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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.

O God of light, in whom there is no darkness, thank You for Your love. You are a guide who gently leads us. You are a mystery but not a puzzle, profound but not incomprehensible. You are loving but not sentimental, patient and long-suffering but not weak and indecisive. O God, You are all things that we are not but need to be.

You, O God, with steadiness and perseverance, move in the lives of humanity and in the life of the whole world and its events. Awaken our lawmakers to Your inescapable presence. Enable them to feel You in their midst as they grapple with the problems of our time.

And, Lord, we thank You for the many years of faithful service by Kathie Alvarez.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.R. 240.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 5, H.R. 240, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

CARTER NOMINATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, later today the Senate will consider the nomination of Ash Carter to be the next Secretary of Defense.

If I could place one demand on him, it would be to leave our Armed Forces in a better position to deal with global threats than they are today. As I have noted in the past, the overall consequence of many of the President's policies have been to weaken our ability to confront Al Qaeda and its affiliates, the Taliban, and associated groups.

The President's inflexible commitment to campaign promises made in 2008 has led to artificial deadlines for withdrawal from Afghanistan, a rushed withdrawal from Iraq, and Executive orders to close Guantanamo and send detainees back home to places such as Yemen and Afghanistan. It has also led essentially to end America's ability to capture, detain, and interrogate terrorists—whether or not we are still at war with Al Qaeda.

The truth is Al Qaeda was at war with us before we went to war with them, and today we face a diffuse and versatile threat from terrorists, with ISIL intent on striking America and its allies.

The next Secretary of Defense needs to explain to the President that drawing down in Afghanistan—based on an artificial deadline—risks the gains we have made there. He needs to explain that the Haqqani network and the Taliban continue to threaten our allies.

The next Secretary of Defense must do all he can to make a declaratory

policy of pivoting to Asia a real one. Past drawdowns of conventional power and failure to modernize the American force have encouraged foes and unsettled friends. So it is time to invest in the platforms and the capabilities needed to address effectively China's military buildup, and the next Secretary must also support the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff when he provides his best military advice to the President, especially when that advice is ignored in the White House.

In the Senate I will do all I can to support the next Secretary. That starts today. I intend to support Ash Carter's nomination, but my support is conditioned on this request: The incoming Secretary needs to have the courage to speak truth to power—to Congress, yes, but also to his Commander in Chief.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have been trying to understand what has been holding up the funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

The Department of Homeland Security is the agency we created after 9/11 that merged 22 different agencies of our government to make sure that 9/11 never happened again. We created this new Department, and we said to them: Keep America safe. Use our tax resources and your best efforts to keep America safe. Thank goodness that we have not had a repeat of that terrible tragedy of 9/11 since—under either Republican or Democratic Presidents.

When we started debating about funding the agencies of government in December with an omnibus budget bill, the House Republicans said: We will fund the entire Government of the United States, but we will not give regular budget appropriations to the Department of Homeland Security. They singled out the one department responsible for our safety and security and

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



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said: We will give them temporary funding.

In fact, the funding for this round ends February 27, in 15 days. So we are in an almost impossible-to-explain situation where the agency with the premier responsibility of keeping America safe is not being adequately funded to do its job. Now, we know we live in a dangerous time in the world's history. Evidence continues to be shown of the ruthless, barbaric tactics of extremist groups such as ISIS.

Kayla Mueller, this magnificent young woman—I believe 26 years old—taken captive by ISIS, was killed by them. They murdered a Jordanian pilot by burning him alive. They beheaded the Japanese journalist. So we know they are ruthless and barbaric, and we know that they are extending their reach.

Well, we are doing what we must do with the Department of Defense when it comes to stopping them, but we are not doing enough when it comes to the Department of Homeland Security because we are not funding this agency as it should be funded. It has been singled out by the House Republicans as the only agency that doesn't receive regular appropriations.

We sat down with Secretary Johnson and asked him: Well, what impact does it have on you, on managing your Department when it comes to temporary funding, as opposed to a regular budget?

He said: I can't make grants to fire departments in Illinois, Nevada or Arizona. The fire departments come to me and say: Our firefighters need better training; can you give us a Federal grant for that purpose?

Or if they need equipment to keep themselves safe, he said: I can't give the grants because I am under a continuing resolution.

If we look at the budget for this Department of Homeland Security, honestly, there is no real disagreement on how much they should receive. When we look at this budget of \$47.8 billion, it raises some obvious questions.

I wish to mention for the record some of the items the money is used for. There is \$8.5 billion, roughly, for the Coast Guard. We know the Coast Guard's responsibilities—focusing on preventing terrorist attacks; addressing evolving threats to our maritime and transportation systems as well as the global supply chain; preventing the unauthorized acquisition, importation, and use of chemical, biological, radiological, and explosive materials. That is what the Coast Guard is supposed to do. I said \$8.5 billion, but it looks like it is \$10 billion in total that is supposed to go to the Coast Guard. But it is being held up by this continuing resolution.

We have to ask ourselves: What is stopping us from funding the Coast Guard properly so they can protect us?

How about Customs and Border Protection: There are \$12.5 billion for Customs and Border Protection to secure

U.S. air, land, and sea borders; safeguard and streamline lawful trade and travel; and disrupt and dismantle transnational, criminal, and terrorist organizations.

The list goes on and on. What is it that is holding up this appropriation? It took some research, but I found what is holding it up.

It is this young woman on the poster. Her name is Herta Llusho. Herta Llusho was brought to the United States from Albania at the age of 11.

She grew up in Grosse Pointe, MI, a suburb of Detroit. She quickly learned English and became an academic star. She graduated from Grosse Pointe South High School with a 4.05 grade point average. In high school, Herta was a member of the varsity track team, won an Advanced Placement Scholar Award, and was a member of the National Honor Society.

Herta went on to the University of Detroit Mercy, and she graduated with honors with a major in electrical engineering. While Herta was in college, she completed internships at engineering companies, was very involved in her community, and volunteered at homeless shelters, tutoring programs, and in her church.

Listen to what her friends say about Herta Llusho:

I am humbled by Herta's willingness and desire to serve. I have had the privilege of going to the same church at which she faithfully serves. She spends hours tutoring kids and volunteering with the junior high Sunday school class. It's a joy to watch so many kids run up to her at church because of the love they receive when they are with her.

Herta, after she graduated, learned that she could be protected from deportation—because she is undocumented—with a Presidential order called DACA. It is Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, and it was an Executive order by President Obama which says that Herta Llusho could be a DREAMer, allowed to stay in the United States, and will not be deported.

It turns out that Herta Llusho is the reason why we can't fund the Department of Homeland Security, in the minds of Republican leaders. They believe she needs to be deported first before we fund the Department of Homeland Security.

I hate to put that burden on Herta's shoulders, but she and many like her are at the center of this debate—600,000 young people, many of them people such as Herta Llusho, who came to this country as children, made a great record in high school, have no criminal issues whatsoever, and who want to be part of America's future. And what we are hearing from Republican leadership is that we will not fund the Department of Homeland Security to protect America until they deport Herta Llusho. That is what the House bill says. It makes no sense whatsoever.

We were off to a flying start in the Senate. We had 3 straight weeks of debate and 30 to 40 amendments from both sides of the aisle. I thought there

was—but for one bump in the road on a Thursday night—a great spirit of cooperation. Amendments were being offered on the Democratic side and on the Republican side. Some were controversial, and people didn't want to vote on them. But I happened to welcome what happened on the floor. I think that active debate, deliberation, and all these amendments were the right thing to do, even though I disagreed with the basic bill, the Keystone Canadian pipeline bill that came before us. We took it through to its conclusion.

There were countless times when any Democrat could have stood up, objected and stopped the Senate for 30 hours or 60 hours, as we saw over the past several years. We did not do that.

We tried in a spirit of bipartisanship to engage in an active debate, even on an issue where we knew the Republicans would prevail. I think that was the right thing to do.

Sadly, in the past 2 weeks, we have fallen back into bad habits. There has been this insistence by Speaker BOEHNER that the Homeland Security bill not go forward to fund this critical agency unless they can challenge President Obama on immigration issues.

Why are they doing this? Why are they endangering the safety of the United States of America?

Is it because of Herta Llusho and their determination to make sure this spectacular young woman leaves America, is deported back to Albania, a country she barely remembers? Is that why we are doing this? If it is, it is sad. In fact, it borders on being disgraceful.

We need to pass a clean Homeland Security bill. We need to do it now. We can take up the debate on immigration any time the Speaker and the majority leader want to bring it up. It is within their power to call the next issue we are going to debate.

I sincerely hope that before we leave for the President's week break that we call up this bill; that we debate it and pass it, so we can make sure America is safe in this age of terrorism, and then let's save for another day the debate on Herta and the thousands just like her and what their fate and future will be in the United States of America.

Some Republicans have stepped up recently and joined us in our effort. I thank the Presiding Officer for the time he joined us on the rollcall. Yesterday, my colleague Senator KIRK, from the State of Illinois, made a statement on this issue. He said: My hope is that we pass the Homeland Security appropriations bill clean now. I would think we should just pass a regular appropriations bill under regular order. Republican Senator JEFF FLAKE said: To attempt to use a spending bill to try to poke a finger in the President's eye is not a good move, in my mind.

More and more Republican Senators are speaking up. I hope the leadership is listening and I hope the Speaker is

listening. If we want a debate on immigration, let's have it. I am anxious to tell the story of Herta and many others and to appeal to my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to come up with sensible immigration reform. But let us not withhold funding from this critical agency while we are embroiled in this political squabble.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes, with the Democrats controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The Senator from Illinois.

CARTER NOMINATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to express my support for the President's nominee, Dr. Ashton Carter, to serve as our Nation's 25th Secretary of Defense.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CHUCK HAGEL

Let me first say a few words of thanks to Chuck Hagel, our former colleague in the Senate, who has served as Secretary of Defense. He is a friend, he has had a long career in public service, and he is a veteran of Vietnam. The people of Nebraska rewarded him by asking him to represent them in the United States Senate.

As our Nation's first person of enlisted rank to serve as Secretary of Defense, he had a unique, ground-level view on matters of war and peace, and a strong commitment to our troops. I thank Chuck Hagel for his service and his family for their sacrifices over the last 2 years.

Dr. Carter has an impressive and distinguished record of service as well in government, as an adviser and as a scholar. He has what it takes to be a great Secretary of Defense.

His credentials as one of our Nation's top security policy experts are well established. He earned a bachelor's degree in physics and medieval history from Yale and his doctorate in theoretical physics from Oxford. He has served as faculty chair at Harvard and is the author of 11 books.

As singularly impressive as this is, Dr. Carter is also very much a doer. He has served no fewer than 11 Secretaries of Defense, including Leon Panetta and Chuck Hagel. He has four times been awarded the Department's Distinguished Service Medal, as well as the Defense Intelligence Medal.

As an assistant secretary during the Clinton administration, he was instrumental in removing nuclear stockpiles from the former Soviet states of Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus.

As Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, he was renowned for breaking through bureaucratic logjams to get our troops what they needed, when they needed it. We talked about this at some length when we met in my office a few weeks ago. How can we continue, I asked him, to reform DOD so that it will be able to rise to the occasion of today's challenges?

As part of the discussion, I was pleased to hear his appreciation for the organic industrial base of the Department of Defense, especially one near and dear to my heart, the Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois.

He recalled his experience in Afghanistan as he tried to bring our troops the body armor and armored humvees they needed. He also recalled working alongside the great dedicated employees at the Rock Island Arsenal as they delivered the necessary lifesaving equipment to our troops and rolled it off their assembly lines in record time.

I am confident Dr. Carter can steer the Department of Defense through difficult times and provide the President with the best policy advice to deal with our Nation's challenges. He has my full support.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, while I am pleased the Senate is moving, and moving quickly, on Ashton Carter, I am troubled that my colleagues across the aisle are delaying consideration of Loretta Lynch, the President's nominee for Attorney General of the United States. It has been 96 days since the President announced the nomination. This is longer than any other Attorney General nominee has had to wait in recent memory. By way of comparison, the Democratic-controlled Senate confirmed Michael Mukasey as Attorney General in 53 days, Eric Holder in 64 days.

I sat through the hearings with Loretta Lynch, and I listened to the questions, particularly from the Republican side, because most all Democrats I know of are supporting her. I listened to the questions on the Republican side and I came to the inescapable conclusion that Republican Senators were going to refuse any effort to renominate Eric Holder for Attorney General. That is all they had to say. Their grievance was with the sitting Attorney General, who has announced he is leaving as soon as his successor is chosen. I listened carefully for any criticism of Loretta Lynch and I didn't hear it.

Then they had the panel of public witnesses. That is a panel that has a majority of Republican-chosen witnesses and Democratic witnesses. Early on, I believe Senator LEAHY asked the question of all the witnesses there: How many of you who are on this public panel oppose the nomination of Loretta Lynch for Attorney General? Not one—not one Republican, not one Dem-

ocrat. There is no opposition to Loretta Lynch.

Why are they holding up this important appointment by President Obama? Why don't we consider that this afternoon? It can be done, and it should be done very quickly.

Nobody has questioned her record as a Federal prosecutor. She has twice before been unanimously confirmed to serve as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York. She has been vetted and examined and questioned to a fare-thee-well. She testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee for nearly 8 hours, answering every question, including 600 written questions that were sent to her.

It is time to move forward and confirm this obviously well-qualified and historic nominee.

The Senate Judiciary Committee will have the opportunity to report Ms. Lynch out this week. We have the opportunity to confirm her immediately. There is no reason for further delay. What are the Senate Republicans trying to prove by holding up an obviously qualified nominee for a critically important agency such as the Department of Justice?

I hope the spirit of bipartisanship shown in that committee can be shown on the floor of the Senate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURPHY. 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. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes.

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

AUMF

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, to her high school classmates it was pretty clear what kind of person Kayla Mueller was going to turn out to be. As a teenager she took up the causes of the disenfranchised and the dispossessed, such as when she joined a campaign to stop the city of Flagstaff from using recycled wastewater to make snow on a set of peaks the Hopi people considered to be sacred. She later went to the most dangerous place on Earth because people there needed help. She saw suffering on an unimaginable scale, brought on by a vicious civil war inside Syria and Iraq, and she wanted to make it better.

No one is responsible for her death except for ISIL. They killed her, as they did James Foley, Steven Sotloff, Abdul-Rahman, Peter Kassig, and thousands of individual innocent Iraqis and Syrians over the course of the last year.

It has been a long time since the world has seen such evil. This is a brutal inhuman terrorist organization

that today is a threat to the region in which they prowl, but without question could pose a threat to the United States if their march is allowed to go unchecked.

Like the Presiding Officer, every time I hear of a new attack or a new execution carried out by ISIL, my blood boils, I get furious, and I commit myself to doing everything within our power to stamp them out. But I also remember that as justified a response as it is, fury is not a strategy; revenge is not security.

If we are going to defeat ISIL, we need to act with our heads, not just with our hearts. And that means Congress needs to pass a war authorization that includes a strategy for victory—a strategy that learns from a small little creature called the planarian flatworm. I want to tell you about flatworms for a second. This is going to sound a little strange, but I will bring it back here.

These flatworms are extraordinary little things that live in ponds, under logs, and in moist soil. What is amazing about these flatworms is that if you split one of them in two, if you cut it in half, both halves regenerate into new flatworms. In fact, if you cut it into four pieces, all four pieces can regrow into new flatworms. It means if for whatever reason you are trying to get rid of flatworms, cutting them into pieces does more harm than good. If you take a knife to it, you actually create more flatworms than you destroy.

So why am I talking about this? Because they are a perfect object lesson of the simple truth that if you attack a problem the wrong way, you might not just leave the problem unsolved, you might actually make it worse. If you use the wrong tool to try to eradicate flatworms, you just end up with a lot more of them.

In the wake of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, we were told we were going to be treated as liberators. We were told we would be out of Iraq in a few years. When that failed, our invasion turned the one-headed monster of Saddam Hussein into a two-headed monster of competing Sunni and Shiite insurgencies.

Then we were told more troops would do the trick. And it worked, for only as long as tens of thousands of Americans were patrolling the sands of Iraq. But ultimately our occupation was quietly breeding a new brand of an even more lethal insurgency, one that turned into the terrorist group we are fighting today.

Put simply, ISIL in its current form would not exist if we had not put massive ground troops into the region in the first place. Our presence in Iraq, our mishandling of the occupation, became bulletin board material for terrorist recruiters. Iraq became, in the CIA's words, the "cause celebre" of the international extremist network. We killed a terrorist, and the next day two more showed up.

Let me be clear, because I don't want people to twist my words here. Amer-

ica is not responsible for this evil ideology, and our troops are not to blame for ISIL. No one forgets that Al Qaeda attacked us and killed 3,000 of our people before we invaded Iraq. But do we believe having hundreds of thousands of U.S. soldiers occupying territory in the Middle East since then has succeeded in making us safer?

We have killed a lot of terrorists over the last 13 years, and yet there are more of them, in more places, with an even more radical agenda today than ever before.

Former Defense Secretary Bob Gates understood the lesson of the flatworm when he said, upon his departure from the Department of Defense, any future Secretary who proposed putting ground troops back into the Middle East should "have their head examined."

So for me, as we debate this new war authorization against ISIL, I have a bottom line: We cannot authorize a strategy that could result in American combat troops going back to the Middle East.

If this President or the next President puts our soldiers into the Middle East to fight ISIL, they would serve with bravery and honor. But an intervention of this scale would ultimately create more terrorists than it destroyed. And to the extent we drove back ISIL, it would only be temporary, lasting only as long as our troops were there.

Why? These extremist groups such as ISIL exist not because of a military vacuum but because of a political and an economic vacuum. They prey upon disenfranchised young men who see no future for themselves in societies with massive, crippling hunger, poverty, and destitution.

These groups work best when autocratic or sectarian governments marginalize and dispossess specific ethnic or religious groups, pushing them into the arms of extremists who pledge to fight the corrupt and dehumanizing status quo.

Foreign ground troops do nothing to address these underlying issues. But worse, more often than not, foreign ground troops exacerbate these motivating forces. Bloody ground wars make more economic dislocation, not less. Foreign occupations often empower divisive local leadership, such as the former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Malaki, who pushed people toward—not away from—extremist groups. Then groups such as Al Qaeda and ISIL use this misery to brainwash young men into believing America is to blame, that we are the enemy they are yearning to fight.

That doesn't mean there isn't a role for military force in the Middle East. I have voted for an authorization in the Foreign Relations Committee that allows for the United States—our military—to go in and kill terrorists, but we simply need to understand that ultimately what military force is in the Middle East is a shaping mechanism to give us space in order to achieve the

political and economic reform on the ground with our local partners such that those root causes of terrorists disappear.

American military force is useful in this fight, but it has limits. There is a decreasing marginal return and then a point where it actually flips on its head and begins to actually create more of the people we are seeking to destroy.

I have heard two arguments over the past few days as to why this AUMF shouldn't have a limitation on ground troops. First, some of my Republican friends say this kind of prohibition on ground troops would be unwise because it would telegraph to our enemies a critical tactical limitation. My response: Good.

Why do we think ISIL puts up these execution videos? Because they know the best long-term play for their desired caliphate is predicated on the United States making a mistake and rejoining a ground war in the Middle East. Recent history has taught ISIL that the best tool by far to recruit terrorists—and estimates are there are as many as 20,000 foreign fighters who have joined ISIL—is the U.S. Army in the Middle East. Thus, I have no problem being transparent with our enemy by signaling this to them; that we are going to learn from our mistakes and we are going to fight this war with tools that result in victory, not defeat.

The second argument I hear is that Congress would be overstepping our constitutional bounds by limiting the power of the President to prosecute a war. But first let's note that over and over again, starting with Congress's very first authorizations of military force passed in early American times, we have put restrictions consistently on war declarations and AUMFs. Most recently, Republicans and Democrats in the Foreign Relations Committee voted to put some pretty serious limitations on our authorization for the use of military force in Syria in the wake of chemical weapons usage. Frankly, regardless of the precedent, I would argue Congress has a constitutional responsibility to help set the strategy for war, to help guide the Nation's foreign policy.

Let's be honest. This AUMF is going to go on for 3 years, according to the limitations the President proposed, well into the next President's term. As someone who believes combat troops in the Middle East would be a mistake, I simply can't rely on President Obama's promise that he will not use ground troops against ISIL because he only has 2 more years left, and many leading Republicans have made it perfectly clear they would push a President from their party, if that is who comes next, to put troops back into the fight against ISIL. As an elected representative of the people I serve, I should get a say as to whether we have learned from our mistakes of the past 10 years.

I remember my first visit to Iraq. I was there in the bloody spring of 2007. I remember being absolutely blown

away by the capability and the bravery and the capacity of the young U.S. soldiers whom I met in places such as Baghdad, Tikrit, and Baiji. So I can understand why it is easy for some people to believe there is no enemy our soldiers can't beat, that there is no challenge they can't meet, that there is no threat they can't eliminate. I believe in American exceptionalism in my heart, but I don't think it allows us to ignore history, to avoid facts, to deny reality, and the reality is extremists in some parts of the world are like flatworms. If we come at them with the wrong weapon, we may kill one, but we will create two more.

I am pleased the Senate is finally able to debate a new war against ISIL. This debate is past due. ISIL needs to be defeated, and we deserve to honor the U.S. Constitution and step up to the plate and debate an authorization.

Make no mistake, we should pass an AUMF. ISIL is evil personified, but for us to beat them, we need an AUMF that makes it totally clear we will not simply repeat the mistakes of the past that got us into this mess in the first place.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, what is the status of the floor debate and how much time might I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democrats have 8 minutes remaining.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for 10 minutes.

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I have come to the floor, with just 16 days left until the Department of Homeland Security shuts down, to again call for Congress to pass a clean full-year bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security. With our Nation facing very real and very dangerous threats—Senator MURPHY was just on the floor talking about the ISIL threat and pointed out what the risks are—it is time for us to put politics aside and do what is right for the security of our Nation.

If we don't pass a full-year bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security, we will not be able to make critical investments in border security, maritime security, and in nuclear detection activities.

If we don't pass a full-year bill, grants to protect our cities and our ports from terror attacks would be halted, and new grants to police and firefighters will not be awarded. If we don't pass a full-year bill, we are short-

changing counterterrorism efforts, and we will put our Nation's cyber networks at risk.

Senator MIKULSKI and I have filed a clean, full-year funding bill that is on the Senate calendar and ready for action. Our bill fully funds these key security priorities, but if our colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't want to support a bill that Senator MIKULSKI and I have filed, certainly we can support a clean Republican bill that includes the funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

Our bill—our clean bill—is based on the bicameral, bipartisan agreement that was reached in December by Senator MIKULSKI and Congressman HAL ROGERS. The legislation was agreed to by Democrats and Republicans, and it was the result of bipartisan, compromised negotiations. Not everyone got what they wanted in the bill, but it is a good budget that strengthens our Nation and protects against the many threats we face.

Appropriations bills are only possible because of the art of compromise. Senators from both parties identify priorities important to them or their States. They work with Members of the Appropriations Committee on bill language, funding priorities. Everyone works together to influence the final product. All Senators have the opportunity to participate in crafting appropriations bills.

In fact, there doesn't seem to be any disagreement about the funding and how it is allocated in the appropriations bill before us, in the funding bill for Homeland Security. Senator COCHRAN, who chairs the Appropriations Committee, came to the floor and touted all of the benefits in the funding bill for Homeland Security. Senator HOEVEN, who chairs the Subcommittee on Homeland Security that I am the ranking member of, came to the floor and, similar to Senator COCHRAN, touted what is on the bill. I have been on the floor, Senator MIKULSKI has been to the floor many times to talk about what is in the funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security and why we need to pass it.

This morning I wish to highlight a few more of the priorities in a clean, full-year bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security, priorities that will be at risk if we can't pass a clean bill.

There is bipartisan support that the Homeland Security appropriations bill includes strong funding for fire and SAFER grants. I know the Presiding Officer understands these programs because he has been the Governor of his home State. So he knows how important those fire and SAFER grants are to local fire departments, to first responders because they help purchase new equipment, they help with training exercises, and they can help fire departments cut down response times and save lives.

There is also bipartisan support that the Homeland Security funding bill include grants to help our Nation's large-

est cities protect against terror attacks. There is funding for port security grants, State and local law enforcement grants, emergency preparedness grants. There is bipartisan support for funding to upgrade the FEMA Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, AL.

There is a compromise most of the people on the Democratic side of the aisle didn't agree with, to deny President Obama's request to increase air passenger fees and reinstitute the air carrier security fee.

The Coast Guard needs to continue the acquisition of its eighth national security cutter, which is so important for our maritime security. Republicans and Democrats secured \$627 million in the bill for the cutter.

We have all seen how devastating the attacks were against Sony when it was hacked. Cyber attacks are an area of security that former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft called "as dangerous as nuclear weapons." That is why Republicans and Democrats pushed for full funding for DHS cyber security activities.

The increase to the southwestern border of unaccompanied children and families last year is a major concern for States along our southern border—States such as Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico. It has been a key priority for a number of my Republican colleagues, and for all of us who are concerned about border security, to meet the statutory mandate of 34,000 detention beds for undocumented immigrants that is required for the Department of Homeland Security.

The clean funding bill includes support for those 34,000 detention beds, and it also includes funding to meet Republican requests to build 3,000 new family detention beds in Texas.

The National Bio and Agro-Defense facility construction in Manhattan, KS, which is an effort to help us deal with threats against our food supply and other bioterrorism threats—in a clean funding bill will receive the final amount needed to begin construction.

Senator ROBERTS and I talked about this today. One of the things he pointed out is he has been working on this project for 16 years. There is \$300 million in this clean, full-year bill. If we don't pass this bill, if the Department of Homeland Security shuts down, if we are in a continuing resolution, then this funding is at risk and they may have to rebid the project, which will drive up costs. That makes no sense.

There was bipartisan agreement to include \$12 million for the National Computer Forensics Institute in Hoover, AL, to support the expansion of basic and advanced training for State and local law enforcement personnel, judges, and prosecutors to combat cyber crime.

These important investments in counterterrorism and cyber and border security are not controversial. That is not what we are arguing about here. We are arguing about whether we are

going to debate what the President did with respect to immigration, and we should not be having this debate on the Department of Homeland Security's funding bill. We can have that debate. I am all for it. I was happy to have that debate when this body passed comprehensive immigration reform 2 years ago, but we should not be having this debate on this bill. The House should understand, just as the Senate understands that. We should not be having that debate on this funding bill for Department of Homeland Security.

We need to come together to pass a clean bill—a bill that was the result of bipartisan negotiation and bipartisan compromise. We have a bill on the Senate calendar to do just that.

I am hearing from communities all across New Hampshire—we are hearing from communities across the country—about the need to pass a full-year funding bill.

Last week the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Association of Counties, the International Association of Emergency Managers, and the International Association of Firefighters joined our call for a clean, full-year funding bill because they understand, as I know we all do, how disastrous failing to fund this agency would be. Three previous DHS Secretaries, two Republicans and one Democrat, have done the same.

Earlier this week, the National Fraternal Order of Police joined that call for action.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have the letter from the National Fraternal Order of Police printed in the RECORD.

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

NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER
OF POLICE,
Washington, DC, February 10, 2015.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. HARRY M. REID,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY P. PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCONNELL, MR. SPEAKER, SENATOR REID AND REPRESENTATIVE PELOSI: I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police, and probably most Americans, to express our frustration and outrage that what used to be two greatest legislative bodies on the planet will allow a policy dispute to compromise the safety and security of our country.

The previous Congress made a conscious, political decision to defer action of funding for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) until the end of this month. I would also point out that is five months since the start of the current fiscal year and that some of our nation's largest and most vital law enforcement agencies and functions are operating without FY15 funding in place. The House passed legislation in spite of a veto threat and the Senate is now paralyzed and cannot even pass a motion to begin de-

bating the bill. The entire process has become farcical and no amount of political spin or blaming the other side is reason enough to jeopardize the integrity of our nation's borders or the safety of the public.

What kind of message does this send to the men and women in DHS who put their lives on the line in defense of our homeland—three of whom fell in the line of duty over the past two years?

What kind of message does this send to our enemies? Our current threat level is "Elevated" as threats from terrorists and other hostile organizations plan attacks on the United States and our allies. Our Border Patrol and Customs and Border Patrol officers, not yet recovered from last year's surge of minors unlawfully entering our country by the thousands, now must redouble their vigilance against more sinister penetrations. Yet our great democratic institutions are unable to complete their most basic function—providing funding for the protection of our national security. Just more than a decade has passed since the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and today political partisanship holds hostage its operational integrity. This is a political obscenity.

I urge you all, as the leaders of this Congress, to work together and to fund fully the Department of Homeland Security. This is what the American people elected you to do and this is your obligation as Members of Congress. If you cannot, you may as well put out a welcome mat for our enemies and others who would do us harm.

Sincerely,

CHUCK CANTERBURY,
National President.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Their letter expresses frustration with the fact that a policy dispute over the President's immigration actions "could compromise the safety and security of our country."

The letter continues:

What kind of message does this send to the men and women in DHS who put their lives on the line in defense of our homeland—three of whom fell in the line of duty over the past two years?

What kind of message does this send to our enemies?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for another 60 seconds.

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Congress's most basic function is to provide for the Nation's security. It is time to stop playing politics, to get to work, do our jobs, and pass a clean full-year bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas is recognized.

PRESIDENT'S NATIONAL SECURITY PLAN

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, on the same week that the President released his national strategy, a pilot in the Royal Jordanian Air Force was burned alive by radical Islamists.

While the administration was putting the finishing touches on this docu-

ment, the propaganda wing of ISIS was busy too. The jihadist group was pumping out a video of this latest act of horrific brutality.

ISIS represents one of the biggest threats to peace of an already unstable region. These terrorists are committed to establishing a new caliphate ruled by shari'a law where all would be forced to convert or die. They are committed to destroying all who stand in their way. If anyone embodies radical Islam, it is ISIS.

Given the severity of the threat posed by ISIS, not to mention continuing efforts of Al Qaeda to strike again, you would think a plan to take on radical Islam would be a focal part of the President's national security plan. It is not. In fact, there is no mention of radical Islam in the document at all.

What is mentioned instead is global warming. Yes, global warming is discussed in the President's national security strategy, but not radical Islamic extremism. Apparently that is not a threat to the United States. The President and his advisers have stood by this senseless narrative.

In a lengthy interview with Vox, the President essentially blamed the media for overhyping the threat of terrorism. He went on to say that terrorism sells because it is "all about the ratings," and climate change is "a hard story for the media to tell on a day-to-day basis."

Yesterday the White House spokesman was pressed on this very issue and refused to accept the premise that terrorist groups such as ISIS pose a "greater clear and present danger" than global warming. So you can see the disconnect that exists within the administration. But it doesn't end with just this document.

The President's budget proposal for the Department of Homeland Security would allocate tens of millions of dollars to protect against climate change. It does so by failing to dedicate funds for communities to identify and disrupt homegrown terror, despite the fact that ISIS is recruiting foreign fighters at a clip never seen before. While the majority of them are from the Middle East, the Wall Street Journal reports that upwards of 20,000 foreign fighters have joined ISIS in the past 2 years.

The group's savvy use of social media and its highly orchestrated propaganda campaign has appealed to Westerners as well, bringing thousands of jihadists with passports that allow them to travel with ease to ISIS-controlled territory. Where they will ultimately take the deadly skills they learned in Iraq and Syria remains to be seen. These foreign fighters could return home or even come to the United States, giving ISIS the ability to strike on American soil. The recent attacks in Paris serve as a vivid reminder that the reach of radical Islam extends far beyond the jihadi fighters on the ground in Iraq and in Syria.

Meanwhile, the Democrats in this Chamber, at the behest of the President, are holding up the House-passed DHS appropriations bill. Senate Democrats voted three times to filibuster the House-passed Department of Homeland Security funding bill last week. Their objection is that it withholds funding from the President's unconstitutional Executive actions on immigration. They are holding up the entire bill and threatening to shut down DHS to protect the President's priority—not because the funding is too low or because the programs need reforms. Their complaint is that the President is not getting what he wants.

I encourage them to relent on their filibuster so we can debate the bill, make changes if the Chamber sees fit, and send it to the President. If the President truly wants immigration reform, then do it the right way and work with Congress to get it done. Don't go about it on your own unconstitutionally and then threaten to shut down a department charged with protecting Americans. It is out of touch, but it is not the first time this administration's priorities have been at odds with those of the American people.

The President once characterized ISIS as the JV team. This is no JV team. As the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee noted, ISIS is the "largest convergence of Islamist terrorists in history" that has created a "pseudo-state dead set on attacking America."

Preventing ISIS from achieving its goals takes a clear, forceful security strategy both abroad and at home. What the President has put forward is neither.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I wish to follow on the comments of my good friend and neighbor from Arkansas, Senator BOOZMAN. He was talking about what the President is now asking the Congress to do. I think there are many questions that need to be asked about this authorization for activity against ISIS and what that might mean before the Congress can move forward.

The principal question, however, will continue to be: Do we have a strategy? And if we have a strategy, which has not yet been explained, is there a commitment to that strategy to move forward? Is this just another redline that means nothing or is this a document that is designed to meet some objectives that really are not the objectives of fighting people who clearly perceive freedom and America and the values we stand for as anathema to what they would hope to see?

There are so many questions. Is the 3-year timeframe enough? Why would you have a 3-year timeframe? That puts this authorization of force 1 year into the next Presidency. What kind of legacy is that to leave the next Presi-

dent? The minute that person becomes President, suddenly you have a clock that is ticking. If we take that approach, not only are we telling our adversaries when we plan to quit, we are telling the next President, no matter what the situation is, when we will quit. We have not been presented with a 3-year plan on how to degrade and destroy ISIS. We understand that is what the goal is, but nobody suggested a 3-year plan.

In fact, if you look back over the last 6 months, you will find the President's ability to project his foreign policy seems to defy all projections. A few months ago, he talked about Yemen as an example of how well our policy is working. This week we abandoned the Embassy and abandoned our efforts in that country.

The specific focus on ISIS and/or associated persons or forces—what does that mean? Does that mean another terrorist group that is struggling against ISIS is not covered by this? Does that mean Al Qaeda or al-Nusra or some other group that is equally focused on the United States and our friends is not covered by this?

The President has the authority to go after terrorist organizations. As far as 2001, 2002—he says he wants at least one of those authorities left on the books. By the way, it is sufficient to do anything we want to do now, so why add this to it?

This debate may take a while, but during the debate, I think we need to listen closely to our military leaders and question them again about how we can accomplish what we need to accomplish here, what we can do to help our friends as they work to accomplish what needs to be accomplished here, what we do to encourage people from the neighborhood to put their boots on the ground, and what do we need to do to be helpful.

Last weekend I traveled with a few other members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence to Jordan and Turkey to discuss the ISIS threat and what was happening in Iraq and Syria. It was especially interesting to be in Jordan just after the brutal murder of the Jordanian pilot. I don't know that we know for sure exactly when that happened, but I think there are many reasons to believe this group was negotiating to save the life of the pilot long after the pilot's life had been taken in one of the most barbarous of possible ways. It got the attention of the neighborhood, and certainly Jordan and the UAE and others are beginning to line up with a new determination to go after ISIS, hitting targets on the ground, we are told, that we have known were targets for a long time but we didn't seem to be able to have the willingness to hit them. Certainly we had the capacity to hit them. Certainly we had the information to hit them. But why weren't we doing that? What is the commitment to do this?

The President asked the Congress of the United States to make this com-

mitment of use of force, but there is absolutely no reason for us to make that commitment unless he intends to use the force and unless we understand how he intends to use the force. Not only can we not define our policy here; those people around the world who would like to know what our policy is don't hear it defined either.

Then we have events happen such as the botched interview of last weekend the Senator from Arkansas was speaking about where the President was asked if "the media sometimes overstates the level of alarm people should have about terrorism and this kind of chaos, as opposed to a longer-term problem of climate change and epidemic disease." The President's response was "Absolutely." Absolutely, a long-term problem of climate change and epidemic disease somehow calculates into the discussion of whether we are in imminent danger of these terrorist groups and whether that is real?

