Provided further*, That, of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed \$160,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

For necessary expenses for information technology systems and telecommunications support, including developmental information systems and operational information systems; for pay and associated costs; and for the capital asset acquisition of information technology systems, including management and related contractual costs of said acquisitions, including contractual costs associated with operations authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, \$4,106,363,000, plus reimbursements: *Provided*, That \$1,115,757,000 shall be for pay and associated costs, of which not to exceed \$34,800,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017: *Provided further*, That \$2,512,863,000 shall be for operations and maintenance, of which not to exceed \$175,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017: *Provided further*, That \$477,743,000 shall be for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement, and shall remain available until September 30, 2017: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement may not be obligated or expended until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Chief Information Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs submits to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a certification of the amounts, in parts or in full, to be obligated and expended for each development project: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for salaries and expenses, operations and maintenance, and in-

formation technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement may be transferred among the three subaccounts after the Secretary of Veterans Affairs requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: *Provided further*, That amounts made available for the "Information Technology Systems" account for development, modernization, and enhancement may be transferred among projects or to newly defined projects: *Provided further*, That no project may be increased or decreased by more than \$1,000,000 of cost prior to submitting a request to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress to make the transfer and an approval is issued, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed: *Provided further*, That funds under this heading may be used by the Interagency Program Office through the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a standard data reference terminology model: *Provided further*, That, of the funds made available for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement for Vista Evolution, not more than 25 percent may be obligated or expended until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs submits to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, and such Committees approve, a report that describes: (1) the status of and changes to the Vista Evolution program plan dated March 24, 2014 (hereinafter referred to as the "Plan"), the Vista 4 product roadmap dated February 26, 2015 ("Roadmap"), and the Vista 4 Incremental Life Cycle Cost Estimate, dated October 26, 2014; (2) any changes to the scope or functionality of projects within the Vista Evolution program as established in the Plan; (3) actual program costs incurred to date; (4) progress in meeting the schedule milestones that have been established in the Plan; (5) a Project Management Accountability System (PMAS) Dashboard Progress report that identifies each Vista Evolution project being tracked through PMAS, what functionality it is intended to provide, and what evaluation scores it has received throughout development; (6) the definition being used for interoperability between the electronic health record systems of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, the metrics to measure the extent of interoperability, the milestones and timeline associated with achieving interoperability, and the baseline measurements associated with interoperability; (7) progress toward developing and implementing all components and levels of interoperability, including semantic interoperability; (8) the change management tools in place to facilitate the implementation of Vista Evolution and interoperability; and (9) any changes to the governance structure for the Vista Evolution program and its chain of decisionmaking authority: *Provided further*, That the funds made available under this heading for information technology systems development, modernization, and enhancement, shall be for the projects, and in the amounts, specified under this heading in the report accompanying this Act.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

For necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General, to include information technology, in carrying out the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), \$126,766,000, of which \$12,676,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2017.

CONSTRUCTION, MAJOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or for any of the purposes set forth

in sections 316, 2404, 2406 and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, including planning, architectural and engineering services, construction management services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, where the estimated cost of a project is more than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, or where funds for a project were made available in a previous major project appropriation, \$1,027,064,000, of which \$967,064,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2020, and of which \$60,000,000 shall remain available until expended: *Provided*, That except for advance planning activities, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and other capital asset management related activities, including portfolio development and management activities, and investment strategy studies funded through the advance planning fund and the planning and design activities funded through the design fund, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and salaries and associated costs of the resident engineers who oversee those capital investments funded through this account, and funds provided for the purchase of land for the National Cemetery Administration through the land acquisition line item, none of the funds made available under this heading shall be used for any project which has not been approved by the Congress in the budgetary process: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading for fiscal year 2016, for each approved project shall be obligated: (1) by the awarding of a construction documents contract by September 30, 2016; and (2) by the awarding of a construction contract by September 30, 2017: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall promptly submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a written report on any approved major construction project for which obligations are not incurred within the time limitations established above: *Provided further*, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2016, under this heading, \$490,700,000 for Veterans Health Administration major construction projects shall not be available until the Secretary of Veterans Affairs:

(1) Enters into an agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to serve as the design and construction agent for Veterans Health Administration projects with a Total Estimated Cost of \$250,000,000 or above.

(2) That such an agreement will designate the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as the design and construction agent to serve as—

(A) the overall construction project manager, with a dedicated project delivery team including engineers, medical facility designers, and professional project managers;

(B) the facility design manager, with a dedicated design manager and technical support;

(C) the design agent, with standardized and rigorous facility designs;

(D) the architect/engineer designer; and

(E) the overall construction agent, with a dedicated construction and technical team during pre-construction, construction, and commissioning phases.

(3) Certifies in writing that such an agreement is in effect and will prevent subsequent major construction project cost overruns, provides a copy of the agreement entered into (and any required supplementary information) to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, and a period of 60 days has elapsed.

CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including planning and assessments of needs which may lead to capital investments, architectural and engineering services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406 and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, where the estimated cost of a project is equal to or less than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, \$378,080,000, to remain available until September 30, 2020, along with unobligated balances of previous “Construction, Minor Projects” appropriations which are hereby made available for any project where the estimated cost is equal to or less than the amount set forth in such section: *Provided*, That funds made available under this heading shall be for: (1) repairs to any of the nonmedical facilities under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department which are necessary because of loss or damage caused by any natural disaster or catastrophe; and (2) temporary measures necessary to prevent or to minimize further loss by such causes.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF STATE EXTENDED CARE FACILITIES

For grants to assist States to acquire or construct State nursing home and domiciliary facilities and to remodel, modify, or alter existing hospital, nursing home, and domiciliary facilities in State homes, for furnishing care to veterans as authorized by sections 8131 through 8137 of title 38, United States Code, \$100,000,000, to remain available until expended.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF VETERANS CEMETERIES

For grants to assist States and tribal organizations in establishing, expanding, or improving veterans cemeteries as authorized by section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, \$46,000,000, to remain available until expended.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 201. Any appropriation for fiscal year 2016 for “Compensation and Pensions”, “Readjustment Benefits”, and “Veterans Insurance and Indemnities” may be transferred as necessary to any other of the mentioned appropriations: *Provided*, That, before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and such Committees issue an approval, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 202. Amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016, in this Act or any other Act, under the “Medical Services”, “Medical support and compliance”, and “Medical Facilities” accounts may be transferred among the accounts: *Provided*, That any transfers between the “Medical Services” and “Medical Support and Compliance” accounts of 1 percent or less of the total amount appropriated to the account in this or any other Act may take place subject to notification from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the amount and purpose of the

transfer: *Provided further*, That any transfers between the “Medical Services” and “Medical Support and Compliance” accounts in excess of 1 percent, or exceeding the cumulative 1 percent for the fiscal year, may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: *Provided further*, That any transfers to or from the “Medical Facilities” account may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

SEC. 203. Appropriations available in this title for salaries and expenses shall be available for services authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code; hire of passenger motor vehicles; lease of a facility or land or both; and uniforms or allowances therefore, as authorized by sections 5901 through 5902 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 204. No appropriations in this title (except the appropriations for “Construction, Major Projects”, and “Construction, Minor Projects”) shall be available for the purchase of any site for or toward the construction of any new hospital or home.

SEC. 205. No appropriations in this title shall be available for hospitalization or examination of any persons (except beneficiaries entitled to such hospitalization or examination under the laws providing such benefits to veterans, and persons receiving such treatment under sections 7901 through 7904 of title 5, United States Code, or the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.)), unless reimbursement of the cost of such hospitalization or examination is made to the “Medical Services” account at such rates as may be fixed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 206. Appropriations available in this title for “Compensation and pensions”, “Readjustment benefits”, and “Veterans insurance and indemnities” shall be available for payment of prior year accrued obligations required to be recorded by law against the corresponding prior year accounts within the last quarter of fiscal year 2015.

SEC. 207. Appropriations available in this title shall be available to pay prior year obligations of corresponding prior year appropriations accounts resulting from sections 3328(a), 3334, and 3712(a) of title 31, United States Code, except that if such obligations are from trust fund accounts they shall be payable only from “Compensation and Pensions”.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 208. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, during fiscal year 2016, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, from the National Service Life Insurance Fund under section 1920 of title 38, United States Code, the Veterans’ Special Life Insurance Fund under section 1923 of title 38, United States Code, and the United States Government Life Insurance Fund under section 1955 of title 38, United States Code, reimburse the “General operating expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration” and “Information Technology Systems” accounts for the cost of administration of the insurance programs financed through those accounts: *Provided*, That reimbursement shall be made only from the surplus earnings accumulated in such an insurance program during fiscal year 2016 that are available for dividends in that program after claims have been paid and actuarially determined reserves have been set aside: *Provided further*, That, if the cost of administration of such an insurance program exceeds the amount of surplus earnings accumulated in that program, reimbursement

shall be made only to the extent of such surplus earnings: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall determine the cost of administration for fiscal year 2016 which is properly allocable to the provision of each such insurance program and to the provision of any total disability income insurance included in that insurance program.