He went on to say in that interview: "If it bleeds, it leads, right?" This is the President talking. He went on to say, "You show crime stories and you show fires, because that's what folks watch, and it's all about ratings." I don't know what that means. I wouldn't want to suppose the President is saying that coverage of terrorism is about ratings. I, frankly, don't know what it means, but I do know that if I don't know what it means, a lot of people all over the world don't know what it means.

This is not climate change. It is not what we need to be doing at the CDC. The President is not asking for authorized use of force to do something about the CDC. When that was happening, the Congress stepped up and said: OK, here is money that will help meet that immediate need. That is not the same kind of discussion at all.

The President also raised eyebrows by suggesting that the shooting at a kosher deli, kosher market in Paris was "random." I think his exact quote was, "It is entirely legitimate for the American people to be deeply concerned when you've got a bunch of violent, vicious zealots who behead people or randomly shoot a bunch of folks in a deli in Paris." I could speak quite a bit about the President's unwillingness to call this bunch of violent, vicious zealots what they are. They are Islamic extremists. The Prime Minister of Great Britain can say that. Other leaders all over the world can say that. We can't say that.

The other comment I thought was particularly interesting was "randomly" shoot people in a deli in Paris. It was a kosher deli in Paris. There was no "random" about that. Most of the customers would be and the victims were Jews. There was no "random" about that. Let's accept this for what it is.

Let's not go back, as the President did at the National Prayer Breakfast a few days ago, and decide to equate something—crusades, almost 800 years

ago, 600 years ago, various crusades—equate the crusades with what is happening now and somehow suggest that these people are just temporarily misguided. These people are not temporarily misguided; these people are about an evil purpose. They killed fellow members of their religion because they believed those people didn't perfectly reflect their own religion.

This is an issue we need to be concerned about. We have to have a strategy. We need clarity. We need commitment. If we are going to destroy this threat, we really have to be committed to destroy this terrorist threat.

I plan to press the administration, as many others will, on that question of, What is your plan? The President's nominee for Secretary of Defense couldn't explain the plan. That is a vote we are going to have later today. I don't intend to vote for that nominee today. We have already had three Secretaries of Defense in this Presidency who have been incredibly frustrated, obviously and visibly frustrated and willing to talk about their frustrations—at least the two Secretaries who have already left—of not knowing how to deal with a White House that wants to run the military in the most specific ways rather than saying: Here is our goal. What is the best way to meet that goal?

We have had that already. We don't need another Secretary of Defense who doesn't understand what the plan is and can't communicate that plan to either the Congress or the country or our friends around the world.

The Congress doesn't understand what the President is trying to do. The administration can't explain what the President is trying to do. Our enemies are emboldened by the fact that we can't explain what we are trying to do, and our friends wonder what we are trying to do.

In so many cases—I remember the great speech by the President of Ukraine at a joint session of Congress last year where basically he said: Thank you for the food. Thank you for the blankets. But we can't fight the Russians with blankets. We can't fight the terrorists without a strategy. We can't fight the terrorists without a commitment to the goal.

The document the President sent to us this week was carefully worded to meet all kinds of political constituencies. It is not carefully worded in a way that meets the threat of radical Islamic terrorism. The Jordanians understand this. People in the neighborhood understand this. People in Europe seem to have a better understanding of it than we do. They all want to see some level of commitment by the United States of America, and I would like to hear what that commitment is.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I heard the remarks earlier today about how we need to move forward with the Department of Homeland Security funding bill without any reaction to the President's Executive actions of last year. One way to see if that would really meet the test of the Senate is to move forward, to have the debate.

Our friends on the other side are unwilling to debate this. Why would that be? Many of them disagree with the actions of the President of last November. Enough of them certainly disagreed to have 60 votes on the Senate floor that would pass a bill to reverse those actions. Maybe not everybody agrees with everything, but we had more amendment votes on the Senate floor 2 weeks ago on 2 different days—each of 2 different days—than we had all of last year. The majority leader has shown a commitment to let Senators be heard. If they want to improve what the House sent over, let's debate it. If they want to improve what the House sent over, let's hear what those improvements are.

Later today I am joining my colleagues from the Senate Steering Committee and the Republican Study Committee to discuss why Senate Democrats continue their efforts to filibuster this funding bill, to not have a debate on this funding bill. In the last Congress we were often accused of not being willing to end debate; seldom were we accused of not being willing to have the debate. Our argument was, how can we end debate when we have had no amendments? We have not been able to be heard on how we would like to change this bill. Why would we end that debate?

Seldom were we accused of not wanting to go to debate. Several times that was the case when it was clear that nothing was going to happen and the debate was all about politics.

This is a debate about funding part of the government that is so essential that if funding is not there, almost all of the employees show up anyway. They are considered essential. They need a paycheck, just as families all over America do. We are going to see to it that that happens. These are essential employees.

This is not a situation where we can just decide we don't need to have the debate. Our friends on the other side can't continue to think that the debate only happens and amendments only happen in the Senate if there are provisions with which they agree. Maybe they just don't want to explain why the President said 22 times he couldn't take the action he took in November. That is a lot of times, even by political

standards. Twenty-two times saying he can't do something and then figuring out a way he can do it is a pretty extraordinary event.

So we need to have this debate. Frankly, unless we engage in the debate, we won't really ever know what is going to happen with the debate.

I think it is time to move forward. I hope Senate Democrats will work with us. If they want to offer amendments, I am more than happy to vote on their amendments. I think the bill the House sent over is work product we should be pursuing. We should be moving forward with it. Seldom is there legislation that can't possibly be improved, but it can't be improved if we won't talk about it. This is not an option. This is an issue we eventually have to deal with.

Let's have the debate on why it now doesn't matter that the President said 22 times he wasn't going to take an action and then took it. If there are provisions in the House bill our friends on the other side don't like, let's hear what they are and vote on those issues and see what happens then.

We need to continue our efforts to move to this funding bill. I hope we will still engage in this debate before the end of the month and give this the attention it deserves.

We should not assume that any legislation that comes to the floor is so perfect, it can't be improved. In fact, the tradition for appropriations bills of the Senate and the House has always been that any Member could challenge anything—until about 7 years ago when suddenly no Member could challenge anything. Let's get back to the way this work is supposed to be done.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COATS. 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. COATS. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent to exceed—I know morning business expires in 3 or 4 minutes. I doubt I will be speaking for more than 10 minutes, but for extra time in morning business, I ask unanimous consent.

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

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I rise today to address what I call an issue of public responsibility. More specifically, I rise to address the responsibility of both the legislative and the executive branches to deal with our Nation's out of control deficit spending. Unfortunately, the President has shown little interest in the dire fiscal situation facing our Nation, which makes it all the more important for Congress to do so. Without Presidential leadership, it is

now Congress's duty to step up and take the lead.

We have an obligation to be straightforward and honest with the American people about the financial challenges America faces. There was a furor over our continuing plunge into debt and deficit starting in 2009 and 2010 as we saw the spending explode with stimulus plans that didn't work and other policies that continued to drive us into debt. Unfortunately, that level of intensity and displeasure over all that was happening has subsided, but the problem hasn't gone away. It needs to be addressed, and it needs to be addressed now.

As I said, we have an obligation as Members of this body and of the Congress to be honest and straightforward with the American people about where we stand and what we will do about it.

I received a letter from one of my constituents, Steven of Martinsville, Indiana. Steven wrote to me to describe his concerns about our national debt and spending. Let me quote from his letter:

As of today, the outstanding national debt is over \$18 trillion. That is an overly exorbitant amount of money.

It certainly is, Steven. You are right. It is an exorbitant amount of money—one we can hardly even get our minds around in terms of what \$18 trillion means.

Steven continued:

Therefore, I would like to know our options in America.

I think we as elected officials have an obligation to list those options and describe what we would do about it if we had the opportunity and the support from the President, which is not forthcoming, but perhaps it will be. Surely even the executive branch and the President have to understand the situation we are in and the consequences of not doing something about it.

I am sure my colleagues received many letters and information from constituents who are concerned about the health of our Nation, from our mounting Federal debt, to our management—or I suppose I could say mismanagement of the Federal budget. Our constituents want to know what we, as their elected officials, are going to do about it.

What is plain as day to Steven, unfortunately, is not so clear here in Washington because the President says we don't have a spending problem, we have a revenue problem. I can't go home to people in Indiana and tell them that we need to tax more because government is growing and needs their money, and do so without derision coming back my way because people are being taxed to death. This President has an obsession with solving every conceivable problem by asking for more revenue and more taxes. The revenue is increasing; yet we have not placed the necessary spending restraints to control this ever-growing dilemma of deficit spending.

I think there is only one real solution to our problem—a solution that is

absolutely necessary because we literally have tried everything else and come up short—and that solution is for this body to pass a balanced budget constitutional amendment. That is why I am cosponsoring an amendment to the United States Constitution that forces the Federal Government to balance its budget, limits the growth of government spending, and that requires a supermajority to pass any tax increase. Without these measures, we will not successfully deal with this problem.

This is not a new idea. I served here in 1995 and again in 1997. I voted for a balanced budget amendment to limit spending and require the Federal Government to balance its checkbook. Both times, the Senate came one vote short of the necessary two-thirds to pass the constitutional amendment and send it to the States for ratification. One vote—one Member out of 100—could have voted with us, and we would have put ourselves on the path towards a balanced budget. We would not have begun to have the problems of ever-increasing debt, ever-increasing new taxes to cover that debt, and constriction in terms of spending for national priorities, such as defense and health research. Unfortunately, it didn't. When the amendment failed in 1997, our nation's debt stood at \$5.36 trillion. Our debt is about three and a half times larger today. If we had had the political will to act then, we would not be faced with the financial challenges that exist today.

By passing a balanced budget amendment, we can send to the States not just a message that we are serious about addressing our fiscal woes, but that we are giving them a voice, we are giving people a voice, and we are giving them the power to hold Federal spending accountable. It would be a unique opportunity to right a wrong and begin restoring our fiscal house by making the Federal Government accountable for its spending.

In March of 1997 I stood on this very floor and warned about the dangers of operating outside our means. I said it then, and I would like to say it again today. I am quoting from what I said in 1997:

There is no reliable check on this process of intergenerational theft. It is politically prudent, even popular, and this political calculation will not change, will never permanently change without some kind of systematic institutional counterweight, without some measure to give posterity a voice in our affairs. Nothing, in my view, will permanently change until the accumulation of popular debt is a violation of our oath to the Constitution. Perverse incentives of the current system will not be altered until the system itself is altered, until our political interests are balanced by the weighty words of a constitutional amendment. It would be a much needed balance.

We need to come to this body at the beginning of each session and put our left hand on the Bible and our right hand forward and swear to uphold the Constitution, which would involve re-

sponsible spending to keep us from plunging into disastrous consequences.

I mentioned earlier that Steven from Martinsville, IN, sent me this letter. What I did not mention is that Steven is a Boy Scout working toward his Citizenship in the Nation merit badge, which teaches Scouts how to become active citizens who are aware of and grateful for their liberties and their rights.

We all know that Boy Scouts take this oath—the oath to be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, brave, clean, reverent, and thrifty. If we just take one of those principles, thrifty, and apply it to our governing, then America would be in a better place.

We cannot fail Steven, and we cannot fail his generation. His share of the debt will amount to more than \$62,000 in 10 years. Let's not keep shifting the hard choices to our children and grandchildren. Let's not deny them the opportunity at the American dream that all of us in my generation have enjoyed. The opportunity that comes with responsible spending and a responsible government. Opportunity that comes to few people in the world. We are so privileged as Americans to have that, and we are denying that to the future. By passing this balanced budget amendment, we can honor the moral tradition of sacrificing for posterity instead of asking posterity to sacrifice for us.

With that, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF ASHTON B. CARTER TO BE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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

The bill clerk read the nomination of Ashton B. Carter, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Defense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from Maine.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS and Ms. KLOBUCHAR pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 74 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Submitted Resolutions.")

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I always try to be accurate in what I say on the floor. Having been trained before Federal judges for almost 15 years, practicing law, if you said something out of line, you got hammered for it.

My friend, very good friend and colleague, the Democratic whip, Senator DURBIN, earlier today came to the floor and said: Mr. President, I have been trying to understand what is holding up the funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

I would ask my colleague Senator DURBIN: Have you ever heard of a filibuster? What about the filibuster you are leading to block the bill that funds Homeland Security? I mean how much more obvious can the answer be to what is holding up funding for the Department of Homeland Security, the House-passed legislation?

It is good legislation, to my knowledge. There is very little dispute about the agencies and the departments in Homeland Security in terms of what they would get in terms of funding. They simply said that the extra-lawful actions of President Obama would not be funded.

The Los Angeles Times now says that this executive amnesty could cost up to \$484 million. I think it will be much more. The Los Angeles Times isn't counting the cost to State and local governments, welfare costs, tax costs. This is just their idea of what it will cost to give lawful status to 5 million people. It is going to cost more than that. But \$484 million is still a lot of money.

Congress, the House of Representatives, said: Mr. President, we don't agree with this policy and your policy is unlawful. You said 20 times yourself you don't have the power to do this. Constitutional scholars say that. It is an erosion of our power and, based on the fact that we don't like the policy and we think it is unlawful policy, we are going to fund Homeland Security, we are just not going to allow you to take money from enforcement of homeland security laws to reward people who violated the laws.

Isn't that a responsible thing for Congress to do? Isn't it an absolute fact that Congress has the power to fund what it desires to fund and not fund what it does not desire to fund? That is the power of the purse, vested in the coequal branch of Congress. It is Congress's fundamental power.

Senator DURBIN is now leading the filibuster. We have had a series of votes. He has been able to get every single Democrat to vote with him to block even going to the bill, even allowing a bill to come up on the floor of the Senate for debate and amendment.

If he wants to offer language that says we want to ratify what the Presi-

dent did and allow all this to happen, he is free to offer that amendment on the floor of the Senate. But he is not even attempting to do that. He is basically saying we are not going to allow the bill to come up for a vote, and we are going to blame the Republicans for blocking the bill.

What kind of world are we living in? I have suggested that is "through the looking glass." We have the people leading the filibuster accusing the House and Republicans in the Senate for blocking the bill when they, indeed, are the ones doing it.

He also quoted our fine colleague Senator FLAKE to say: To attempt to use the spending bill to try to poke a finger in the President's eye is not a good move, in my mind.

I agree with that, we shouldn't be using a spending bill to poke the President in the eye. But I suggest to my colleagues that the President is the one who has poked the American people in the eye, he has poked the rights and powers of Congress in the eye by taking money that was assigned and given to Homeland Security to enforce the laws of the United States. He is taking out money and spending it at this very moment to undermine and to violate the laws of the United States.

Colleagues, the law of the United States—we have a lot of laws—says that an employer, for example, cannot hire somebody unlawfully in the country.

So the President's proposal: Well, I am going to make 5 million people who are unlawful today lawful. I am going to give them a photo ID, I am going to give them a right to work, a Social Security number, and the right to participate in Social Security and Medicare, because I am angry that Congress wouldn't pass it.

Senator DURBIN says this—and our colleagues who have been leading the filibuster have been saying this—repeatedly.

It is impossible to explain the situation, quoting Senator DURBIN, where the agency "with the premier responsibility to keep America safe is not being adequately funded."

He goes on to say that again about placing America at risk.

I would ask a couple of questions. How does taking funding from the lawful, authorized policies of Homeland Security that are supposed to identify people unlawfully here, to identify terrorists, and do other things to make America safe—how does taking the money from them, to give legal status to 5 million illegal aliens make us safer?

Does that make us safer? How absurd is that?

Ken Palinkas, who is head of the union of CIS workers, the National Citizenship and Immigration Services Council, said:

Unfortunately—and perilously overlooked in Washington—our caseworkers are denied the urgent professional resources, enforcement tools, and mission support we need to

keep out those who are bent on doing us harm.

This is processing the 1 million or so per year who are given lawful status in America. He is not referring to the future when they are going to be expected to process—immediately, apparently—5 million more. They don't have money to process the people today. These are his words, not mine, in a letter dated September of last year. He said:

The 9/11 hijackers got into the U.S. on visas and now, 13 years later, we have around 5 million immigrants in the United States who overstayed their visas—many from high-risk regions in the Middle East. Making matters more dangerous, the Obama Administration's executive amnesty, like S. 744 that he unsuccessfully lobbied for, would legalize visa overstays and cause millions additionally to overstay—raising the threat level to America even higher.

That is what the people who enforce the law every day are saying.

In January of this year, a few weeks ago, January 22, Mr. Palinkas said:

The President's executive amnesty—

And that is what they are objecting to. That is what the people who are filibustering this bill today are doing. They are protecting, advancing, supporting, and attempting to fund the President's unlawful amnesty.

Mr. Palinkas, whose duty it is to enforce these laws, said:

The President's executive amnesty order for 5 million illegal immigrants places the mission of USCIS [that is the immigration service] in grave peril. Instead of meeting our lawful function to protect the Homeland and keep out those who pose a threat to U.S. security, health, or finances, our officers will be assigned to process amnesty for individuals residing illegally inside our nation's borders. This compromises national security and public safety, while undermining officer morale.

That is exactly right. You don't have to be a real expert to understand he is exactly right about this.

He continues:

The Administration's skewed priorities means that the Crystal City amnesty processing center will likely have superior work-site conditions for personnel relative to our normal processing centers. Additionally, the security protocols at place in this facility will be insufficient to engage in any basic screening precautions, ensuring and rewarding massive amounts of fraud. For the administration to continue down this course after the Paris attacks is beyond belief.

This is what we are dealing with. In October of last year, Mr. Palinkas, when the President was proposing this amnesty before it happened, issued a statement on behalf of his workers and his colleagues in the immigration service. He concludes in his statement:

That is why this statement is intended for the public. If you care about your immigration security and your neighborhood security, you must act now to ensure that Congress stops this unilateral amnesty. Let your voice be heard and spread the word to your neighbors. We who serve in our nation's immigration agencies are pleading for your help—don't let it happen. Express your concern to your Senators and Congressmen before it is too late.

Well, that is what it is all about. The President 20 times said he did not have the power to do such a thing, but he—under political pressure, I suppose, or just an overreach on his part—decided to do it anyway. He said he didn't have the power to do this. Now he has acted on it, even though the officers pleaded for him to not do it, even though an overwhelming majority of the American people said don't do it, even though at least nine Democratic colleagues who were supporting this filibuster said the President didn't have the power or shouldn't do it this way, that these kinds of decisions are part of Congress's power.

Mr. President, don't do it, is what they said. Yet all nine of them are now standing in lockstep to block the funding of homeland security that funds every part of homeland security—it just doesn't fund this building they have leased across the river in Crystal City that is supposed to process up to 5 million people.

Colleagues, I want you to know it is absolutely true they will not even have face-to-face interviews with these applicants. This is going to be coming in by mail and computer. They will eventually be sent someplace to get a photo ID, they will be given a work permit to take any job in America, and the right to participate in Social Security and Medicare, weakening both of those programs over the long term, without any doubt.

That is what is occurring without congressional approval. This is going to cost hundreds of millions of dollars just in the process.

But what I want Senator DURBIN to know is this is going to weaken national security. Because if someone is here to do harm to America—perhaps they are a drug dealer or they are a terrorist and they want to do criminal acts in America, and they have a record—they are not going to ask for the amnesty. They are going to stay and continue to work their wicked will. That is what they are going to do. Nobody is going to go look for them. Nobody is looking for them now, and nobody will be looking for them then. It will be business as usual.

But if you came here with a bad purpose—terrorism, drug dealing, other criminal activity—and you don't have a criminal record, you will just call in, send an email in, get your identity, and be allowed to permanently operate in the United States.

And colleagues, the American people, I think, understand this. Nobody is going to investigate anything, other than maybe to run a computer background check—a computer check to see if there is a criminal record out there. There is no way anybody is going to go back and try to verify whether someone has actually been in the country a number of years, verify family relations. They are not going to go back to some school to see if they actually graduated. There are no people to do that. This is just a blanket approval

for people who apply, basically. You send in a few documents, and you are in. There is no capability of doing anything other than that.

So the President has just made a big mistake—a big mistake—and Congress needs to push back. Congress has the power to consider what kind of policies we want to set with regard to immigration. Those have been set. It is unlawful for people unlawfully in America to work in America and to participate in Social Security and all of those programs. It is just unlawful to do that. The President is violating that law in issuing directives through these departments and agencies to Federal employees, and those employees are protesting dramatically, but nobody seems to care.

Congress is the one body that is supposed to stand up to that, and the House of Representatives has done so. They passed a bill that would stop this activity, that says: we will not authorize the expenditure of any money to carry out this plan that Congress has not approved, that undermines the laws we have in place, and that—as Palinkas and other officers have told us—will encourage more people to come to America unlawfully, further decimating any integrity the system has.

We issued a 49-page document of 200 different actions taken since President Obama has been in office that undermine the moral integrity of the immigration system, making it more and more difficult to maintain even a modicum of legality in the system. His actions are continuing to erode that—the most dramatic, of course, being this Executive Amnesty. So we are just supposed to accept this.

This isn't a personal issue to attack President Obama or any of our colleagues. It is a big American policy issue. It is a huge issue for this country, and we need to understand it. It is a constitutional question as well as a policy question.

The constitutional question, which the House of Representatives understands, is that Congress appropriates money. Congress has no duty to placate the President of the United States when he wants to carry on an activity that Congress chooses not to fund. Congress has a duty to history and to generations yet unborn to defend and protect its power of the purse. Congress has to do that.

I plead with and say to my colleagues that those who know the President overreached on this, this is the time, this is the bill when we should fix this. Passage of this bill without the language of the House would basically fund all of the Executive Amnesty. It would not block funding of this activity. To take out the House language and to pass what our colleagues want to pass—a bill that makes no reference to the Executive Amnesty—takes no action to stop that activity; that is, it ratifies it. It is in effect a financial ratification of an unconstitutional

overreach by the executive branch that will have ramifications in the future that we can't even imagine today.

Somebody asked the question—and I think it is a valid analogy—what if the President wanted to reduce the tax rate from 39 percent to 25 percent and Congress wouldn't pass it. So he tells all of his IRS agents—they work for him—don't collect any money over 25 percent. He says to the people: Don't send in money more than 25 percent. I told the agents not to collect more than 25 percent.

Is that so far-fetched, if this were to pass?

What the President is saying is, I know the law says you can't work here. I know the law says you are supposed to be removed if you are here illegally. I know all of these things, but we are just not going to do it. Not only am I not going to enforce the law with regard to immigration, but what I am going to do is I am going declare you as lawful. I am going to give you Social Security numbers and work permits.

A recent report from a liberal group, the Economic Policy Institute, announced on February 10 that the unemployed exceed job openings in almost every industry in America.

We know unemployment is exceedingly high, and we know that we have high job unemployment in the country. Remember, the unemployment rate we see today does not include people who drop out of the workforce, it only reflects those people who are underemployed and looking for more work or people who are actually seeking employment aggressively and have signed up on the unemployment rolls in efforts to get a job.

This indicates that in the big industry we used to hear a lot from—the construction industry—there are six times as many construction workers as there are job openings. Even for professional and business services they are higher. In retail trade there are far more applicants than jobs. It goes on and on, sector after sector.

So remember, at a time of this high unemployment, we are also going to be legalizing 5 million people to take jobs. We know we have to get over 200,000 jobs created in a month—that it takes 180,000 or 200,000—just to stay level with the growth in the population of America. We have been slightly above that recently, and there has been a lot of positive spin about that. But we still have the lowest percentage of Americans in their working years actually working that we have had in this country in 40 years.

Income is down \$4,000 since 2007 for middle-class working families. The median income is down \$4,000 since 2007. So how is this good for lawful immigrants, permanent residents, American citizens? How is it good to bring in even more workers at a time when we have the smallest percentage of Americans in the workforce in 40 years? I point to 40 years ago because we began to see a lot more women working in

those years, so this is a reversal of that trend.

What do the American people think about it? Here is some Paragon Poll data that says by a more than 2-to-1 margin Americans strongly oppose rather than strongly support the President's Executive actions. Blue collar and middle class workers strongly oppose the President's action by more than a 3-to-1 majority. By a 50-point margin, voters want Congress to pass legislation making it harder for companies to hire workers now illegally in the country—71 to 21.

The American people want to make it harder. Their children, their husbands, their wives are looking for work and not finding any. They want to have a decent wage, a rising wage, and a chance to get a job. So this is a 50-point margin. Remember, the President's action—far from making it harder for people to get a job—is going to provide a photo ID, work authorizations, and Social Security numbers to 5 million people unlawfully here. Almost all of those are adults, frankly.

Just to show how people feel about this and how strongly they feel about it, Kellyanne Conway's polling data shows that by a 75-to-8 margin Americans say companies should raise wages instead of allowing more immigrant workers to fill jobs.

People would like to see a pay raise around here for a change. Salaries dropped 5 cents in December. We are not doing nearly as well as some would like to say. That is a Department of Labor statistic—a government statistic—that says that.

How about this? What about people who have the hardest time finding work right now. African Americans, according to the Conway poll, by an 86-to-3 margin say companies should raise wages instead of allowing more immigrant workers to take jobs. For Hispanics that is true by a margin of 71 to 11. So by a 71-to-11 margin, Hispanics in America say companies should raise wages instead of bringing in more workers to take jobs, pulling wages down. That is what the market says.

So let's go back to the morality of all of this, which is fundamental. We as members of Congress represent the people of the United States. That includes immigrants, recent immigrants—naturalized citizens—living here today. It includes native-born citizens. That is who our obligation is to. So we need to ask ourselves, how are we helping them at a time of difficult wage conditions, difficult job conditions, while allowing a surge of workers to come to compete for the few jobs there are? Is that fulfilling our duty to the voters, to the electors who sent us here? I think not.

I think it is time for somebody to focus on the needs of people who go to work every day, who have had their hours reduced, who have had their wages decline, who have had their spouses and children having a hard time finding work. That is what is happening.

To repeat for my good friend Senator DURBIN, who says he has been trying to understand what is holding up the funding for the Department of Homeland Security, let me answer that question. The House has passed a bill. They have sent it to the Senate. More than a majority of the Senators have voted to pass a bill and fund the Department of Homeland Security. And you, as the Democratic whip, are leading the filibuster to block it from even coming up on the floor so amendments can be offered.

That is the answer to your question. So I don't think you should continue blaming Republicans for not attempting to fund Homeland Security. The whole world knows who is blocking the bill that funds Homeland Security: You and your team of filibusterers.

That is what it is. There is no doubt about that, and we need to get this straight. I don't believe the American people are going to be misled by that argument. I believe they are going to know what is happening in this Senate and why we have this difficulty.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. 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. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senate will vote later today on the confirmation of Dr. Ashton Carter to fill a critically important Cabinet position, that of Secretary of Defense. I think we all know Dr. Carter is a dedicated and distinguished public servant. He has actually been confirmed twice, unanimously, to two senior positions at the Pentagon. He has been recognized as a four-time recipient of the Department of Defense Distinguished Service Medal, and he has been awarded the Defense Intelligence Medal. I have no doubt the vote today in support of Dr. Carter will be overwhelmingly favorable.

The Defense Department faces important, timely, and difficult decisions in the coming months and years. They have to learn how best to balance what we know are our fiscal constraints with not only existing but emerging international challenges. Dr. Carter served as the day-to-day financial officer of the Pentagon, so he is one of the few people who understand the complexities of the Pentagon's budget. I believe that Dr. Carter will build upon the fine work of Secretary Hagel to chart a path toward fiscal accountability while maintaining the kind of military capabilities we need to face current global threats.

Dr. Carter is receiving his confirmation vote just over a week after he testified before the Armed Services Committee and two days after his nomination

was reported to the full Senate, and that swift action is commendable. But I want to contrast how his nomination was handled as compared to Loretta Lynch's for Attorney General.

LYNCH NOMINATION

It is a disappointment that contrary to what was done for Dr. Carter, Republicans on the Judiciary Committee chose to hold over for another two weeks another critical nomination, that of Loretta Lynch to be the Attorney General of the United States, the Nation's chief law enforcement officer.

Loretta Lynch is a renowned prosecutor, twice unanimously confirmed by the Senate. She has worked to put criminals behind bars for such crimes as terrorism and fraud. Some Members of this body said these terrorists should be held in Guantanamo because we, the most powerful nation on earth, should be afraid to try them in our Federal courts—the best court system in the world. She showed a lot more courage. She said, we will try these terrorists in our Federal courts, and we will show the rest of the world America is not afraid—and it worked. She got convictions. Now, the President announced the nomination of Ms. Lynch nearly one hundred days ago. It has been more than two weeks since she testified before the Judiciary Committee. In addition to nearly eight hours of live testimony, she has responded to more than 600 written questions. Her nomination has been pending for longer than any modern Attorney General nominee.

I contrast this to another nominee. In 2007, Democrats, who had been in the minority, took back over control of the Senate. President Bush had had an Attorney General, a man who, by just about any objective standard, had been a disaster. He was removed, and President Bush nominated Michael Mukasey to serve as Attorney General. It took only 53 days from the time his nomination was announced to his confirmation. That included doing all of the background checks and having the hearings. And then, after Mr. Mukasey's hearing, of course under our rules we could have held his nomination over in Committee, but I asked the Committee not to and we did not. While I ultimately voted against Mr. Mukasey because of his responses relating to questions on torture, as Chairman I made sure to have the Committee act quickly on him. In fact, I held a special markup session in order for the Committee to be able to report his nomination as soon as possible, because the President should have an Attorney General—and he was confirmed by the Senate two days later. Now, Republicans should extend the same courtesy with respect to Ms. Lynch's nomination to serve as the Nation's top law enforcement officer.

I look forward to working with Dr. Carter. I am not suggesting we should hold him up because they are holding her up. Of course not. He should be confirmed, as she should be confirmed, and

I look forward to working with Dr. Carter on issues of great importance to Vermonters and to the Nation, particularly concerning our continued diplomatic efforts to end Iran's nuclear program, in halting and reversing the proliferation of landmines around the world, in responsibly managing the Pentagon, and in supporting our servicemembers at home and abroad.

And I look forward to working with Loretta Lynch when the Senate ultimately confirms her nomination, as it will. I urge the Republican Leader to serve the national interest by scheduling a confirmation vote on her nomination as soon as she is reported by the Senate Judiciary Committee on February 26. She has already waited far longer for a confirmation vote than any Attorney General in modern history, and she should be confirmed just as Dr. Carter is going to be.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise to join my friend and colleague from Rhode Island, Senator REED, in supporting the nomination of Dr. Ash Carter to be Secretary of Defense. I am confident Senator REED and I feel we have had a very good nomination hearing and that Dr. Carter is qualified to be the Secretary of Defense.

I have known Dr. Carter for many years during his lengthy service in Washington. He is one of America's most experienced defense professionals, respected by Republicans and Democrats alike.

He has served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, and most recently as Deputy Secretary of Defense. In these positions, I have known him to be an honest, hard-working, and committed public servant. I have had the opportunity to work together with Dr. Carter on several issues of shared concern, especially trying to reform the Defense Acquisition System, improving financial management of the Department, and repealing and rolling back sequestration.

I was also pleased to hear Dr. Carter explain his views on a number of critical national security issues at his confirmation hearing earlier this month.

On Afghanistan Dr. Carter told the committee he would consider revisions to the size and pace of the President's drawdown plan if security conditions warranted. To achieve the success that is possible there, he urged the United States to "continue its campaign and finish the job."

Dr. Carter indicated he is very much inclined in the direction of providing defensive lethal arms to help Ukraine resist Russian aggression.

He pledged to do more to streamline and improve the Defense Acquisition System that takes too long and costs too much, and Dr. Carter agreed it is time to roll back sequestration because, in his words, "it introduces tur-

bulence and uncertainty that are wasteful, and it conveys a misleadingly diminished picture of our power in the eyes of friends and foes alike."

America is confronted with a diverse and complex range of national security challenges. A revisionist Russia, a rising China, and radical Islamist groups each seeking in their own way to fundamentally challenge the international order as we have known it since the end of World War II, a system that cherishes the rule of law, maintains free markets and free trade, and relegates wars of aggression to their rightful place in the bloody past.

We need a coherent national security strategy incorporating all elements of America's national power to sustain and defend the international order that has produced and extended security, prosperity, and liberty across the globe.

We need to stop holding our military hostage to domestic political disputes and send an unmistakable message to friend and foe alike that America intends to lead in the 21st century by repealing sequestration immediately.

We need to reform our Defense Acquisition System to restore confidence that every defense dollar is spent well and to ensure that the men and women in uniform are getting the training and equipment they need on time and at a cost acceptable to the taxpayer.

That is why America needs a strong Secretary of Defense now more than ever. I think Dr. Carter will be a good Secretary of Defense, who will always keep faith with our men and women in uniform and work tirelessly on their behalf and that of our national security. I am hopeful about the prospects of working together with Dr. Carter, along with my colleagues in the Senate Committee on Armed Services on both sides of the aisle, to achieve our shared priorities, especially the reform of our Defense Acquisition System, the modernization of our military compensation system, and the repeal of sequestration.

But when it comes to much of our national security policy, I must candidly express concern about the task that awaits Dr. Carter and the limited influence he may have.

Two of his predecessors, Secretary Gates and Secretary Panetta, have severely criticized White House micromanagement of the Defense Department and overcentralization of foreign and defense policies. According to numerous news reports, Secretary Hagel experienced similar frustrations with the insular and indecisive White House national security team over issues ranging from ISIL to Ukraine, detention policy to sequestration.

Dr. Carter is a worthy choice for Secretary of Defense. He has the experience, knowledge, and skill to succeed. The Armed Services Committee voted unanimously to approve his nomination last week, and I will gladly vote to confirm him today. I do so with sincere hope, and sadly, little confidence that

the President who nominated Dr. Carter will empower him to lead and contribute to the fullest extent of his abilities. At a time of global upheaval and multiplying threats to our security, the American people need and deserve nothing less.

I thank my colleague from Rhode Island for his cooperation and coordination with the hearing and for his input and influence which led to a unanimous vote from the committee.

I yield the floor for my friend and colleague from Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I commend the chairman for his very clear and thoughtful conduct of these hearings with respect to Dr. Carter. The reason we are here today on the verge of a very strong vote for Dr. Carter to be the next Secretary of Defense is due to the contribution that Chairman MCCAIN has made to this process, which was extremely thoughtful and bipartisan. I thank him again for that.

Mr. President, I join Senator MCCAIN, and I not only commend him for his leadership but I also wish to express my strong support for the nomination of Dr. Ashton Carter to be the 25th Secretary of Defense. Dr. Carter is uniquely qualified to lead the Department of Defense at a time when—as Henry Kissinger recently said in a hearing before the Armed Services Committee—"the United States has not faced a more diverse and complex array of crises since the end of the Second World War."

Dr. Carter was born and raised in Philadelphia. He received a bachelor's degree in physics and medieval history from Yale and a doctorate in theoretical physics from Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar.

During his career, Dr. Carter has already held three critical positions in the Department of Defense: Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global and Strategic Affairs in the Clinton administration; Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics from 2009 to 2011; and most recently, Deputy Secretary of Defense from 2011 to 2013. He is well aware of, and has already been deeply immersed in, many of the significant challenges facing this Nation and the Defense Department.

As Deputy Secretary of Defense, Dr. Carter was a critical player in the discussions and decision making on a myriad of international issues—issues that will continue to need the close attention in his tenure as Secretary of Defense.

I wish to name just a few. While the Secretary of Defense is not a party to the negotiations relating to Iran's nuclear program, the Secretary will undoubtedly be responsible for any number of potential contingencies. In the event of a breakdown in the negotiations, the consequences could alter the face of the region for generations and generations to come, and the Secretary

of Defense will be intimately involved in shaping the reaction.

Another area of deep concern is ISIL. Their violent campaign in Iraq and Syria to establish an extremist caliphate threatens to erase borders, destabilize the region, and create a breeding ground for foreign fighters willing to return to the West to carry out attacks against the United States and our allies. The Department must provide critical leadership in a coalition effort that includes Arab and Muslim States to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL while being careful to ensure that the United States does not end up, as Brent Scowcroft and Dr. Brzezinski indicated to us in a hearing before the committee, “owning” some of these conflicts in Syria and elsewhere.

In Afghanistan the hard-won gains of the past decade are significant but remain fragile. As the Afghan National Security Forces continue taking over responsibilities to secure Afghanistan, the United States and coalition forces have transitioned to a more limited mission of training and assisting the Afghan forces and conducting counterterrorism operations. Yet it remains to be seen whether conditions on the ground in Afghanistan will improve sufficiently by the end of 2016 to warrant the pace of further reductions under the current plan. Dr. Carter’s participation in evaluating that plan will be absolutely critical.

Russia’s aggression against Ukraine has raised tensions in Europe to a level not seen in decades. Recently separatists in eastern Ukraine, with substantial Russian equipment, training, and leadership, have abandoned any pretext of a cease-fire, although there were discussions that were held overnight that perhaps might indicate a cease-fire. But in any case, the United States must determine the best way to support the Ukrainian people and their forces in defending their country.

Political instability in Yemen has caused the United States to evacuate its Embassy and created a vacuum, allowing the free reign of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which is intent on striking the United States and its interests. Again, the Defense Department plays a key role in supporting our partners in Yemen and navigating the complex political situation and continuing to have a presence there—which they do—which can effectively help to preempt any attempt to use that as a launching pad for operations in the region or across the globe.

The same brand of violent extremism in the Middle East can also be found in parts of Africa—al-Shabaab in Somalia, Al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb, and Boko Haram in Nigeria. Countering the threat posed by these groups will require building partner capacity and enabling support to foreign security forces at a time when resources are scarce and those capabilities are in high demand.

In North Korea, Kim Jong Un’s regime has increased tensions on the pe-

ninsula with his provocative and belligerent behavior. The recent cyber attack on Sony is just the latest in a string of destabilizing actions. The regime is playing a dangerous game that could have disastrous consequences—especially for its own civilian population which has already suffered untold hardships and deprivation under his leadership. The North Korean regime is painting itself into a corner where it will be left with few friends and few options, and again, the United States, and particularly the Department of Defense, must be ever vigilant.

While the United States and China have many areas of coordination and cooperation, our future relationship remains uncertain. We welcome the rise of a peaceful and prosperous China. Especially in this new century of global commerce and economies, a prosperous China is not only in the region’s best interests but also in the world’s best interest. China’s increasingly controversial claims of sovereignty in the South China Sea and dangerous altercations with its neighbors raise serious concerns. While legal and peaceful avenues for dispute resolution are available, China has instead chosen to pursue, in too many cases, adversarial and unilateral actions that raise questions about its intentions.

On the cyber front, China is engaged in massive theft of U.S. intellectual property from American industry and government, which threatens our technological edge and sows distrust and profound misgivings. China will remain one of the Department’s most persistent and complicated challenges. With the focus on so many crises overseas, it is easy to overlook the challenges on our own continent. We have a violent threat of transnational organized crime in our own hemisphere. When the United States faced a threat stemming from violence and the drug trade in Colombia in the 1990s, it dedicated significant resources and entered into a decade-long commitment to provide training and other enabling assistance.

Colombia is a success story, but the problem has simply moved, in many cases, to other nations in the region. General Kelly, Commander of U.S. Southern Command, leads the Department’s efforts in the hemisphere, but he operates with scarce resources, a situation that may have serious consequences.

In addition to these traditional challenges that nation-states have faced for many, many years, the United States now faces new 21st century threats. For years we have devoted significant attention to the complex challenge of cyber warfare. The attack on the Sony Corporation was a watershed event in many respects, and it should and must stimulate fresh critical thinking. This attack demonstrated that a relatively small and weak rogue nation can reach across the oceans to cause extensive destruction to a U.S.-based economic target and very nearly succeed in sup-

pressing freedom of expression through cyber space.

The real and manifest advantages of the offense over the defense in cyber warfare that enable militarily inferior nations to strike successfully against the homeland are a new and worrisome factor for our national security and that requires not only the attention of the Department of Defense but the attention of the Congress.

All of the issues I have talked about are external, but there are local issues that the Secretary of Defense has to deal with. Senator McCain pointed out probably the most significant one, and that is the budgetary and programmatic challenges that have been forced upon us by sequestration.

The most immediate threat facing the Defense Department is, indeed, sequestration because without resources, the programs, the policies, and the initiatives which must be undertaken to confront these national threats cannot be done.

General Mattis, former Commander of Central Command, recently testified before our committee. He said: “No foe in the field can wreak such havoc on our security that mindless sequestration is achieving today.”

Only one-third of Army brigades are ready to fight. Less than 50 percent of our combat squadrons are fully combat ready. Sequestration threatens not only our national security, but it risks damaging our public safety, our health, our transportation, our education, and our environment. In the world we face, there is not a neat distinction between what the Department of Defense does, what the Department of Homeland Security does, and what other civil agencies such as FEMA must do. It is something that we have to consider, not just in the context of the Department of Defense but in so many other agencies of the Federal Government—in fact, in every agency of the Federal Government.

When the Budget Control Act was passed, Dr. Carter organized the Strategic Choices and Management Review to find options for implementing the required defense cuts. The results of this review have helped the Defense Department navigate through difficult fiscal constraints, but Congress must find a balanced and bipartisan solution and a repeal of sequestration across the entire government.

Even without sequestration, the Defense Department has to tackle the rising personnel costs which could crowd out other items in the budget. Currently, military personnel benefits, including health care and retirement, consume approximately one-third of the Defense Department’s budget.

If we are to adequately train and equip the force we have, to ensure they are capable of performing the arduous task we ask of them, and to modernize weapon systems, we must slow the growth of these costs within the Department in line with the slowdown of the overall top line. The congressionally mandated Military Compensation

and Retirement Modernization Commission recently released their recommendations. They are far-reaching and would fundamentally change military personnel benefits. They did so with the idea of improving the benefits available to many of our forces. They did it with the idea of insisting that our recruitment and retention efforts continue to be successful because we are a volunteer force. Their focus was really on the troops, but one of the effects of the recommendations was to make these costs sustainable over time.

As Secretary of Defense, Dr. Carter will have to work with Congress to carefully consider these recommendations to ensure that the Department has the resources to properly train and equip its fighting men and women.

The other major cost driver in the Defense Department is acquisition. To put it succinctly, defense acquisition takes too long and costs too much, but the Defense Department has undertaken significant reforms in recent years and many of these were personally led by Dr. Carter.

As Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Dr. Carter oversaw implementation of the Weapons System Acquisition Reform Act of 2009, and again, I must commend Senator MCCAIN and Senator Levin for their leadership in this effort. The largest restructuring of DOD acquisition policies in more than two decades resulted from this initiative.

He also oversaw and contributed to improvements in a number of major acquisition programs, including the major restructuring on the Joint Strike Fighter program, the largest DOD acquisition program; efforts to reduce the cost of the Virginia-class submarine program and to improve contract performance, which has allowed the Navy to begin a two-per-year procurement program for these submarines, which are under budget and ahead of schedule—a remarkable achievement; improvements to the littoral combat ship program, which was experiencing major costs increases and delays, with Dr. Carter's participation DOD shifted to competitive fixed-price contracts in 2011; restructured procurement for the Air Force's KC-46A strategic tanker program, which led to a competitive procurement, incorporating a firm fixed-price development production contract for buying up to 120 tanker aircraft; and canceling of the VH-71 program, an out-of-control program to replace the current Presidential helicopter fleet.

Clearly not all acquisition problems have been fixed and the Defense Department can and should do more to streamline and improve the system. I believe, from what I have just indicated, that Dr. Carter as Secretary of Defense will do just that. He has already demonstrated he can do it and he will do it.

Finally, and most importantly, as Senator MCCAIN indicated, if confirmed

as Secretary of Defense, Dr. Carter will be leading 1.3 million Active-Duty military, 820,000 Reserve and Guard, and 773,000 civilians. They are under strain after over a decade of war and years of fiscal uncertainty. They are wrestling with many of the same issues as civilian society—issues such as sexual assault and suicide. Yet they are committed to protecting this Nation and remain the finest force in the world.

Every decision Dr. Carter makes, I know he will make it thinking ultimately about what is in the best interests of the men and women in uniform and the DOD civilian workforce who give so much to this country every day, and that, I think, is one of the factors that compels all of us to support this nomination.

Dr. Carter has proven time and time again his commitment to the men and women who serve this Nation. I believe he is the right leader at the right time for the Department of Defense, and I urge my colleagues to support his confirmation.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CHUCK HAGEL

Mr. President, I would urge them also at this time to commend and thank Secretary Chuck Hagel for his service. It began decades ago as a young sergeant in Vietnam where he was wounded twice, where he fought in close combat against the enemies of the United States. He took this ethic from his own experience of understanding that ultimately the decisions made here in Washington are carried out by young men and women across this globe. In his tenure, he brought principled leadership, he brought a dedication to the men and women of the Armed Forces, and he also looked ahead in many different ways. One notable approach was his complete review of the nuclear establishment, the triad, not only in terms of its effectiveness but its security and its ability to respond to the threats not just of the Cold War but of the new world we face.

So for many reasons, he has done a remarkable job, and at this juncture, it is an opportunity to salute his efforts.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. President, I have concluded my remarks with respect to the nomination of Dr. Carter, but I wish to speak for a moment on a different topic.

We are in the midst of trying to provide appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security. It is an action we must take and we should take and we should do it without extraneous policy provisions.

Over the past few weeks, the State of Rhode Island has been beset by a series of snowstorms. In fact, the State could face another foot of snow this weekend. In coordinating a response to a disaster such as this, my State depends upon the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency as well as local emergency managers. Those agencies, in turn, depend on Federal funding through the Department of Homeland Security, particularly the Emergency

Management Performance grant and Homeland Security grant programs, to build the capacity they need to respond to snowstorms, to hurricanes, and to natural disasters of all forms.

However, uncertainty about Federal funding makes it harder on my State to plan and prepare. It is harder for every State to plan and prepare. It is one of the many reasons we ought to pass the bipartisan bill that was negotiated by Democrats and Republicans on the Committee on Appropriations without the provisions added by the House regarding immigration.

A clean Department of Homeland Security bill would probably pass in this Chamber by an overwhelming majority in a matter of minutes. We all understand the security of the United States—not just with respect to natural disasters but with respect to many of the issues that are handed off, if you will, from the Department of Defense to the Department of Homeland Security. When we are worried, as we all are, about the lone wolves who may be in combat zones but coming to the United States, that is quickly a Department of Homeland Security responsibility. I don't think we want to confuse the issue of defending the homeland and protecting communities from natural disasters with other issues.

This is commonsense legislation. We have done it before. We have to move I think with alacrity to get this done. It is about protecting the American people from natural disasters as well as, unfortunately, in this world we live in, the potential for terrorist activities that emanate elsewhere but are directed against the United States.

Issues that are unrelated to funding the Department of Homeland Security I think should be put aside. We can deal with them. We can deal with them through the authorization process, but let's get this Department fully appropriated so it can continue.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I support Dr. Ashton B. Carter to be our next Secretary of Defense.

I have known Dr. Carter for many years, both inside government and out, and especially as members of the Aspen Strategy Group. I have found Dr. Carter to be deeply thoughtful and extraordinarily competent. I am confident he will serve with distinction as our next Secretary of Defense, and I urge my colleagues to support his nomination.

It is vital to swiftly confirm Dr. Carter because we face countless threats around the world, many of which know no simple resolution. On all these national security issues, I strongly believe we need someone in charge who brings leadership, experience, intellect and a strategic lens. Dr. Carter possesses all of these things, and I fully expect he will put his expertise and counsel to good use in tackling our Nation's pressing challenges.

First and foremost, Dr. Carter will need to lead the Pentagon in confronting and ultimately defeating the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL.

ISIL is an unconscionably evil terrorist organization. Its barbarity knows no bounds. ISIL has burned alive Jordanian Capt. Moath al-Kasasbeh, beheaded American journalists and aid workers, and inflicts daily savagery on the people of Syria and Iraq, including the murder of civilians, women, children, and minorities. To marshal international support to sustain the global coalition and ensure ISIL is ultimately eliminated, I trust Dr. Carter to serve his country well.

At the same time, Dr. Carter will need to focus on our drawdown in Afghanistan. The Taliban is resurgent, ISIL is attempting to establish itself in the country, and the Afghan National Security Forces need our continued support. In 2011, the United States fully withdrew from Iraq only to see that country fall apart due to sectarian violence and undue foreign influence. We cannot afford the same in Afghanistan.

I have discussed with Dr. Carter my view that our drawdown in Afghanistan should not be linked to an arbitrary timeline, but rather to the needs on the ground and the necessity of an orderly transition.

Dr. Carter's deep history with nuclear nonproliferation issues will also be important in the coming years. Unfortunately, many of our nonproliferation programs with Russia have gone dormant due to our worsening bilateral relationship. We cannot let this continue to happen.

For decades the United States and Russia have worked together to secure nuclear materials and reduce our nuclear arsenals because doing so is important not only for U.S. security, but for global security. Finding a way to work constructively with Russia on securing and eliminating nuclear material, despite its invasion of Ukraine and continued support for the Assad regime in Syria, is clearly a most difficult assignment. I think Dr. Carter is up to the task.

Finally, Dr. Carter will need to deal with the extremely difficult spending limitations created by the 2011 Budget Control Act. If Congress cannot come together to find a bipartisan solution to raise the spending caps, like we did for fiscal years 2014 and 2015, overall security spending will only be allowed to increase by \$1.8 billion this year, that is a less than one-half of 1 percent increase.

At a time when threats to our Nation are increasing, not decreasing, I am deeply concerned that, under current law, our defense budget will not be allowed to rise to meet current threats. Dr. Carter understands this. In his confirmation hearing, he said, "I very much hope that we can find a way together out of the wilderness of sequester." I fully agree, and I urge my colleagues to work together to increase

the spending caps for both defense and non-defense programs.

Dr. Carter is a rare combination of a strategic foreign policy thinker and an expert on the roles and procedures of the Department of Defense. In his time as Assistant Secretary of Defense under President Clinton, he focused on key national security issues like proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and relationships with other major world powers.

In his two recent positions at the Pentagon—as Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics and as the Deputy Secretary—Dr. Carter has managed the Department's business functions and ran its day-to-day operations. As Secretary, he will bring his unique experience in both sides of the job to the numerous challenges the Department and the Nation face.

Dr. Carter returns to the Defense Department at a time of immense global upheaval. Leading the Defense Department in such a time is no easy task, but I believe he will prove to be an excellent pick to help our country address these challenges head-on. He has the support of the President, the military, the civilian leadership of the Department, and by virtue of this vote, the U.S. Senate.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REALITIES OF DRUG SENTENCING IN THE FEDERAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President and Members of the Senate, as chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, I have mentioned publicly that I am open to certain Federal sentencing, or prison, reforms, and I have tried to make it very clear that I am very opposed to others.

Today I wish to address the realities of drug sentencing in the Federal criminal justice system. I do so because there are many myths that surround this topic.

The myth is that there are thousands of low-level drug offenders, such as people smoking marijuana, in Federal prison for very long terms. This is supposed to mean a waste of Federal tax dollars, overcrowding, and unfairness to people who should not be in prison. These myths are often used to justify lenient and, frankly, dangerous sentencing proposals in the U.S. Senate. One of those proposals is the so-called Smarter Sentencing Act.

It is time to set the record straight, and that is why I am here. It is important to know how many people are in Federal prison for drug possession, who they are, and why they are in prison. Then it will be clear why it is unwise

to make wholesale, one-way lenient changes in drug sentencing. In fiscal year 2013, the most recent year we have statistics, according to the U.S. Sentencing Commission there were 2,332 drug possession cases in the Federal prison. Almost 94 percent involved marijuana, more than 86 percent were against noncitizens, and 88 percent of the cases arose along the southwest border, so it is clear why so many noncitizens were charged. Federal drug possessors were rarely prosecuted for small quantities.

The median amount of drug possession in these southwest border cases, which are 88 percent of the Federal drug possession cases, was about 48 pounds. Understand, we are not talking about a few ounces of possession of marijuana. The average is 48 pounds. Can you imagine being in possession of 48 pounds of illegal drugs? These are not low-level, casual offenders by any stretch of the imagination. Moreover, well over 90 percent of the drug possession cases are along the southwest border. So more than 80 percent of all Federal drug possession cases were brought in the State of Arizona.

In that district, the U.S. attorney will agree to charge a drug trafficker with only drug possession if the offender is a first-time offender who acted only as a courier. Again, the median quantity of the amount of possession is 48 pounds, and many who actually committed trafficking there are charged only with mere drug possession.

Since 88 percent of all Federal drug possession cases derive from the southwest border, only 270 simple drug possession cases arose anywhere else in the United States. Get this, please. The odds of an American being subject to a Federal prosecution for drug possession in any given year are less than 1 in 1 million. It is also imperative to remember that mandatory minimum sentences are not an issue in these cases. The average Federal sentence for drug possession is 5 months; that is, only 5 months—I say that for emphasis—not the years of imprisonment some of the proponents of lenient sentencing would have us believe.

The brevity of Federal drug possession sentences is emphasized by how in the vast majority of these cases the median amount of drugs at issue was 48 pounds. In the 270 cases not along the border, the median amount of drugs the offender possessed was only 4 grams. The average sentence was 1.3 months. Most of those convicted were sentenced to probation.

There is no basis whatsoever to advocate change in Federal mandatory minimum sentencing laws based on drug possession cases since they are not subject to such mandatory minimums. Anyone who raises drug possession as an argument against Federal mandatory minimum sentences is using a stalking horse to lower sentences for much more serious offenders.

There is no separate Federal offense for what is called possession with intent to distribute. Those who possessed with that intent are treated the same as those who distribute. We need to look at drug distribution sentences in the Federal system as well.

Drug trafficking cases are sometimes subject to mandatory minimum sentences. For instance, just under half of all drug courier offenders were subject to mandatory minimum sentences, but under 10 percent were subject to mandatory minimum sentences at the time of their sentencing.

There are two main reasons so few of these offenders are actually sentenced to a mandatory minimum. The first is they may fall within the safety valve Congress has enacted to prevent mandatory minimum sentences from applying to low-level, first-time drug offenders or, second, they may have provided substantial assistance to prosecutors in fingering high-level offenders in a drug conspiracy.

That is an intended goal of current Federal sentencing policy, to put pressure on defendants to cooperate in exchange for a lower sentence so evidence against more responsible criminals can be attained. As a result, even for drug couriers the average sentence is 39 months. That seems to be an appropriate level.

We are not sending huge numbers of nonviolent drug offenders to Federal prison under lengthy mandatory minimum sentences. I want to make it very clear, this is the biggest sentencing myth of them all. When Federal drug sentencing is discussed, we need then to keep in mind the facts. There are hardly any nonviolent drug-offending Americans in Federal prison for mere drug possession. The quantities of drugs underlying the vast majority of Federal possession cases are high and sentences are fair. For drug courier distribution cases, only 10 percent of offenders are subject to mandatory minimum sentences at the time of sentencing.

I hope you will be on notice and be on guard. Don't let anyone tell you Federal mandatory minimum sentences are putting large numbers of nonviolent offenders in jail for long periods of time at great taxpayer expense. Don't let anyone tell you such offenders are the reason for the increase in Federal drug prisoners over the years. Don't let anyone tell you harsh mandatory sentences for low-level nonviolent offenders are decimating various communities.

Apart from the clear evidence from the Sentencing Commission regarding Federal drug offenders, I want to draw attention to the responses to questions from witnesses before our Judiciary Committee just this month. Testifying before the committee, Milwaukee County Sheriff David A. Clarke, Jr., stated: "Federal mandatory minimum sentences have struck terror into the hearts of career criminals . . . and have provided longer periods of respite

from the impoverished and crime-riddled communities that can least afford their return."

The sheriff said he feared the effect in his inner-city community of changing Federal drug mandatory minimum sentences. I have told my colleagues I am going to be open to lowering some Federal mandatory minimum sentences but only where specific situations may warrant that and if we can add or raise new ones for such offenses as arms export control violations, financial crimes, and child pornography possessions. Those three categories do not have to be extremely long sentences under present law, but too many judges are systematically sentencing these offenders to probation. Especially when the Supreme Court has taken away any other means of making sure judges do not let these offenders walk, mandatory minimum sentences are the only way Congress can require these offenders serve any time at all.

I am trying to inform my Senate colleagues through the use of facts. In doing that, by looking at the facts, we will not make unwise and dangerous changes to our Federal sentencing laws. I ask my colleagues to stick to the facts and avoid repeating myths. I pointed out those myths. It is a myth to say sentences for drug possession and nonviolent offenders justify the Smarter Sentencing Act. That bill does not apply to possession at all. Many drug offenses necessarily involve violence. Drug conspiracies operate with the threat or the use of force.

Whatever the offense charged, if the offender has a history of violent crime, he is a violent offender, and the sentence will and should reflect that fact. It is a myth to say the Smarter Sentencing Act would save money. All it would do is shift costs from incarceration to the victims who bear the cost of the crimes that earlier released offenders would commit. That is one of the reasons the bill is dangerous.

The Congressional Budget Office also says it would add billions of dollars in mandatory spending, regardless of what upfront discretionary savings there may be. I would ask my colleagues to get this: It is a fact the Smarter Sentencing Act would cut sentences for a range of heroin offenses, including importation and dealing, while the entire Nation is in the midst of a heroin epidemic and a rising number of deaths from heroin overdoses.

I would ask my colleagues to get this: It is a fact from the heads of the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Agency and Federal police organizations that mandatory minimum sentences spur cooperation from defendants and enable the successful prosecution of high-level drug criminals who cause most of the tremendous harm. That includes cooperation from defendants charged with narcoterrorism.

I would ask my colleagues to get this: It is a fact the so-called Smarter Sentencing Act would cut in half the mandatory minimum sentences Con-

gress put in place for distributing drugs to benefit terrorists or terrorist organizations. It would cut in half the mandatory minimum sentences for members of Taliban, Al Qaeda, ISIS or Hezbollah who deal drugs that fund terrorism. That would mean less cooperation to bring charges of narcoterrorism, get terrorists off the streets, and obtain intelligence to help prevent future attacks.

As President Obama's U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York has remarked, "[T]here is a growing nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism, a threat that increasingly poses a clear and present danger to our national security.

So I ask my colleagues to get this: It is a fact that the so-called Smarter Sentencing Act is dangerous not only because of its effect on increased crime and victimization but on national security as well.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to urge our colleagues to come together quickly to pass a clean Homeland Security bill. We are now just 16 days away from a Homeland Security shutdown. The clock is ticking. A shutdown would be wholly unnecessary and, quite frankly, completely dangerous. We know we do not lack for security threats. It was less than 2 years ago that terrorists attacked the Boston Marathon. It was just weeks ago that we witnessed a horrific series of terror attacks on our friends in Paris. We know the brutal destabilizing force known as the Islamic State, or ISIL, is determined to hurt our Nation and our citizens. The world is a dangerous place.

At a time like this, we should be working together on a bipartisan basis to fund and strengthen Homeland Security, but instead we are facing insecurity, instability, and uncertainty because some want to hold the funding for the Department of Homeland Security hostage—hostage to a partisan political debate.

Is it really more important to hold a fight over deporting children who came to the United States and know no country other than the United States, came here through no fault of their own? Is it more important to hold this fight over deporting those children than it is to protect America against terrorist threats?

Although protecting against these threats is reason enough to oppose this misguided strategy, the resulting fallout would not just be limited to national security. This bill includes

FEMA grants to disaster-stricken areas. This bill includes funding for grants to local fire departments—grants that would not occur.

Thousands of essential public servants—from Homeland Security, to FEMA, to our terrific men and women in the Coast Guard—would be asked to keep on working even though we are not paying them. This is not the way to run a nation. This is certainly not the way to address national security threats that face us.

I think it is telling when a strategy is being criticized from Members on both sides of the aisle. This is a foolhardy game being played with our national security.

A colleague from Arizona said on this floor just yesterday—a colleague from across the aisle—that “to attempt to use a spending bill in order to poke a finger in the President’s eye is not a good move.”

Another colleague from across the aisle, from Illinois, said, “The American people are pretty alarmed, as they should be, about security . . . the way to go forward is just fund DHS,” the Department of Homeland Security. He continued, “We ought to strip the bill of extraneous issues and make it about homeland security.”

That is the path forward, to have a funding bill for Homeland Security, stripped of political riders designed to take on one issue or another when those issues can be addressed in separate bills. If someone really wants to prioritize the deportation of children who came here through no fault of their own and know no country other than the United States, our DREAMers, then they should write that bill, put it through committee, and then the majority should bring the debate to the floor of this Chamber. I can tell you that I would be voting against that bill, but we would have the debate on that issue separate from the conversation about funding Homeland Security.

I found it interesting to read the Wall Street Journal the other day. It refers to immigration restrictionists who want a larger brawl and have browbeat GOP leaders into adding needless policy amendments. That is coming from the Wall Street Journal. They proceed to say in regard to the fight over prioritizing the deportation of folks who are here without legal credentials and who have criminal backgrounds, that the President is “prioritizing” those deportations of those with criminal backgrounds. The Wall Street Journal says:

That is legitimate prosecutorial discretion, and in opposing it Republicans are undermining their crime-fighting credentials.

So if some of my colleagues want to argue that the President should not prioritize deporting individuals with criminal backgrounds, which I think should be prioritized, have that debate, but do not hold the Homeland Security bill hostage to that particular fight.

In this morning’s paper, there was an article about the funding of the De-

partment of Homeland Security. This is in the Washington Post. It refers to the Grand Old Party at impasse as a measure stalls in the Senate. It quotes the Speaker of the House, Mr. BOEHNER. Speaker BOEHNER says, “It is time for the Senate to do their work,” and he proceeds to give a little lecture to Senators. He says, “You know, in the gift shop out here, they’ve got these little booklets on how a bill becomes a law.” Well, I encourage Speaker BOEHNER to actually read that book because what that book says is that in order to pass through the Senate, it has to get on the floor and it has to have support to be approved by this Chamber.

So, Speaker BOEHNER, I encourage you to actually read the pamphlet you recommended because sending over funding for Homeland Security laden with unrelated policy riders is going to make sure that bill dies here in the Senate. Don’t take my word for it, take the Senate’s version or expression on this. It has come up for three votes in the Senate. We have voted three times to kill this House bill, giving clear instruction to the House: Send us the actual Department of Homeland Security bill free of these political riders, and we will put it on the floor, and we will have that debate, and we will undoubtedly pass that bill. But if you want to play political games rather than looking out for the security of the United States of America, don’t expect the Senate to rubberstamp your political games, Speaker BOEHNER.

So that is where we are now. I do encourage the Speaker to go right down the gift shop—I will be happy to buy him a copy of this, and I will be happy to read the phrases to the Speaker on exactly how a bill becomes law.

It is deeply disturbing to the American people to see these types of political games being played with our Nation’s security. We live in a dangerous world, and we need to take seriously our responsibility to fund this Department.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. BROWN pertaining to the introduction of S. 522 are printed in today’s RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, are we on the Carter nomination?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, this is an important nomination, at a time when this country faces very significant national security threats.

AUMF

As I commented yesterday, the President came to us yesterday asking us to authorize the use of force, and I think we should do that. I am not necessarily sure we should do it in the way he has asked us to do it. I think it should be a pretty straightforward authorization, and here is what it should say. It should say we authorize the President of the United States to destroy ISIS and to defeat their military. It is up to the Commander in Chief to decide the right way in which to do that.

I have very serious concerns and very serious reservations about our current strategy when it comes to ISIS. I am not sure it is sufficient. I think it is a strategy that will contain them but will not defeat them. In fact, ISIS is now popping up, for example, in Libya, where they have a very significant hub. They have a very significant presence in Benghazi. Just a few days ago they carried out an attack in Tripoli. We are now hearing media reports that ISIS has a presence in Afghanistan, perhaps even terrorist training camps.

So they continue to grow their affiliates, they continue to grow their presence, and we need an authorization of the use of force that allows us to defeat them anywhere in the world where they are to be found.

The President’s suggestion has been well received. We thank him for submitting one. But now it is the responsibility of the Senate to do its job and to write one of its own. It may reflect many of the things the President wants, but what I believe it should reflect more than anything else is that we authorize him to defeat ISIS no matter what it takes and no matter how long it takes. If we have problems with the President’s strategy, there are different ways to address it. I do have problems with the strategy and I want that to be addressed.

ISRAEL

Mr. Carter’s nomination comes at another important moment. In that same region of the world, one of America’s strongest allies and its very existence is under attack. Of course I am talking about Israel, the Jewish State—an extraordinary story in the history of the world. Here is a country founded after the end of World War II as a homeland for the Jewish people so that never again—never again—would they have nowhere to go if they faced the sorts of oppression, the sort of genocide they faced during the Holocaust.

Since that time the Jewish State has had an extraordinary story. From an economic perspective, it is a vibrant, first-rate country with a first-rate economy. What is most interesting is this is not a country with oil or a country with vast supplies of natural gas.

This is not a country that is an agricultural superpower, yet it has a world-class economy providing prosperity and upward mobility to millions of its people, and it has done so on the basis of innovation.

There is a very good book recently written called "Start-up Nation" that talks about the extraordinary story of Israel.

It is also a very vibrant democracy—in fact, observers of Israeli politics often joke perhaps a little too vibrant. They have heated debates. But it is a democracy.

So what we have here is a democratic nation with a vibrant free enterprise economy in the middle of the Middle East.

Israel is everything we want that region of the world to become. We wish every nation in that region were a real democracy, a vibrant one. We wish every nation in that part of the world had a first-rate economy that provided upward mobility to everyone. And we wish every nation in the Middle East was as strong an ally of the United States as Israel has been.

This is the extraordinary story of this small but important nation, and this country must continue to be their strongest ally in the world. But they face extraordinary threats to their safety, to their security, and to their existence.

It begins with what I believe is a concerted effort around the world—including in American academia, including in the universities of this very country—to delegitimize Israel's right to exist and its right to exist as a Jewish state, and it is an outrage.

It continues with the growth of anti-Semitism all over the world, increasingly in Europe. Every day we see stories of a mass exodus as more and more Jews are leaving Europe because of the growth of anti-Semitism.

We saw what happened in Paris—not just the attack that happened but how Jews were deliberately targeted for death by terrorists. It was not a random attack. It was a deliberate act to target Jews. It was a deliberate act of violence in the furtherance of anti-Semitism.

In every international body in the world, Israel is often the target of scorn and criticism, without any consideration whatsoever to what its enemies intend to do to them. And now perhaps the greatest risk of all is to its very existence from the threat of an Iranian nuclear program.

I, like everybody else, wish that I would wake up tomorrow morning to the news that the Ayatollah had come to his senses and realized Iran cannot continue down its path; that they have given up their nuclear weapons ambition; that they have given up sponsoring terrorism all over the world; that they have given up their anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic rhetoric; that they have given up oppressing their own people. But I know that is not going to happen because Iran is not

governed by a normal leader the way we would consider a leader of a nation. Iran is governed by a radical shia cleric—a radical shia cleric who believes he is not only the head of Iran, he believes he is the head of all Islam everywhere in the world. Iran is where he lives. Iran is where he is based. But Iran is not what he believes is his domain; he believes every Muslim on the planet under the Sun is under his control and leadership.

But here is the scariest thing he believes: He believes it is his job to trigger an apocalyptic showdown between the Muslim and non-Muslim world because that would bring about the emergence of the 13th Imam—the Hidden Imam, the Mahdi, as they call him—who will then come and govern the entire world under the flag of Islam—his version of radical Islam. We may say that stuff sounds a little far-fetched. That is what he believes. That is what he passionately and legitimately believes.

So when someone wants to trigger an apocalyptic showdown between the Muslim and non-Muslim world, when someone says they want to destroy the State of Israel, wipe it off the face of the Earth, and that person is trying to acquire nuclear weapons capabilities, we had better be very concerned, and we had better conclude that is an unacceptable risk for us to take. It is particularly scary for Israel because they are closer to Iran than we are. They are in their crosshairs both verbally and militarily.

The administration would have us believe that we are in the midst of this negotiation and hopefully we will delay the Iranian nuclear program or extend the amount of time they would need to break out. Let me break it to everyone: They are not going to break out. They are going to sneak out. They will concoct some sort of excuse at some point in the future as to why they need a nuclear weapons program.

Let me begin by saying that Iran is an oil-rich nation. They have no need for civilian nuclear power. But if they want one, they can have it, like most of the other countries in the world do, by importing enriched uranium or reprocessed plutonium and using it for their reactors for peaceful purposes. But instead they insist on the ability to enrich and reprocess, and there is only one reason why they would insist on that—because they want the infrastructure necessary to one day build a weapon when they decide they need it.

But don't take my word for it. That is not the only thing they are doing. There are two other aspects of their program that aren't even being discussed.

The first is that they continue to develop long-range rockets. Why do they need intercontinental missiles? Why do they need long-range rockets? They don't need them for conventional purposes. They don't put a conventional warhead—they don't spend all the time and energy and money that it takes to

build that capacity to bomb someone with a conventional weapon. There is only one reason to build long-range rockets such as those, and that is to put a nuclear warhead on them. That is not being discussed in these negotiations, and they continue to make unabated progress toward their long-range rocket capabilities.

The other is a weapons design. The three things they need for a nuclear weapons program: a weapons design, long-range rockets, and the ability to enrich and reprocess. They are already building the rockets. The weapons design they can literally buy from dozens of people around the world who will sell it to them. And the reprocessing? Even under the deal the President is asking for, if it went down exactly the way the President is asking for, they would still keep all the infrastructure, all the things that it takes to enrich to weapons-grade. They would have all the equipment, all the scientists, all the infrastructure.

Here is one more point. Iran has always had a secret component to their nuclear program. They have always had some secret component to their program. And I would venture to guess that right now they have a secret component to their program as well that we do not know about.

That is why I have little hope in this deal, and that is why Prime Minister Netanyahu is so concerned about the deal. See, he doesn't have the luxury of living an illusion. He doesn't have the luxury of pretending that somehow we can work this out, as if somehow we are negotiating with Luxembourg or Belgium. He knows the neighborhood he lives in, and he knows his enemy. He knows their true nature. He knows their true intentions. And it is his obligation not just to protect his people but to fight for that nation's very existence. So he has chosen to come before the Congress at the invitation of the Speaker. I am glad he has accepted his invitation, and I think we owe him the courtesy to hear what he has to say.

I want you to go back and look at the United Nations rollcall votes. Time and again, when the interests of this country are being challenged around the world, I want you to see how many times Israel is one of the few countries—often the only country—that vote with the United States of America in that international forum. I want you to see all the times that the Israelis have stood with America on issue after issue around the world.

I also want you to think about what it says about us as a nation if we are not prepared to make it very clear that before anything else, we are the friends of our allies. What does it say to our other allies around the world, to other nations in other parts of the world that are counting on the American security guarantee for their own existence and their own security, what does it say to Japan and to South Korea and to our allies in NATO if the United States is

prepared to create daylight between us and the State of Israel?

That is exactly the message people will get—that there is a division between us and Israel—if, in fact, Members of Congress carry through on their threat to boycott the Prime Minister's speech before Congress on the 3rd of March. If a significant number of Members of the Senate and the House boycott his speech, that message will be heard not only by Israel's enemies but also by our allies. And the message will be twofold—one, that America is no longer firmly on the side of Israel as it once was, and two, that America is an unreliable ally; look what they just did to Israel.

I think everyone has the right to go or not go to any speech they want, but I hope my colleagues who are thinking about not going will reconsider. You may not like the way this went down. You may not like the fact that the Speaker did it the way he did it. That is your choice. But I want you to think about the implications beyond that. I want you to think about the implications this leaves on Israel. I want you to think about the message this sends to Israel's enemies because what we have seen decade after decade is that anytime Israel's enemies get the perception that somehow America is no longer as committed to Israel's security as it once was, it emboldens them to attack Israel, and Israel has no shortage of enemies that want to not just attack them but destroy them. We have seen what Hamas has done. We have seen what Hezbollah has done. We have seen what Iran wants to do and is doing.

If you boycott this speech, if a significant number of Members of Congress boycott this speech, you will send an incredibly powerful message to Israel's enemies. So I hope you will reconsider.

I don't question anyone's commitment on this issue. I believe there are supporters of Israel who won't attend the speech because they think it is disrespectful to the President. This is a lot bigger than that. We are talking about the existence of this nation. We are talking about whether people in that nation will survive in 20 years or 15 years. That is how important and monumental this moment is.