SEC. 209. Amounts deducted from enhanced-use lease proceeds to reimburse an account for expenses incurred by that account during a prior fiscal year for providing enhanced-use lease services, may be obligated during the fiscal year in which the proceeds are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 210. Funds available in this title or funds for salaries and other administrative expenses shall also be available to reimburse the Office of Resolution Management of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication under section 319 of title 38, United States Code, for all services provided at rates which will recover actual costs but not to exceed \$43,700,000 for the Office of Resolution Management and \$3,400,000 for the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication: *Provided*, That payments may be made in advance for services to be furnished based on estimated costs: *Provided further*, That amounts received shall be credited to the "General Administration" and "Information Technology Systems" accounts for use by the office that provided the service.

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 211. Of the amounts made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016 for the Office of Rural Health under the heading "Medical Services", including any advance appropriation for fiscal year 2016 provided in prior appropriation Acts, up to \$20,000,000 may be transferred to and merged with funds appropriated under the heading "Grants for Construction of State Extended Care Facilities".

SEC. 212. No funds of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be available for hospital care, nursing home care, or medical services provided to any person under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, for a non-service-connected disability described in section 1729(a)(2) of such title, unless that person has disclosed to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in such form as the Secretary may require, current, accurate third-party reimbursement information for purposes of section 1729 of such title: *Provided*, That the Secretary may recover, in the same manner as any other debt due the United States, the reasonable charges for such care or services from any person who does not make such disclosure as required: *Provided further*, That any amounts so recovered for care or services provided in a prior fiscal year may be obligated by the Secretary during the fiscal year in which amounts are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 213. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, proceeds or revenues derived from enhanced-use leasing activities (including disposal) may be deposited into the "Construction, Major Projects" and "Construction, Minor Projects" accounts and be used for construction (including site acquisition and disposition), alterations, and improvements of any medical facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such sums as realized are in addition to the amount provided for in "Construction, Major Projects" and "Construction, Minor Projects".

SEC. 214. Amounts made available under "Medical Services" are available—

(1) for furnishing recreational facilities, supplies, and equipment; and

(2) for funeral expenses, burial expenses, and other expenses incidental to funerals and burials for beneficiaries receiving care in the Department.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 215. Such sums as may be deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to "Medical Services", to remain available until expended for the purposes of that account: *Provided*, That, for fiscal year 2016, up to \$27,000,000 deposited in the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Care Collections Fund shall be transferred to "Information Technology Systems", to remain available until expended, for development of the Medical Care Collections Fund electronic data exchange provider and payer system.

SEC. 216. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into agreements with Indian tribes and tribal organizations which are party to the Alaska Native Health Compact with the Indian Health Service, and Indian tribes and tribal organizations serving rural Alaska which have entered into contracts with the Indian Health Service under the Indian Self Determination and Educational Assistance Act, to provide healthcare, including behavioral health and dental care. The Secretary shall require participating veterans and facilities to comply with all appropriate rules and regulations, as established by the Secretary. The term "rural Alaska" shall mean those lands sited within the external boundaries of the Alaska Native regions specified in sections 7(a)(1)–(4) and (7)–(12) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1606), and those lands within the Alaska Native regions specified in sections 7(a)(5) and 7(a)(6) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1606), which are not within the boundaries of the municipality of Anchorage, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the Kenai Peninsula Borough or the Matanuska Susitna Borough.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 217. Such sums as may be deposited to the Department of Veterans Affairs Capital Asset Fund pursuant to section 8118 of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to the "Construction, Major Projects" and "Construction, Minor Projects" accounts, to remain available until expended for the purposes of these accounts.

SEC. 218. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to implement any policy prohibiting the Directors of the Veterans Integrated Services Networks from conducting outreach or marketing to enroll new veterans within their respective Networks.

SEC. 219. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a quarterly report on the financial status of the Veterans Health Administration.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 220. Amounts made available under the "Medical Services", "Medical Support and Compliance", "Medical Facilities", "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration", "General Administration", and "National Cemetery Administration" accounts for fiscal year 2016 may be transferred to or from the "Information Technology Systems" account: *Provided*, That, before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

SEC. 221. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or any other Act for the Department of Veterans

Affairs may be used in a manner that is inconsistent with: (1) section 842 of the Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, the District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006 (Public Law 109–115; 119 Stat. 2506); or (2) section 8110(a)(5) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 222. Of the amounts made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016, in this Act or any other Act, under the "Medical Facilities" account for non-recurring maintenance, not more than 20 percent of the funds made available shall be obligated during the last 2 months of that fiscal year: *Provided*, That the Secretary may waive this requirement after providing written notice to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 223. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016 for "Medical Services", "Medical Support and Compliance", "Medical Facilities", "Construction, Minor Projects", and "Information Technology Systems", up to \$266,303,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 3571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500): *Provided*, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress: *Provided further*, That section 223 of Title II of Division I of Public Law 113–235 is repealed.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 224. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs which become available on October 1, 2016, for "Medical Services", "Medical Support and Compliance", and "Medical Facilities", up to \$265,675,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 3571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500): *Provided*, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 225. Such sums as may be deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, for healthcare provided at facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500) shall also be available: (1) for transfer to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs

Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111-84; 123 Stat. 3571); and (2) for operations of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417; 122 Stat. 4500).

(TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 226. Of the amounts available in this title for “Medical Services”, “Medical Support and Compliance”, and “Medical Facilities”, a minimum of \$15,000,000 shall be transferred to the DOD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, as authorized by section 8111(d) of title 38, United States Code, to remain available until expended, for any purpose authorized by section 8111 of title 38, United States Code.

(INCLUDING RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 227. (a) Of the funds appropriated in division I of Public Law 113-235, the following amounts which become available on October 1, 2015, are hereby rescinded from the following accounts in the amounts specified:

(1) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Services”, \$1,400,000,000.

(2) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Support and Compliance”, \$150,000,000.

(3) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Facilities”, \$250,000,000.

(b) In addition to amounts provided elsewhere in this Act, an additional amount is appropriated to the following accounts in the amounts specified to remain available until September 30, 2017:

(1) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Services”, \$1,400,000,000.

(2) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Support and Compliance”, \$100,000,000.

(3) “Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Facilities”, \$250,000,000.

SEC. 228. The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of all bid savings in major construction projects that total at least \$5,000,000, or 5 percent of the programmed amount of the project, whichever is less: *Provided*, That such notification shall occur within 14 days of a contract identifying the programmed amount: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 14 days prior to the obligation of such bid savings and shall describe the anticipated use of such savings.

SEC. 229. The scope of work for a project included in “Construction, Major Projects” may not be increased above the scope specified for that project in the original justification data provided to the Congress as part of the request for appropriations.

SEC. 230. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a quarterly report that contains the following information from each Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Office: (1) the average time to complete a disability compensation claim; (2) the number of claims pending more than 125 days; (3) error rates; (4) the number of claims personnel; (5) any corrective action taken within the quarter to address poor performance; (6) training programs undertaken; and (7) the number and results of Quality Review Team audits: *Provided*, That each quarterly report shall be submitted no later than 30 days after the end of the respective quarter.

SEC. 231. Of the funds provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016 for “Medical Services” and “Medical Support and Compliance”, a maximum of

\$5,000,000 may be obligated from the “Medical Services” account and a maximum of \$154,596,000 may be obligated from the “Medical Support and Compliance” account for the VistA Evolution and electronic health record interoperability projects: *Provided*, That funds in addition to these amounts may be obligated for the VistA Evolution and electronic health record interoperability projects upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 232. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide written notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 15 days prior to organizational changes which result in the transfer of 25 or more full-time equivalents from one organizational unit of the Department of Veterans Affairs to another.

SEC. 233. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide on a quarterly basis to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress notification of any single national outreach and awareness marketing campaign in which obligations exceed \$2,000,000.

SEC. 234. Not more than \$4,400,000 of the funds provided in this Act under the heading “Department of Veterans Affairs—Departmental Administration—General Administration” may be used for the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs.