I am not claiming that by you not attending the speech, somehow that is going to lead to Israel's destruction. I am claiming that if you boycott this speech, you will send a message to Israel's enemies that could embolden them, and I hope you will reconsider that position.

I find it quite frankly outrageous that reports are that the White House has asked Members of Congress to boycott the speech. I find it outrageous that the Vice President of the United States—the Vice President—has decided to boycott that speech. I find it outrageous, for example, that on the one hand we are more than glad to send administration officials at the highest

levels to sit down and meet repeatedly with the highest ranking officials that Iran will send, but our strongest ally's Prime Minister is coming to Washington and they won't even meet with him? One of our strongest ally's Prime Minister wants to speak before the Congress and they won't even attend the speech? What do you think the headlines will be read as in Iran, by the terrorists in Gaza, by the terrorists in Judea and Samaria, by the terrorists in all parts of the world, such as in Lebanon, who want to destroy Israel? What do you think they are going to read into it? What they are going to read into it, unfortunately, is that somehow Congress's commitment to the future security of Israel is not as strong as it once was. And I fear what the implications of that will be. We should not take this lightly.

I can think of no nation on Earth that needs our help more right now than Israel, and I can think of no people on Earth who deserve our support more than they do. As I said earlier, they are a reliable, strong, committed ally of this Nation. We have strong links to them on personal, cultural, political, and economic levels. They have stood by us time and again in international forums when America's interests have been challenged. They are everything we want the Middle East to look like in the future—free, prosperous, democratic, aligned with America, peace-loving, desirous of a better future. What more do you want? What more could they do? What else could they be for us to be any stronger an ally of theirs than we should be or are right now? Yet there are people who are talking about boycotting the speech to protest because their feelings are hurt, because they are upset about the way it went down, because they don't like the way it was scheduled, because it was disrespectful to the President.

You have the right to voice your concerns, but don't do this to an ally. Don't do this to a nation that is as threatened today as it has ever been at any time in its existence. Don't do this to a people who are in the crosshairs of multiple terrorist groups with the capability of attacking them. Don't do this to a nation whose civilians are terrorized by thousands of rockets launched against them at a moment's notice. Don't do this to a country that is facing down the threat of a nuclear weapon annihilating them off the face of the Earth. Don't do this to a people who are being stigmatized all over the world even as we speak, who are being oppressed. Don't do this to a country that in forum after forum has become the subject of delegitimization, as people argue that somehow Israel's right to exist is not real. Don't do this to them.

I hope my colleagues will reconsider their decision to not attend. This is an important speech. It is the Prime Minister's choice, obviously. He must always act in the best interests of his na-

tion and his people. But I hope he will speak to us on March 3, and I hope he will speak to us clearly. I hope that through his speech he will open the eyes of this Congress and the American people that this is not child's play, that what Iran intends to have is not just a nuclear weapon to destroy Israel but ultimately to terrorize the world. I hope he will speak to us bluntly about the true nature of this threat.

I know there is a lot going on in the world, but there is no greater threat to the long-term security of the planet than the Iranian nuclear ambition. No people and no nation on Earth know that better than the people of Israel, and no leader on Earth understands that better than Prime Minister Netanyahu.

I think after years of commitment to this alliance, after the bravery he has shown in his time in office and the bravery the Jewish people of Israel have shown in defending their nation's right to exist after being attacked multiple times throughout their history and even to this modern day, they deserve our unambiguous support. Of course, there are differences between allies. There always have been and always will be.

If we won't stand for Israel, for whom will we stand? If the United States of America will not defend its ally, whom will we defend? What message do we send to our alliances across the planet and what message do we send to our enemies and Israel's enemies?

I hope cooler heads will prevail. I hope Members of the House and Senate who have announced they are boycotting will reconsider. I hope we will all be there, if we can, to hear what the Prime Minister has to say the first week in March.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in executive session.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

TRIBUTES TO KATHIE ALVAREZ

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, regular C-SPAN viewers, this is your DVR alert. Get your TiVo ready. After today you will no longer hear the dulcet voice of Kathie Alvarez calling the roll in the United States Senate. After nearly 30 years as an integral part of the floor staff, Kathie is leaving the Senate.

Her road to the Senate began as a young seventh grade history teacher in Louisiana. In 1984 she chaperoned her

students during a class trip to Washington, DC. During the trip she met an old college friend who told her about a job opening in the Senate Document Room. While her students were touring the Capitol, Kathie interviewed and was hired on the spot. Unfortunately for those students, they lost a great teacher that day, but it turned out to be a gain for the Senate.

In 1985 Kathie was hired as the second assistant bill clerk and was quickly promoted to assistant bill clerk.

In 1991, for the first time, Senators came to this Chamber and heard a woman's voice taking the rollcall vote. It was Kathie Alvarez, the first female bill clerk of the United States Senate. What an achievement.

Before the end of the millennium, Kathie Alvarez was a part of another first when she was 1 of 10 officers—all women—presiding over the Senate at the start of the day. If that were not enough, Kathie once again made history when she was promoted to legislative clerk in 2009. She was the first woman to serve in this role too. What a career.

In 1922, for the history books, Rebecca Latimer Felton was the first woman to sit in the Senate. She served in this body for only 1 day, but during those 24 hours she made a bold prediction for her time about the future role women would play in the Senate. She said:

When the women of the country come in and sit with you . . . you will get ability, you will get integrity of purpose, you will get exalted patriotism, and you will get unstinted usefulness.

Well, I will certainly second that.

As the first woman to serve as the bill clerk and legislative clerk of the United States Senate, I would say Kathie Alvarez has certainly lived up to Senator Felton's prediction. She began her career as a seventh grade history teacher and came to the Senate, where she made history.

Thank you for your service to this body. I know you will be joining your husband John and your high school student daughter Georgia in a much more fulsome way now, but we will miss you in the Senate, and I wish you and your family the very best.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I wish to say a word about a remarkable woman in the Senate we will soon be losing.

Kathie Alvarez, the Senate's legislative clerk, is a bit of a celebrity. Every C-SPAN aficionado knows her voice. All she has to say is "Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE . . ." and it is instantly recognizable.

Kathie has been calling the roll around here for quite a while. In 1991, she became the first woman to ever call the roll in the Senate. In 1999, with Senator COLLINS in the chair, Kathie became a member of the first all-female team to preside over this body, and in 2009 she became the Senate's first female legislative clerk.

So Kathie Alvarez has been making a lot of history since she first arrived here in 1984.

And you will notice, Madam President, that every female floor staffer is paying tribute to her today. They are each wearing something with Kathie's favorite design—animal print.

Along with the love of Cajun food, sartorial distinction is one thing this Louisianan has become known for, a passion for perfection is another.

Kathie has maintained a laser-like focus for three decades. That is good news for the Senate because we rely on her—and the American people rely on her—to ensure that every bill, every amendment, and every message from the House is processed perfectly. That is a lot of pressure.

So we can't blame Kathie for wanting to retire. I know she is looking forward to spending more time with her husband John, and I know Kathie wants to see more of her daughter Georgia.

It will not be as though Kathie is leaving us entirely. We will still be able to hear her voice on the film every tourist watches when they come to visit the Capitol.

So the Senate thanks Kathie Alvarez, its history-making celebrity, for her many years of service, and we wish the very best to her deputy, John Merlino, as he steps into Kathie's role as the Senate's new legislative clerk.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Ashton B. Carter, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Defense?

Mr. INHOFE. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) is 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 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 56 Ex.]

YEAS—93

Alexander	Boxer	Casey
Ayotte	Brown	Cassidy
Baldwin	Burr	Coats
Barrasso	Cantwell	Cochran
Bennet	Capito	Collins
Blumenthal	Cardin	Coons
Booker	Carper	Corker

Cornyn	Johnson	Roberts
Cotton	Kaine	Rounds
Cruz	King	Rubio
Daines	Klobuchar	Sanders
Donnelly	Lankford	Sasse
Durbin	Leahy	Schatz
Enzi	Lee	Schumer
Ernst	Manchin	Scott
Feinstein	Markey	Sessions
Fischer	McCain	Shaheen
Flake	McCaskill	Shelby
Franken	McConnell	Stabenow
Gardner	Menendez	Sullivan
Gillibrand	Merkley	Tester
Graham	Mikulski	Thune
Grassley	Murkowski	Tillis
Hatch	Murphy	Toomey
Heinrich	Murray	Udall
Heitkamp	Nelson	Vitter
Heller	Paul	Warner
Hirono	Perdue	Warren
Hoeven	Peters	Whitehouse
Inhofe	Portman	Wicker
Isakson	Reed	Wyden

NAYS—5

Blunt	Crapo	Risch
Boozman	Kirk	

NOT VOTING—2

Moran	Reid
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The nomination was confirmed.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for 2 weeks now Democrats have continued to filibuster funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

They are filibustering Homeland Security for one reason, and that is to defend actions President Obama himself referred to as "unwise and unfair" and "ignoring the law."

For 2 full weeks, Democrats have prevented the Senate from even considering legislation to fund the Department of Homeland Security. Democrats won't allow the Senate to even debate this funding. Democrats won't allow the Senate to even consider amendments to this funding.

Democrats appear willing to do anything and everything they can to prevent the Senate from taking any action to fund Homeland Security, and all to defend "unwise and unfair"—the President's words, not mine—overreach.

This includes Democrats who claim to be against overreach and who claim to be for funding the Department of Homeland Security. Yet these Democrats continue to filibuster things they claim to want.

Listen to the things Democrats have been saying too. We have heard a claim

from them the Democratic filibuster wasn't actually a filibuster. We heard a call from them for the Senate to start with funding legislation of its own. Of course, the Democratic leader has been clear in the past that the Senate can do no such thing.

Well, here is some good news. There is already a funding bill before us. It has already passed the House. It would fund the Department of Homeland Security fully, and we can consider it today, right now. All Democrats have to do is stop blocking the Senate from even debating it. If our Democratic colleagues don't like provisions of the bill the House has passed, the Senate has a process for modifying bills. It is called amending them. But the Senate can only consider amendments to a bill if it is not being filibustered.

This strained logic of our Democratic friends is very hard to swallow. We understand Democrats might be having a tough time kicking this years-long gridlock habit of theirs, but it is about time they did.

I have already offered a fair and open debate to them several times now. It is a debate that would allow amendments from both parties—that means amendments from our Democratic friends as well. If you want to make changes to the bill, colleagues, that is the way to do it. But to do so you first need to end the weeks-long Democratic filibuster of Homeland Security funding.

Why don't we get serious instead and let the Senate fund the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to proceed to H.R. 240 be agreed to, and that it be made in order for the managers or their designees to offer amendments in an alternating fashion, with the majority manager or his designee being recognized to offer the first amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The acting minority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I don't understand why the Republicans in the House and the Senate have decided to hold up one appropriations bill of our Federal Government, the appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security, the one agency that is supposed to protect us against terrorism.

Last December, the House Republicans said: We are just not going to give regular funding to this Department—\$48 billion this Department spends on the Coast Guard, border security, and a myriad of different things to keep America safe—but the Republicans said this is one agency we are not going to fully fund. We will put them on temporary funding, called a continuing resolution, and we will get back to you on February 27.

Then what they did is to lash the budget of this Department to the thorny, difficult issue of immigration and insist that we can't fund the De-

partment of Homeland Security unless we take up what I consider to be some rather outrageous riders put on by the House of Representatives on the issue of immigration.

The good news is we have come up with a solution on this side. I am going to make it in the manner of a unanimous consent request, and it is very straightforward.

First, because Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN from New Hampshire has stepped forward and offered, with Senator MIKULSKI, S. 272, we have a clean appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

If the Senator would like me to yield for a question, I will yield at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. If I could ask my colleague a question, isn't it true, I say to Senator DURBIN, that the bill you are talking about, the clean bill Senator MIKULSKI and I have introduced, is the legislation that was agreed to last December by Senator MIKULSKI, when she was chair of the Appropriations Committee, and HAL ROGERS, chair of the House Appropriations Committee? It was a bipartisan agreement, a bicameral agreement, and each side gave some.

What is at issue here is not that underlying bill. What is at issue are the five riders, the amendments the House put on, that have nothing to do with funding the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. DURBIN. I would answer in the affirmative. That is why the unanimous consent request I am going to make is the easiest, quickest solution to our problem—a clean, bipartisan appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security. But we are not running away from the immigration issue. Because Senator MCCONNELL is now the majority leader and controls the business of the Senate and Speaker BOEHNER controls the business of the House, they can take up the immigration issue immediately after we have funded this Department.

So what I am going to suggest in my unanimous consent request is that they use their power in the majority to take us to this important debate on immigration after we have given a clean appropriation to the one Federal agency empowered with keeping America safe from terrorism.

Let's not play politics with terrorism. Let's not play politics with the budget of the Department of Homeland Security.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that following the enactment of the text of S. 272, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015, at a time to be determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader but no later than Monday, March 16, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Mod-

ernization Act, as passed by the Senate by a vote of 68 to 32 on June 27, 2013, the text of which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MCCONNELL. What is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed to H.R. 240.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The assistant 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. 240, making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Thad Cochran, Tom Cotton, Roger F. Wicker, David Vitter, Jerry Moran, Daniel Coats, Michael B. Enzi, Mike Crapo, Bill Cassidy, John Boozman, John Thune, Tim Scott, John Hoeven, James Lankford, Jeff Sessions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

(The remarks of Mr. CORNYN pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 76 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CORNYN. 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. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Minnesota.

(The remarks of Ms. KLOBUCHAR pertaining to the introduction of S. 491 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes.

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

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, yesterday the Budget Committee, of which I am the ranking member, held a very important hearing on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program,

which is a life-and-death program for nearly 11 million Americans, including more than 1 million veterans and almost 2 million children who rely on this program to get the nutrition they need, to heat their homes, and to pay for their medicine. This is a program that impacts some of the most vulnerable people in this country.

Let me be very clear in describing this program. This is a program American workers have paid into. It is an insurance program. This is not charity.

When Americans pay 6.2 percent of their income in payroll tax, almost 1 percent of that amount goes into the disability insurance program. The average disability insurance benefit is less than \$1,200 a month, and for 30 percent of beneficiaries this is all of the income they have—\$1,200 a month, 30 percent of the beneficiaries of SSDI. For them this is all of their income. Nobody is getting rich off of disability benefits.

Sadly, on the very first day of the new Congress, House Republicans passed a rule that would lay the groundwork for a 19-percent cut in Social Security disability insurance benefits. Specifically, this rule would prohibit the reallocation of payroll taxes from the Social Security retirement fund to the disability insurance fund, a routine accounting practice that has been done 11 times in the past in a very noncontroversial, nonpartisan way. But Republicans in the House said they will not allow this to happen unless it is accompanied by a cut in Social Security benefits or an increase in taxes.

In other words, what the House Republicans are saying is that either there will be cuts to the disability program or, if that fund is to be replenished, the money will have to come from cuts to the Social Security Retirement Program. In my view, that is very wrong.

If the Social Security disability program was cut by 19 percent, it would mean the average benefit of approximately \$13,980 a year for a disabled person—which is already where the poverty level is—would be cut by 19 percent to \$11,324. That is what a 19-percent cut to the average Social Security disability insurance benefit would mean.

Do any of my colleagues believe a person with a severe disability—maybe that person is facing a terminal illness, maybe that person is paralyzed, maybe that person is an amputee. Does anybody believe a disabled person in America in the year 2015 should be forced to live on \$11,324 a year?

Unfortunately, that is what the House Republicans are laying the groundwork for. That is what a 19-percent cut in disability benefits would mean, and we must not allow that to happen.

In my view, the debate we are having is nothing more than a manufactured crisis which is part of the long-term agenda of a number of Republicans who in fact are trying to cut Social Secu-

urity. In my view, cutting Social Security is a very bad idea.

Let us be very clear because there is a lot of misinformation about Social Security that is getting out there. The fact is Social Security has a \$2.8 trillion surplus and can pay out every benefit owed to every eligible American for the next 18 years.

Let me repeat that. Social Security has a \$2.8 trillion surplus and can pay out every benefit owed to every eligible American for the next 18 years. That is not the opinion of Senator BERNIE SANDERS. That comes from report of the Social Security trustees.

There are a lot of folks out there who are talking in one way or another about cutting Social Security. Some of them are saying let's raise the retirement age. Let's have struggling workers work another 1 or 2 years or more before they can get Social Security benefits. Other people are saying these COLA benefits are just too generous. In recent years, Social Security beneficiaries know we have had several years where people have gotten a zero cost-of-living increase and other cost-of-living increases in recent years has been minuscule. Yet some are saying let's move to a so-called chained CPI and lower the cost-of-living adjustments.

Other people are talking in one form or another about a means test, which would mean significant reduction in benefits for many seniors. Others who are bolder—including some of our Republican colleagues—are talking about the privatization of Social Security. As many will remember, under President Bush that proposal in fact was brought forward and pushed very hard by Republicans.

Because of an aging population, because more women are in the workforce today, and because of an increase in the retirement age, it is true there has been an increase in the number of Americans who are receiving disability benefits, but this is not a surprise. This is a demographic reality that the Social Security Administration predicted would happen back in 1994. The fact that the Social Security Disability Insurance Program is facing a funding shortfall next year is a surprise to absolutely no one. It was predicted 20 years ago.

Furthermore, shortfalls in the Social Security Disability Insurance Program or the Social Security Retirement Program is nothing new. It has happened 11 times in the past and has always been resolved in a simple, noncontroversial way. That is the reason for the reallocation of payroll taxes between the Social Security retirement fund and the Social Security disability fund.

As this chart shows, reallocation was done in 1968 under President Johnson; in 1970 under President Nixon; in 1978, 1979, and 1980 under President Carter; in 1982, 1983, and 1984 under President Reagan; and in 1994, 1997, and 2000 under President Clinton. In other

words, this is a commonplace procedure which has happened under Democratic and Republican Presidents in an absolutely noncontroversial way.

Interestingly, of the 11 times funds were reallocated, it turns out that on 5 occasions it was the disability fund that was reallocated to help the retirement fund. In other words, money was shifted from disability to the retirement fund. This time it is going the other way.

At an interesting committee hearing yesterday, a number of colleagues—Republicans and Democrats—made the point that the reallocation of funds in order to prevent a 19-percent cut in disability benefits was a short-term solution; that it was not going to solve the overall issue of how do we fund Social Security for our kids and our grandchildren. That point is clearly right. No one can argue with that. What we have to do right now in fact is to prevent a massive cut to the disability program, but at the same time, while Social Security can pay out all benefits for the next 18 years, it is important that sooner than later we begin to address the problem of how do we make Social Security solvent, not just for 18 years but for decades beyond that.

In terms of the disability program and the need to go forward with reallocation, every major senior organization in this country, representing tens of millions of people, wants us to do just that. These organizations include AARP, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, and the Alliance for Retired Americans, which together represent over 60 million older Americans. What they are saying loudly and clearly is it is imperative we go forward with this reallocation to prevent cuts in the Social Security disability fund. They are united in opposition to the rule passed by the House Republicans to make reallocation more difficult.

Yesterday AARP wrote a letter to the chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator ENZI, and to myself, the ranking member. Let me quote from this letter:

To prevent any imminent reductions in SSDI benefits, we urge you to rebalance the allocation of social security payroll taxes between the OASI trust and the DI trust as Congress has done with success in the past. Because of SSDI, millions of disabled Americans are able to live their lives with dignity, and support their families. The highest priority in the near term is to ensure that SSDI beneficiaries, most of whom are older Americans, are not put at risk of a 20 percent benefit cut in the very near future.

That is from AARP and virtually every major senior organization. Together, they represent some 60 million older Americans and agree exactly with the sentiment expressed by AARP.

I am delighted President Obama proposed this reallocation plan in his budget request. I applaud the President for doing that. As I mentioned, the Social Security trust fund can pay out every benefit owed to every eligible American for the next 18 years.

At yesterday's hearing, my Republican friends—and, again, some Democrats—made the very valid point that we have to go further than just reallocation, that we need a long-term solution to make certain our children and our grandchildren will have all of the benefits to which they were promised. I agree with that sentiment. That is why last year I introduced far-reaching Social Security legislation which in fact would make Social Security solvent for decades to come.

The concept behind this legislation is pretty simple. It would simply apply the Social Security payroll tax on income above \$250,000. In other words, it would scrap the cap that currently exists. Right now in the midst of massive wealth and income inequality in our country, a Wall Street CEO who makes \$20 million a year pays the same amount into Social Security as someone who makes \$118,500. If you make \$20 million or you make \$118,000, the amount of money you put into the Social Security trust fund is the same because the cap is now at \$118,000.

In 2013 I asked the Chief Actuary of the Social Security Administration to estimate how long the solvency of Social Security would be extended if we simply applied the Social Security payroll tax on income above \$250,000. His answer was that Social Security would be made solvent until 2060—45 years from today. I refer my colleagues to the letter from the Social Security Chief Actuary that I had printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on February 5 of this year.

Further, the Center for Economic and Policy Research has estimated that my proposal—my legislation—would only impact the top 1.5 percent of wage earners. More than 98.5 percent of Americans would not see their taxes go up by one dime under this plan.

So I say to my colleagues, if you want to extend the solvency of Social Security—not just for the next 18 years, which is currently the case, but for the next 40 to 45 years—I hope you will join me in making sure the very wealthiest people in our country—the top 1.5 percent—pay their fair share into the Social Security trust fund. To my mind that is a much better idea than raising the retirement age, forcing hard-pressed workers to work another year or two before they get their benefits. It is a much better idea than cutting the cost of living adjustment. It is a much better idea than many of the ideas I have been hearing for the last few years.

We all know that the huge increase that we have seen in this country in wealth and income inequality has resulted in millions of Americans seeing a decline in their income, and we have people from one end of this country to the other working longer hours for lower wages.

In fact, while the wealthiest people have become much richer, real median family income today is almost \$5,000 less than it was in 1999. Incredibly, the

typical male worker—the man right in the middle of our economy—made \$783 less last year than he did 42 years ago. The typical female worker—the woman in the middle of the economy—earned \$1,300 less last year than she did in 2007.

Today the top one-tenth of 1 percent owns more wealth than the bottom 90 percent. As this chart shows, the top one-tenth of 1 percent owns as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. In terms of income what we are looking at is a situation where almost all of the new income generated since the Wall Street crash goes to the top 1 percent.

Why is this significant? Well, obviously it is significant because millions of Americans have not seen growth in their income. In fact, they have seen a decline in their income. But what makes it also significant is that this decline in income for millions of Americans—this growth in income and wealth disparity—has also had a profound impact on the solvency of Social Security.

I want all of my colleagues to understand that if income inequality remained at the same level today as it was in 1983, Social Security would have \$1.1 trillion more in the trust fund than it does today. Why? Because, obviously, when workers saw their wages go down, less money went into the Social Security trust fund. When people on the top went over the cap, they were no longer contributing from their income that was above the cap. So less money goes into the Social Security trust fund.

If the payroll tax had simply continued to cover 90 percent of all earnings, which it did in 1983, rather than the 83 percent that it covers today, the Social Security trust fund would be able to pay every benefit owed to every eligible American—not just for the next 18 years but for the next 38 years.

So when we talk about income and wealth inequality in this country, that is not only a tragedy unto itself; when we see the middle class shrinking and real wages for American workers going down, in some cases significantly, it is also a major problem for the Social Security trust fund.

Once again, if income levels had remained the same today as they were in 1983—if incomes had gone up rather than gone down—we would see over \$1 trillion more in the Social Security trust fund.

So, I agree with my Republican colleagues who say that doing the reallocation for the disability trust fund is a temporary solution. It is. But it is an important solution, and it is something that has been done 11 times in the past. It is something that is supported by the AARP and every major senior organization. It is something we must do right now to prevent a 19-percent cut in benefits for some of the most vulnerable people in this country. So I won't argue with anyone who says, well, that doesn't go far enough. We need a long-term solution.

So I challenge my Republican friends: Do you have the courage to come up with a solution other than cutting benefits for seniors? Do you have the courage to come up with an idea that says: No, it is bad, it is wrong to raise the retirement age, and it is wrong to cut cost of living adjustments.

Are you prepared to deal with the reality that because of the growing disparity in income in America, we have lost substantial funding for Social Security, and the way to address that issue—the way to extend Social Security—is to ask the people on top, the people who have been doing phenomenally well in recent years, to pay more into the Social Security trust fund?

I do agree with my Republican colleagues that we have to look at Social Security from a long-term perspective for our kids and our grandchildren.

We have brought forth an idea: Raise the cap. Ask people making more than \$250,000 a year to pay the same percentage of their income into the Social Security trust fund as somebody making \$50,000 a year. I think that is a sensible idea, and I look forward to hearing some of my Republican friends work with us on this concept.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The Senator from Utah.

PATIENT CARE ACT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, last week I joined my colleague Senator BURR in unveiling the latest version of our legislative proposal to repeal and replace the so-called Affordable Care Act. We are joined this time around by our friend in the House, Chairman UPTON of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

We call our proposal the Patient Choice, Affordability, Responsibility, and Empowerment Act, or the Patient CARE Act for short. As you may recall, we first unveiled this framework last year and in general it received high marks for being a serious, responsible alternative to ObamaCare. We have unveiled the latest version of the proposal in hopes of continuing the conversation we began in the last Congress.

Let's face it. ObamaCare isn't working. It is not working. Sure, its proponents in the Senate and elsewhere have gotten pretty good at cherry-picking data in order to convince the American people that the President's health care law is a success. But the American people know the truth. The law is a disaster for individuals, families, and employers alike.

Despite the claims that ObamaCare would lower health care costs, costs have continued to skyrocket. Due to all the mandates in the law, businesses are slowing hiring and moving employees into part-time work. Of course, the law includes more than a trillion dollars in new taxes that impact consumers and businesses around the country. We need a better path forward

and a long-term vision for sustainable health care reform.

I want to take just a few minutes today to talk about the approach we want to take with the Patient CARE Act and why it is a better approach than the one being taken under ObamaCare. Our plan rests on four simple principles. First, repeal ObamaCare with all its costly mandates, taxes, and regulations. Second, reduce costs by taking the government out of the equation and instead empowering consumers to make choices about their own health care. Third, provide common sense consumer protections, including protections for individuals with preexisting conditions. And fourth, reform our broken Medicaid system by giving States more flexibility to provide the best coverage for their citizens.

Let me talk about each of these principles in a little more detail. For any health care proposal to have a chance of success, it must get rid of ObamaCare. The failures of ObamaCare have been well documented here on the Senate floor and elsewhere. The American people deal with those failures on a daily basis. That is why the first principle of our proposal is to repeal ObamaCare once and for all. Then we move on to address the biggest barrier to health care in this country—skyrocketing costs.

Our plan would give taxpayers affordable options to meet their health care needs by harnessing the power of the marketplace—not through Federal Government mandates. With more options in the private insurance marketplace, people will be better able to find insurance that meets their needs. The lack of choice and draconian coverage mandates is one of ObamaCare's largest shortcomings. Our proposal would allow consumers to find affordable plans that address their particular needs without making them pay for coverage they will never use or want.

Our proposal would also give States more options to provide people with more coverage. Under our plan families earning up to 300 percent of the Federal poverty level would be eligible for a tax credit to purchase insurance of their choosing. In addition, our plan would help small businesses enjoy the same advantages in the marketplace as large businesses by allowing them to band together to leverage their purchasing power to buy insurance for their employees.

The Patient CARE Act also proposes an expansion of the health savings accounts so that people can plan and save for their future medical needs. Under our plan, for the first time consumers would be able to use their pretax dollars to pay premiums and deductibles. Our proposal would inject more transparency into health care costs so people can know what their providers are charging and how successful they are.

In addition, we include other cost-saving measures such as medical malpractice liability reform to help reduce

the expensive practice of unnecessary defensive medicine.

Our plan would reduce the distortions in the Tax Code that actually increase the cost of health care in our country by capping the unlimited employee exclusion. This is a key way of restraining costs that has support across the political and economic spectrum.

In our proposal the exclusion is capped at a generous \$30,000 for a family plan, and that threshold will continue to grow at CPI plus one. Most importantly, we make sure we preserve the employer-sponsored health care system for those 160 million Americans who rely on it by leaving the employer deduction untouched and by repealing the job-killing employer mandate. By increasing consumer choice and utilizing the power of the market, our proposal will actually reduce health care costs, something ObamaCare has miserably failed to do.

Our plan also includes a number of commonsense consumer protections. For example, we would make sure a person would not see their coverage get canceled if they get sick. Our plan would also ensure that people with preexisting conditions could not be denied access to health insurance. Period.

I will repeat that for my friends on the other side, who were confused about this in some of their speeches: No American with a preexisting condition can be denied coverage under our plan. End of story.

We would also let children stay on their parents' plans through age 26 and prevent insurers from putting caps on total benefits paid out over a person's lifetime so that no patient will have to worry about maxing out their coverage.

Finally, our plan would address the current failings of the Medicaid Program. Keep in mind, many of the newly insured people credited to ObamaCare have obtained their coverage through the expansion of Medicaid. Of course, this is absurd as Medicaid is a financially unsound program that continues to swallow up State budgets on a yearly basis. ObamaCare did not improve the stability of Medicaid, it only threatened it further.

The Patient CARE Act includes a key reform that is similar to the Medicaid modernization plan that Chairman UPTON and I proposed in the last Congress.

Currently, Federal taxpayers have an open-ended liability to match State Medicaid spending, which is a significant driver in Medicaid's budgetary challenges. Our proposal would create per capita spending caps—something President Clinton, and many Democrats who remain in this Chamber, supported in the past.

We would couple this structural reform to Medicaid with new flexibility for States to manage their Medicaid populations. On top of that, we would give those on Medicaid the option of purchasing private health insurance,

which is more frequently accepted by quality doctors.

I hope you are grasping a pattern when it comes to this proposal. At virtually every step, our aim with this proposal is to take the Federal Government out of the equation and put individuals and families in charge of making their own health care decisions. We trust the American people to make the best choices for themselves.

The Patient CARE Act represents a sustainable and achievable alternative to ObamaCare, one that will succeed without the tax hikes, the mandates, and the outrageous government spending that came part and parcel with the Affordable Care Act. Most importantly, it will actually reduce the cost of health care in this country.

Once again, our hope with unveiling the latest version of this framework is that we can continue the conversation about improving health care for individuals and families. I have given just a top-line, 35,000-foot overview of the proposal here today. I want to invite my colleagues to take a look at our ideas and give us your feedback. I hope health care experts around the country will continue to do the same.

Unlike ObamaCare, this is a product that will rely on consensus and feedback. We have more work to do. It is important, and I look forward to more discussions and conversations about these issues.

REGULAR ORDER IN THE SENATE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I also rise today to speak about the recent progress we have made in restoring the Senate as an institution.

After being sworn in as President pro tempore just over a month ago, I rose to address the state of the Senate and how we, as Members, must work together to restore its greatness. This is an opportune moment to take stock and to reflect briefly on our progress toward achieving this goal.

I am pleased to report that we have embarked on a new chapter of thoughtful, productive legislating in this Chamber, just as the Framers intended us to and just as the American people expect us to.

We have had hours upon hours of open, constructive debate with arguments from both sides of the aisle. We have considered dozens of amendments reflecting a full range of political viewpoints. The majority leader promised this body that he would restore regular order, and that is precisely what he has done. Not only have we engaged in full-scale debate and considered dozens of amendments, but we have also already passed four major bipartisan bills in a single month to reform and extend the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program, to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, to address the critically important issue of veteran suicides, and—my bill yesterday—to provide effective restitution for victims of child pornography.

That is what voters elected us to do—to craft good legislation, to debate it,

to improve it through the open amendment process, and then send it to the President's desk.

In my remarks when I was sworn in as President pro tempore, I noted that in recent years the foundations of the Senate's unique character—meaningful debate and an open amendment process—have come under sustained assault by those who have prioritized scoring political points over preserving the Senate's essential role in our system of government.

What a difference such a short time can make. What a breath of fresh air these last 6 weeks have been for this body on both sides of the aisle. We are moving forward. We are keeping our promises, and we are helping to restore the Senate as the world's greatest deliberative body.

I wish to highlight some specifics of these positive changes we have witnessed over the past work period.

First, robust debate. The late Senator Robert C. Byrd liked to say that "as long as the Senate retains the power to amend and the power of unlimited debate, the liberties of the people will remain secure." In this new Congress, we are restoring the right to meaningful debate.

As I noted last month, when a full and robust debate has occurred, invoking cloture—a motion to end debate—is often appropriate. But we must not abuse this power by always seeking reflexively to cut off debate before it even begins. In the dark days of the previous Congress, we often saw such motions to cut off debate filed as soon as debate had begun, eviscerating any meaningful opportunity for considering the issues.

The Senate desperately needed to return to a system where all Senators have a say in what the Senate does and are able to express their views without getting cut off at the pass. We are now returning to that system. We have resisted the temptation to cut off debate immediately.

Under the majority leader's leadership, this body spent the better part of 3 weeks considering the Keystone XL Pipeline bill. During that time, Senators—both Republican and Democrat—enjoyed ample opportunity to voice their position on the bill as well as on our energy policy more broadly. This represents the exact sort of deliberate character the Senate was designed to embody.

Indeed, the Democratic minority actually used more hours of floor debate on Keystone than did the Republican majority. To me, this is a remarkable statistic indicative of our new majority's commitment to treat the minority fairly and to approach individual Senators, regardless of party, as valuable contributors to our work rather than as mindless partisans.

The Senate was also designed to be the institution in our system of republican self-government that produced wise legislation. Popular passions, parochial interests, and factionalism—

what Edmund Randolph called the "turbulence and follies of democracy"—were to be defined in the Senate where smaller membership and larger constituencies and longer terms would improve the legislative product.

These structural features of the Senate led to the development of a tradition in which individual Members were allowed to offer amendments freely—one of the primary mechanisms by which this body can refine legislation for the better. For centuries, this notion of an open amendment process has been at the core of the Senate's identity. But in recent years, many of us have bemoaned the demise of this tradition. In effect, one of this institution's most defining characteristics was emasculated for partisan political purposes. But the way we dealt with amendments over the course of the last month shows that the open amendment process is making a comeback.

The majority leader shepherded through votes on more than 30 amendments in January, more than double the amendment votes permitted by the Democrats in all of 2014. In fact, in 1 week alone, we voted on more amendments than the previous majority allowed us to vote on all of last year. There could be no clearer evidence of this body's resurgence.

The facts speak for themselves. While one former Democratic Senator did not receive a vote on any of his amendments during the entire extent of his service in this body over the prior 6 years, the lone freshman Democrat Senator in this Congress, the junior Senator from Michigan, has already received a vote on one of his amendments in just the first few weeks of his service here. Truly, under this new majority, Senators of both parties are individually contributing to our work for the common good.

A key part of returning to regular order is restoring the committee process. A healthy committee process is essential to a well-functioning Senate. In committees, Members are often best able to work together to debate, draft, and amend legislation that ultimately passes the Senate. We began resuscitating the committee process in our consideration of the Keystone XL Pipeline bill.

I commend the tireless efforts of the distinguished Chair and ranking member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, who together masterfully led this body through recently unfamiliar territory of legislating through regular order.

The Senator from Alaska merits particular praise for the skill she demonstrated in guiding this bill through the process, while the Senator from Washington should be lauded for her commitment to a fair and orderly process despite her opposition to the underlying policy. Their admirable work set an important example for the rest of us as we return to regular order in the 114th Congress by working together to improve legislation rather than simply

trying to shut each other out of the process.

I heard voices from some corners quibbling over certain elements of the Keystone debate process, but to focus on these criticisms misses the forest for the trees by fixating on one or two nitpicks and ignoring how deliberative and inclusive the process really was. We enjoyed open debate, ample opportunity to amend, and respect for committee expertise. This all contributed to the passage of a bipartisan bill.

The proof is in the votes. Of the almost 50 votes on Keystone-related matters, few followed strict party lines, and the final bill won passage with 62 affirmative votes, including those of 9 Democrats. Twenty percent of Democrats present, nearly one-fifth of the caucus, voted for the Keystone bill. This was real bipartisanship.

The result was a critically important piece of legislation that the President of the United States should sign into law. I urge him to do so. But that is not what we are hearing from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. No, the President has said he will veto the bill. In fact, he said he would veto it before we even took it up—before any amendments had even been offered.

Instead, President Obama appears determined to ignore the will of the U.S. Congress, dismissing bills out of hand that have yet to reach his desk. I fail to see how this recalcitrance advances the cause of responsible governance or responds to the will of the American people who made their preferences clearly known at the ballot box last November.

I, for one, will not let the President's irresponsible attitude toward this institution diminish my commitment to it. In fact, I call on each Senator to continue working to restore our Chamber's proper functioning. I urge all of us to participate actively in the committee process, help produce sound legislation, and carry out our institutional duties.

The American people can then see for themselves the stark difference between a Senate that works and a White House that is unwilling to engage in genuine negotiation and compromise.

I will close with a note on civility, that crucial ingredient we must never overlook, even in the heat of political discourse. I recall the words of Senator Chris Dodd, my friend, who represented Connecticut in this body for 30 years. In his final speech here on the Senate floor in late 2010, he reminded us that the Senate was intended to be a place where every Member's voice could be heard and where deliberation and even dissent would be valued and respected. As Senator Dodd explained, "Our Founders were concerned not only with what was legislated, but—just as importantly—with how we legislated."

I have observed that debate on this floor during the past few weeks—although tense at times—has on the whole been genuine, balanced, and respectful. We must remain true to this

ethos as we continue to reinvigorate the debate and amendment process.

In the weeks and months ahead, new disagreements will surely arise. This is when civility and statesmanship are most needed. We must each overcome whatever instincts may drive us away from civil discourse and toward anger, bitterness, petulance, or self-promotion.

When this new Congress convened just over six weeks ago, I spoke of our collective duty to restore the Senate. I expressed my confidence that we could make the Senate work again by returning to regular order, promoting robust debate, and enabling an inclusive amendment process. We have made admirable progress over the last month. Our actions are backing up our rhetoric. Let us sustain this momentum.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PRESIDENT'S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, this afternoon the Senate voted to approve Dr. Carter's nomination as the next Secretary of Defense. I supported his nomination and appreciated the candor he displayed during both his confirmation hearing and in our private meeting.

I believe the many challenges facing our Nation require a fresh perspective and a strong analytical mind. I am confident Dr. Carter possesses both. Despite the fact the international landscape has changed dramatically over the past few years, the Obama administration has failed to modify its policies to meet the new challenges facing our Nation. In fact, top administration officials have emphasized in recent interviews their approach is not changing and instead offer Americans a laundry list of things they will continue to do. This is unacceptable.

I am very concerned this administration actually believes the correct course of action is to continue what we have been doing. In the Senate, the Armed Services Committee has held a number of hearings to examine the effectiveness of the current U.S. national security strategy.

Witnesses from across the political spectrum have merged on one point. In several key areas, U.S. national security strategy and our regional goals are either ambiguous or divorced from events on the ground. What is needed is a reevaluation, not a continuation.

In Syria, for example, President Obama called on Bashar al-Assad to step down 3 years ago. However, the President has failed to lay out a strat-

egy to accomplish his stated goal. After hundreds of thousands of Syrians have died, terrorist groups have seized control of about half of that country. Further, thanks to assistance provided by Iran and Russia, Assad has fortified his control over much of western Syria.

In response to all of this, President Obama has continued to call for a negotiated transfer of power without any articulation of how this would be accomplished. The President's goal was probably unlikely when it was first conceived, but now it is thoroughly unimaginable.

The Obama administration has also stated the United States intends to downgrade and destroy ISIL. While I support this goal, I am concerned we have yet again failed to lay out a strategy to accomplish it.

Yesterday President Obama sent to Congress his authorization of military force. The decision to send young men and women to war is the most serious decision that elected officials will make. This deserves a serious, open, transparent debate that is worthy of the American people. I look forward to a robust committee process on this issue.

I am also eager to hear more from the President about the exact contours of his strategy, particularly when it comes to achieving very clear goals. What exactly do we hope to achieve? Simply stating our objective is to destroy ISIL doesn't reflect the complexities of actually realizing this goal.

The President has waged a campaign of airstrikes against this barbaric terrorist group, but we know airpower alone will not be sufficient to destroy ISIL. While the White House has proposed arming and training Syrian opposition fighters, this effort will take years to produce a force that is strong enough to dislodge ISIL from its strongholds in eastern Syria. What is more, it is unclear how the Syrian fighters—any of whom view Assad as the primary target—will be convinced to first fight ISIL. Questions about the extent to which the United States will provide opposition forces direct air support if they are attacked by ISIL or Assad—those questions remain unanswered. For these reasons, the President has been rightly criticized for not having a clear and effective strategy.

Again, I support the goal of destroying ISIL. But this is a multilayered problem. In Iraq, the administration seems to embrace a growing Iranian role, even though this puts our goal of maintaining a unified Iraq in even greater jeopardy.

With respect to Iran itself, the administration unequivocally states it will not allow that nation to develop a nuclear capability, but we hear reports repeatedly that are suggesting the U.S. negotiators are crafting an agreement that would accept its enrichment program and leave Iran as a threshold nuclear power 1 year away from a bomb, at most.

In Ukraine, the United States imposed sanctions on Russia in March for

its intervention. Since that time, Russia has continued to pour heavy weapons and fighters into that conflict. Clearly our policy is not working. We must acknowledge that as Putin continues to build momentum on the battlefield, the incentive for him to honor his diplomatic commitments and end the conflict diminishes.

Additional measures—including defensive weapons for the Ukrainians—are necessary, and they must be implemented. The international community and most Americans are understandably confused by the stark contrast between what they see and what they hear from the White House. They hear vague assertions, but they see no strategy. They hear a goal, but they see no discussion on how to achieve it. This damages our global credibility.

In a world where we rely heavily on partner nations to be our boots on the ground, we cannot afford to have our international allies wondering if we mean what we say.

Dr. Carter will have a lot on his plate in his new role. I hope his appointment will help encourage the strategic reevaluation that is so desperately needed.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOKER. 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. BOOKER pertaining to the introduction of S. 502 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I stand before this body this afternoon to encourage my colleagues—particularly my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—to take into account the need to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

The House of Representatives acted responsibly in passing legislation to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, and they did so acting more than 1 month in advance of the scheduled expiration of the existing funding stream for the Department of Homeland Security. This was a good move. It was likewise a good move of

the majority leader to bring up this bill for consideration nearly 1 month before the expiration of the existing funding. I applauded this effort and still do.

One of the reasons it was so important is it would help us avoid the cliff effect. What I mean by that is the dynamic that occurs every time we have a scheduled expiration of funding and the House and the Senate wait until the last minute, sometimes with only 1 or 2 days, sometimes with only 1 or 2 hours to spare before we act.

What this does is effectively shuts out the voices of most Members of the House and most Members of the Senate. It strips us of our right to offer improvements, amendments, to legislation before that legislation has a chance to become law.

Ultimately this enures to the advantage of just a few people, and it results in the effective disenfranchisement of so many people throughout America whose voices don't have an opportunity to be considered through their duly-elected Senators and Representatives.

That is why this time it was going to be different. That is why this time it was so great the House and the Senate acted early in bringing up this legislation.

Nevertheless, it has been 2 weeks since we brought up this bill, the bill passed by the House to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded. Two weeks, and we have cast vote after vote trying to get on the bill—just trying to consider the bill—and we have seen those efforts to get on the bill blocked by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

Earlier today I heard colleagues on the other side of the aisle trying to explain their reasons for continuing to block consideration of this bill. I heard arguments that suggested that although they want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, they don't want to consider this bill because, as some of them have put it, they don't like everything the House of Representatives put into the bill. They don't like the provisions in the bill restricting the administration's ability to use those funds to carry out—to implement—the President's Executive orders issued in November of this last year, Executive orders that would have the effect of granting amnesty to millions of people currently inside the United States illegally.

Look, people are entitled to their opinions about how best we should proceed, how best we should deal with those who are currently inside the country illegally. There are a lot of opinions about this, and everyone is entitled to their own opinion. But Americans are overwhelmingly united behind the uncontroversial proposition that when Congress has established a law in a particular area, as it has with our immigration code, in order for that law to be changed, it needs to be changed by congressional action. The House needs to pass it, the Senate

needs to pass it, and the President needs to sign it into law.

As the President has acknowledged repeatedly, he lacks the authority to make those changes on his own. He lacks the authority to act unilaterally. He lacks the authority under our system to behave as if he were a government of one. Ours is not a government of one. In fact, our Founding Fathers, while they disagreed on a number of issues, they were united behind one core principle behind our 227-year-old governing document that has fostered the development of the greatest civilization the world has ever known. They were united behind the proposition that bad things happen when too much power gets consolidated into the hands of the few or, even worse, into the hands of one person.

That is why they put in place this system that would split the powers of government into three coequal branches, and within the legislative branch—which many of them tended to view as wielding potentially the most dangerous power—they split up that power into two bodies and then split up the power within each of those bodies so no one person and no one group of people could accumulate too much power.

They certainly never intended a system in which we would have a virtual monarch, albeit a monarch serving for a term of years who could by the stroke of a pen change the law according to his own will, change the law in order to suit his own political interests, change the law without going through Congress. Yet that is what has happened, which brings me back to arguments made today and over the last few days by my colleagues across the aisle. They say we are fine with funding the Department of Homeland Security, but we don't like all the provisions put in there by the House of Representatives. We don't like those provisions that would restrict the President's authority to spend money implementing the President's Executive amnesty program.

Again, Americans, regardless of how they feel about amnesty, as a matter of policy, are overwhelmingly of the opinion—and correctly so—that this is a decision that needs to be made by Congress and not the President of the United States.

Secondly, this is the kind of issue we deal with, with some regularity, within Congress.

Within the system as it has evolved, within the system as dictated by operation of the rules of the House of Representatives, typically—and for more than a century exclusively—it has been the role of the House of Representatives to initiate appropriations bills when we are trying to fund a government program that starts in the House, and that has been the case for well over a century. So they have the prerogative of starting a bill to fund the government, and that is what they did.

When it comes over here, if you don't like it, that is fine. This is a great

place to be if you don't like a bill as it starts out. The U.S. Senate has been called the world's greatest deliberative legislative body with good reason—because our rules, when properly followed, protect the right of every Member to make sure his or her views are adequately aired and protect and preserve the right of each and every Member to offer improvements to bills and offer amendments to make changes to legislation before it is put into law. Our rules are very clear on this.

It is unfortunate that in the last few years under the previous leadership those rights were trampled. Those rights were suppressed. We often didn't have those rights. We often had legislation that came up without a fair, open opportunity for each Member to offer amendments.

But we have moved on. We have a new majority leader, a majority leader who has, to his great credit, stood behind his commitment to protect the right of each Member to offer amendments to legislation. I thank him for that and encourage him to continue following this because it is good for this body. But because it is good for us and because our rules already provide for it and because we are following those rules now, as evidenced by the fact that we have now voted on more amendments on the floor in the form of a rollcall vote to pending legislation just in the last few weeks than we did in the entire last Congress, as evidenced by that, we don't need to fear the old order anymore. We don't need to fear the possibility of legislation coming into this body, and if we proceed to it, that that legislation will be without the opportunity to offer amendments.

So if Members don't like something in this bill, vote at least to proceed to it, vote at least to allow the debate to begin, but that, alas, is not what my colleagues across the aisle have chosen to do.

What they have chosen to do is to say: No. No, no, no. They are obstructing. They are obstructing the process as it was designed by the Constitution and as contemplated by the rules of the Senate and the rules of the House of Representatives.

They are saying, no, we will not consider this because we don't like some provisions of this bill. Yet they are also saying at the same time we want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded.

I agree with exactly half of that statement. I agree with them I think when they say they want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded. At least I will take that at face value. But if they truly do, then why on Earth would they not proceed to it? And if they don't like some of the other provisions, let them offer amendments. Let them change that.

At the end of the day, we have to come to terms with the fact that not all of us are going to like every part of every bill that comes over from the

House of Representatives. In fact, I dare say it hardly ever happens that any one Member of this body immediately, automatically feels great about every jot and tittle, about every section, every syllable, every paragraph of a bill that comes over from the House of Representatives.

That is exactly why we have the rules we do. That is exactly why parliamentary procedures, as they have evolved over the centuries, generally have as their central feature the protection of Members of any body such as this of the right to offer amendments, to offer helpful suggestions. But under our rules in the Senate, that cannot operate, it will not operate, it is not available, it doesn't exist unless we first vote to proceed to the bill.

So I invite my colleagues across the aisle—I challenge them—if they want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, vote to get on this bill. If they care about America's national security, there is a way to prove it. There is a way to prove they mean what they say when they say they want to keep it funded. Vote to get on this bill. It doesn't mean they have to agree with me, but it was not only acceptable but entirely appropriate and even necessary for the House to act to protect the constitutional order and to do so by restricting the President's ability to spend money to implement his Executive amnesty program.

People don't have to agree with me on that, but if Members want to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, they can and they must and they will vote to proceed to this bill. Now we may disagree on what amendments you offer, but the Senate majority leader has repeated his offer, to make sure that we have an open amendment process, and we will.

In light of that, there is no excuse—there can be no excuse for my Democratic colleagues to continue to insist on the one hand that they care about our Nation's security and funding the Department of Homeland Security, while voting on the other hand against proceeding to this funding bill to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded. There is no excuse and there can be none.

It is most unfortunate that we have gone now 2 weeks without being able to proceed to this bill—2 weeks in which we could have offered amendments, 2 weeks in which my Democratic colleagues may well have succeeded in getting rid of some or perhaps all of the provisions they don't like added by the House of Representatives. They may have ended up with a piece of legislation that is exactly what they would have written had they started it over here, but they didn't do that.

Meanwhile, they have the audacity to accuse Republicans of causing this problem. This is something I don't understand. There are those among them who insist that Republicans did this very thing in the last Congress. Well, there were times when Republicans

voted in the last Congress not to proceed to something, but overwhelmingly—and if I recall correctly, perhaps entirely—when Republicans stopped their motion to proceed, when Republicans blocked cloture on a motion to proceed to the legislation, it was on the basis of a well-founded complaint that there would be no open amendment process. But there is no such argument to be made here. That argument has thankfully been taken off the table by our majority leader, who has thankfully opened up the Senate once again and made an amendment process possible.

Perhaps my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are still fearing the shadow cast by the previous leadership exercised in the previous Congress in the Senate that blocked out the amendment process, that made amendments impossible. If that is what they are afraid of, they have no need to fear. The Sun is now shining. The opportunity to offer up amendments and have those amendments considered has been restored to the Senate. There is no reason to be afraid. No reason to be afraid, of course, unless we somehow do the unthinkable—unless we continue to kick this can down the road farther and farther until we have no options left on the table.

We have just a few legislative days remaining between now and the time the existing funding for the Department of Homeland Security will expire. Our next vote has been scheduled on this, as I understand it, a week from Monday. I would implore each of my colleagues to reconsider their current strategy. Whether you like it or not, the way our system is set up is that the House of Representatives starts our spending bills. They have to pass spending bills first. If you don't like everything in the Homeland Security bill that the House passed—fine, vote to proceed to it and then change it. Change it back however you want. Propose amendments. I might not vote for all of them, I might not agree to all of them, but propose them. Have them aired out, have them considered by this body, by the American people, and let's have the debate, because our clock is ticking and our Nation's homeland security is too important for us to continue to put this off. But that is what we have been doing. That is what my colleagues who have been voting against cloture on the motion to proceed have been doing every time they voted no on this important issue.

The time has come for this body to accept the fact that a new day has dawned and we now have the ability once again to offer amendments, and because that opportunity now exists again, there is no reason to be afraid to move to legislation that has been passed by the House of Representatives to keep one of our government's important departments operating—no reason to fear whatsoever. In fact, if you are worried about what you should be fearful of, you should be fearful of not proceeding to this bill.

The next time we cast a vote on this, I encourage each of my colleagues to vote yes. Let's get on the bill and have an open, robust debate and whatever the outcome of that debate, we will get something passed. We will get it to the President, and we will make sure we keep this Department funded.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEE

RAMIRO GARZA, JR.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, here in Congress, as the Presiding Officer knows, we do a lot of oversight. Oversight is focused on what is going right as well as what is going wrong in our government. There is a lot of each, actually. That oversight is critically important work. It is sometimes overlooked, but critically important.

I think it is also important to stop and recognize where things are going right from time to time and the people who are doing the right thing. Following in the footsteps of one of our former colleagues here—I don't think the Presiding Officer ever had a chance to work with him, but Ted Kaufman was a Senator who served here for 2 years. He succeeded JOE BIDEN who went off to do some other job—Vice President, maybe that is what it is. And then, before Senator CHRIS COONS was elected 2 years later, Ted Kaufman was our Senator, a great guy. He used to be Senator BIDEN's chief of staff for 20 years or so.

Ted used to come to the floor pretty regularly and talk about different Federal employees who are doing exemplary work; people who had gone above and beyond to achieve the mission of solving problems and giving the U.S. taxpayer something to be proud of.

When somebody has a good idea, I like to steal it, and I think Ted Kaufman had a great idea. I have not really stolen it, but we have taken an idea and we have focused it a little bit, to focus on some of the people the Presiding Officer and I, along with Senator RON JOHNSON, met with this last weekend on the U.S. border with Mexico. I have decided to take the Ted Kaufman idea and focus it, put a spotlight on a number of employees within the Department of Homeland Security.

As many of us know, the Department of Homeland Security, which does important work—sometimes heroic work, dangerous work—they suffer from low morale, but it is filled with men and women who, frankly, deserve, I think, in many cases, a lot more credit than they receive.

Today I wish to speak for the next several minutes about one of the people we met, a fellow whose name I think the Presiding Officer will probably remember. His name is Ramiro Garza, Jr., and he goes by Ram. I think he has probably gone by Ram all his life. I will always remember him as Ram. He is an outstanding Border Patrol officer whom we met last week in McAllen, TX, while we were visiting the Mexican border in South Texas—the three of us, the Presiding Officer, Senator RON JOHNSON, and yours truly.

This is Ram. Some of my colleagues may remember the pictures last summer, when an unprecedented surge of Central American children and families arrived at our Texas border. They are the kind of pictures that really burn into our memories for a lot of us. The pictures we are more used to seeing may be from war zones than to see here in our own country, with hundreds upon hundreds of unaccompanied minors and a lot of mothers with young children in search of protection, literally turning themselves in to our Border Patrol agents; not running away from them, but turning themselves in and asking for asylum.

The Rio Grande Valley in South Texas is where Agent Ram Garza works. Ram is the acting patrol agent in charge of the Rio Grande Valley sector of the U.S. Border Patrol. The Rio Grande Valley where Ram works is the epicenter of that humanitarian crisis we witnessed last year. That is because most of the migrants were from the northern triangle of Central America, and they were fleeing violence, fleeing economic desperation, and fleeing a sense of hopelessness in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

These migrants had to travel some 1,500 miles through Mexico, risking life and limb to get to the United States. The shortest route—though by no means an easy one—runs up the east side of Mexico from Central America to the South Texas border, and many of the people who are making that 1,500 mile trek did it on top of a train. In fact, they did it on a series of trains—freight trains, not passenger trains—where people actually get on top of the trains and try to hold on for a 1,500 mile trip. Some of them succeeded and some of them didn't. Some of them fell down between the trains and cars and lost their lives. Some made it to the border. Some fell off the train. Some got hurt. Some got on another train. Some didn't make it. But many of them rode on top of those trains to get here, and they suffered violence. If they made it safely on the train, a lot of them suffered violence at the hands of predatory gangs along the way.

When these children showed up in South Texas, they literally overwhelmed the Border Patrol stations along the border. These stations are only supposed to hold detained migrants for a short period of time as they are processed for removal back to where they came from, or for deten-

tion. Usually along the border, they deal with the young men. However, last year stations were packed with mothers and young children who were trapped there for days as our government struggled to find suitable shelters and decide what to do with them. There were no adequate meals, no clothing, no diapers. There is literally no room at times for someone to lie down, either.

Faced with this human crisis, Customs and Border Protection agents sprang to action. Among their leaders was our agent here today whom I especially want to put a spotlight on: Ramiro Garza. With the help of his colleagues, Ram went above and beyond to process the arrivals, according to the law, while also responding to the human needs of these people. Agent Garza helped create an emergency operations center to manage the crisis and worked to transfer unaccompanied children to the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Perhaps most impressive, though, he worked with his colleagues to convert an enormous abandoned warehouse that we visited in McAllen, TX. I will not soon forget that. It is just a few miles from our border with Mexico. He turned it into a processing center for detained migrants and they did it in 18 days. They looked at a place—and they described what it was like before they started working on it, and then what they did in 19 days, they did pretty remarkable stuff. And Ram, whom we honor especially here today, and those who worked with him deserve our recognition.

This processing center helped greatly relieve the crowded and inadequate conditions in multiple Border Patrol stations along the border. When Senator RON JOHNSON, our Presiding Officer, Senator SASSE, and I visited this past weekend the extraordinary processing center that Agent Garza helped set up, we were amazed to see a cavernous, orderly center equipped with the humanitarian necessities needed for hundreds of children and their parents. The center also had space for Central American officials to work with Customs and Border Protection in order to properly identify migrants and arrange for speedier repatriations, in many cases to their home countries, where appropriate.

Agent Garza was instrumental in designing the processing facility and getting it up and running quickly. Today he is in charge of that facility.

This is just the latest achievement in Agent Garza's career with the Border Patrol. As I said, known most of his life as Ram, he grew up in the Rio Grande Valley. There he attended high school and the University of Texas-Pan American. He joined the Border Patrol in 1996. His first assignment was to the Brownsville station in the Rio Grande sector. In 2004, he was promoted to supervisory Border Patrol agent at the Rio Grande City station. That was followed by tours at the Rio Grande sec-

tor's intelligence office and at Harlingen station.

Agent Garza also worked on detail here in Washington, DC, where his duties included supporting the agency's efforts in biometric collection—something we think is very important. While he is helping to humanely process migrants apprehended at the border, Agent Garza also cares for his own family—his wife and their own two children. We thank them for sharing with us their husband and their dad—a very good man.

The Department of Homeland Security and our Nation are truly blessed by Ram's exemplary service.

Agent Garza, if you are out there listening, we want to thank you for what you do each and every day for all of us. We thank you for your tireless service to our Nation for all of these years.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. CARPER. As the Presiding Officer, along with Senator JOHNSON and myself, met the men and women of the Border Patrol last weekend, including Agent Garza, we heard about their work, and it is hard to ignore the fact that they might not know if they will be getting a paycheck next month when the continuing resolution which funds the Department of Homeland Security expires in actually about 2 weeks, on February 27.

Many of them don't know if they will be able to obtain the technology or supplies they need to do the jobs as effectively as possible either. This is not the way we would want to be treated if we were in their shoes, but it is how I think we are treating the men and women who work around the clock to protect our borders and to keep our Nation safe and secure. Those of us here in Congress can change that, and I think we should.

Two of our colleagues—Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN of New Hampshire and BARBARA MIKULSKI of Maryland—have introduced a clean appropriations bill that would fund the Department of Homeland Security for the balance of the fiscal year, up through the end of September. Overall, the funding provisions in their bill, S. 272, which I understand both Democrats and Republicans on the Appropriations Committee agreed to in December—just 2 months ago—provide just under \$40 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Homeland Security for the remainder of the fiscal year. I think that is an increase from year to year of about \$400 million. It sounds like a lot of money. It is about a 1-percent increase above 2014 funding. This bill would ensure that Department employees get their paychecks on time and have the resources they need to best meet the Department's critical mission and the security needs of our Nation.

The clean bill put forward by Senators SHAHEEN and MIKULSKI would

take additional measures to secure order and enforce our immigration laws—something that I know is a priority to me and I know to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle. In fact, most of the funding increase in the Shaheen-Mikulski bill would go to border security and immigration enforcement.

The bill our colleagues have put forward contains a little more than \$10 million for Customs and Border Protection—an increase of approximately \$118 million above last year's enacted level. This funding level would support the largest operational force levels for the agency in its history—a total of more than 21,000 Border Patrol agents and nearly 24,000 enforcement officers.

But if the Department of Homeland Security remains on a continuing resolution—or worse, shuts down—we just won't be as effective as we ought to be in securing our Nation's borders. If Congress forces a shutdown of the Department—I hope we won't—frontline personnel would be asked to continue to work without pay. We met some of them just a few days ago when we were on the border. They don't look like fast boats, but they move pretty good. We went zipping up and down the Rio Grande River looking for people trying to slip across the border, looking for folks who were trying to bring contraband—drugs, illegal drugs—across the border.

There are some 40,000 Customs and Border Protection officers who are needed to keep our borders secure. If we allow the funding for the Department to lapse on February 27, we are going to expect these guys and gals to still come to work. We are not going to pay them, at least not in a timely way.

If Congress continues to keep the Department on a continuing resolution, Immigration and Customs Enforcement will see a shortfall—I am told a little over half a billion dollars—to respond to unaccompanied minors and families with children.

In addition, Customs and Border Protection won't be able to replace or upgrade border surveillance technology, including upgrades to obsolete remote and mobile video surveillance systems in the high-risk area of the Rio Grande Valley.

The drone is a pilotless aircraft. We fly aircraft similar to these all over the planet. We fly a number of them along the border of our country with Mexico in an effort to try to see, visualize, and detect people making their way to our border, maybe just to come across, maybe to flee a bad situation in their own country. Maybe it is to bring drugs or other things that are illegal into our country. We are not going to be able to replace or upgrade this kind of technology and bring it to high-risk areas along the Rio Grande Valley.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson recently said—I want to quote Secretary Johnson just briefly. He said, “Border security is not free. The men and women of [the De-

partment of Homeland Security] need a partner in Congress to fund their efforts.” He added, “Time is running out.” Those were his words. I couldn't agree with him more.

In the next week or so, I pray that those of us in Congress will come together and will do what I believe is the right thing; that is, support the passage of a clean full-year appropriations bill for the remainder of this fiscal year for the Department of Homeland Security and do it by February 27.

After we have done that, for God's sake, let's get to work on crafting thoughtful, comprehensive, bipartisan immigration reform law for our country, one that better secures our borders, one that strengthens our economy, and one that reduces our budget deficit over the next two decades by hundreds of billions of dollars. That is what we ought to do. I would pledge here today to my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, one or two Independents, and our Presiding Officer, that we will meet you in the middle and do our dead level best to make sure we meet our responsibilities.

With that, I am looking for others on the floor who may want to speak. I don't see anybody.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO DEPARTING STAFFERS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I would like to pay tribute to two of the hardest working staffers in the Senate: John Ashbrook and Russell Coleman.

RUSSELL COLEMAN

First, there is Russell, a dyed-in-the-wool Kentuckian. He is a huge Wildcats fan. The only words one associates with Russell more often than “affable” are these two: “persuasive” and “determined.” When Russell sets his mind to something, there is not much you can do to stop him—not that you would want to because he is one of the friendliest guys you will ever meet. More than a few times, you will see a group entering a meeting with Russell, spoiling for a fight. Then the door opens, and they are his best friends. It is quite a skill. It is nearly as impressive as this one: Russell Coleman knows just about everybody in Kentucky. His Rolodex is something to behold.

He has done a lot of great work here in the Senate. This one-time FBI agent is passionate about law-enforcement issues. This one-time intern is passionate about mentoring others, letting those around him know, no matter how junior, that their contributions do matter.

Russell is also a great fighter. That tough will has helped Russell push through adversity with grace and with grit. Faith is a big part of Russell's life too. It is something he shares with Chaplain Black every Friday in Bible study.

Russell is ready to share more of himself, too, with his family, his wife Ashley and his children, Annie and Clay. They are all making the move back to Louisville. They will have a lot more time together, and I know they and Russell couldn't be happier.

So congratulations, Russell, and thanks for your service.

JOHN ASHBROOK

Let me tell you about John Ashbrook. John has been with me since I first became Republican leader. He was a fresh-faced kid back then, a young guy from Cincinnati who wanted nothing more than to work in the White House. I am grateful he chose to work for me instead. I am grateful John was willing to transfer his allegiance across the Ohio River for the past 8 years because John Ashbrook is easy-mannered, matched with unbending will. You don't see that very often. He has been an important player on our staff not only for his professionalism but for his character too.

John is known around the Capitol as a founding member of the Senate Republican Communications Center. With John's help, it has been a real success.

The Capitol is going to be a different place without John's laughter echoing in the corridors. Every reporter knows his name. Every member of my staff knows his smile. It is pretty hard to miss.

John, muffin in hand, is usually the first guy in every morning. Many hours later, he is often the last one out. I appreciate it deeply.

I know John's wife Kate takes a somewhat different view. I can't blame her. Kate is ready for dinners without John's Blackberry at the table, and John is ready to spend more time with his three beautiful daughters—Margaret, Abigail, and Charlotte, all born during his service here. John's daughters and Kate mean everything to him, and I couldn't be happier that John will be seeing more of all of them very soon.

CELEBRATING THE 206TH ANNIVERSARY OF PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate one of the most admired, well-known Americans and Presidents this great Nation has ever seen. Just 56 years ago, Carl Sandburg addressed a joint session of Congress and remarked about him: “Not often in the story of mankind does a man arrive on Earth who is both steel and velvet, who is as hard as rock and soft as drifting fog, who holds in his heart and mind the paradox of terrible storm and peace unspeakable and perfect.”

Those words echo today, as it marks the arrival as the 206th anniversary of

President Abraham Lincoln's birth. Born on February 12, 1809, Lincoln had humble beginnings in Kentucky and Indiana before moving to Illinois as a young adult. He began his journey into politics there, serving in the State legislature, the U.S. House of Representatives, and eventually as U.S. President.

As President, he led our Nation through its most perilous times, successfully ended slavery, and saved the Union. His contributions were timeless as he paved the way for America to appreciate the true meaning of freedom, opportunity, and equality. We have come a long way since his time and continue to work towards the America that President Lincoln envisioned.

Every day we are reminded of President Lincoln's contributions. Symbols of him are found anywhere you go—whether it be on the face of the penny or the monument down the street. We can and should preserve these reminders of his work and his ideals of freedom, opportunity, and equality for generations to come.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the 206th birthday of the 16th President of the United States, as well as the penny that honors his name. Hailing from the Land of Lincoln, I have long celebrated the life and legacy of President Abraham Lincoln.

For more than 100 years, Abraham Lincoln has been the face of the penny. Lincoln was the first person to appear on an American coin, and the Lincoln penny is the longest used design of any American coin.

For generations of Americans, the penny has served as a memorial to the first President assassinated in office. It is a reminder of the liberation of the African slaves and of the brutal Civil War that threatened to end the American experiment.

Different versions of the penny have been produced throughout the years. In 1959, the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, a representation of the Lincoln Memorial was put on the reverse side of the coin. To honor Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday, four new penny designs were released. One reflects a log cabin, similar to the one in Kentucky where Lincoln was born. The second features Lincoln reading a book with an axe by his foot, showing his formative years and self-education in Indiana. The third penny shows Lincoln speaking in front of the State capitol in Springfield, representing his professional life as legislator from Illinois. Finally, the fourth design features a half-finished Capitol dome during the Civil War to represent his Presidency. The newest reverse design depicts a Union shield with a scroll and carries the words "Preservation of the Union" marking what is seen as Lincoln's greatest achievement.

The Lincoln penny is the most common and most highly circulated coin in the United States. The penny significantly contributes to the U.S. economy, especially in charitable contribu-

tions. Tens of millions of pennies have been donated to charities over the past decade.

It may be the lowest coin denomination, but the penny carries a lot of weight in terms of our Illinois and American history, culture, and society. It is an intrinsic part of the American experience and represents the opportunity that many believe is inherent in the American dream.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in accordance with rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I submit the rules governing the procedure of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for publication in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

I ask unanimous consent that they be printed in the RECORD.

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

RULES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES GENERAL RULES

Rule 1. The Standing Rules of the Senate, as supplemented by these rules, are adopted as the rules of the Committee and its Subcommittees.

MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 2. (a) The Committee shall meet on the third Thursday of each month while the Congress is in session for the purpose of conducting business, unless, for the convenience of Members, the Chairman shall set some other day for a meeting. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairman as he may deem necessary.

(b) Hearings of any Subcommittee may be called by the Chairman of such Subcommittee. Provided, That no Subcommittee hearing other than a field hearing, shall be scheduled or held concurrently with a full Committee meeting or hearing, unless a majority of the Committee concurs in such concurrent hearing.

OPEN HEARINGS AND MEETINGS

Rule 3. (a) All hearings and business meetings of the Committee and all the hearings of any of its Subcommittees shall be open to the public unless the Committee or Subcommittee involved, by majority vote of all the Members of the Committee or such Subcommittee, orders the hearing or meeting to be closed in accordance with paragraph 5(b) of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

(b) A transcript shall be kept of each hearing of the Committee or any Subcommittee.

(c) A transcript shall be kept of each business meeting of the Committee unless a majority of all the Members of the Committee agrees that some other form of permanent record is preferable.

HEARING PROCEDURE

Rule 4. (a) Public notice shall be given of the date, place, and subject matter of any hearing to be held by the Committee or any Subcommittee at least one week in advance of such hearing unless the Chairman of the full Committee or the Subcommittee involved determines that the hearing is non-controversial or that special circumstances require expedited procedures and a majority

of all the Members of the Committee or the Subcommittee involved concurs. In no case shall a hearing be conducted with less than twenty-four hours' notice. Any document or report that is the subject of a hearing shall be provided to every Member of the Committee or Subcommittee involved at least 72 hours before the hearing unless the Chairman and Ranking Member determine otherwise.

(b) Each witness who is to appear before the Committee or any Subcommittee shall file with the Committee or Subcommittee, at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing, a written statement of his or her testimony in as many copies as the Chairman of the Committee or Subcommittee prescribes.

(c) Each Member shall be limited to five minutes in the questioning of any witness until such time as all Members who so desire have had an opportunity to question the witness.

(d) The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or Subcommittee or the Ranking Majority and Minority Members present at the hearing may each appoint one Committee staff member to question each witness. Such staff member may question the witness only after all Members present have completed their questioning of the witness or at such other time as the Chairman and the Ranking Majority and Minority Members present may agree. No staff member may question a witness in the absence of a quorum for the taking of testimony.

BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

Rule 5. (a) A legislative measure, nomination, or other matter shall be included on the agenda of the next following business meeting of the full Committee if a written request by a Member of the Committee for such inclusion has been filed with the Chairman of the Committee at least one week prior to such meeting. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to limit the authority of the Chairman of the Committee to include a legislative measure, nomination, or other matter on the Committee agenda in the absence of such request.

(b) The agenda for any business meeting of the Committee shall be provided to each Member and made available to the public at least three days prior to such meeting, and no new items may be added after the agenda is so published except by the approval of a majority of all the Members of the Committee on matters not included on the public agenda. The Staff Director shall promptly notify absent Members of any action taken by the Committee on matters not included on the published agenda.

QUORUMS

Rule 6. (a) Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c), eight Members shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business of the Committee.

(b) No measure or matter shall be ordered reported from the Committee unless twelve Members of the Committee are actually present at the time such action is taken.

(c) One Member shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting a hearing or taking testimony on any measure or matter before the Committee or any Subcommittee.

VOTING

Rule 7. (a) A rollcall of the Members shall be taken upon the request of any Member. Any Member who does not vote on any rollcall at the time the roll is called, may vote (in person or by proxy) on that rollcall at any later time during the same business meeting.

(b) Proxy voting shall be permitted on all matters, except that proxies may not be counted for the purpose of determining the

presence of a quorum. Unless further limited, a proxy shall be exercised only upon the date for which it is given and upon the items published in the agenda for that date.

(c) Each Committee report shall set forth the vote on the motion to report the measure or matter involved. Unless the Committee directs otherwise, the report will not set out any votes on amendments offered during Committee consideration. Any Member who did not vote on any rollcall shall have the opportunity to have his position recorded in the appropriate Committee record or Committee report.

(d) The Committee vote to report a measure to the Senate shall also authorize the staff of the Committee to make necessary technical and clerical corrections in the measure.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Rule 8. (a) The number of Members assigned to each Subcommittee and the division between Majority and Minority Members shall be fixed by the Chairman in consultation with the Ranking Minority Member.