SEC. 235. None of the funds available to the Department of Veterans Affairs, in this or any other Act, may be used to replace the current system by which the Veterans Integrated Service Networks select and contract for diabetes monitoring supplies and equipment.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 236. Of the discretionary funds made available in title II of division I of Public Law 113-235 for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016, \$198,000,000 are rescinded from “Medical Services”, \$42,000,000 are rescinded from “Medical Support and Compliance”, and \$15,000,000 are rescinded from “Medical Facilities”.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 237. (a) There is hereby rescinded an aggregate amount of \$55,000,000 from the total budget authority provided for fiscal year 2016 for discretionary accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs in—

(1) this Act; or

(2) any advance appropriation for fiscal year 2016 in prior appropriation Acts.

(b) The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a report specifying the account and amount of each rescission not later than 30 days following enactment of this Act.

(RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

SEC. 238. Of the unobligated balances available within the “DOD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund”, \$50,000,000 are hereby rescinded.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 239. Of the discretionary funds made available in title II of division I of Public Law 113-235 for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2015, \$1,052,000 are rescinded from “General Administration”, and \$5,000,000 are rescinded from “Construction, Minor Projects”.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

SEC. 240. (a) There is hereby rescinded an aggregate amount of \$90,293,000 from prior year unobligated balances available within discretionary accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(b) No funds may be rescinded from amounts provided under the following headings:

- (1) “Medical Services”;
- (2) “Medical and Prosthetic Research”;
- (3) “National Cemetery Administration”;
- (4) “Board of Veterans Appeals”;
- (5) “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration”;
- (6) “Office of Inspector General”;
- (7) “Grants for Construction of State Extended Care Facilities”;
- (8) “Grants for Construction of Veterans Cemeteries”.

(c) No amounts may be rescinded from amounts that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

(d) The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a report specifying the account and amount of each rescission not later than 30 days following enactment of this Act.

SEC. 241. Section 2302(a)(2)(A)(viii) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting “or under title 38” after “of this title”.

SEC. 242. The Department of Veterans Affairs is authorized to administer financial assistance grants and enter into cooperative agreements with organizations, utilizing a competitive selection process, to train and employ homeless and at-risk veterans in natural resource conservation management.

SEC. 243. Section 312 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c)(1) Whenever the Inspector General, in carrying out the duties and responsibilities established under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), issues a work product that makes a recommendation or otherwise suggests corrective action, the Inspector General shall—

“(A) submit the work product to—

“(i) the Secretary;

“(ii) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

“(iii) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives;

“(iv) if the work product was initiated upon request by an individual or entity other than the Inspector General, that individual or entity; and

“(v) any Member of Congress upon request; and

“(B) the Inspector General shall submit all final work products to—

“(i) if the work product was initiated upon request by an individual or entity other than the Inspector General, that individual or entity; and

“(ii) any Member of Congress upon request; and

“(C) not later than 3 days after the work product is submitted in final form to the Secretary, post the work product on the Internet website of the Inspector General.

“(2) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize the public disclosure of information that is specifically prohibited from disclosure by any other provision of law.”.

SEC. 244. None of the funds provided in this Act may be used to pay the salary of any individual who (a) was the Executive Director of the Office of Acquisition, Logistics and Construction, and (b) who retired from Federal service in the midst of an investigation, initiated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, into delays and cost overruns associated with the design and construction of the new medical center in Aurora, Colorado.

SEC. 245. Of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the “Medical Services” account for fiscal year 2016 in this Act

of any other Act, not less than \$10,000,000 shall be used to hire additional caregiver support coordinators to support the programs of assistance and support for caregivers of veterans under section 1720G of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 246. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs in this Act may be used in a manner that would—

(1) interfere with the ability of a veteran to participate in a State-approved medicinal marijuana program;

(2) deny any services from the Department to a veteran who is participating in such a program; or

(3) limit or interfere with the ability of a health care provider of the Department to make appropriate recommendations, fill out forms, or take steps to comply with such a program.

TITLE III RELATED AGENCIES

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, including the acquisition of land or interest in land in foreign countries; purchases and repair of uniforms for caretakers of national cemeteries and monuments outside of the United States and its territories and possessions; rent of office and garage space in foreign countries; purchase (one-for-one replacement basis only) and hire of passenger motor vehicles; not to exceed \$7,500 for official reception and representation expenses; and insurance of official motor vehicles in foreign countries, when required by law of such countries, \$75,100,000, to remain available until expended.

FOREIGN CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS ACCOUNT

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, such sums as may be necessary, to remain available until expended, for purposes authorized by section 2109 of title 36, United States Code.

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for the operation of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims as authorized by sections 7251 through 7298 of title 38, United States Code, \$32,141,000: *Provided*, That \$2,500,000 shall be available for the purpose of providing financial assistance as described, and in accordance with the process and reporting procedures set forth, under this heading in Public Law 102-229.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE—CIVIL CEMETERIAL EXPENSES, ARMY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for maintenance, operation, and improvement of Arlington National Cemetery and Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, including the purchase or lease of passenger motor vehicles for replacement on a one-for-one basis only, and not to exceed \$1,000 for official reception and representation expenses, \$70,800,000, of which not to exceed \$28,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2018. In addition, such sums as may be necessary for parking maintenance, repairs and replacement, to be derived from the "Lease of Department of Defense Real Property for Defense Agencies" account.

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME TRUST FUND

For expenses necessary for the Armed Forces Retirement Home to operate and

maintain the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi, to be paid from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, \$64,300,000, of which \$1,000,000 shall remain available until expended for construction and renovation of the physical plants at the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 301. Funds appropriated in this Act under the heading "Department of Defense—Civil, Cemeterial Expenses, Army", may be provided to Arlington County, Virginia, for the relocation of the federally owned water main at Arlington National Cemetery, making additional land available for ground burials.

SEC. 302. Amounts deposited during the current fiscal year to the special account established under 10 U.S.C. 4727 are appropriated and shall be available until expended to support activities at the Army National Military Cemeteries.

SEC. 303. For an additional amount for "Department of Defense—Civil Cemeterial Expenses, Army" in this title, \$30,000,000: *Provided*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, such funds may be transferred to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, for construction of access roads adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery to support land acquisition for the expansion of the cemetery.

TITLE IV GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 401. No part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall remain available for obligation beyond the current fiscal year unless expressly so provided herein.

SEC. 402. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for any program, project, or activity, when it is made known to the Federal entity or official to which the funds are made available that the program, project, or activity is not in compliance with any Federal law relating to risk assessment, the protection of private property rights, or unfunded mandates.

SEC. 403. Such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016 for pay raises for programs funded by this Act shall be absorbed within the levels appropriated in this Act.

SEC. 404. No part of any funds appropriated in this Act shall be used by an agency of the executive branch, other than for normal and recognized executive-legislative relationships, for publicity or propaganda purposes, and for the preparation, distribution, or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television, or film presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before Congress, except in presentation to Congress itself.

SEC. 405. All departments and agencies funded under this Act are encouraged, within the limits of the existing statutory authorities and funding, to expand their use of "E-Commerce" technologies and procedures in the conduct of their business practices and public service activities.

SEC. 406. Unless stated otherwise, all reports and notifications required by this Act shall be submitted to the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

SEC. 407. None of the funds made available in this Act may be transferred to any depart-

ment, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government except pursuant to a transfer made by, or transfer authority provided in, this or any other appropriations Act.

SEC. 408. (a) Any agency receiving funds made available in this Act, shall, subject to subsections (b) and (c), post on the public Web site of that agency any report required to be submitted by the Congress in this or any other Act, upon the determination by the head of the agency that it shall serve the national interest.

(b) Subsection (a) shall not apply to a report if—

(1) the public posting of the report compromises national security; or

(2) the report contains confidential or proprietary information.

(c) The head of the agency posting such report shall do so only after such report has been made available to the requesting Committee or Committees of Congress for no less than 45 days.

SEC. 409. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to maintain or establish a computer network unless such network blocks the viewing, downloading, and exchanging of pornography.

(b) Nothing in subsection (a) shall limit the use of funds necessary for any Federal, State, tribal, or local law enforcement agency or any other entity carrying out criminal investigations, prosecution, or adjudication activities.

SEC. 410. (a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Defense in this Act may be used to construct, renovate, or expand any facility in the United States, its territories, or possessions to house any individual detained at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, for the purposes of detention or imprisonment in the custody or under the control of the Department of Defense.

(b) The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply to any modification of facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

(c) An individual described in this subsection is any individual who, as of June 24, 2009, is located at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and who—

(1) is not a citizen of the United States or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

(2) is—

(A) in the custody or under the effective control of the Department of Defense; or

(B) otherwise under detention at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

This Act may be cited as the "Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016".