(b) Assignment of Members to Subcommittees shall, insofar as possible, reflect the preferences of the Members. No Member will receive assignment to a second Subcommittee until, in order of seniority, all Members of the Committee have chosen assignments to one Subcommittee, and no Member shall receive assignment to a third Subcommittee until, in order of seniority, all Members have chosen assignments to two Subcommittees.

(c) Any Member of the Committee may sit with any Subcommittee during its hearings but shall not have the authority to vote on any matters before the Subcommittee unless he is a Member of such Subcommittee.

NOMINATIONS

Rule 9. At any hearing to confirm a Presidential nomination, the testimony of the nominee and, at the request of any Member, any other witness shall be under oath. Every nominee shall submit the financial disclosure report filed pursuant to title I of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978. Such report is made available to the public.

INVESTIGATIONS

Rule 10. (a) Neither the Committee nor any of its Subcommittees may undertake an investigation unless specifically authorized by the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member or a majority of all the Members of the Committee.

(b) A witness called to testify in an investigation shall be informed of the matter or matters under investigation, given a copy of these rules, given the opportunity to make a brief and relevant oral statement before or after questioning, and be permitted to have counsel of his or her choosing present during his or her testimony at any public or closed hearing, or at any unsworn interview, to advise the witness of his or her legal rights.

(c) For purposes of this rule, the terms "investigation" shall not include a review or study undertaken pursuant to paragraph 8 of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate or a preliminary inquiry, undertaken at the direction of the Chairman or the Ranking Member, intended to determine whether there is substantial credible evidence that would warrant an investigation.

SWORN TESTIMONY

Rule 11. Witnesses in Committee or Subcommittee hearings may be required to give testimony under oath whenever the Chairman or Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or Subcommittee deems such to be necessary. If one or more witnesses at a hearing are required to testify under oath, all witnesses at such hearing shall be required to testify under oath.

SUBPOENAS

Rule 12. The Chairman shall have authority to issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses or the production of memoranda, documents, records, or other materials (1) with the agreement of the Ranking Minority Member, (2) when authorized by a majority of all the Members of the Committee, or (3) when within the scope of an investigation authorized under Rule 10(a).

CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY

Rule 13. No confidential testimony taken by or any report of the proceedings of a closed Committee or Subcommittee meeting shall be made public, in whole or in part or by way of summary, unless authorized by a majority of all the Members of the Committee at a business meeting called for the purpose of making such a determination.

DEFAMATORY STATEMENTS

Rule 14. Any person whose name is mentioned or who is specifically identified in, or who believes that testimony or other evidence presented at, an open Committee or Subcommittee hearing tends to defame him or otherwise adversely affect his reputation may file with the Committee for its consideration and action a sworn statement of facts relevant to such testimony or evidence.

BROADCASTING OF HEARINGS OR MEETINGS

Rule 15. Any meeting or hearing by the Committee or any Subcommittee which is open to the public may be covered in whole or in part by web, television, or radio broadcast or still photography. Photographers and reporters using mechanical recording, filming, or broadcasting devices shall position their equipment so as not to interfere with the seating, vision, and hearing of Members and staff on the dais or with the orderly process of the meeting or hearing.

AMENDING THE RULES

Rule 16. These rules may be amended only by vote of a majority of all the Members of the Committee in a business meeting of the Committee: Provided, That no vote may be taken on any proposed amendment unless such amendment is reproduced in full in the Committee agenda for such meeting at least three days in advance of such meeting.

REEMERGENCE OF VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES: EXPLORING THE PUBLIC HEALTH SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my remarks at the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing earlier this week be printed in the RECORD.

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

REEMERGENCE OF VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES: EXPLORING THE PUBLIC HEALTH SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

From smallpox to polio, we have learned in the United States that vaccines save lives. And yet a troubling number of parents are not vaccinating their children.

Last September this committee held a hearing about the Ebola virus. Our witnesses included a brave physician, Dr. Kent Brantly, who worked in Liberia; and a brave father in Sierra Leone who came to warn us about how rapidly the virus was spreading. The number of people being infected with Ebola was doubling every three weeks, and many of those infected were dying—because for Ebola there was and is no cure, and there was and is no vaccine.

This produced a near panic in the U.S.—it changed procedures in nearly every hospital and clinic. In response, Congress appropriated more than \$5 billion to fight the spread of the virus. The impact of efforts to fight Ebola is that the number of Ebola cases is declining.

At the same time, here in the U.S. we are now experiencing a large outbreak of a disease for which we do have a vaccine. Measles used to sicken up to 4 million Americans each year and many believed that it was an unpreventable childhood illness—but the introduction of a vaccine in 1963 changed everything. Measles was declared eliminated—meaning absence of continuous disease transmission for greater than 12 months—from the United States in 2000. From 2001 to 2012, the median yearly number of measles cases reported in all of the U.S. was 60.

Today is February 10, 2015. It is the 41st day of the year and we already have seen more cases of measles than we would in a typical year. One measles outbreak—in Palatine, Illinois, a suburb about a half hour from Chicago—has affected at least five babies, all less than a year old.

Infants and individuals who are immunocompromised are traditionally protected by what is called herd immunity—the people around them are vaccinated, so they don't get sick, and that keeps the babies and others who can't get vaccinated from getting sick. That herd immunity is incredibly important. Measles can cause life-threatening complications in children, such as pneumonia or swelling of the brain.

Our witnesses today will talk more not just about what is causing this outbreak, but why some parents are choosing not to vaccinate their children. Measles is only one example. This hearing which was planned before the measles outbreak reminded us of the importance of vaccines. An analysis of immunization rates across 13 states performed by USA Today found the following:

"Hundreds of thousands of students attend schools—ranging from small, private academies in New York City to large public elementary schools outside Boston to Native American reservation schools in Idaho—where vaccination rates have dropped precipitously low, sometimes under 50%."

California is one of the 20 states that allow parents to claim personal belief exemptions from vaccination requirements. In some areas of Los Angeles, 60 to 70 percent of parents at certain schools have filed a personal belief exemption. In those elementary schools, vaccination rates are as low as those in Chad or South Sudan.

The purpose of this hearing is to examine what is standing between healthy children and deadly diseases. It ought to be vaccinations. But too many parents are turning away from sound science.

Sound science is this: Vaccines save lives. They save the lives of the people who are vaccinated. They protect the lives of the vulnerable around them—like infants and those who are ill.

Vaccines save lives. They protect us from the ravages of awful diseases like polio, which invades the nervous system and can cause paralysis. I can remember as a child how parents were frightened by the prospect of polio for their child. I had classmates who lived in iron lungs. Our Majority Leader, Senator MCCONNELL, contracted polio as a child. Or whooping cough, which causes thick mucus to accumulate in the airways and can make it difficult for infants to breathe. Or, diphtheria, a bacterial infection that affects the mucous membranes of your nose and throat and can, in advanced stages, damage your heart, kidneys and nervous system.

We have learned that vaccines save lives. They take deadly, awful, ravaging diseases

from horror to history. So it is troubling to hear that before we've even reached Valentine's Day this year, 121 Americans are sick with measles, a disease eliminated in the U.S. 15 years ago. It is troubling that a growing number of parents are not following the recommendations doctors and public health professionals have been making for decades. At a time when we are standing on the cusp of medical breakthroughs never imagined—cutting-edge personalized medicine tailored to an individual's genome—we find ourselves retreading old ground.

WOODSTOCK, MAINE BICENTENNIAL

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President. I wish to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Town of Woodstock, ME. Known today as a gateway to the rugged and beautiful Western Maine Mountains, Woodstock was built with a spirit of determination and resiliency that still guides the community today.

Woodstock's incorporation on Feb. 7, 1815, was but one milestone on a long journey of progress. For thousands of years, the banks of the Androscoggin River and its tributaries were the hunting grounds of the Abenaki Tribe. One of the legends that attests to the friendship that developed between the Native Americans and the first European settler concerns the Abenaki Princess Mollyocket, a woman with great spirit and knowledge of healing. A few years before the town was incorporated, she was called to the small settlement of Trap Corner to attend to a seriously ill infant. She nursed the baby back to health and pronounced that he would grow to greatness. Mollyocket's patient was Hannibal Hamlin, who became Abraham Lincoln's first Vice President.

Settlement began in 1787, when 10 lots of 100 acres each were surveyed. The early settlers at what was called The Thousand Acre Squadron were drawn by fertile soil, vast forests, and fast-moving waters, which they turned into productive farms and busy mills. The wealth produced by the land and by hard work and determination was invested in schools and churches to create a true community. In 1815, 5 years before Maine statehood, the settlers' petition for incorporation to the Governor of Massachusetts was readily signed, although, for reasons lost to history, he rejected the proposed name of Sparta and chose Woodstock instead.

The main population center of Woodstock is the Village of Bryant Pond, known for its beauty, recreation opportunities, and hospitality. Bryant Pond also is home to a 14-foot tall, 3,000-pound statue of an old-fashioned, hand-cranked telephone, the kind that had a human operator on the other end, to memorialize the town's distinction as the last place in the United States to use these devices. The townspeople finally gave up their hand-cranked telephones in 1983, but they retain their fondness for the personal touch.

Woodstock is a charming town of involved citizens. The active historical

society, volunteer fire department, and library are evidence of a strong community spirit. That spirit will be on full display this June, when Woodstock holds its Great Bicentennial Celebration.

This 200th anniversary is not just about something that is measured in calendar years; it is about human accomplishment, an occasion to celebrate the people who for more than two centuries have pulled together, cared for one another, and built a community. Thanks to those who came before, Woodstock has a wonderful history. Thanks to those who are there today, it has a bright future.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING CORPORAL C.G. BOLDEN

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, on February 21, 2015, the city of Clinton, AR will gather for a memorial service for Corporal C.G. Bolden who was killed in action in Korea in 1951.

The service will coincide with the return of his remains for proper burial, over 60 years after he left Clinton to fight in the Korean war.

As a member of the Army Reserve, Corporal Bolden was called upon to serve shortly after the Korean war started. He had been in theater for only a few months when his family back in Clinton received a telegram with terrible news; Corporal Bolden was missing in action.

For the next 64 years, his wife, Geraldine Johnson, would await his return. In the days and months following that telegram, Geraldine would check the paper for news and sneak off to a quiet place to pray for her husband's return.

Corporal Bolden—a light weapons infantryman in Company C, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division—was taken prisoner by the enemy on January 5, 1951 and died as a prisoner of war on April 30, 1951.

Last month, upon learning his remains had been positively identified, Geraldine recounted to KARK news in Little Rock how her husband would often appear in her dreams over the six decades. "Those dreams would say he is coming home this time, this is really it," she told the reporter.

Corporal Bolden was just 22 years old when he was captured while fighting the enemy in South Korea. He was marched to a prison camp just south of Pyongyang in what his wife told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette she heard was "the coldest weather there ever was."

About 15 years ago, the military asked for and obtained DNA from Corporal Bolden's remaining siblings to aid in efforts to identify his remains. Last December, the Army contacted Geraldine to notify her of a DNA match. Corporal Bolden became the fifth Arkansan who had disappeared during the Korean war to be identified.

Corporal Bolden was posthumously awarded the Prisoner of War Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Service Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, United Nations Service Medal, Republic of Korea War Service Medal, and Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation.

I am grateful that after all these years Corporal Bolden will finally be reunited with his wife, son, and other family members. I appreciate the work of those at the Joint Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Command who helped identify Corporal Bolden. Most of all, we are grateful for Corporal Bolden's service.●

CONGRATULATING UNLV'S LEE BUSINESS SCHOOL

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate the Lee Business School of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, UNLV, for receiving top honors at the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, AICPA, Accounting Competition. UNLV's Accounting REBEL-ation team included Annegenelle Figueroa, Kayla Shim, Brett Sebastian, and Kevin Curry. The students won a total of \$5,000 to benefit the school's accounting department, a contribution that will help future students for years to come.

The annual AICPA Competition assesses students' capabilities in making decisions on management, operations, finance, and strategy. This year's competition drew 140 teams to represent schools across the country and required the students to create a cost-accounting system for a fictional business called Humble Pies, Inc. The UNLV accounting team worked over a 3-month period before advancing to the finals and presenting its ideas to a panel of accounting executives. Teams were judged based upon persuasiveness, technical detail, and creativity. The students representing UNLV were specifically applauded for their real-world business application. These Nevada students are shining examples of how hard work and dedication lead to success and stand as role models for future Rebels.

I am excited to see local students bringing recognition to both Nevada and to UNLV for their advancement in a national competition. The Lee Business School should be proud to call itself a top contender in a competitive environment. I ask my colleagues to join me and all Nevadans in congratulating these students from UNLV's Lee Business School for their unwavering effort and honorable representation of Nevada.●

CONGRATULATING MOUNTAIN RIDGE LITTLE LEAGUE ALL- STAR TEAM

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, I wish to congratulate the Mountain Ridge Little League team from Las Vegas for receiving first place in the

Little League World Series U.S. Championships. This series began back in 1947 and for the first time, in 2014, a team from Nevada represented the greatest Little League team in the Nation. Today, I would like to honor the players and coaches for their tireless efforts in reaching their goals and for representing Nevada with integrity and hard work.

The Mountain Ridge team, with players aged 12 to 13 years old, entered the Little League World Series U.S. Championship game with a 16-0 record in four tournaments, outscoring opponents 184-29. The team showed its true dedication to the State by traveling for weeks, spending time away from family and friends. Its journey began at the Western Regionals Competition on August 1 in San Bernardino, CA, and ended on August 25, after competing in the Little League World Series U.S. Championship game. Austin Kryszczuk, most noted for his batting skills, was labeled best player in the Little League World Series U.S. Championships.

All of the players are role models for future generations of Nevada baseball, and the coaches serve as shining examples of leadership. The Mountain Ridge Little League team's accomplishment should be noted as a special moment to Nevada, after being called the second-most successful sports team in Las Vegas' history after the University of Nevada, Las Vegas' men's basketball national championship team in 1990. This team did more for Nevada than just represent the State on the field. It revealed the strong community that Nevada has to offer with many groups of friends and families coming together to watch the games.

I am excited to see local athletes bringing recognition to Nevada and the Las Vegas community. The Mountain Ridge Little League team should be proud to call itself the top baseball team in the country. I ask my colleagues to join me and all Nevadans in congratulating this team from northwest Las Vegas for their unwavering dedication and honorable representation of Nevada.●

RECOGNIZING LANDRY VINEYARDS

● Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, small businesses have the unique ability to seamlessly fill a niche in their local communities. In many cases, this means they offer a service or product that is completely unique to the region. As Valentine's Day and Mardi Gras quickly approach, I would like to honor a small business that is not often associated with the State of Louisiana—a beautiful vineyard and winery. This week's Small Business of the Week is Landry Vineyards and Winery of West Monroe, LA.

In 1999 with the help of their family and close friends, Jeff and Libby Landry decided to pursue their dream of owning and operating a vineyard. The Landry family started their busi-

ness by planting Blanc Du Bois grapes on their 2 acres in Folsom, LA. Four years later, they were licensed as a Louisiana Native Winery, which allowed their wines to be shipped and sold across the State. After the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, however, the Landrys moved their enterprise to higher ground in the hill country of West Monroe. Today, the wines produced at Landry Vineyards are available in over 300 stores throughout Louisiana and can be purchased across the country by simply visiting their Web site.

The Landry family has created an experience for locals and out-of-towners that is well worth the trip. Daily tours of the vineyards are available for small groups on golf carts, and tractor drawn wagons are used for the larger groups. The winery also provides free wine tastings in the nearby tasting room, and guests are encouraged to bring picnic lunches to enjoy on the winery grounds. Each year the winery hosts an outdoor music concert series that caters to families with local bands who perform in all genres like Cajun, funk, and country blues. The 20-acre property also serves as a popular destination for public and private events, including weddings.

In the last 15 years, Landry Vineyards has thrived despite any obstacles—whether it is a natural disaster or burdensome regulations—in its way. As I work to make sure the voices and concerns of small business owners across the country are heard in Washington, the history and success of Landry Vineyards serve as an inspiring reminder of what is worth fighting for. Congratulations to Landry Vineyards and Winery for being selected as this week's Small Business of the Week.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:56 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1. An act to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, in

which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 431. An act to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March in March of 1965, which served as a catalyst for the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 431. An act to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March in March of 1965, which served as a catalyst for the Voting Rights Act of 1965; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 720. An act to improve intergovernmental planning for and communication during security incidents at domestic airports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. HATCH, from the Committee on Finance, without amendment:

H.R. 22. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Rept. No. 114-3).

By Mr. BLUNT, from the Committee on Rules and Administration, without amendment:

S. Res. 73. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015, October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016, and October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Daniel Henry Marti, of Virginia, to be Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, Executive Office of the President.

(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. THUNE (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. SCOTT, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 470. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt certain educational institutions from the employer health insurance mandate, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 471. A bill to improve the provision of health care for women veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. REID):

S. 472. A bill to promote conservation, improve public land, and provide for sensible development in Douglas County, Nevada, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. UDALL:

S. 473. A bill to implement programs and activities to raise children up out of poverty and save the next generation; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 474. A bill to require State educational agencies that receive funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to have in effect policies and procedures on background checks for school employees; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. COATS, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HELLER, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 475. A bill to reform the Federal sugar program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

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

S. 476. A bill to recruit, support, and prepare principals to improve student academic achievement at eligible schools; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 477. A bill to terminate Operation Choke Point; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 478. A bill to promote career readiness indicators and career counseling for students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. FISCHER:

S. 479. A bill to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Chief Standing Bear National Historic Trail, and other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SCHUMER, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 480. A bill to amend and reauthorize the controlled substance monitoring program under section 399O of the Public Health Service Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 481. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to drug scheduling recommendations by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and with respect to registration of manufacturers and distributors seeking to conduct clinical testing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

S. 482. A bill to increase from \$10,000,000,000 to \$50,000,000,000 the threshold figure at which regulated depository institutions are subject to direct examination and reporting requirements of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 483. A bill to improve enforcement efforts related to prescription drug diversion and abuse, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 484. A bill to protect all patients by prohibiting the use of data obtained from comparative effectiveness research to deny or delay coverage of items or services under Federal health care programs and to ensure that comparative effectiveness research accounts for advancements in personalized medicine and differences in patient treatment response; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. COTTON):

S. 485. A bill to prohibit the use of eminent domain in carrying out certain projects; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 486. A bill to amend the Head Start Act to ensure that all children in Head Start and Early Head Start programs are vaccinated, and allow exemptions only for children with underlying medical conditions, for whom vaccines are therefore medically contraindicated; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 487. A bill to amend the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to allow the rebuilding, without elevation, of certain structures that are located in areas having special flood hazards and are substantially damaged by fire, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 488. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 489. A bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to increase the maximum value of articles that may be imported duty-free by one person on one day; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEE, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. COTTON):

S. 490. A bill to achieve domestic energy independence by empowering States to control the development and production of all forms of energy on all available Federal land; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. ENZI, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 491. A bill to lift the trade embargo on Cuba; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 492. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 in order to improve environmental literacy to better prepare students for postsecondary edu-

cation and careers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. GARDNER, and Mr. COTTON):

S. 493. A bill to reduce a portion of the annual pay of Members of Congress for the failure to adopt a concurrent resolution on the budget which does not provide for a balanced budget, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 494. A bill to authorize the exploration, leasing, development, production, and economically feasible and prudent transportation of oil and gas in and from the Coastal Plain in Alaska; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. ISAKSON:

S. 495. A bill to revoke the charters for the Federal National Mortgage Corporation and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation upon resolution of their obligations, to create a new Mortgage Finance Agency for the securitization of single family and multifamily mortgages, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

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

S. 496. A bill to prohibit the use of any Federal funds to finalize, implement, or enforce the proposed rule entitled "Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. COONS, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 497. A bill to allow Americans to earn paid sick time so that they can address their own health needs and the health needs of their families; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. VITTER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 498. A bill to allow reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. COATS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. SCOTT):

S. 499. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to prevent concurrent receipt of unemployment benefits and Social Security disability insurance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. UDALL, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. LEE, and Mr. HATCH):

S. 500. A bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to require the Secretary of the Interior to convey to a State all right, title, and interest in and to a percentage of the amount of royalties and other amounts required to be paid to the State under that Act with respect to public land and deposits in the State, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 501. A bill to make technical corrections to the Navajo water rights settlement in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PAUL, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. COONS):

S. 502. A bill to focus limited Federal resources on the most serious offenders; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 503. A bill to amend the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act to extend trade preferences for certain articles imported from Haiti and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PETERS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. DONNELLY):

S. 504. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to protect and restore the Great Lakes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. BROWN):

S. 505. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the Health Coverage Tax Credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 506. A bill to amend part B of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to exclude customary prompt pay discounts from manufacturers to wholesalers from the average sales price for drugs and biologicals under Medicare, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. LEE, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. HATCH, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 507. A bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to permit employers to pay higher wages to their employees; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. FLAKE, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 508. A bill to amend the FLAME Act of 2009 to provide for additional wildfire suppression activities, to provide for the conduct of certain forest treatment projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 509. A bill to establish the African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center in New York, New York, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. HELLER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. CORKER, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 510. A bill to require Senate confirmation of Inspector General of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. REED, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. WARREN, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 511. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require that genetically engineered food and foods that contain genetically engineered ingredients to be labeled accordingly; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Mr. HELLER):

S. 512. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to safeguard data stored abroad from improper government access, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 513. A bill for the relief of Esther Karinge; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 514. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to establish the Promise Neighborhoods program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

S. 515. A bill to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to provide relief during fiscal years 2016 and 2017 from the reductions in the discretionary spending limits imposed by sequestration; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 516. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to permit alternate standards and assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. UDALL, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 517. A bill to extend the secure rural schools and community self-determination program, to restore mandatory funding status to the payment in lieu of taxes program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 518. A bill to require States to establish highway stormwater management programs; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. COONS, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 519. A bill to amend the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 to permanently reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 520. A bill to amend the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act to reauthorize the Act; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 521. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of President Station in Baltimore, Maryland, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. REID, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. COONS, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 522. A bill to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. WARNER, Ms. AYOTTE, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 523. A bill to coordinate the provision of energy retrofitting assistance to schools; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. COONS, and Mr. KIRK):

S. 524. A bill to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 525. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.) to reform the Food for Peace Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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

S. 526. A bill to sunset the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force after three years; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BLUNT, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BURR, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SASSE, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. COTTON, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. RISCH, Mr. WICKER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. COATS, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REID, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. REED, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. COONS, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. CARDIN, and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 527. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or in the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March in March of 1965, which served as a catalyst for the Voting Rights Act of 1965; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 528. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 in order to improve the requirements regarding alternate standards and assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

S. 529. A bill to improve the services available to runaway and homeless youth who are victims of trafficking, to improve the response to victims of child sex trafficking, to direct the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking to identify strategies to prevent children from becoming victims of trafficking and review trafficking prevention efforts, to protect and assist in the recovery of victims of trafficking, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. BLUNT:

S. Res. 73. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015, October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016, and October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017; from the Committee on Rules and Administration; placed on the calendar.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. WARNER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. Res. 74. A resolution declaring that achieving the primary goal of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease of the Department of Health and Human Services to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's disease by 2025 is an urgent national priority; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DURBIN (for Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE)):

S. Res. 75. A resolution designating the month of February 2015, as "National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COTTON, Mr. LEE, Mr. HELLER, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. MORAN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. VITTER, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. RISCH, Mr. DAINES, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SASSE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BURR, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. PERDUE, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. COATS, Mr. KIRK, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. ENZI, Mr. PAUL, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. Res. 76. A resolution welcoming the Prime Minister of Israel to the United States for his address to a joint session of Congress; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. BOXER, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. Res. 77. A resolution designating Friday, February 13, 2015, as "\$2.13 Day"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. REID):

S. Res. 78. A resolution relative to the death of Jerry Tarkanian, former head basketball coach of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. Res. 79. A resolution honoring Dean Edwards Smith, former head coach for the men's basketball team for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. REID, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. Res. 80. A resolution recognizing the cultural and historical significance of Lunar New Year; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. Res. 81. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that children trafficked

for sex in the United States should not be treated or regarded as child prostitutes because there is no such thing as a "child prostitute"; only children who are victims or survivors of rape and sex trafficking; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. ALEXANDER, 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. CORKER, 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. 82. A resolution commending Kathleen Alvarez Tritak on her service to the United States Senate; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 30

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 30, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the definition of full-time employee for purposes of the employer mandate in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 139

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 139, a bill to permanently allow an exclusion under the Supplemental Security Income program and the Medicaid program for compensation provided to individuals who participate in clinical trials for rare diseases or conditions.

S. 149

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 149, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

S. 166

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from New York

(Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 166, a bill to stop exploitation through trafficking.

S. 178

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

S. 203

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 203, a bill to restore Americans' individual liberty by striking the Federal mandate to purchase insurance.

S. 223

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 223, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program on awarding grants for provision of furniture, household items, and other assistance to homeless veterans to facilitate their transition into permanent housing, and for other purposes.

S. 239

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 239, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, with respect to apportionments under the Airport Improvement Program, and for other purposes.

S. 255

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 255, a bill to restore the integrity of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 258

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 258, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to remove the 96-hour physician certification requirement for inpatient critical access hospital services.

S. 262

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 262, a bill to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, and for other purposes.

S. 269

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 269, a bill to expand sanctions imposed with respect to Iran and to impose additional sanctions with respect to Iran, and for other purposes.

S. 271

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 271, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to

receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 275

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 275, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of home as a site of care for infusion therapy under the Medicare program.

S. 288

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 288, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to reform the National Labor Relations Board, the Office of the General Counsel, and the process for appellate review, and for other purposes.

S. 301

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 301, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

S. 308

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 308, a bill to reauthorize 21st century community learning centers, and for other purposes.

S. 336

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 336, a bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 entirely.

S. 338

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

S. 347

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 347, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that the individual health insurance mandate not apply until the employer health insurance mandate is enforced without exceptions.

S. 356

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr.

BOOKER) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 356, a bill to improve the provisions relating to the privacy of electronic communications.

S. 373

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 373, a bill to provide for the establishment of nationally uniform and environmentally sound standards governing discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel.

S. 388

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 388, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to require humane treatment of animals by Federal Government facilities.

S. 391

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 391, a bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities.

S. 404

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 404, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit taking minors across State lines in circumvention of laws requiring the involvement of parents in abortion decisions.

S. 409

At the request of Mr. BURR, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) were added as cosponsors of S. 409, a bill to amend the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act to require the Secretary of Defense to inform the Attorney General of persons required to register as sex offenders.

S. 439

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 439, a bill to end discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity in public schools, and for other purposes.

S. 466

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 466, a bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to improve the quality, health outcomes, and value of maternity care under the Medicaid and CHIP programs by developing maternity care quality measures and supporting maternity care quality collaboratives.

S. 467

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 467, a bill to reduce recidivism and increase public safety, and for other purposes.

S. 469

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 469, a bill to improve the reproductive assistance provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to severely wounded, ill, or injured members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their spouses or partners, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 5

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 5, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

S.J. RES. 8

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 8, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures.

S. RES. 52

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 52, a resolution calling for the release of Ukrainian fighter pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who was captured by Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine and has been held illegally in a Russian prison since July 2014.

S. RES. 65

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 65, a resolution supporting efforts to bring an end to violence perpetrated by Boko Haram, and urging the Government of Nigeria to conduct transparent, peaceful, and credible elections.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 478. A bill to promote career readiness indicators and career counseling for students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, preparing all students to be college and career-ready upon graduating high school is one of the central promises that public education and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA, should fulfill. However, career readiness has

all too often taken a back seat to a focus on traditional college preparation. Strong academic skills are essential to college preparation, but it takes much more to be truly ready for a career.

Today many students graduate high schools with little knowledge of the careers available to them and the technical skills needed to meet the demands of the 21st century job market. "Career readiness indicators" are factors that demonstrate a student's preparedness, including both academic and technical knowledge and skills, for postsecondary education and the workforce. By encouraging school districts to track and report on career readiness indicators, States can send a signal to schools, communities, parents, and students that it is critical to be prepared for the workforce regardless of postsecondary education plans. Additionally, it provides public data for employers to help locate their operations in regions with a high-skilled workforce.

This is why I am pleased to introduce with my colleagues, Senator PORTMAN and Senator BALDWIN, the Career Ready Act, which will amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to expand on these efforts by encouraging more states to report on courses in their school systems. This includes utilizing multiple indicators of career readiness when states report data to the federal government such as student participation in career and technical education courses or attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials or academic and technical skills including industry-recognized credentials, certifications, licenses, and postsecondary degrees. Tracking and publishing this data provides much-needed information for businesses and workforce leaders that is not provided under current law.

This bipartisan legislation also strengthens the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling grant program in current law by placing an emphasis on career guidance and providing professional development for school counselors to use labor market information and partnerships with community groups such as local workforce investment boards, businesses, industries, and regional economic development agencies to educate students on postsecondary opportunities. The Career Ready Act encourages schools to align career exploration course offerings and counseling to the workforce needs of the local community and coordinate with the requirements of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

I am proud to introduce this commonsense, bipartisan legislation to improve career readiness and career guidance to ensure students are prepared for the 21st century workforce. I strongly encourage my colleagues on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee to consider this legislation in any ESEA reauthorization.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 487. A bill to amend the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to allow the rebuilding, without elevation, of certain structures that are located in areas having special flood hazards and are substantially damaged by fire, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Fire-Damaged Home Rebuilding Act.

This legislation is simple. It allows families living in federally-designated flood plains to rebuild their home in the event it is destroyed by a fire.

The bill allows communities to waive requirements that were meant to block reconstruction after floods, but which have been applied to block reconstruction of homes after fires and other natural disasters as well.

I was first made aware of this issue by a constituent from Sacramento, Jennifer Taylor. Her home in the Natomas neighborhood burned down, and she was denied when she applied for a permit to rebuild it. The county informed her that Federal floodplain regulations required her to elevate the home 20 feet above ground level because of existing deficiencies in the levee protecting her neighborhood.

Can you imagine what that would look like? Every house in the neighborhood at ground level, and one home towering 20 feet above the rest?

More importantly though, the cost would be exorbitant, and would not be covered by her insurance. Instead, the cost would be imposed on a family trying to get back on its feet after a personal tragedy.

When the home burned down, the family collected \$71,000 from their insurance company. Contractors estimated the cost to restore the home to its original condition was \$170,000—a significant burden, but one the family was willing to bear.

But when the family factored in the cost of elevating their home 20 feet, the cost skyrocketed. Contractors estimated the elevation project would cost an additional \$200,000.

Just to restore their home to its previous size and condition, the family would owe \$300,000 more than what they received from their insurance.

There is a fundamental issue of fairness at stake.

This family tragically lost their home and many of their personal belongings. But instead of helping the family during this difficult time, the Federal Government is instead blocking them from rebuilding. Why? Because the Federal Government has failed to maintain adequate flood protection.

It just doesn't seem fair.

The Fire-Damaged Home Rebuilding Act addresses this issue by allowing local communities to grant variances to federal flood plain regulations without jeopardizing their participation in the program.

The legislation allows waivers to be granted only if all of the following conditions are met: communities must already have taken steps to repair damaged levees, such as seeking Federal authorization of a levee project, and there must be previously existing plans to obtain the requisite 100-year flood protection in the near future.

The destroyed house must be within a deep floodplain where it would be too expensive and unsightly to elevate the home.

The new home must be built within the footprint of the destroyed structure.

The homeowner cannot qualify for new insurance discounts; and the property has never been associated with a claim to the National Flood Insurance Program.

These limitations will only allow families to rebuild very limited circumstances after tragedy strikes that is unrelated to a flooding event. The number of waivers local governments can approve is capped at ten per year so that this authority is not subject to abuse. This limit will ensure that waivers are used prudently and sparingly.

I strongly oppose new development in the flood plain. It is irresponsible to permit new homes or businesses to be constructed without adequate mitigation in an area where you know that flooding is likely.

The Federal floodplain regulations were put in place to block individual homeowners from voluntarily renovating and improving their homes. They were also designed to block homeowners from rebuilding after a flood. By doing so, the Federal Government limits its liability for future flood insurance claims.

Fire-damaged homes clearly represent an exception to these circumstances, however. So we need to adjust the law to eliminate an unfortunate and unintended consequence of an otherwise good policy.

City and county governments must be empowered to make case by case judgments about whether it makes sense to elevate damaged structures by 10, 15, or 20 feet when the rest of the neighborhood remains at ground level.

That is exactly what the Fire-Damaged Home Reconstruction Act does. It provides limited authority to local governments, which will allow them to do what makes sense for their communities and will allow families to rebuild after a fire or other non-flood disaster.

This is a commonsense piece of legislation and I hope my colleagues will work to quickly adopt the bill.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. ENZI, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 491. A bill to lift the trade embargo on Cuba; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss our country's relationship with Cuba. I have long advocated modernizing our relationship

with Cuba. The current embargo has been in place for 50 years, and it has greatly constrained opportunities for American businesses by restricting commerce, by restricting our exports—things that are made in America—from going to a place that is only 90 miles off our shores and has 11 million people.

That is why today I introduce the bipartisan Freedom to Export to Cuba Act with Senators ENZI, STABENOW, FLAKE, LEAHY, and DURBIN. This bill lifts the trade embargo on Cuba and knocks down the legal barriers to Americans doing business in Cuba. This bill will help open up new economic opportunities for American businesses, which will mean more jobs. It will also boost opportunities for farmers—something the Chair knows well coming from the State of North Dakota, as we know well in the State of Minnesota. This will also allow Cubans to have access to these products, which we believe is good for their country, good for their people so that they can become a different country.

Freeing our businesses to pursue opportunities for development could greatly help the people of Cuba. Consider for example that Cuba only has a 2G cellular network and that only about one-fourth of the population has Internet access. Ultimately, I believe this legislation will help usher in a new era for Americans and Cubans shaped by opportunities for the future rather than simply a story of the past.

The process the President has jump-started to normalize our ties with Cuba is a positive step forward. My home State of Minnesota exported about \$20 million in agricultural products to Cuba in 2013. I think people are surprised by that, but as many of us know, there are humanitarian exceptions to the current embargo. So our country is already exporting, and my State alone exported \$20 million in products. With the President's action alone, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture estimates that exports could increase by another \$20 million. The United States is already the fourth largest source of imports to Cuba based solely on authorized shipments of agriculture and medical supplies. Over the past decade we have been one of Cuba's top suppliers of food products. So it is not as if we don't already do business there, but unlike every other country, including our own neighbor to the north, Canada, we hamstring our businesses seeking to export their products there. Export and travel restrictions have continued to prevent Americans from seeking opportunities in Cuba, and the embargo prevents Cubans from obtaining food and other goods we take for granted in our country.

Cuban human rights activist Yoani Sanchez wrote:

It is impossible for Cubans to buy staples like eggs or cooking oil without turning to the underground market. Rationing forces people to stand in line for hours for poultry and fish. On the Cuban government's 50th an-

niversary in 2009, it provided families with an extra half pound of ground beef, but that beef was not from the U.S. It was sponsored by the Venezuelan government . . . a meager gift nicknamed "Hugo Chavez's Hamburger" by everyday Cubans.

I say it is time for America to stop ceding credit for the hamburger to Venezuela. It is time that we made our hamburger accessible in Cuba. The Freedom to Export to Cuba Act will help us do that. It is simply a targeted repeal of the provisions in current law that keep the embargo in place, including restrictions that prevent American businesses from financing their own exports to the island and requirements for American farms to seek special licenses for any transaction with Cuba.

It is also important to emphasize what this bill does not do. There are many outstanding issues that many of my colleagues have discussed between our two countries that must be dealt with, especially our concerns about the Cuban Government's repressive policies. That is why this bill does not repeal provisions of current law that address human rights in Cuba or that allow individuals and businesses to pursue claims against the Cuban Government for property.

None of us is under any illusion about the nature of the Cuban Government. The Cuban Government must take serious steps to reform politically and economically. It must free political prisoners and stop arbitrarily arresting people for political speech. It must also take steps to liberalize its state-centric economic system if it truly hopes to allow its people to prosper and to benefit from growing commerce with the United States.

We do not minimize the importance of those issues, but we also know the embargo has not helped to solve them. Members on both sides of the aisle recognize that continuing along the same path with respect to Cuba has not achieved our objectives and in fact has constrained Americans' freedom to pursue business opportunities abroad. It has hindered our freedom to travel, which is why I also cosponsored the Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act recently introduced by Senator FLAKE.

Both that bill and the Freedom to Export to Cuba Act that I have introduced today with a bipartisan group of Senators shows that we can work together in this new Congress to support a commonsense relationship between the United States and Cuba.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation. It is a chance to build on our current progress and take additional actions to forge a practical and positive relationship with the people of Cuba and the people of America.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 492. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 in order to improve environmental

literacy to better prepare students for postsecondary education and careers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing bipartisan legislation to provide support for environmental education in our Nation's classrooms. I thank Senators KIRK, DURBIN, WHITEHOUSE, HEINRICH, and BENNET for joining as original cosponsors of the No Child Left Inside Act of 2015.

Given the major environmental challenges we face today, it is important to prioritize teaching our young people about their natural world. Preparing the next generation to be stewards of our natural environment not only equips them with important skills and knowledge but also, as studies have shown, enhances achievement levels in science and other core subjects and increases student engagement. Another key benefit is that it promotes healthy lifestyles by encouraging kids to spend more time outside.

For more than 3 decades, environmental education has been a growing part of effective instruction in America's schools. Responding to the need to improve student achievement and prepare students for the 21st century economy, many states and schools throughout the Nation now offer some form of environmental education.

Indeed, according to the National Association for Environmental Education, 47 States and the District of Columbia have taken steps towards developing plans to integrate environmental literacy into their statewide educational initiatives. In Rhode Island, organizations such as the Rhode Island Environmental Education Association, Roger Williams Park Zoo, Save the Bay, the Nature Conservancy, and the Audubon Society, as well as countless schools and teachers, are offering educational and outdoor experiences that many children may never otherwise have, helping inspire them to learn. In partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Education, these organizations have developed a statewide environmental literacy plan that is now being put into action.

Yet, environmental education is facing a significant challenge, and remains out of reach for too many children. With many schools being forced to scale back or eliminate environmental programs, fewer and fewer students are able to take part in related classroom instruction and field investigations, however effective or in demand these programs are.

The No Child Left Inside Act would increase environmental literacy among elementary and secondary students by encouraging and providing assistance to States for the development and implementation of environmental literacy plans and promoting professional development for teachers on how to integrate environmental literacy and field experiences into their instruction.

The legislation would also support partnerships with high-need school districts to initiate, expand, or improve their environmental education curriculum, and for replication and dissemination of effective practices. Finally, the legislation would support interagency coordination and reporting on environmental education opportunities across the Federal Government. This legislation has broad support among national and state environmental and educational groups.

In addition to the benefits that accrue to students, business leaders also increasingly believe that an environmentally literate workforce is critical for long-term success. Indeed, according to a 2011 survey by the GreenBiz Group and the National Environmental Education Foundation, 65 percent of respondents valued environmental and sustainability knowledge as a factor in making hiring decisions, and 68 percent believed that the importance of this knowledge would continue to grow in the future. We must ensure that our students are prepared with the knowledge that employers are looking for, and that increasingly includes environmental literacy.

For these reasons, I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor the bipartisan No Child Left Inside Act and to work together to include its provisions into the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. GARDNER, and Mr. COTTON):

S. 493. A bill to reduce a portion of the annual pay of Members of Congress for the failure to adopt a concurrent resolution on the budget which does not provide for a balanced budget, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I join Senator CASSIDY of Louisiana, Senator GARDNER of Colorado, and Senator COTTON of Arkansas in introducing the Balanced Budget Accountability Act. By establishing the principle No Balanced Budget, No Pay, this legislation will bring fiscal responsibility to Washington. The American people deserve a balanced budget. Unfortunately, Washington remains unwilling to take the steps needed to get our country back on solid fiscal ground. The Balanced Budget Accountability Act reflects core principles that work: common sense business practices that protect hardworking taxpayers and making elected officials accountable for delivering results to the people they serve. It is what Washington needs to finally balance the budget.

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. 493

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; FINDINGS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Balanced Budget Accountability Act”.

(b) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Federal debt exceeds \$18,000,000,000,000, continues to grow rapidly, and is larger than the size of the United States economy.

(2) The Federal budget has shown an annual deficit in 45 of the last 50 years.

(3) Deficits and the Federal debt threaten to shatter confidence in the Nation’s economy, suppress job creation and economic growth, and leave future generations of Americans with a lower standard of living and fewer opportunities.

(4) It is the duty of Members of Congress to develop and implement policies, including balancing the Federal budget, that encourage robust job creation and economic growth in the United States.

(5) Members of Congress should be held accountable for failing to pass annual budgets that result in a balanced budget.

SEC. 2. REQUIRING ADOPTION OF BUDGET RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR BALANCED BUDGETS.

(a) ADOPTION OF BUDGET RESOLUTION.—Each House of Congress shall adopt a concurrent resolution on the budget for a fiscal year which provides that, for each fiscal year for which a budget is provided under the resolution (beginning not later than with the budget for fiscal year 2025)—

(1) total outlays do not exceed total receipts; and

(2) total outlays are not more than 18 percent of the gross domestic product of the United States (as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the Department of Commerce) for such fiscal year

(b) CERTIFICATION BY CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE.—Upon the adoption by a House of Congress of a concurrent resolution on the budget for a fiscal year, the Director of the Congressional Budget Office shall transmit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the President pro Tempore of the Senate (as the case may be) a certification as to whether or not that House of Congress has met the requirements of subsection (a) with respect to the resolution.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall apply with respect to the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2016 and each succeeding fiscal year.

SEC. 3. EFFECT OF FAILURE TO ADOPT RESOLUTION.

(a) RULE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 AND 2017.—

(1) FISCAL YEAR 2016.—

(A) HOLDING SALARIES IN ESCROW.—If the Director does not certify that a House of Congress has met the requirements of section 2(a) with respect to fiscal year 2016 before April 16, 2015, during the period described in subparagraph (B) the payroll administrator of that House of Congress shall deposit in an escrow account all payments otherwise required to be made during such period for the compensation of Members of Congress who serve in that House of Congress, and shall release such payments to such Members only upon the expiration of such period.

(B) PERIOD DESCRIBED.—With respect to a House of Congress, the period described in this subparagraph is the period that begins on April 16, 2015 and ends on the earlier of—

(i) the date on which the Director certifies that the House of Congress has met the requirements of section 2(a) with respect to fiscal year 2016; or

(ii) the last day of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.

(2) FISCAL YEAR 2017.—

(A) HOLDING SALARIES IN ESCROW.—If the Director does not certify that a House of

Congress has met the requirements of section 2(a) with respect to fiscal year 2017 before April 16, 2016, during the period described in subparagraph (B) the payroll administrator of that House of Congress shall deposit in an escrow account all payments otherwise required to be made during such period for the compensation of Members of Congress who serve in that House of Congress, and shall release such payments to such Members only upon the expiration of such period.

(B) PERIOD DESCRIBED.—With respect to a House of Congress, the period described in this subparagraph is the period that begins on April 16, 2016 and ends on the earlier of—

(i) the date on which the Director certifies that the House of Congress has met the requirements of section 2(a) with respect to fiscal year 2017; or

(ii) the last day of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.

(3) WITHHOLDING AND REMITTANCE OF AMOUNTS FROM PAYMENTS HELD IN ESCROW.—The payroll administrator shall provide for the same withholding and remittance with respect to a payment deposited in an escrow account under paragraph (1) or (2) that would apply to the payment if the payment were not subject to paragraph (1) or (2).

(4) RELEASE OF AMOUNTS AT END OF THE CONGRESS.—In order to ensure that this subsection is carried out in a manner that shall not vary the compensation of Senators or Representatives in violation of the twenty-seventh article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the payroll administrator of a House of Congress shall release for payments to Members of that House of Congress any amounts remaining in any escrow account under this section on the last day of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.

(5) ROLE OF SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall provide the payroll administrators of the Houses of Congress with such assistance as may be necessary to enable the payroll administrators to carry out this subsection.

(6) PAYROLL ADMINISTRATOR DEFINED.—In this subsection, the “payroll administrator” of a House of Congress means—

(A) in the case of the House of Representatives, the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives, or an employee of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer who is designated by the Chief Administrative Officer to carry out this section; and

(B) in the case of the Senate, the Secretary of the Senate, or an employee of the Office of the Secretary of the Senate who is designated by the Secretary to carry out this section.

(b) RULE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018 AND SUBSEQUENT FISCAL YEARS.—If the Director of the Congressional Budget Office does not certify that a House of Congress has met the requirements of section 2(a) with respect to fiscal year 2018, or any fiscal year thereafter, before April 16 of the fiscal year before such fiscal year, during pay periods which occur in the same calendar year after that date each Member of that House shall be paid at an annual rate of pay equal to \$1.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term “Director” means the Director of the Congressional Budget Office; and

(2) the term “Member” includes a Delegate or Resident Commissioner to Congress.

SEC. 4. SUPERMAJORITY REQUIREMENT FOR INCREASING REVENUE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In the Senate and the House of Representatives, a bill, joint resolution, amendment, conference report, or amendment between the Houses that increases revenue shall only be agreed to upon an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the

Members of that House of Congress duly chosen and sworn.

(b) RULES OF SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—Subsection (a) is enacted by Congress—

(1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate and House of Representatives, respectively, and as such it is deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, but applicable only with respect to the procedure to be followed in that House in the case of a bill, joint resolution, amendment, conference report, or amendment between the Houses that increases revenue, and it supersedes other rules only to the extent that it is inconsistent with such rules; and

(2) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedure of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 494. A bill to authorize the exploration, leasing, development, production, and economically feasible and prudent transportation of oil and gas in and from the Coastal Plain in Alaska; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise, along with my colleague Senator SULLIVAN, to introduce a bill to open a small portion of the arctic coastal plain, in my home State of Alaska, to oil and gas development. I am introducing this bill today because I strongly believe that whether oil and gas exploration should be conducted on a small portion of the coastal plain is a question for Congress; not one for unilateral action by Federal agency.

The 1.5 million acres of the Arctic coastal plain that lie within the non-wilderness portion of the 19 million acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge are North America's greatest prospect for conventional onshore production. When Prudhoe Bay, the largest conventional oil field in North America and one of the 20 largest fields in the world was discovered in 1968, estimates at the time projected 9.6 billion barrels of oil would be recovered. The U.S. Geological Survey continues to estimate that this part of the coastal plain has a mean likelihood of containing 10.4 billion barrels of oil and 8.6 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, as well as a reasonable chance of economically producing 16 billion barrels of oil. With potential comparable to Prudhoe Bay, the coastal plain represents an opportunity to ensure the American energy renaissance continues and our domestic energy security is bolstered for decades to come.

Alaska used to provide that foundation for our country. At its peak in 1988, Alaska provided nearly 25 percent of America's domestic production. Today it represents barely 6 percent. Importantly, despite the Federal government owning almost 70 percent of the lands in Alaska, almost all of our oil production is from State lands. The people of Alaska are doing everything they can to contribute to America's energy security by promoting production

from State lands. In the past two years the State of Alaska has passed oil tax reforms, improved State permitting and provided more than \$1.2 billion in State tax credits to support the exploration and development of oil from State lands. The only production on federal estate comes from the Northstar project, a small man-made island that straddles state and federal waters in the Beaufort Sea.

For more than 30 years, my State has successfully balanced resource development with environmental protection. Alaskans have proven, over and over again, that these endeavors are not mutually exclusive, and with advances in technology, the footprint of development projects is only getting smaller. Yet as the Federal level, there is an astonishing refusal to acknowledge the record.

With new exploration and development projects on Federal lands stalled or outright blocked, Alaska faces a tipping point. The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, an engineering marvel that has served as one of America's great energy arteries for decades is facing more and more challenges from lower throughput. A closure of TAPS would shut down all northern Alaska oil production, devastating Alaska's economy and deepening our dependence on unstable petrostates throughout the world. Exploration and development in the Arctic offshore and National Petroleum Reserve Alaska depend on the long-term viability of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System.

The bill I introduce today, would disturb no more than 2,000 acres of the vast coastal plain. To put this in perspective, 2,000 acres is less than $\frac{1}{6}$ the size of the local Dulles Airport, or about $\frac{1}{10}$ of 1 percent of the refuge. Since these areas are less than 60 miles from TAPS, development in the Coastal Plain is the quickest, most environmentally sound way to increase oil production in Alaska and ensure the pipeline will operate well into the future, providing jobs and supporting the economies of both Alaska and the United States.

The bill includes strong protection for fish and wildlife, fish and wildlife habitat, subsistence resources, and the environment. Development would not move forward if it would cause significant adverse impacts to the coastal plain. The bill also ensures these protections are strong because it provides for strict consultation with the residents of the coastal plain; the City of Kaktovik as well as the regional government, the North Slope Borough. The bill also provides important impact aid to the local communities from the State's share of revenues due to it under the Mineral Leasing Act and Alaska's Statehood Act.

As we continue to struggle with long-term unemployment, and an unsustainable national debt, we need to pursue development opportunities more than ever. The shale oil and gas boom on 2 state and private lands in

the Lower 48 has been the shining light as our economy struggles to recover from the recession. My bill offers us a chance to produce more of our own energy, for the good of the American people, in an environmentally-friendly way and with the meaningful impact of the local people.

For decades, Alaskans, whom polls show overwhelmingly support development of the coastal plain, have been asking permission to explore and develop the resources located there. Consistent with the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, ANILCA, the state of Alaska recently submitted a plan to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct minimal exploration activities in the coastal plain and was rejected. Despite the fact that the State was in court presenting its case, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released an updated Plan for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge that puts areas like the Coastal Plain in de facto wilderness status as Wilderness Study Areas.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service states that they did not consider an oil and gas alternative, as requested by the State of Alaska, North Slope Borough, various Alaska Native Regional and Village Corporations as well as a broad spectrum of Alaskans, because they stated that the decision to conduct oil and gas development is one for Congress to make. I hope this Congress will rise to that challenge and have the common sense to allow America to help itself by developing a small portion of the coastal plain. This is critical to my State and the nation as a whole and one more step we can take to push back against the unilateral executive actions that are threatening our economy and very system of government.

With this in mind, Senator SULLIVAN and I will work to educate members of this chamber about the opportunity we have and the tremendous benefits it would provide. We will show why such development should occur—why it must occur—and how it can benefit all of us and help secure our energy security for decades to come.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. VITTER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. BURR, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 498. A bill to allow reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 498

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 “Constitutional Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. RECIPROCITY FOR THE CARRYING OF CERTAIN CONCEALED FIREARMS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 926C the following:

“§ 926D. Reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding any provision of the law of any State or political subdivision thereof to the contrary—

“(1) an individual who is not prohibited by Federal law from possessing, transporting, shipping, or receiving a firearm, and who is carrying a government-issued photographic identification document and a valid license or permit which is issued pursuant to the law of a State and which permits the individual to carry a concealed firearm, may possess or carry a concealed handgun (other than a machinegun or destructive device) that has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce in any State other than the State of residence of the individual that—

“(A) has a statute that allows residents of the State to obtain licenses or permits to carry concealed firearms; or

“(B) does not prohibit the carrying of concealed firearms by residents of the State for lawful purposes; and

“(2) an individual who is not prohibited by Federal law from possessing, transporting, shipping, or receiving a firearm, and who is carrying a government-issued photographic identification document and is entitled and not prohibited from carrying a concealed firearm in the State in which the individual resides otherwise than as described in paragraph (1), may possess or carry a concealed handgun (other than a machinegun or destructive device) that has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce in any State other than the State of residence of the individual that—

“(A) has a statute that allows residents of the State to obtain licenses or permits to carry concealed firearms; or

“(B) does not prohibit the carrying of concealed firearms by residents of the State for lawful purposes.

“(b) **CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS.**—The possession or carrying of a concealed handgun in a State under this section shall be subject to the same conditions and limitations, except as to eligibility to possess or carry, imposed by or under Federal or State law or the law of a political subdivision of a State, that apply to the possession or carrying of a concealed handgun by residents of the State or political subdivision who are licensed by the State or political subdivision to do so, or not prohibited by the State from doing so.

“(c) **UNRESTRICTED LICENSE OR PERMIT.**—In a State that allows the issuing authority for licenses or permits to carry concealed firearms to impose restrictions on the carrying of firearms by individual holders of such licenses or permits, an individual carrying a concealed handgun under this section shall be permitted to carry a concealed handgun according to the same terms authorized by an unrestricted license of or permit issued to a resident of the State.

“(d) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to preempt any provision of State law with respect to the issuance of licenses or permits to carry concealed firearms.”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections for chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 926C the following:

“926D. Reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms.”.

(c) **SEVERABILITY.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, if any provision of this Act, or any amendment made by this Act, or the application of such provision or amendment to any person or circumstance is held to be unconstitutional, this Act and amendments made by this Act and the application of such provision or amendment to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

(d) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this Act shall take effect 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PAUL, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. COONS):

S. 502. A bill to focus limited Federal resources on the most serious offenders; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the Smarter Sentencing Act, which I believe is a very critical piece of legislation.

I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of this legislation in this Congress, and I thank the bipartisan coalition of Senators who have come together, led by Senator MIKE LEE from Utah and Senator DICK DURBIN from Illinois. Their leadership on this issue has been absolutely critical.

The Smarter Sentencing Act has essential front-end reforms. These are reforms for when a person gets to the point of incarceration. What they actually do is combat injustices in the Federal sentencing program. They address a real plague in our country; that is, mass incarceration.

Think about this: We are the land of the free. We are a nation that believes in liberty and justice. But we are singular in humanity for an awful distinction: We have 5 percent of the globe's population but we incarcerate 25 percent of the globe's incarcerated people. That is unacceptable unless you believe for some reason that Americans have a higher proclivity for crime, unless you believe we have something in our water that makes us more likely to do wrong, and that is not the case.

The challenge is that we have seen in the past three decades a profound over-incarceration driven by a drug war that has created unfortunate negative consequences to our society. I thank Members of Congress for stepping up in this Congress to speak to this issue. It is un-American that we should hold the largest amount of incarcerated people per population than any other country. It goes against the very strains of our society dedicated to liberty, dedicated to keeping government focused on what it should be doing, not overreaching, not becoming overly aggressive, not surrendering or taking the liberty unnecessarily of other Americans.

I would like to talk for a few minutes about this broken system. What is broken in our criminal justice system? Well, when about three-quarters of our

Federal prisoners are actually non-violent offenders—I am actually one of those people who believe that if you do a violent crime, you should pay a very hefty price for that, that we as a society should have a place where we take stern action against people who promulgate violence, who undermine civil society. But as we look at this mass-incarceration problem where 25 percent of the globe's prison population is in our country, we realize that three-quarters of those people in the Federal prison system are nonviolent offenders.

This is not our history. This is not our tradition. Over the course of all of our Nation's history, we did not have this problem. It has really been the last 30 years where we have witnessed the explosion in the U.S. Federal prison population. In those 30 years alone—think about this—in the last 30 years alone, the prison population at the Federal level has expanded by nearly 800 percent. That is a massive and unacceptable increase, especially when you realize this was driven by the incarceration of nonviolent offenders.

This expansion of our prison population had a harmful effect when those people were released because once someone has a nonviolent felony offense, it is hard to get a job, it is hard to get business licenses, and they cannot get Pell grants. Often those people get caught up and go back to being involved in the drug war. So what happens is that two out of three of those people get rearrested within 3 years.

We are paying for this broken system, this revolving door of arresting nonviolent offenders, releasing them, and bringing them back into our system. It is plaguing the Federal budget and, frankly, State budgets all around our country. Each year more than one-quarter of a trillion dollars is being spent on this broken criminal justice system—money that could be used to empower people to succeed, to repair our infrastructure, or, how about this, it could stay in taxpayers' pockets.

What makes this system worse is that it undermines our American ideals. As I look across the way from the Capitol Building where I stand now and see the Supreme Court, written above the Supreme Court building, at the top, is this ideal of equal justice under law. The ideal that everyone will be treated equally under the law. But this broken criminal justice system has disproportionately impacted certain Americans and not others, which undermines America's core values of fairness and equal treatment for all.

More than 60 percent of our prison system is comprised of racial and ethnic minorities. The painful reality is that if somehow African Americans or Latinos used drugs at different levels than Whites, that might explain the disparate impact. If they dealt drugs at different levels, yes, that might explain it. But that is not the case. African Americans engage in drug offenses at a lower rate than Whites but are incarcerated at a rate 10 times that of Whites.

What is alarming about the mass incarceration is that people are actually not committing more and more crimes. The National Research Council recently released a report confirming what numerous other studies have actually shown: Incarceration rates are actually not tied to crime rates. We have seen incarceration rates going up and up, but now crime rates are coming down.

What is perpetuating this explosion of our prison population? It is the war on drugs that has created over the last 30 years alone an over-criminalization of nonviolent individuals, which stacked our prison population full of Americans, disproportionately minority and disproportionately poor.

Please understand that the people paying the highest price for this are the poor in our country. The New York Times yesterday published an article detailing how our jails have become warehouses made up primarily of people too poor to pay bail or to hire lawyers or too ill with mental health or drug problems to adequately care for themselves. If you look at our prison population, you will see that poverty, race, mental illness—those are the folks who are being disproportionately incarcerated.

If we follow our core ideals of fairness, democracy, and justice—then we know that mass incarceration is not who we are. That is not right. That the times demand that we examine this broken system and do those commonsense things that are needed to make our justice system just, to work first and foremost for our safety, to not be a gross waste of taxpayer dollars, and to make sure basic ideas of fairness are fulfilled.

This is not just speculation. And what is so powerful about this moment in time, even though all I have said so far is compelling enough, is that we as Federal actors—the 100 Senators here, the 435 Congress men and women, the President and the Vice President—don't need to figure out a way forward, make it up, design legislation based on our own ideas. We actually only have to look at the pathway forward by looking at Governors and legislatures in the States. They are so burdened by the costs of this unruly system, a system that is now plaguing—the Federal Bureau of Prisons is plaguing our country with its cost. What the States are doing to bear that cost is they are finding pragmatic, commonsense, bipartisan ways to move forward.

In fact, what gets me excited as a Democrat is that we just have to look at the red States and what the red States are doing to reduce their prison populations. Let me give an example. States such as Texas, Georgia, and North Carolina are leading on this issue, and the Federal Government should follow.

Texas is a State known for law and order, and known for being tough on crime. Yet Texans realize that being smart on crime means saving taxpayer

dollars, using that money efficiently and effectively, lowering crime, and guess what, hey, we can also lower our prison population and empower people to be successful in life and not slip down that slope back toward recidivism. They have made tremendous strides in Texas in adopting policies that are designed to reduce their prison population and lower recidivism.

In 2007, Texas boasted the fourth largest incarceration rate in the country. Faced with a budget projection that estimated by 2012 the State would need an additional 17,000 prison beds—think about that for a second. They saw that they were going to need to build more prisons, house 17,000 more prison beds, and it was going to cost them \$2 billion in Texas. The State's legislature said: Enough of this madness. Enough of this craziness.

They enacted bold reforms that would act as a model for us in the Federal legislature. As a result, they passed this broad-based legislation. Texas was able to stabilize their prison population and avert that budgetary disaster.

Texas State Representative Jerry Madden, a Republican, noted in a recent hearing before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations that the crime rate is now at 1968 levels. They were able to close three prisons and six juvenile facilities, and remarkably the Texas prison system is now operating at a 96-percent capacity. Commonsense reforms.

Georgia is another State. They have made remarkable progress. They are showing that reducing the prison population can lead to dividends for taxpayers, and can lower crime. In fact, over the past 5 years, in terms of the racial disparities in incarceration, Georgia has reduced the number of Black men incarcerated in the State by 20 percent. And they haven't seen crime go up—quite the contrary. They have seen it go down.

These States are proving that they don't have to lock up more people to create that safety we desire. States such as New Jersey, Texas, California, Virginia, Hawaii, Wyoming, Massachusetts, Kentucky, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Colorado, New York, South Carolina, Alaska, and Georgia have all seen drops in crime rates as they have been implementing commonsense criminal justice reform.

So let's be clear. I am advocating for the Smarter Sentencing Act, but we should also be moving for bold, broad-based criminal justice reforms, copying the successes of red States with Republican Governors. We should be looking at their innovations and following their commonsense solutions and mirroring their success at the Federal level.

I am speaking of reforms at the front end when people get arrested; reforms behind the wall—inside the prison system to address what goes on in prison and helping these people, and reforms

on the back end when they come out of prison, to ensure they stay out of prison.

Front-end reforms going on around our country are exciting, such as sentencing reform. What about radical ideas such as letting judges make decisions about sentencing and stop trying to legislate it? Judges are the experts. They know of the brutality of a person's circumstances. They can design sentences.

These policy initiatives should address the entire system. Behind-the-wall efforts should focus on initiatives to change the way prisoners experience life behind bars. To get treatment and job training so they don't commit future crimes. This is commonsense stuff. We shouldn't send people to prison and have them become criminalized or undermine their ability to be successful adults when they come out.

We should also focus on that back end, this idea that we need reentry policies to help people get jobs, reconnect with their families, and become strong, full-fledged American citizens. I am speaking of things such as parole reform.

To move forward we need to think big. This is what I will be advocating for. We can tackle this by taking a systemic approach. We must look at a broad-based reform agenda.

I love the fact that we have conservatives and liberals united on this issue—Republicans and Democrats, red Staters and blue Staters. Criminal justice reform is not a partisan issue, it is an American issue.

In 2010, Senators on both sides of the aisle came together to improve our justice system by passing the Fair Sentencing Act, which the President signed into law. This was a bipartisan piece of legislation that reduced the sentencing disparities between crack and powder cocaine—drugs that are pharmacologically indistinguishable. They changed it from 100 to 1 to 18 to 1, and I thank Senators DURBIN, GRASSLEY, LEAHY, and GRAHAM for their leadership on this issue.

Last year I joined with Senator RAND PAUL from Kentucky. I don't know how many sentences are used by people that contain the names CORY BOOKER and RAND PAUL in them, but we agree on this issue. We have common ground, and we introduced the REDEEM Act. This legislation aims to keep juveniles out of the criminal justice system. We looked to stop acts that many other countries consider torture, such as taking juveniles and routinely putting them into solitary confinement where they are traumatized and often come out of those circumstances more likely to do harm to themselves or others. We are going to reintroduce that bill this year.

Just last month I sat on a criminal justice reform panel right here in the Halls of the Senate, hosted by Van Jones on the left and Newt Gingrich on the right. In the last few months I have talked to Grover Norquist, I have

talked to the Koch brothers' representative, their chief counsel, and I have talked to conservative think tanks and Christian evangelicals. All of us agree on this issue. This chorus of voices, this coalition, this courageous commitment to our country's ideals lets us know that whether you consider yourself a liberal or a conservative, whether you consider yourself moderate leaning, left or right, this is an area we can agree on. It will save taxpayer money, uphold our ideals of liberty and freedom, create safer communities, and empower individuals to be successful.

Today I am excited to have joined with Senators LEE, DURBIN, LEAHY, and CRUZ to support the Smarter Sentencing Act. We need to have this conversation about reducing Federal mandatory minimums. In fact, I love that the Urban Institute has stated that mandatory minimums for drug offenses is the single largest factor in the growth of the Federal prison population.

Let me repeat that. Mandatory minimums for drug offenses are the single largest factor in the growth of the Federal prison population. A key factor in that 800-percent growth in the last 30 years has been driven by nonviolent drug offenders and mandatory minimums.

This bill also would do other things. It would expand the Federal safety valve, giving judges greater discretion and allowing them to hand out their sentences. Those people who believe in separation of powers, let the judiciary have more space to hand down fairer sentences and not shackle them with laws made by legislators who don't know the particulars of a case. Many Federal judges have spoken out about mandatory minimums being unnecessarily restrictive for them in doing their job.

The bill would also make the Fair Sentencing Act retroactive, which would allow persons convicted under the old crack-powder cocaine disparity to now receive a fairer sentence. With the crack-cocaine law changed in 2010, an individual arrested today would receive a lesser sentence. So making this law retroactive to impact people sentenced for crack cocaine offenses prior to 2010 is only fair.

This bill could save a lot of money—hundreds of millions of dollars. It would give us some freedom not only to return some toward debt relief for this country—Lord knows we need to focus on that—but also to invest in other programs many people on both sides of the aisle support, such as reentry programs to help people stay out of prison and get back to a productive lifestyle. If enacted into law as the bill is currently scored, it would save \$3 billion over the next decade alone. This is critically important.

So this is a call to the conscience of the Congress. Every single day we pledge allegiance to our flag. That is not something anybody in this Chamber does as sort of a routine, perfunc-

tory salute. We say those words because they mean something, and we end with this ideal that is a light to all of humanity—this ideal of liberty and justice for all.

If we mean those words, then that, across the board, is what we should be pursuing in this body. We know in our country States are doing things to further uphold these ideals, that they are making commonsense reforms that are keeping people safe and lowering crime, commonsense reforms that are saving taxpayer dollars and relieving the burden on taxpayers and budgets, that they are passing reforms that liberate people from the shackles of an imprisonment that is unnecessary, that is directly addressing the painful disparities of race and poverty, and that it is empowering Americans, our brothers and sisters. In all of our holy texts it talks about the dignity of all people, whether they are behind bars or on our streets, the dignity of worth that empowers people to be successful, to have life and liberty and to pursue their happiness.

So I say I support reforming our criminal justice system. More importantly, I say let's support our ideals. Let's be a nation of liberty and justice for all. Let's follow the lead of courageous governors and legislatures and let's make this Nation even better than it is today. I urge all Senators to promptly pass the Smarter Sentencing Act through the Senate.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. UDALL, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 517. A bill to extend the secure rural schools and community self-determination program, to restore mandatory funding status to the payment in lieu of taxes program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am proud to introduce the Secure Rural Schools and Payment in Lieu of Taxes Repair Act with my colleague Senator CRAPO. The bill will ensure that counties across the nation will have three more years of Secure Rural Schools, SRS, payments. Additionally, the bill would restore mandatory funding for Payment in Lieu of Taxes, PILT.

Because Congress failed to take action to reauthorize SRS before the end of the 113th Congress, counties across the country received SRS payments this week that represent a fraction of last year's payment, leaving counties struggling to find ways to fund schools, roads, and emergency services this year. Without certainty and stability, counties will be forced to make cuts to essential services, leaving residents and communities reeling. County payments are a lifeline for cash-strapped rural communities that are already facing shortfalls to pave roads, keep teachers in schools and firefighters on

call. This bipartisan bill keeps up the commitment the government made to support rural counties in Oregon and across the country. I am glad to once again partner with Senator CRAPO to get this vital legislation across the finish line.

Right now, this bill is not funded. It will be. Senator CRAPO and I will work with our colleagues to find funding for these important programs that is satisfactory to the left and to the right.

Funding for counties is an issue that impacts almost every State in the country. As Congress considers this bill, I ask my colleagues to talk to county leaders in their home states, visit local communities struggling to fund critical services, and find out how SRS and PILT impact their budgets, their priorities, and their quality of life. Rural communities deserve better than to have politics delay funding for SRS, so I urge my colleagues to join Senator CRAPO and me in our efforts to reauthorize this critical program.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 518. A bill to require States to establish highway stormwater management programs; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I come to the floor to discuss the introduction of my latest legislative proposal to better control the harmful and volumes of polluted stormwater that is generated from our Nation's Federal aid highways. Highway stormwater is a growing threat to water quality, aquatic ecosystems and the fish and wildlife that depend on the health of these ecosystems. Moreover, the high volumes and rapid flow of stormwater runoff from highways and roads poses a very serious threat to the condition of our Nation's water and transportation infrastructure as well as personal property particularly in urban and suburban communities.

The Environmental Protection Agency has recognized that pollution from point sources have been steadily declining since the enactment of the Clean Water Act. Likewise, we have seen reductions in pollution from certain non-point sources like agriculture which are attributable in part to the success of a wide variety of USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Programs and farming innovations in soil conservation and nutrient pollution management.

One non-point source sector where we are unfortunately seeing an increasing impact on water quality is from impervious surface that create rapidly moving high volumes of untreated polluted stormwater that rush off of road surfaces, erode unnatural channels next to and ultimately underneath roadways comprising the integrity of roadway infrastructure, and increases the stress on storm sewer systems shortening the useful life of this infrastructure and ultimately lead to the discharge of untreated pollution that is carried off roadways and into our lakes, rivers, streams, and coastal waters.

Impervious surfaces include most buildings and structures, parking lots and of course the nearly 9 million lane miles of roads across our country. The total coverage of impervious surfaces in an area is usually expressed as a percentage of the total land area.

The coverage increases with rising urbanization. In rural areas, impervious cover may only be 1 percent or 2 percent, however road surfaces comprise 80 percent–90 percent of a rural area's total impervious surfaces. In residential areas, impervious surface coverage ranges between 10 percent in low-density subdivisions to over 50 percent in more densely developed communities, where the composition of the impervious surface area coverage works out to be 50 percent roads. In dense urban areas, the impervious surface area is often over 90 percent the total land area, with roads comprising 60 percent–70 percent of that coverage.

According to EPA, urban impervious cover, not just roads, in the lower 48 adds up to 43,000 square miles—an area roughly the size of Ohio. Continuing development adds another quarter of a million acres each year. Typically two-thirds of the cover is pavement, roads and parking lots, and $\frac{1}{3}$ is buildings.

According to the Chesapeake Bay Program, impervious surfaces compose roughly 17 percent of all urban and suburban lands in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The greatest concentration of impervious surfaces in the bay watershed is in the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Areas of DC, Maryland and Virginia. The Virginia Tidewater area, Philadelphia's western suburbs, and Lancaster, PA, are also regions in the watershed where impervious surfaces are greater than 10 percent of the total land area.

Rainfall on hard surfaces like roads and highways has a very destructive and turbulent affect on nearby waterways and infrastructure. For example, the rain events that occur over a week long period at the end of April brought nearly 8 inches of rain to the Baltimore-Washington region. The urban runoff from roads in Baltimore caused an embankment above the CSX railroad track along East 26th Street, between St. Paul and Charles Street, to collapse. Fortunately no one was injured though homes had to be evacuated for more than a month, nearly a dozen parked cars were destroyed and moreover movement of freight along CSX railroad was disrupted for more than a week. This event shows just how destructive and disruptive poorly managed stormwater from transportation infrastructure can be.

Some may chalk this up to a freak storm of unusually large proportion. It's true this storm was unusual, but so were the polar vortexes and all of the snow New England and Buffalo received this winter, and 2013's 3-mile wide tornado in Alabama, the ongoing drought in California. "Unusual" weather seems to be becoming a lot more usual. As extreme weather events triggered by

our changing climate become more frequent it is imperative that we incorporate better designs into our infrastructure to be better handle these types of events.

Under the Clean Water Act, stormwater is considered a non-point source and there are no requirements that stormwater be collected or treated. The exception being for localities where in order to meet the standards set in an MS4, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, permit a region may include its transportation infrastructure in its MS4 permit.

However, in most cases stormwater that falls on roadways washes oil, grease, asbestos brake-dust, nitrogen deposits from tailpipe emissions, trash, road salt and de-icing agents, and sediment into nearby waterways. Highway stormwater runoff is most often not treated or adequately managed.

While these organic and inorganic contaminants are legitimate threats to water quality, the greater concern with roadway runoff is the sheer volume and rapid flow rate in which stormwater leaves these hard surfaces and enters our waterways. Flows and volumes that cause roads to collapse in Baltimore.

Roads are designed for stormwater to flow off of the driving surface quickly, for safety reasons. When stormwater rushes off of road surfaces into storm drains it is usually piped straight into the nearest river or stream without removing contaminants, detaining any of the volume, or slowing down the flow. This creates an enormously destructive set of circumstances for our waterways.

Another example of the destructive force that persistent unmitigated and poorly managed highway runoff can have on the condition and safety of highway infrastructure is in Mobile Alabama along Highway 131 in the Joe's Branch Watershed. The Mobile Bay Estuary Program, part of the National Estuaries Program, in coordination with Alabama Department of Transportation is having to spent millions of dollars to reinforce a highway embankment to keep the highway from slipping down a hill and into the Joe's Branch Creek, restore the hydrology of the river, and help protect private property from the dangerous erosion that's been caused by poorly managed stormwater from Highway 131.