SA 2764. Mr. KIRK proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, insert the following:

SEC. _____. For the purposes of this Act, the term "congressional defense committees" means the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and

Veterans Affairs of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

SA 2765. Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. FLAKE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title IV, add the following:

SEC. 411. Section 213(c) of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-95; 49 U.S.C. 40101 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(3) NOTIFICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS.—Not less than 90 days before applying a categorical exclusion under this subsection to a new procedure at an OEP airport, the Administrator shall—

“(A) notify and consult with the operator of the airport at which the procedure would be implemented; and

“(B) consider consultations or other engagement with the community in the which the airport is located to inform the public of the procedure.

“(4) REVIEW OF CERTAIN CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall review a decision of the Administrator made on or after February 14, 2012, and before the date of the enactment of this paragraph to grant a categorical exclusion under this subsection with respect to a procedure to be implemented at an OEP airport that was a material change from procedures previously in effect at the airport to determine if the implementation of the procedure had a significant effect on the human environment in the community in which the airport is located if the operator of that airport requests such a review and demonstrates that there is good cause to believe that the implementation of the procedure had such an effect.

“(B) CONTENT OF REVIEW.—If, in conducting a review under subparagraph (A) with respect to a procedure implemented at an OEP airport, the Administrator, in consultation with the operator of the airport, determines that implementing the procedure had a significant effect on the human environment in the community in which the airport is located, the Administrator shall—

“(i) consult with the operator of the airport to identify measures to mitigate the effect of the procedure on the human environment; and

“(ii) in conducting such consultations, consider the use of alternative flight paths.

“(C) HUMAN ENVIRONMENT DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term ‘human environment’ has the meaning given that term in section 1508.14 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act).”.

SA 2766. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for

other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 247. None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this title may be used to transfer any amount from the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund to any other account in the Treasury of the United States.

SA 2767. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the Office of General Counsel, \$9,000,000 shall be transferred to the “Medical Services” account and shall be used to hire full-time gynecologists at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each such medical center has a full-time gynecologist.

SA 2768. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 247. (a) None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this title may be used to pay an employee described in subsection (b) an award or bonus under title 5 or 38, United States Code, for performance.

(b) An employee described in this subsection is any employee of the Veterans Benefits Administration in a senior executive position (as defined in section 713(g) of title 38, United States Code) who is responsible for oversight of the processing or adjudication of claims submitted to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for compensation under chapter 11 or 13 of title 38, United States Code.

SA 2769. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available under section 231 for “Medical Support and Compliance” for the VistA Evolution and electronic health record interoperability projects may be obligated until the Department of Veterans Affairs has implemented all recommendations included in the report

by the Comptroller General of the United States (GAO-16-184T) regarding the establishment of a time frame for identifying outcome-oriented metrics and defining goals to provide a basis for assessing and reporting on the status of an interoperable electronic health record between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

AUTHORITIES FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on November 5, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SR-328A Russell Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled “Wildfire: Stakeholder Perspectives on Budgetary Impacts and Threats to Natural Resources on Federal, State and Private Lands.”

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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on November 5, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on November 5, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on November 5, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATORY AFFAIRS AND FEDERAL MANAGEMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on November 5, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled, “Agency Progress in Retrospective Review of Existing Regulations.”

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

FOREIGN TRAVEL FINANCIAL REPORTS

In accordance with the appropriate provisions of law, the Secretary of the Senate herewith submits the following reports for standing committees of the Senate, certain joint committees of the Congress, delegations and groups, and select and special committees of the Senate, relating to expenses incurred in the performance of authorized foreign travel:

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95-384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Senator Pat Roberts:									
Australia	Dollar		1,235.00						1,235.00
Indonesia	Rupiah		515.00						515.00
Singapore	Dollar		930.00						930.00
Jacqueline Cottrell:									
Australia	Dollar		1,235.00						1,235.00
Indonesia	Rupiah		497.00						497.00
Singapore	Dollar		930.00						930.00
Total			5,342.00						5,342.00

SENATOR PAT ROBERTS,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Oct. 22, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95-384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Allen Cutler:									
Switzerland	Franc		327.00						327.00
Germany	Euro		656.00						656.00
United States	Dollar				3,379.60				3,379.60
Charles Rathburn:									
Switzerland	Franc		327.00						327.00
Germany	Euro		656.00						656.00
United States	Dollar				3,379.60				3,379.60
Jennifer Santos:									
Bahrain	Dinar		728.43						728.43
United States	Dollar				13,369.30				13,369.30
Colleen Gaydos:									
Bahrain	Dinar		728.43						728.43
United States	Dollar				13,257.86				13,257.86
Paul "Church" Hutton:									
Bahrain	Dinar		728.43						728.43
United States	Dollar				15,195.40				15,195.40
Brian Potts:									
Panama	Dollar		322.00				55.00		377.00
Colombia	Dollar		657.00				22.51		679.51
United States	Dollar				3,796.00				3,796.00
William Todd:									
Honduras	Lempira		258.00				53.35		311.35
Panama	Dollar		322.00				22.00		344.00
Colombia	Dollar		657.00				22.72		679.72
United States	Dollar				3,264.75				3,264.75
Chris Hall:									
Honduras	Lempira		258.00				48.00		306.00
Panama	Dollar		322.00				22.00		344.00
Colombia	Dollar		657.00				30.13		687.13
United States	Dollar				3,264.75				3,264.75
David Gillies:									
Honduras	Lempira		258.00				18.00		276.00
Panama	Dollar		322.00				22.00		344.00
Colombia	Dollar		657.00						657.00
United States	Dollar				2,581.50				2,581.50
Peter Babb:									
Israel	Shekel		1,500.00		159.39		106.51		1,765.90
Jordan	Dinar		1,066.24		148.32		126.23		1,340.79
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		462.07				140.27		602.34
United States	Dollar				11,780.24				11,780.24
Kathy Kraninger:									
Israel	Shekel		1,500.00		159.39		106.51		1,765.90
Jordan	Dinar		1,066.24		148.32		126.23		1,340.79
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		462.07				140.27		602.34
United States	Dollar				11,726.10				11,726.10
Chip Walgren:									
Israel	Shekel		1,500.00		159.39		106.51		1,765.90
Jordan	Dinar		1,066.24		148.32		126.23		1,340.79
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		462.07				140.27		602.34
United States	Dollar				11,786.27				11,786.27
Senator Barbara Mikulski:									
Austria	Euro		912.00		1,740.91				2,652.91
United States	Dollar				10,483.10				10,483.10
Shannon Kula:									
Austria	Euro		1,910.57		1,740.91				3,651.48
United States	Dollar				10,483.10				10,483.10
Charles Kieffer:									
Austria	Euro		1,121.72						1,121.72
United States	Dollar				1,525.00				1,525.00
Colleen Gaydos:									
South Korea	Won		564.00				920.00		1,484.00
Singapore	Dollar		264.00				562.14		826.14
United States	Dollar				13,648.20				13,648.20
Jennifer Santos:									
South Korea	Won		564.00				920.00		1,484.00
Singapore	Dollar		264.00				562.14		826.14
United States	Dollar				13,330.20				13,330.20
Alexander Carnes:									
Nigeria	Naira		1,251.00						1,251.00
Niger	West African CFA		637.24						637.24
Cameroon	Central African CFA		660.16						660.16

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
United States	Dollar				6,797.70				6,797.70
Christina Gleason:									
Senegal	West African CFA		421.00		889.86				1,310.86
Ethiopia	Birr		788.15						788.15
Rwanda	RWF		634.00						634.00
Gabon	Central African CFA		957.00						957.00
Senator Christopher Coons:									
Senegal	West African CFA		421.00		889.86				1,310.86
Ethiopia	Birr		788.15						788.15
Rwanda	RWF		634.00						634.00
Gabon	Central African CFA		957.00						957.00
Senator Jeff Merkley:									
Senegal	West African CFA		421.00		889.86				1,310.86
Ethiopia	Birr		788.15						788.15
Rwanda	RWF		634.00						634.00
Gabon	Central African CFA		957.00						957.00
Adrian Sneed:									
Senegal	West African CFA		421.00		889.86				1,310.86
Ethiopia	Birr		753.15						753.15
Rwanda	RWF		634.00						634.00
Gabon	Central African CFA		957.00						957.00
Senator Roy Blunt:									
Estonia	Euro		451.26						451.26
Glen Chambers:									
Estonia	Euro		451.26						451.26
Jason Wheelock:									
Mexico	Peso		724.00						724.00
Cuba	Cuban Convertible		780.00						780.00
United States	Dollar				1,331.04				1,331.04
Paul Grove:									
Guatemala	Quetzal		603.12						603.12
Mexico	Peso		724.00						724.00
Cuba	Cuban Convertible		780.00						780.00
United States	Dollar				1,881.64				1,881.64
Alexander Keenan:									
South Africa	Rand		464.50						464.50
Tanzania	Shilling		1,529.00		113.00				1,642.00
United States	Dollar				12,285.50				12,285.50
Laura Friedel:									
South Africa	Rand		464.50						464.50
Tanzania	Shilling		1,529.00		113.00				1,642.00
United States	Dollar				12,285.50				12,285.50
Delegation Expenses:*									
Mexico	Peso						990.22		990.22
Delegation Expenses:*									
Austria	Euro				5,222.72		448.24		5,670.96
Delegation Expenses:*									
Nigeria	Naira						4,770.00		4,770.00
Delegation Expenses:*									
Estonia	Euro						1,763.42		1,763.42
Delegation Expenses:*									
Senegal	West African CFA						3,820.00		3,820.00
Delegation Expenses:*									
Ethiopia	Birr				900.08		1,213.32		2,113.40
Delegation Expenses:*									
Rwanda	RWF						2,066.28		2,066.28
Delegation Expenses:*									
Gabon	Central African CFA						1,654.28		1,654.28
Total			45,741.15		195,145.54		21,124.78		262,011.47

* Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR THAD COCHRAN,
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, Oct. 27, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Senator Tim Kaine:									
Kuwait	Dinar		447.52						447.52
Jordan	Dinar		550.40						550.40
Turkey	Lira		1,183.72						1,183.72
Mary Naylor:									
Kuwait	Dinar		441.57						441.57
Jordan	Dinar		550.40						550.40
Turkey	Lira		1,231.34						1,231.34
Ryan Colvert:									
Kuwait	Dinar		441.57						441.57
Jordan	Dinar		550.40						550.40
Turkey	Lira		1,251.48						1,251.48
Senator Joe Donnelly:									
Kuwait	Dinar		340.97						340.97
Iraq	Dinar		70.00						70.00
South Korea	Won		469.91						469.91
China	Renminbi		245.59						245.59
Rachel Lipsey:									
Kuwait	Dinar		332.97						332.97
South Korea	Won		599.91						599.91
China	Renminbi		241.77						241.77
Delegation Expenses:*									
Kuwait	Dinar						195.67		195.67
Iraq	Dinar				14,500.00				14,500.00
Turkey	Lira						2,435.04		2,435.04
Jordan	Dinar				61.33		128.05		189.38
Daniel Lerner:									
United States	Dollar				20,954.00				20,954.00

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95-384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Japan	Yen		1,170.00						1,170.00
Delegation Expenses:*									
Japan	Yen				1,316.50		617.00		1,933.50
Senator Roger Wicker:									
Ukraine	Hryvnia		421.07						421.07
Czech Republic	Koruna		405.99						405.99
Finland	Euro		1,251.05						1,251.05
Joseph Lie:									
Ukraine	Hryvnia		421.07						421.07
Czech Republic	Koruna		405.99						405.99
Finland	Euro		1,251.05						1,251.05
Delegation Expenses:*									
Ukraine	Hryvnia						450.18		450.18
Czech Republic	Koruna				309.98		1,183.44		1,493.42
Finland	Euro				912.51		752.13		1,664.64
Senator John McCain:									
United States	Dollar				11,106.20				11,106.20
Thomas Goffus:									
United States	Dollar				11,194.52				11,194.52
Elizabeth O'Bagy:									
United States	Dollar				16,117.24				16,117.24
Afghanistan	Afghani		6.00						6.00
Delegation Expenses:*									
Afghanistan	Afghani						66.00		66.00
United Arab Emirates:	Dirham				1,109.93				1,109.93
Senator Tom Cotton:									
United States	Dollar				10,994.50				10,994.50
Austria	Euro		284.50						284.50
United Kingdom	Pound		720.50						720.50
Alex Wong:									
United States	Dollar				10,994.50				10,994.50
Austria	Euro		338.00						338.00
United Kingdom	Pound		774.00						774.00
Delegation Expenses:*									
Austria	Euro				1,033.87		802.38		1,836.25
United Kingdom	Pound						673.04		673.04
Jonathan Epstein:									
United States	Dollar				15,976.30				15,976.30
Kenya	Schilling		1,340.00						1,340.00
Liberia	Dollar		512.00						512.00
Delegation Expenses:*									
Liberia	Dollar						210.64		210.64
Senator Tom Cotton:									
United States	Dollar				18,634.95				18,634.95
Japan	Yen		481.66						481.66
Taiwan	New Dollar		638.00						638.00
South Korea	Won		967.00						967.00
Alex Wong:									
United States	Dollar				18,702.62				18,702.62
Japan	Yen		517.91						517.91
Taiwan	New Dollar		674.25						674.25
South Korea	Won		1,003.25						1,003.25
Thomas Brady:									
United States	Dollar				18,708.70				18,708.70
Japan	Yen		722.10						722.10
Taiwan	New Dollar		863.00						863.00
South Korea	Won		1,307.42						1,307.42
Delegation Expenses:*									
Japan	Yen						624.51		624.51
Taiwan	New Dollar						2,102.00		2,102.00
South Korea	Won						5,405.09		5,405.09
Senator John McCain:									
United States	Dollar				12,162.00				12,162.00
Norway	Krone		742.63						742.63
Sweden	Krona		540.49						540.49
Estonia	Euro		203.31						203.31
Kathryn Wheelbarger:									
United States	Dollar				12,162.00				12,162.00
Norway	Krone		630.63						630.63
Sweden	Krona		698.46						698.46
Estonia	Euro		243.94						243.94
Stephanie Hall:									
United States	Dollar				12,162.00				12,162.00
Norway	Krone		550.00						550.00
Sweden	Krona		582.25						582.25
Estonia	Euro		176.58						176.58
Elizabeth O'Bagy:									
United States	Dollar				12,242.00				12,242.00
Norway	Krone		582.62						582.62
Sweden	Krona		672.10						672.10
Estonia	Euro		176.58						176.58
Delegation Expenses:*									
Sweden	Krona				1,100.00		1,637.71		2,737.71
Norway	Krone				6,367.29		4,528.89		10,896.18
Estonia	Euro						880.21		880.21
Latvia	Euro						251.96		251.96
Senator Mazie Hirono:									
United States	Dollar				11,107.59				11,107.59
Japan	Yen		918.17						918.17
Hiroshi N. Ikeda:									
United States	Dollar				19,122.09				19,122.09
Japan	Yen		1,071.96						1,071.96
Delegation Expenses:*									
Japan	Yen						3,896.47		3,896.47
Daniel Lerner:									
United States	Dollar				9,763.40				9,763.40
United Kingdom	Pound		1,502.00						1,502.00
Kathryn Wheelbarger:									
United States	Dollar				10,082.90				10,082.90
United Kingdom	Pound		1,840.70						1,840.70
Delegation Expenses:*									
United Kingdom	Pound				2,837.53				2,837.53
Cord Sterling:									
United States	Dollar				12,921.10				12,921.10
Germany	Euro		710.59						710.59

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95-384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Portugal	Euro		546.00						546.00
Spain	Euro		583.00						583.00
Thomas Goffus:									
United States	Dollar				12,850.30				12,850.30
Germany	Euro		710.59						710.59
Portugal	Euro		546.00						546.00
Spain	Euro		583.00						583.00
Dustin Walker:									
United States	Dollar				12,146.30				12,146.30
Germany	Euro		556.69						556.69
Portugal	Euro		609.79						609.79
Spain	Euro		584.21						584.21
Delegation Expenses:*									
Portugal	Euro						286.00		286.00
Spain	Euro				1,027.34				1,027.34
United Kingdom	Pound				760.00				760.00
Senator Lindsey Graham:									
Canada	Dollar		161.82						161.82
Matthew Rinkunas:									
Canada	Dollar		173.07						173.07
Richard Perry:									
Canada	Dollar		173.07						173.07
Delegation Expenses:*									
Canada	Dollar						4,690.00		4,690.00
Steven Barney:									
United States	Dollar				11,266.70				11,266.70
Spain	Euro		178.00						178.00
Italy	Euro		912.67						912.67
Germany	Euro		224.66						224.66
Allen Edwards:									
United States	Dollar				11,261.30				11,261.30
Spain	Euro		178.00						178.00
Italy	Euro		912.34						912.34
Germany	Euro		223.66						223.66
Samantha Clark:									
United States	Dollar				11,171.30				11,171.30
Spain	Euro		178.00						178.00
Italy	Euro		912.34						912.34
Germany	Euro		162.67						162.67
Delegation Expenses:*									
Italy	Euro						198.00		198.00
Senator Jack Reed:									
United States	Dollar				12,262.00				12,262.00
Belgium	Euro		10.00						10.00
Germany	Euro		435.00						435.00
Ukraine	Hryvnia		289.00						289.00
Turkey	Lira		260.00						260.00
Elizabeth King:									
United States	Dollar				12,347.00				12,347.00
Belgium	Euro		10.00						10.00
Germany	Euro		525.00						525.00
Ukraine	Hryvnia		289.00						289.00
Turkey	Lira		261.00						261.00
William Monahan:									
United States	Dollar				12,439.43				12,439.43
Belgium	Euro		10.00						10.00
Germany	Euro		457.00						457.00
Ukraine	Hryvnia		296.00						296.00
Turkey	Lira		277.00						277.00
Delegation Expenses:*									
Belgium	Euro				453.07				453.07
Ukraine	Hryvnia						508.68		508.68
Kathryn Wheelbarger:									
United States	Dollar				12,994.28				12,994.28
Djibouti	Franc		344.80						344.80
Kenya	Shilling		1,116.00						1,116.00
Sudan	Pound		463.56						463.56
Adam Barker:									
United States	Dollar				11,170.92				11,170.92
Djibouti	Franc		375.80						375.80
Kenya	Shilling		1,030.00						1,030.00
Sudan	Pound		417.56						417.56
Thomas Goffus:									
United States	Dollar				10,819.11				10,819.11
Djibouti	Franc		345.00						345.00
Kenya	Shilling		975.00						975.00
Sudan	Pound		424.00						424.00
Michael Noblet:									
United States	Dollar				11,283.92				11,283.92
Djibouti	Franc		411.00						411.00
Kenya	Shilling		812.00						812.00
Sudan	Pound		397.00						397.00
Michael Kuiken:									
United States	Dollar				12,994.28				12,994.28
Djibouti	Franc		106.00						106.00
Kenya	Shilling		431.00						431.00
Sudan	Pound		145.00						145.00
Senator John McCain:									
United States	Dollar				12,275.00				12,275.00
Ukraine	Hryvnia		374.75						374.75
Elizabeth O'Bagy:									
United States	Dollar				12,275.00				12,275.00
Ukraine	Hryvnia		298.29						298.29
Delegation Expenses:*									
Ukraine	Hryvnia				299.41		16,185.45		16,484.86
Total			57,963.68		476,124.21		48,708.54		582,796.43

* Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95-384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, Oct. 23, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Tristan Abbey:									
United States	Dollar				11,618.80				11,618.80
Saudi Arabia	Riyal		513.00						513.00
Oman	Rial		578.39						578.39
Qatar	Riyal		279.21						279.21
Delegation Expenses:*									
Saudi Arabia	Riyal						186.66		186.66
Oman	Rial						62.12		62.12
Qatar	Riyal						54.93		54.93
Senator Lisa Murkowski:									
Norway	Kroner		292.78		2,653.01				2,945.79
Iceland	Krona		384.25		150.00				534.25
Senator John Barrasso:									
Norway	Kroner		292.78		2,653.01				2,945.79
Iceland	Krona		384.25		150.00				534.25
Isaac Edwards:									
Norway	Kroner		292.78		2,653.01				2,945.79
Iceland	Krona		384.25		150.00				534.25
Delegation Expenses:*									
Norway	Kroner						2,542.63		2,542.63
Iceland	Krona						1,230.00		1,230.00
Total			3,401.69		20,027.83		4,076.34		27,505.86

*Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Oct. 27, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Sean Moore:									
United States	Dollar				1,697.20				1,697.20
Cuba	Peso		1,593.00				955.67		2,548.67
Yvette Martinez:									
United States	Dollar				1,450.20				1,450.20
Cuba	Peso		1,604.00				955.67		2,559.67
Frederick Illston:									
United States	Dollar				2,362.93				2,362.93
Costa Rica	Colon		2,246.01				273.97		2,519.98
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse:									
Norway	Krone		145.45		696.43				841.88
Sweden	Krona		111.33		275.00		409.43		795.76
Estonia	Euro		50.14						50.14
Latvia	Euro				43.57		19.43		63.00
Lacy Dwyer:									
Norway	Krone		22.78		696.43				719.21
Sweden	Krona		99.77		275.00		409.43		784.20
Estonia	Euro		50.14						50.14
Latvia	Euro				43.57		19.43		63.00
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse:									
Canada	Dollar		143.59				1,563.34		1,706.93
Aaron Goldner:									
Canada	Dollar		184.59				1,563.34		1,747.93
Senator Mike Rounds:									
Norway	Krone		292.78		2,653.01		847.55		3,793.34
Iceland	Krona		384.25		150.00		410.00		944.25
Total			6,927.83		10,343.34		7,427.26		24,698.43

SENATOR JAMES M. INHOFE,
Chairman, Committee on Environment and Public Works, Oct. 23, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON FINANCE FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Everett Eissenstat:									
Japan	Yen		529.50						529.50
Vietnam	Dong		708.89						708.89
Malaysia	Ringgit		640.73						640.73
United States	Dollar				18,291.00				18,291.00
Shane Warren:									
Japan	Yen		555.26						555.26
Vietnam	Dong		710.53						710.53
Malaysia	Ringgit		663.43						663.43
United States	Dollar				16,476.50				16,476.50
Douglas Petersen:									
Japan	Yen		579.81						579.81
Vietnam	Dong		704.61						704.61
Malaysia	Ringgit		710.61						710.61
United States	Dollar				16,479.80				16,479.80
Aaron Fobes:									
Japan	Yen		639.29						639.29
Vietnam	Dong		686.87						686.87
Malaysia	Ringgit		307.27						307.27
United States	Dollar				10,912.60				10,912.60
Elissa Alben:									
Japan	Yen		464.55						464.55

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON FINANCE FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Vietnam	Dong		638.96						638.96
Malaysia	Ringgit		645.94						645.94
United States	Dollar				16,644.00				16,644.00
Milan Dalal:									
Japan	Yen		446.32						446.32
Vietnam	Dong		718.73						718.73
Malaysia	Ringgit		541.00						541.00
United States	Dollar				15,129.00				15,129.00
Treon Glenn:									
Japan	Yen		486.61						486.61
Vietnam	Dong		652.03						652.03
Malaysia	Ringgit		555.23						555.23
United States	Dollar				15,773.00				15,773.00
Eric Toy:									
Japan	Yen		506.86						506.86
Vietnam	Dong		657.13						657.13
Malaysia	Ringgit		576.88						576.88
United States	Dollar				18,542.00				18,542.00
Riki Parikh:									
Japan	Yen		450.01						450.01
Vietnam	Dong		692.69						692.69
Malaysia	Ringgit		644.77						644.77
United States	Dollar				8,951.60				8,951.60
Ryan Evans:									
Japan	Yen		413.59						413.59
Vietnam	Dong		646.95						646.95
Malaysia	Ringgit		645.38						645.38
United States	Dollar				15,088.80				15,088.80
Delegation Expenses:*									
United States	Dollar						8,200.23		8,200.23
Greta Peisch:									
Cuba	Peso		554.25						554.25
Guatemala	Quetzal		278.18						278.18
Argentina	Peso		750.25						750.25
United States	Dollar				9,025.88				9,025.88
Isaiah Akin:									
Cuba	Peso		626.65						626.65
Guatemala	Quetzal		369.10						369.10
Argentina	Peso		901.47						901.47
United States	Dollar				8,621.88				8,621.88
Delegation Expenses:*									
United States	Dollar						1,039.00		1,039.00
Caitlin Gearen:									
Kuwait	Dinar		561.15						561.15
Jordan	Dinar		683.03						683.03
Qatar	Riyal		462.79						462.79
Turkey	Lira		598.22						598.22
United States	Dollar				5,765.80				5,765.80
Total			23,605.52		175,701.86		9,239.23		208,546.61

* Delegation Expenses include transportation, interpretation, embassy overtime and other official expenses in accordance with the responsibilities of the host country.

SENATOR ORRIN G. HATCH,
Chairman, Committee on Finance, Oct. 23, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Senator John Barrasso:									
Norway	Krone		270.00		1,591.82				1,861.82
Sweden	Krona		536.03						536.03
Estonia	Euro		176.58						176.58
United States	Dollar				12,600.10				12,600.10
Delegation Expenses:*									
Norway	Krone						1,132.22		1,132.22
Sweden	Krona						684.42		684.42
Estonia	Euro						222.05		222.05
Latvia	Euro						62.99		62.99
Senator Barbara Boxer:									
Cuba	Peso		2,374.00						2,374.00
Costa Rica	Colon		2,124.60						2,124.60
United States	Dollar				3,444.36				3,444.36
Delegation Expenses:*									
Cuba	Peso						955.66		955.66
Costa Rica	Colon						273.96		273.96
United States	Dollar				14,223.90				14,223.90
Senator Ben Cardin:									
Honduras	Lempiras		289.43						289.43
El Salvador	Dollar		487.57						487.57
United States	Dollar				3,153.70				3,153.70
Brandon Yoder:									
Honduras	Lempiras		333.00						333.00
El Salvador	Dollar		744.00						744.00
United States	Dollar				2,567.70				2,567.70
Delegation Expenses:*									
Honduras	Lempiras						594.00		594.00
El Salvador	Dollar						494.45		494.45
Senator Bob Corker:									
Venezuela	Bolivar		564.80						564.80
United States	Dollar				5,770.70				5,770.70
Todd Womack:									
Venezuela	Bolivar		764.80						764.80
United States	Dollar				5,789.90				5,789.90
Caleb McCarry:									
Venezuela	Bolivar		641.84						641.84
United States	Dollar				6,326.30				6,326.30
Delegation Expenses:*									
Venezuela	Bolivar						5,844.83		5,844.83

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95-384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Senator Cory Gardner:									
Japan	Yen		527.00						527.00
Korea	Won		510.00						510.00
China	Renminbi		279.52						279.52
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Dollar		459.89						459.89
United States	Dollar				19,237.10				19,237.10
Igor Khrestin:									
Japan	Yen		468.00						468.00
Korea	Won		569.00						569.00
China	Renminbi		387.52						387.52
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Dollar		435.88						435.88
United States	Dollar				17,325.40				17,325.40
Delegation Expenses: *									
Japan	Yen					2,304.14			2,304.14
Korea	Won					783.41			783.41
China	Renminbi					650.94			650.94
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Dollar					583.27			583.27
Senator Christopher Murphy:									
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		555.70						555.70
Qatar	Riyal		395.04						395.04
Iraq	Dollar		86.00		1,150.00				1,236.00
Jordan	Dinar		430.41						430.41
United States	Dollar				17,364.00				17,364.00
Jessica Elledge:									
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		542.70						542.70
Qatar	Riyal		395.04						395.04
Iraq	Dollar		86.00		1,150.00				1,236.00
Jordan	Dinar		430.41						430.41
United States	Dollar				17,364.00				17,364.00
Delegation Expenses:									
United Arab Emirates	Dirham					508.53			508.53
Qatar	Riyal					240.60			240.60
Iraq	Dollar					2,300.00			2,300.00
Jordan	Dinar					695.52			695.52
United States	Dollar				1,957.50				1,957.50
Senator David Perdue:									
Australia	Dollar		859.11						859.11
Indonesia	Rupiah		239.26						239.26
Singapore	Dollar		889.91						889.91
Caitlin Poling:									
Australia	Dollar		802.83						802.83
Indonesia	Rupiah		239.26						239.26
Singapore	Dollar		889.01						889.01
Delegation Expenses:									
Australia	Dollar					2,664.22			2,664.22
Indonesia	Rupiah					465.80			465.80
Singapore	Dollar					580.20			580.20
Robert Hunter Bethea:									
Saudi Arabia	Riyal		560.00						560.00
Qatar	Riyal		364.21						364.21
Oman	Rial		629.39						629.39
United States	Dollar				11,534.00				11,534.00
David Andrew Olson:									
Saudi Arabia	Riyal		609.75						609.75
Qatar	Riyal		364.17						364.17
Oman	Rial		627.36						627.36
United States	Dollar				11,564.00				11,564.00
Delegation Expenses:									
Saudi Arabia	Riyal					373.33			373.33
Qatar	Riyal					109.86			109.86
Oman	Rial					124.24			124.24
Brooke Eisele:									
Kosovo	Euro		516.17						516.17
Ukraine	Hryvnia		726.95						726.95
United States	Dollar				11,184.30				11,184.30
Kirsten Madison:									
Ukraine	Hryvnia		838.00						838.00
United States	Dollar				8,936.40				8,936.40
Delegation Expenses:									
Ukraine	Hryvnia					1,324.90			1,324.90
Jaime Fly:									
Qatar	Riyal		324.65						324.65
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		667.59						667.59
Israel	Shekel		853.99						853.99
United States	Dollar				15,093.06				15,093.06
John Rader:									
Qatar	Riyal		364.72						364.72
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		1,021.08						1,021.08
Israel	Shekel		743.25						743.25
United States	Dollar				15,093.06				15,093.06
Delegation Expenses: *									
Qatar	Riyal					158.60			158.60
United Arab Emirates	Dirham					372.06			372.06
Israel	Shekel					1,801.83			1,801.83
Heather Flynn:									
Nigeria	Naira		1,811.43						1,811.43
Germany	Euro		494.67						494.67
Uganda	Shilling		460.00						460.00
United States	Dollar				15,855.30				15,855.30
Alec Johnson:									
Kuwait	Dinar		377.05						377.05
Jordan	Dinar		1,050.87						1,050.87
Turkey	Lira		581.97						581.97
Qatar	Riyal		613.50						613.50
United States	Dollar				6,816.20				6,816.20
Tri Nguyen:									
Kuwait	Dinar		315.61						315.61
Jordan	Dinar		606.00						606.00
Turkey	Lira		479.99						479.99
Qatar	Riyal		556.62						556.62
United States	Dollar				5,914.80				5,914.80
Delegation Expenses: *									
Kuwait	Dinar					316.16			316.16
Jordan	Dinar					370.49			370.49
Turkey	Lira					93.11			93.11

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95-384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Qatar	Riyal						40.15		40.15
Caleb McCarry:									
Italy	Euro		1,674.00						1,674.00
United States	Dollar				14,375.70				14,375.70
Todd Womack:									
Italy	Euro		1,674.00						1,674.00
United States	Dollar				14,662.20				14,662.20
Delegation Expenses: *									
Italy	Euro						1,861.52		1,861.52
Thomas Mancinelli:									
Senegal	Franc		224.66						224.66
Ethiopia	Birr		825.87						825.87
Rwanda	Franc		504.19						504.19
Gabon	Franc		809.93						809.93
Delegation Expenses: *									
Senegal	Franc						955.14		955.14
Ethiopia	Birr						528.35		528.35
Rwanda	Franc						282.76		282.76
Gabon	Central African Franc						241.25		241.25
Damian Murphy:									
India	Rupee		709.11						709.11
Sri Lanka	Rupee		808.76						808.76
United States	Dollar				13,753.75				13,753.75
Charlotte Oldham-Moore:									
India	Rupee		763.99						763.99
Sri Lanka	Rupee		727.50						727.50
United States	Dollar				13,753.75				13,753.75
Delegation Expenses: *									
India	Rupee						715.49		715.49
Stacie Oliver:									
Austria	Euro		288.65						288.65
Turkey	Lira		286.88						286.88
Netherlands	Euro		531.48						531.48
United States	Dollar				4,257.00				4,257.00
Delegation Expenses: *									
Austria	Euro						666.91		666.91
Turkey	Lira						37.65		37.65
Netherlands	Euro						194.72		194.72
Michael Phelan:									
Eritrea	Nakfa		968.50						968.50
United States	Dollar				5,868.20				5,868.20
Delegation Expenses: *									
Eritrea	Nakfa						132.60		132.60
Nicole Porreca:									
Kuwait	Dinar		455.03						455.03
Jordan	Dinar		375.87						375.87
Turkey	Lira		657.56						657.56
Iraq					2,700.00				2,700.00
Delegation Expenses: *									
Kuwait	Dinar						48.91		48.91
Jordan	Dinar						94.68		94.68
Turkey	Lira						400.89		400.89
Michael Schiffer:									
Burma	Kyat		1,820.00						1,820.00
United States	Dollar				11,325.70				11,325.70
Delegation Expenses: *									
Burma	Kyat						3,872.00		3,872.00
Chris Socha:									
Poland	Zloty		224.00						224.00
United States	Dollar				4,244.30				4,244.30
Morgan Vina:									
Kenya	Shilling		1,015.91		205.60				1,221.51
Namibia	Namibian Dollar		760.82						760.82
United States	Dollar				4,015.50				4,015.50

*Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 P.L. 95-384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, Oct. 23, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95-384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b). COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Jason Rauch:									
United States	Dollar				5,895.80				5,895.80
Kuwait	Dinar		390.00						390.00
Jordan	Dinar		870.00						870.00
Qatar	Riyal		590.00						590.00
Turkey	Lira		570.00						570.00
Senator Gary Peters:									
United States	Dollar				12,994.00				12,994.00
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		198.00						198.00
Qatar	Riyal		191.89						191.89
Iraq	Dinar		11.00						11.00
Jordan	Dinar		238.87						238.87
Brooke Ericson:									
United States	Dollar				965.93				965.93

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015—Continued

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Canada	Dollar		334.40						334.40
Roscoe Jones, Jr.:									
United States	Dollar				1,000.93				1,000.93
Canada	Dollar		273.10						273.10
Jose Bautista:									
United States	Dollar				505.83				505.83
Canada	Dollar		326.40						326.40
Holly Idelson:									
United States	Dollar				1,000.93				1,000.93
Canada	Dollar		282.13						282.13
Delegation Expenses:*									
Jordan	Dinar						740.98		740.98
Qatar	Riyal						80.31		80.31
Turkey	Lira						186.22		186.22
Total			4,275.79		22,363.42		1,007.51		27,646.72

*Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR RON JOHNSON,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs,
Oct. 29, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Senator John Cornyn:									
Australia	Dollar		1,235.00						1,235.00
Indonesia	Rupiah		289.00						289.00
Singapore	Dollar		930.00						930.00
Beth Jafari:									
Australia	Dollar		1,157.00						1,157.00
Indonesia	Rupiah		257.00						257.00
Singapore	Dollar		930.00						930.00
Monica Popp:									
Australia	Dollar		1,157.00						1,157.00
Indonesia	Rupiah		257.00						257.00
Singapore	Dollar		930.00						930.00
Jonathan Porter:									
Australia	Dollar		1,207.00						1,207.00
Indonesia	Rupiah		257.00						257.00
Singapore	Dollar		930.00						930.00
Senator Thom Tillis:									
Australia	Dollar		970.92						970.92
Indonesia	Rupiah		257.00						257.00
Singapore	Dollar		870.95						870.95
Delegation Expenses:*									
Australia	Dollar						7,350.54		7,350.54
Indonesia	Rupiah						1,164.50		1,164.50
Singapore	Dollar						1,441.09		1,441.09
Total			11,634.87				9,956.13		21,591.00

*Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Section 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179 agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Oct. 23, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Senator Al Franken:									
Senegal	Franc		342.65		692.11				1,034.76
Ethiopia	Birr		859.37						859.37
Rwanda	Franc		561.86						561.86
Gabon	Franc		954.83						954.83
Ali Nouri:									
Senegal	Franc		370.61		692.11				1,062.72
Ethiopia	Birr		759.59						759.59
Rwanda	Franc		509.22						509.22
Gabon	Franc		782.93						782.93
Delegation Expenses:									
Senegal	Franc						3,232.29		3,232.29
Ethiopia	Birr						1,056.71		1,056.71
Rwanda	Franc						1,250.00		1,250.00
Gabon	Franc						827.14		827.14
Total			5,141.06		1,384.22		6,366.14		12,891.42

*Delegation expenses include payments and reimbursements to the Department of State under the authority of Sec. 502(b) of the Mutual Security Act of 1954, as amended by Sec. 22 of P.L. 95–384, and S. Res. 179, agreed to May 25, 1977.

SENATOR LAMAR ALEXANDER,
Chairman, Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,
Oct. 23, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Ryan Tully:			202.00						202.00
			664.00						664.00
					10,079.50				10,079.50
Josh Alexander:			382.00						382.00
Walter Weiss:			382.00						382.00
Randy Bookout:			870.00						870.00
			10,412.00						10,412.00
			1,487.38						1,487.38
Christian Cook:			870.00						870.00
					10,412.00				10,412.00
Paul Matulic:			870.00						870.00
					10,412.00				10,412.00
Jennifer Barrett:			342.00						342.00
Hayden Milberg:			1,803.00				126.70		1,929.70
			200.00						200.00
					14,491.30				14,491.30
Paul Matulic:			1,803.00				126.70		1,929.70
			200.00						200.00
					14,491.30				14,491.30
Senator Tom Cotton:			390.00						390.00
Total			10,465.38		70,298.10		253.40		81,016.88

SENATOR RICHARD BURR,
Chairman, Select Committee on Intelligence, Oct. 23, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), REPUBLICAN LEADER FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Dr. Brian Monahan:									
Czech Republic	Dollar		428.75						428.75
Ukraine	Dollar		496.63						496.63
Finland	Dollar		1,155.00						1,155.00
Brendan Dunn:									
Japan	Dollar		455.00						455.00
Malaysia	Dollar		569.40						569.40
Vietnam	Dollar		675.56						675.56
United States	Dollar				9,006.80				9,006.80
Thomas Hawkins:									
Austria	Dollar		318.75						318.75
United Kingdom	Dollar		1,625.76						1,625.76
United States	Dollar				11,711.90				11,711.90
United States	Dollar				14,491.30				14,491.30
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		1,628.00				126.70		1,754.70
Pakistan	Rupee		200.00						200.00
Total			7,552.85		35,210.00		126.70		42,889.55

SENATOR MITCH MCCONNELL,
Republican Leader, Oct. 27, 2015.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL BY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. SENATE, UNDER AUTHORITY OF SEC. 22, P.L. 95–384—22
U.S.C. 1754(b), COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE FOR TRAVEL FROM JULY 1 TO SEPT. 30, 2015

Name and country	Name of currency	Per diem		Transportation		Miscellaneous		Total	
		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency
Amb. David Killion:									
Ukraine	Hryvnia		594.00						594.00
Czech Republic	Koruna		466.00						466.00
Finland	Euro		2,050.00						2,050.00
United States	Dollar				10,024.10				10,024.10
Poland	Zloty		2,600.00						2,600.00
United States	Dollar				9,272.00				9,272.00
Total			5,710.00		19,296.10				25,006.10

SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER,
Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe,
Oct. 15, 2015.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREE-
MENT—HOUSE MESSAGE TO AC-
COMPANY S. 1356

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks on Tuesday, November 10, the Chair lay before the Senate the House message to accompany S. 1356; that Senator MCCAIN or his designee be recognized to offer a motion to concur in the House amendment and that there then be 20 minutes equally divided before a vote on the motion to concur; further, that if the motion to concur is agreed to, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 90, the resolution be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all without intervening action or debate.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREE-
MENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 9, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 334; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that following disposition of the nomination the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

NATIONAL NURSE-MANAGED
HEALTH CLINIC WEEK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 303.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 303) designating the week beginning November 8, 2015, as "National Nurse-Managed Health Clinic Week."

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 303) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.
(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of November 3, 2015, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

AUTHORIZING USE OF
EMANCIPATION HALL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 24.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 24) authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for the unveiling of the marble bust of Vice President Richard Cheney on December 3, 2015.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 24) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL NATIVE
AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 307, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 307) recognizing National Native American Heritage Month and celebrating the heritages and cultures of Native Americans and the contributions of Native Americans to the United States.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 307) was agreed to.

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

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR DESIGNATING
OCTOBER 20, 2015, AS
THE NATIONAL DAY ON WRITING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 308, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 308) expressing support for the designation of October 20, 2015, as the "National Day on Writing."

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 308) was agreed to.

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

RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF
FRED THOMPSON, FORMER
UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR
THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 309, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 309) relative to the death of Fred Thompson, former United States Senator for the State of Tennessee.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 309) was agreed to.

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

PROVIDING FOR A CONDITIONAL
ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES AND A
CONDITIONAL RECESS OR AD-
JOURNMENT OF THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 92.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 92) providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives and a conditional recess or adjournment of the Senate.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 92) was agreed to, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 92

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That when the House adjourns on any legislative day from Thursday, November 5, 2015, through Thursday, November 12, 2015, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2:00 p.m. on Monday, November 16, 2015, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the Senate recesses or adjourns on any day from Tuesday, November 10, 2015, through Friday, November 13, 2015, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until noon on Monday, November 16, 2015, or such

other time on that day as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 3 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. (a) The Speaker or his designee, after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House, shall notify the Members of the House to reassemble at such place and time as he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the House adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection by its Majority Leader or his designee, the House shall again stand adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

SEC. 3. (a) The Majority Leader of the Senate or his designee, after concurrence with the Minority Leader of the Senate, shall notify the Members of the Senate to reassemble at such place and time as he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the Senate adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection by its Majority Leader or his designee, the Senate shall again stand adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the

Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, November 9; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 2029, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided in the usual form; finally, that at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session as under the previous order.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2015, AT 3 P.M.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the provisions of S. Res. 309 as a further mark of respect to the late Fred Thompson, former Senator from Tennessee.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:53 p.m., adjourned until Monday, November 9, 2015, at 3 p.m.