The Mobile Bay Estuary Program described the problem this way: "In the Joe's Branch watershed, on the property of Westminster Village adjacent and parallel to Highway 131, a head cut stream is eroding at an accelerating rate, an ominous condition as ALDOT prepares to undertake improvements to the highway. Identified as a high priority stabilization area in the D'Olive Creek, Tiawasee Creek and Joe's Branch Watershed Management Plan, MBNEP has submitted a funding request to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management on behalf of its partners in Spanish Fort, Daph-

ne, ALDOT and Westminster Village to undertake restoration of the stream using a cutting-edge technology called Regenerative Step Pool Storm Conveyance."

The four entities involved are spending large amount money to repair a problem caused by stormwater damage that could have been prevented at a lower cost by incorporating better stormwater mitigation facilities into the design of the highway.

These high-volume/high-speed flows also hasten the deterioration of water infrastructure. A 2001 study on the erosive power of urban stormwater flows examined how excessive stormwater volumes and flow rates off of urban surface infrastructure caused more than \$1 million in roadway and water infrastructure damage in the Cincinnati metropolitan areas in Ohio and Kentucky in a single year.

While there are serious water quality concerns with not adequately controlling roadway infrastructure runoff, there are serious infrastructure costs, that are ultimately passed on to taxpayers and ratepayers, that can be avoided if transportation authorities do more to control and manage stormwater runoff with the infrastructure assets they manage and build.

The increased incidence of flash flooding events that occur even during seemingly mild and routine storm events is a direct result of the growing percentage of impervious land cover in urban and suburban communities. Replacement of the "greenscapes" that are lost to pavement is essential to restoring hydrological balance to our urban and suburban communities and impaired watersheds.

According to USGS: an inch of rain on one square foot of pavement produces 1.87 gallons of stormwater. Scaled up, 1 inch of rain on one acre would produce 27,150 gallons of stormwater. Using FHWA design standards for interstate highway lane and shoulder widths, 12 feet per lane, 10 foot right shoulder, 2x, 4 foot left shoulder, 2x, 10 miles of a four lane interstate highway generates nearly 2.5 million gallons of polluted stormwater for every inch of rain. To put that into perspective for the Potomac and Anacostia River Watersheds: The Capital Beltway, not including its 48 interchanges, generates nearly 30 million, 29,920,946, gallons of polluted stormwater for every inch of rain that falls on the 64 mile 8 to 12 lane interstate highway loop. It is volumes of stormwater like that which cause dangerous streambank erosion.

Gillies Creek is an urban waterway located East of Downtown Richmond. It is a tributary of the James River which flows into the Chesapeake Bay. Gillies Creek is surrounded by industrial and residential development and also receives stormwater from State highway 33, Interstate 64, US 60, and hundreds of city streets including Stony Run Parkway which directly adjacent to the creek for several miles.

The banks and bed of this creek have eroded so badly as urban development around the creek has added more impervious surfaces to the watershed that streambed sheering has created cliffs more than 10 feet tall at spots along the creek. Trees supporting the bank continually fall into the creek and nearby roadways and other infrastructure as well as homes and business are at risk. Reducing the impacts of the storms by mitigating the flow and volume of stormwater in this watershed will protect against further erosion and save the cost of repair and eventual replacement of the assets located along this endangered creek.

The aim of this legislation is to improve highway designs to better manage stormwater to avoid the costly damage that poorly managed stormwater causes to infrastructure and nearby streams, rivers and coastal waters.

I held a hearing on this issue in the Water and Wildlife Subcommittee on May 13, 2014. I heard many ideas from both the minority and majority witnesses that were invited to present testimony at this hearing. I listened to the concerns of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and I have incorporated provisions into this bill that should alleviate concerns they may have had with previous attempts to better control highway stormwater.

My bill's approach to highway runoff management is one that I hope my colleagues of both parties can support. First of all it put States in the driver's seat for developing hydrological analysis and implementation of best management practices to control highway runoff. The objective of the legislation is to control and manage flow and volume of stormwater from highways not to treat runoff in order to meet water quality standards. By taking this sort of approach we avoid EPA's involvement in the process. Lastly, States would only need to apply these procedures to new construction on major reconfiguration projects that significantly increases the amount of impervious surface in the project area.

Title 23 of the U.S. Code states: "transportation should play a significant role in promoting economic growth, improving the environment, and sustaining the quality of life" through the use of "context sensitive solutions." In 2008, the Government Accountability Office issued a report examining key issues and challenges that needed to be addressed in the next reauthorization of the transportation bill. That report highlighted the clear link between transportation policy and the environment. With 985,139 miles of federal aid highways stretching from every corner of the US, polluted highway runoff is no small problem facing our Nation's waters. I would urge my colleagues to join me trying to address this problem facing America's watersheds and infrastructure.

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. 518

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 "Highway Runoff Management Act".

SEC. 2. FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY RUNOFF MANAGEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 23, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 330. Federal-aid highway runoff management program

"(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) COVERED PROJECT.—The term 'covered project' means a reconstruction, rehabilitation, reconfiguration, renovation, major resurfacing, or new construction project on a Federal-aid highway carried out under this title that results in—

"(A) a 10-percent or greater increase in impervious surface of the aerial extent within the right-of-way of the project limit on a Federal-aid highway or associated facility; or

"(B) an increase of 1 acre or more in impervious surface coverage.

"(2) EROSION FORCE.—The term 'erosive force' means the flowrate within a stream or channel in which channel bed or bank material becomes detached, which in most cases is less than or equal to the flowrate produced by the 2-year storm event.

"(3) HIGHWAY RUNOFF.—The term 'highway runoff', with respect to a Federal-aid highway, associated facility, or management measure retrofit project, means a discharge of peak flow rate or volume of runoff that exceeds flows generated under preproject conditions.

"(4) IMPACTED HYDROLOGY.—The term 'impacted hydrology' means stormwater runoff generated from all areas within the site limits of a covered project.

"(5) MANAGEMENT MEASURE.—The term 'management measure' means a program, structural or nonstructural management practice, operational procedure, or policy on or off the project site that is intended to prevent, reduce, or control highway runoff.

"(b) STATE HIGHWAY STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, each State shall—

"(A) develop a process for analyzing the erosive force of highway runoff generated from covered projects; and

"(B) apply management measures to maintain or restore impacted hydrology associated with highway runoff from covered projects.

"(2) INCLUSIONS.—The management measures established under paragraph (1) may include, as the State determines to be appropriate, management measures that—

"(A) minimize the erosive force of highway runoff from a covered project on a channel bed or bank of receiving water by managing highway runoff within the area of the covered project;

"(B) manage impacted hydrology in such a manner that the highway runoff generated by a covered project is below the erosive force flow and volume;

"(C) to the maximum extent practicable, seek to address the impact of the erosive force of hydrologic events that have the potential to create or exacerbate downstream channel erosion, including excess pier and abutment scour at bridges and channel downcutting and bank failure of streams adjacent to highway embankments;

"(D) ensure that the highway runoff from the post-construction condition does not increase the risk of channel erosion relative to the preproject condition; and

"(E) employ simplified approaches to determining the erosive force of highway runoff generated from covered projects, such as a regionalized analysis of streams within a State.

"(c) GUIDANCE.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall publish guidance to assist States in carrying out this section.

"(2) CONTENTS OF GUIDANCE.—The guidance shall include guidelines and technical assistance for the establishment of State management measures that will be used to assist in avoiding, minimizing, and managing highway runoff from covered projects, including guidelines to help States integrate the planning, selection, design, and long-term operation and maintenance of management measures consistent with the design standards in the overall project planning process.

"(3) APPROVAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall—

"(A) review the management measures program of each State; and

"(B) approve such a program, if the program meets the requirements of subsection (b).

"(4) UPDATES.—Not later than 5 years after the date of publication of the guidance under this subsection, and not less frequently than once every 5 years thereafter—

"(A) the Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall update the guidance, as applicable; and

"(B) each State, as applicable, shall update the management measures program of the State in accordance with the updated guidance.

"(d) REPORTING.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2)(A), each State shall submit to the Secretary an annual report that describes the activities carried out under the highway stormwater management program of the State, including a description of any reductions of stormwater runoff achieved as a result of covered projects carried out by the State after the date of enactment of this section.

"(2) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS UNDER PERMIT.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—A State shall not be required to submit an annual report described in paragraph (1) if the State—

"(i) is operating Federal-aid highways in the State in a post-construction condition in accordance with a permit issued under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.);

"(ii) is subject to an annual reporting requirement under such a permit (regardless of whether the permitting authority is a Federal or State agency); and

"(iii) carries out a covered project with respect to a Federal-aid highway in the State described in clause (i).

"(B) TRANSMISSION OF REPORT.—A Federal or State permitting authority that receives an annual report described in subparagraph (A)(i) shall, on receipt of such a report, transmit a copy of the report to the Secretary."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chapter 3 of title 23, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"330. Federal-aid highway runoff management program."

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. COONS, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 519. A bill to amend the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 to permanently reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, authorized under P.L. 105-312 in 1998 and reauthorized by P.L. 107-308 in 2002, the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network helps several million visitors and residents discover, enjoy, and learn about the special places and stories of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Today, I am introducing legislation to permanently authorize this successful 17-year-old program.

For visitors and residents, the Gateways are the “Chesapeake connection.” The network members provide an experience of such high quality that visitors indeed connect to the Chesapeake emotionally as well as intellectually, and thus to the Bay’s conservation. Through more than 160 of these sites, the Gateways Network partner sites and water trails enable visitors to experience the authentic Chesapeake.

The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure. The Chesapeake ranks as the largest of America’s 130 estuaries and one of the Nation’s largest and longest fresh water and estuarine systems. The Atlantic Ocean delivers half the bay’s 18 trillion gallons of water and the other half flows through over 150 major rivers and streams draining 64,000 square miles within 6 states and the District of Columbia. The Chesapeake watershed is among the most significant cultural, natural and historical assets of our Nation.

The Chesapeake is enormously vast and diverse—to the extent that it is impossible to experience all the culture, history and natural beauty in any one place. That is why the gateways program is designed to connect and use the scores of existing public resources to collaborate on presenting the many chapters and tales of the bay’s story. Visitors and residents go to more places for more experiences, all through a coordinated Gateways Network.

Beyond simply coordinating the network, publishing a map and guides, and providing standard exhibits at all Gateways, the National Park Service has helped gateways with matching grants and expertise for several hundred high-quality projects, developing sites to provide fishing, boating, and viewing access to the bay and its major tributaries. This is a great deal for the bay—it helps network members tell the Chesapeake story better and inspires people to care for this National Treasure, in addition to supporting local, State, and national water trails—and it’s a good deal for the Park Service. It serves all 170+ gateways and their 10 million visitors. No other National Park can provide such a dramatic ratio

of public dollars spent to number of visitors served.

With the National Park Service’s expertise and support, gateways have made significant progress in their mission to tell the Bay’s stories to their millions of members and visitors, extend access to the Bay and its watershed, and develop a conservation awareness and ethic. It is time to not only reauthorize the Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails program, but make the annual \$3 million reauthorization for this program permanent. It is my hope that the Congress will act quickly to adopt this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 519

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 “Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network Reauthorization Act”.

SEC. 2. PERMANENT REAUTHORIZATION.

Section 502(c) of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; Public Law 105-312) is amended by striking “for” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “for each fiscal year”.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 520. A bill to amend the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act to reauthorize the Act; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. More than half of the bird species found in the U.S. migrate across our borders and many of these spend our winter in Central and South America. This bill promotes international cooperation for long-term conservation, education, research, monitoring, and habitat protection for more than 350 species of neotropical migratory birds. Through its successful competitive, matching grant program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service supports public-private partnerships in countries mostly in Latin America and the Caribbean. Up to ¼ of the funds may be awarded for domestic projects.

This legislation aims to sustain healthy populations of migratory birds that are not only beautiful to look at but help our farmers by consuming billions of harmful insect and rodent pests each year, providing pollination services, and dispersing seeds. Migratory birds face threats from pesticide pollution, deforestation, sprawl, and invasive species that degrade their habitats in addition to the natural risks of their extended flights. Birds are excellent indicators of the health of an ecosystem. As such, it is troubling that, according to the National Audubon Society, half of all coastally migrating shorebirds, like the Common

Tern and Piping Plover, are experiencing dramatic population declines.

The Baltimore Oriole, the State bird of Maryland and one whose song brightens all of the Northeastern U.S., has steadily declined in population despite being protected by federal law under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and the State of Maryland’s Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act. Likewise, the iconic Red Knot bird, whose legendary 9,000 mile migration centers on a stopover in the Mid-Atlantic states, is decreasing in population quickly. Threats to these beloved Maryland birds are mainly due to habitat destruction and deforestation, particularly in the Central and South American countries where the birds winter. In addition, international use of toxic pesticides ingested by insects, which are then eaten by the birds, has significantly contributed to this decline. Conservation efforts in our country are essential, but investment in programs throughout the migratory route of these and countless other migratory birds is critical. This legislation accomplishes this goal.

The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act has a proven track record of reversing habitat loss and advancing conservation strategies for the broad range of neotropical birds that populate the United States and the rest of the Western hemisphere. Since 2002, more than \$50.1 million in grants have been awarded, supporting 451 projects in 36 countries. Partners have contributed an additional \$190.6 million, and more than 3.7 million acres of habitat have been affected.

This legislation is cost-effective, budget-friendly, and has been a highly successful Federal program. This simple reauthorization bill will make sure that this good work continues.

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. 520

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

SECTION 1. REAUTHORIZATION OF NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION ACT.

Section 10 of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 6109) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act \$6,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2020.

“(b) USE OF FUNDS.—Of the amounts made available under subsection (a) for each fiscal year, not less than 75 percent shall be expended for projects carried out at a location outside of the United States.”.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 521. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of President Station in Baltimore, Maryland, and for

other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today marks an important day in history as our Nation continues to honor the sesquicentennial of the Civil War. There are many landmarks in my hometown of Baltimore that are significant to Civil War history, which I believe are in the Nation's interests to protect for future generations. As our Nation pays tribute to this trying time in our Nation's history, I am proud to reintroduce the President Street Station Study Act, which would initiate the process for preserving one such landmark in the heart of Baltimore. President Street Station played a crucial role in the Civil War, the Underground Railroad, the growth of Baltimore's railroad industry, and is a historically significant landmark to the presidency of Abraham Lincoln.

The station was constructed for the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore, PW&B, Railroad in 1849 and remains the oldest surviving big city railroad terminal in the United States. This historical structure is a unique architectural gem, arguably the first example and last survivor of the early barrel-vault train shed arches, also known as the Howe Truss. The arch-rib design became the blueprint for railroad bridges and roofs well into the 20th century and was replicated for every similarly designed train shed and roof for the next 20 years.

The growth of President Street Station and the PW&B railroad mirror the expansion of the railroad industry throughout the country in the latter half of the 19th century. This station played an essential role in making Baltimore the first railroad and sea-rail link in the nation and helped the city become the international port hub it is today.

In its heyday, President Street Station was the key link connecting Washington, D.C. with the northeast States. Hundreds of passengers traveling north passed through this station and, by the start of the Civil War, Baltimore had become our Nation's major southern railroad hub. Not surprisingly, the station played a critical role in both the Civil War and the Underground Railroad.

Perhaps the most famous passenger to travel through the station was President Abraham Lincoln. He came through the station at least four times, including secretly on his way to his first inauguration in 1861. President-elect Lincoln was warned by a PW&B private detective of a possible assassination plot in Baltimore as he transferred trains. While it is unclear if this plot existed and posed a serious threat, Lincoln nevertheless was secretly smuggled aboard a train in the dead of night to complete his trip to Washington.

Just a few months later, President Street Station served as a backdrop for what many historians consider to be the first bloodshed of the Civil War.

The Baltimore Riot of 1861 occurred when Lincoln called for Union volunteers to quell the rebellion at Fort Sumter in Charleston. On this day in history, April 19, 1861, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania volunteers were met and attacked by a mob of secessionist and Confederate sympathizers. The bloody confrontation left four dead and 36 wounded. As the war continued, the Station remained a critical link for the Union. Troops and supplies from the north were regularly shuttled through the station to support Union soldiers.

It is well known that Maryland was a common starting point along the Underground Railroad and that many escaped slaves from Maryland's Eastern Shore plantations were destined for Baltimore and the President Street Station to travel north to freedom. Last year, Congress acted to honor Maryland's own Harriet Tubman, the Underground Railroad's most famous "conductor" by enacting the Harriet Tubman National Historical Parks Act, establishing the first set of National Historical Parks to commemorate the life of an African American woman. While Harriet Tubman personally led dozens of people to freedom, her courage and fortitude also inspired others to find their own strength to seek freedom. President Street Station was indeed a station on this secret network. Prior to emancipation in 1863, several renowned escapees, including Frederick Douglass, William and Ellen Craft, and Henry "Box" Brown, traveled through the Station, risking their lives for a better and freer life.

Others' journeys for a better life also passed through President Street Station. From its beginning and into the 20th century, Baltimore was both a destination and departure point for immigrants. New arrivals from Ireland, Russia, and Europe arriving on the eastern seaboard traveled by way of the PW&B railroads to the west.

For decades, President Street Station has long been recognized as having an important place in history: In 1992, it was listed on the National Register of Historic places and the city of Baltimore has dedicated it a local historical landmark. For many years it served as the Baltimore Civil War Museum, educating generations of people about the role Maryland and Baltimore played in the Civil War and the early history of the city. In recent years, the museum, run by dedicated volunteers from the Maryland Historical Society and Friends of President Street Station, have struggled to keep the station's doors open and keeping the station's character true to its historical roots. The area around President Street Station has changed dramatically over the decades, but the Station has worked to preserve its place in place in history. It has been many years since trains passed through the President Street Station and it is clear that today the best use for this building is to preserve the building and use it to tell station's American story.

President Street Station is an American historical treasure. This bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of President Street Station to evaluate the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Station as a unit of the National Park Service. President Street Station, a contributor to the growth of the railroad, and a vital player in the Underground Railroad, Lincoln Presidency and Civil War, is part of this history. I urge my colleagues to join me in giving this station the recognition it deserves and support this bill.

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. 521

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 "President Street Station Study Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) STUDY AREA.—The term "study area" means the President Street Station, a railroad terminal in Baltimore, Maryland, the history of which is tied to the growth of the railroad industry in the 19th century, the Civil War, the Underground Railroad, and the immigrant influx of the early 20th century.

SEC. 3. SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary shall conduct a special resource study of the study area.

(b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) evaluate the national significance of the study area;

(2) determine the suitability and feasibility of designating the study area as a unit of the National Park System;

(3) consider other alternatives for preservation, protection, and interpretation of the study area by the Federal Government, State or local government entities, or private and nonprofit organizations;

(4) consult with interested Federal agencies, State or local governmental entities, private and nonprofit organizations, or any other interested individuals; and

(5) identify cost estimates for any Federal acquisition, development, interpretation, operation, and maintenance associated with the alternatives.

(c) APPLICABLE LAW.—The study required under subsection (a) shall be conducted in accordance with section 8 of Public Law 91-383 (16 U.S.C. 1a-5).

(d) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available for the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report that describes—

(1) the results of the study; and

(2) any conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. REID, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr.

BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. COONS, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 522. A bill to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, we have made great strides in recent years ensuring that Americans of all ages have access to quality health care. Part of this success comes from the Children's Health Insurance Program created in 1997 as a joint State-Federal health insurance program for low- to moderate-income children and pregnant women.

Because of CHIP, 10 million children, including 130,000 children in my State—most of whom are sons and daughters of working parents who are in low-income jobs and not making enough money to afford insurance and for employers that typically don't offer insurance—have access to health care today—health care they may not have received otherwise.

We know CHIP works not just in the number of children insured under the program but because of the flexibility CHIP provides States and the quality of care children receive. It works. It works for children, it works for parents, and it works for communities.

That is the good news. The bad news is, even though the law is on the books until 2019, the funding for CHIP will expire in September. That is why I am proud to introduce legislation today with my colleagues Senators STABENOW, WYDEN, CASEY, and Leader REID to protect the CHIP program and to extend its funding to match the authorization until 2019.

The Protecting and Retaining our Children's Health Insurance Program—PRO-CHIP—Act is straightforward, it is common sense, and will provide much needed budget predictability for our States.

The Republican Governor of my State supports CHIP. He understands they need it in Ohio and across the country sooner rather than later so they can properly budget and plan and avoid gaps in health care for vulnerable children.

Again, these 130,000 children in my State alone are overwhelmingly sons and daughters of working parents who don't make enough money to pay for health insurance out of pocket, and who are working at companies and

businesses that don't provide health insurance.

I am honored that 30 of our Senate colleagues have already joined as cosponsors. Providing health insurance to low-income children isn't just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. Children stay healthier, families function better, neighborhoods are better off, and children do better in school as a result, with fewer sick days. They feel better when they are at school because they have a family doctor, because they have health insurance.

We know it works. Listen to these numbers: Thanks to CHIP, the number of uninsured children has fallen by half, from 14 percent in 1997—when this bill passed with bipartisan support, and it has been extended and reauthorized a couple of times since—to a record low of 7 percent in 2012.

In nearly every State of the Union, Governors planning their State budgets and parents planning their family budgets are relying on us to extend CHIP now. We should not go right up to the deadline, as some are now talking about in terms of shutting the government down. We should not go up to the deadline but do it now. It would provide a sigh of relief for parents, not only for financial reasons but because CHIP means better access to comprehensive care for their kids.

Think about the anxiety parents face knowing they have insurance today under CHIP but not being certain they will have it this time next year. We should act together to protect this vital program that provides comprehensive health care coverage for 10 million children. States will start to roll back their CHIP program and funding for the program will expire at the end of September if we don't act soon.

This has always been bipartisan. It should continue to be. I look forward to working with all my colleagues to prioritize children's health and help pass this PRO-CHIP legislation as soon as possible.

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

S. 529. A bill to improve the services available to runaway and homeless youth who are victims of trafficking, to improve the response to victims of child sex trafficking, to direct the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking to identify strategies to prevent children from becoming victims of trafficking and review trafficking prevention efforts, to protect and assist in the recovery of victims of trafficking, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today, I am introducing a measure that would help us make progress in the fight against domestic human trafficking, a terrible crime. This legislation, titled the Combating Human Trafficking Act of 2015, has three objectives. First, it would encourage federal agencies to devote existing grant resources to initiatives that are designed

to protect runaway and homeless youth from human traffickers. Second, it would update the authorizing language for the cyber tipline of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to ensure that the statute specifically references "child sex trafficking." Third, and finally, this legislation would help ensure that trafficking victims' housing needs are met and equip Congress with more information on the best practices to combat human trafficking.

The first title of this measure is based on legislation introduced by U.S. Congressman JOSEPH HECK of Nevada in January. It is titled the Enhancing Services for Runaway and Homeless Victims of Youth Trafficking Act of 2015. Similar language passed the House on January 26 by a unanimous voice vote. This part of the bill would improve the support provided specifically to runaway and homeless youth who are trafficking victims. This title also would enable the Secretary of Health and Human Services to devote existing grant resources to training grantees' personnel on the effects of human trafficking on runaway and homeless youth. Finally, this title would allow the HHS Secretary to provide street-based services to such victims.

The second title of the bill, based on a measure introduced by U.S. Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY of Ohio, would amend the Missing Children's Assistance Act to ensure that the phrase "child sex trafficking" is incorporated into the statutory language that authorizes the cyber tipline of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Nearly identical language already passed the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this year.

The final title of this legislation is known as the Human Trafficking Prevention, Intervention and Recovery Act of 2015, after a bill introduced by U.S. Congresswoman KRISTI NOEM of South Dakota. It would charge the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking with several duties, such as identifying best practices and strategies to combat human trafficking and cataloging the anti-trafficking activities of various State and Federal agencies. This task force, which was created under the 2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act, must provide a report within one year of its review and findings, under the legislation.

The third title of this legislation also calls for the Government Accountability Office to report to Congress on governmental and law enforcement efforts to combat domestic human trafficking. This title also recognizes that minors who are trafficking victims in the United States are in desperate need of housing. It would ensure that certain grants, which are available from the U.S. Department of Justice under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, can be used for initiatives to assist trafficking victims with their

housing needs. Shelters and facilities that are seeking to expand or develop services to trafficking survivors would be eligible to apply for these grant funds, under this title of the legislation. Nearly identical language passed the House last month.

I urge my colleagues to pass this vitally important legislation. I also want to extend my appreciation to my colleague from Illinois, Mr. KIRK, who has agreed to join me as an original cosponsor of this measure.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 73—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE FOR THE PERIODS MARCH 1, 2015 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2015, OCTOBER 1, 2015 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2016, AND OCTOBER 1, 2016 THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2017

Mr. BLUNT submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Rules and Administration; which was placed on the calendar:

S. RES. 73

Resolved,

SECTION 1. AGGREGATE AUTHORIZATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of carrying out the powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, and under the appropriate authorizing resolutions of the Senate, there is authorized for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015, in the aggregate of \$57,801,217, for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016, in the aggregate of \$99,087,800, and for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017, in the aggregate of \$41,286,584, in accordance with the provisions of this resolution, for standing committees of the Senate, the Special Committee on Aging, the Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Indian Affairs.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for “Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations” of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committees for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015, for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016, and for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017.

SEC. 2. COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$2,463,834, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$40,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$4,223,716, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$40,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$1,759,882, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$40,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Armed Services is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$3,783,845, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$46,667 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$17,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$6,486,591, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$80,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of indi-

vidual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$30,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$2,702,746, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$33,334 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$12,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 4. COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$3,119,153, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$8,370 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$503 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$5,347,119, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$14,348 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$861 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$2,227,966, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$5,978 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$358 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such

committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 5. COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on the Budget is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$3,534,372, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$35,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$21,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$6,058,924, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$60,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$36,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$2,524,552, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$25,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$15,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 6. COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and

the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$3,879,581, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$6,650,710, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$2,771,129, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$50,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 7. COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$3,219,522.

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$5,519,181.

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$2,299,659.

SEC. 8. COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$3,060,871, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$4,666.67 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$1,166.67 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$5,247,208, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$8,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$2,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$2,186,337, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$3,333.33 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$833.33 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 9. COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Finance is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$4,710,670, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$17,500 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$5,833 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$8,075,434, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$30,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$10,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$3,364,764, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$12,500 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$4,166 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 10. COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$3,889,028, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$58,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$11,600 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$6,666,904, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$100,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of indi-

vidual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$2,777,877, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$42,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$8,400 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 11. COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$5,105,487, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$8,752,264, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$3,646,777, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$25,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of

such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 12. COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules and S. Res. 445, agreed to October 9, 2004 (108th Congress), including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$5,591,653, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$9,585,691, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$3,994,038, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(e) INVESTIGATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The committee, or any duly authorized subcommittee of the committee, is authorized to study or investigate—

(A) the efficiency and economy of operations of all branches of the Government including the possible existence of fraud, misfeasance, malfeasance, collusion, mismanagement, incompetence, corruption or unethical practices, waste, extravagance, conflicts of interest, and the improper expenditure of Government funds in transactions, contracts, and activities of the Government or of Government officials and employees and any and all such improper practices between Government personnel and

corporations, individuals, companies, or persons affiliated therewith, doing business with the Government, and the compliance or noncompliance of such corporations, companies, or individuals or other entities with the rules, regulations, and laws governing the various governmental agencies and the Government's relationships with the public;

(B) the extent to which criminal or other improper practices or activities are, or have been, engaged in the field of labor-management relations or in groups or organizations of employees or employers, to the detriment of interests of the public, employers, or employees, and to determine whether any changes are required in the laws of the United States in order to protect such interests against the occurrence of such practices or activities;

(C) organized criminal activity which may operate in or otherwise utilize the facilities of interstate or international commerce in furtherance of any transactions and the manner and extent to which, and the identity of the persons, firms, or corporations, or other entities by whom such utilization is being made, and further, to study and investigate the manner in which and the extent to which persons engaged in organized criminal activity have infiltrated lawful business enterprise, and to study the adequacy of Federal laws to prevent the operations of organized crime in interstate or international commerce, and to determine whether any changes are required in the laws of the United States in order to protect the public against such practices or activities;

(D) all other aspects of crime and lawlessness within the United States which have an impact upon or affect the national health, welfare, and safety, including investment fraud schemes, commodity and security fraud, computer fraud, and the use of offshore banking and corporate facilities to carry out criminal objectives;

(E) the efficiency and economy of operations of all branches and functions of the Government with particular reference to—

(i) the effectiveness of present national security methods, staffing, and processes as tested against the requirements imposed by the rapidly mounting complexity of national security problems;

(ii) the capacity of present national security staffing, methods, and processes to make full use of the Nation's resources of knowledge and talents;

(iii) the adequacy of present intergovernmental relations between the United States and international organizations principally concerned with national security of which the United States is a member; and

(iv) legislative and other proposals to improve these methods, processes, and relationships;

(F) the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of all agencies and departments of the Government involved in the control and management of energy shortages including their performance with respect to—

(i) the collection and dissemination of accurate statistics on fuel demand and supply;

(ii) the implementation of effective energy conservation measures;

(iii) the pricing of energy in all forms;

(iv) coordination of energy programs with State and local government;

(v) control of exports of scarce fuels;

(vi) the management of tax, import, pricing, and other policies affecting energy supplies;

(vii) maintenance of the independent sector of the petroleum industry as a strong competitive force;

(viii) the allocation of fuels in short supply by public and private entities;

(ix) the management of energy supplies owned or controlled by the Government;

(x) relations with other oil producing and consuming countries;

(xi) the monitoring of compliance by governments, corporations, or individuals with the laws and regulations governing the allocation, conservation, or pricing of energy supplies; and

(xii) research into the discovery and development of alternative energy supplies; and

(G) the efficiency and economy of all branches and functions of Government with particular references to the operations and management of Federal regulatory policies and programs.

(2) **EXTENT OF INQUIRIES.**—In carrying out the duties provided in paragraph (1), the inquiries of this committee or any subcommittee of the committee shall not be construed to be limited to the records, functions, and operations of any particular branch of the Government and may extend to the records and activities of any persons, corporation, or other entity.

(3) **SPECIAL COMMITTEE AUTHORITY.**—For the purposes of this subsection, the committee, or any duly authorized subcommittee of the committee, or its chairman, or any other member of the committee or subcommittee designated by the chairman is authorized, in its, his, her, or their discretion—

(A) to require by subpoena or otherwise the attendance of witnesses and production of correspondence, books, papers, and documents;

(B) to hold hearings;

(C) to sit and act at any time or place during the sessions, recess, and adjournment periods of the Senate;

(D) to administer oaths; and

(E) to take testimony, either orally or by sworn statement, or, in the case of staff members of the Committee and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, by deposition in accordance with the Committee Rules of Procedure.

(4) **AUTHORITY OF OTHER COMMITTEES.**—Nothing contained in this subsection shall affect or impair the exercise of any other standing committee of the Senate of any power, or the discharge by such committee of any duty, conferred or imposed upon it by the Standing Rules of the Senate or by the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946.

(5) **SUBPOENA AUTHORITY.**—All subpoenas and related legal processes of the committee and any duly authorized subcommittee of the committee authorized under S. Res. 253, agreed to October 3, 2013 (113th Congress) are authorized to continue.

SEC. 13. COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY.

(a) **GENERAL AUTHORITY.**—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on the Judiciary is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$5,461,388, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of indi-

vidual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$9,362,379, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$3,900,991, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$200,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 14. COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION.

(a) **GENERAL AUTHORITY.**—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) **EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.**—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$1,375,819, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$43,750 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$7,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) **EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.**—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$2,358,546, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$75,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$12,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of

such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$982,728, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$31,250 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$5,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 15. COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$1,520,944, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$25,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$10,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$2,607,332, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$25,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$10,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$1,086,388, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$25,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$10,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 16. COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the

Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of such rules, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$1,283,522, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$10,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$3,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$2,200,323, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$5,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$916,801, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$8,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$1,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 17. SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions imposed by section 104 of S. Res. 4, agreed to February 4, 1977 (95th Congress), and in exercising the authority conferred on it by such section, the Special Committee on Aging is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$1,399,763, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$3,055 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual

consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$3,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$2,399,594, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$6,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$6,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$999,831, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$2,500 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$1,500 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 18. SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under S. Res. 400, agreed to May 19, 1976 (94th Congress), as amended by S. Res. 445, agreed to October 9, 2004 (108th Congress), in accordance with its jurisdiction under sections 3(a) and 17 of such S. Res. 400, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by section 5 of such S. Res. 400, the Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$3,217,448, of which not to exceed \$10,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$5,515,626, of which not to exceed \$17,144 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$2,298,177, of which not to exceed \$7,143 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i)

of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i)).

SEC. 19. COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions imposed by section 105 of S. Res. 4, agreed to February 4, 1977 (95th Congress), and in exercising the authority conferred on it by that section, the Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized from March 1, 2015 through February 28, 2017, in its discretion—

(1) to make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;

(2) to employ personnel; and

(3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and the Committee on Rules and Administration, to use on a reimbursable, or nonreimbursable, basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

(b) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015 under this section shall not exceed \$1,184,317, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 under this section shall not exceed \$2,030,258, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for training consultants of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(d) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2017.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017 under this section shall not exceed \$845,941, of which—

(1) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$20,000 may be expended for training consultants of the professional staff of such committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 20. SPECIAL RESERVE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Within the funds in the account “Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations”, there is authorized to be established a special reserve to be available to any committee funded by this resolution as provided in subsection (b) of which—

(1) for the period March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015, an amount shall be available, not to exceed 7 percent of the amount equal to $\frac{1}{12}$ th of the appropriations for the account that are available for the period October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015;

(2) for the period October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016, an amount shall be available, not to exceed 7 percent of the appropriations for the account that are available for that period; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017, an amount shall be available, not to exceed 7 percent of the amount equal to $\frac{5}{12}$ th of the appropriations for the ac-

count that are available for the period October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017.

(b) AVAILABILITY.—The special reserve authorized in subsection (a) shall be available to any committee—

(1) on the basis of special need to meet unpaid obligations incurred by that committee during the periods referred to in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of subsection (a); and

(2) at the request of a Chairman and Ranking Member of that committee subject to the approval of the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Rules and Administration.

SENATE RESOLUTION 74—DECLARING THAT ACHIEVING THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THE NATIONAL PLAN TO ADDRESS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO PREVENT AND EFFECTIVELY TREAT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE BY 2025 IS AN URGENT NATIONAL PRIORITY

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. WARNER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 74

Whereas the number of individuals in the United States with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (referred to in this preamble as “Alzheimer's”) is as high as 5,200,000, which is more than double the number in 1980;

Whereas based on the trajectory of Alzheimer's, as many as 16,000,000 individuals in the United States may have Alzheimer's by 2050;

Whereas the increasing prevalence of Alzheimer's and other dementias is a global health crisis that afflicts an estimated 44,000,000 individuals worldwide as of December, 2013 and may afflict over 135,000,000 individuals by 2050;

Whereas Alzheimer's is a leading cause of death in the United States with new data indicating that more than 500,000 deaths each year are attributable to the disease;

Whereas Alzheimer's is the only disease among the top 10 causes of death in the United States without an effective means of prevention, treatment, or cure;

Whereas Alzheimer's places an enormous financial strain on families, the health care system, and State and Federal budgets;

Whereas the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) and the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.) are estimated to bear more than two-thirds of the total costs of this care in 2015;

Whereas a RAND Corporation study published in 2013 and commissioned by the National Institute on Aging found that Alzheimer's is the costliest disease in the United States, costing more than cancer and heart disease;

Whereas in 2013, an estimated 15,500,000 family members and friends of individuals with Alzheimer's provided those individuals with 17,700,000,000 hours of unpaid care, an amount valued at more than \$220,000,000;

Whereas Alzheimer's disease has a disproportionate impact on many populations including women, African Americans, and Latinos;

Whereas the global cost of Alzheimer's exceeds \$600,000,000,000 each year, an amount

equal to approximately 1 percent of the world's gross domestic product;

Whereas in December 2013, the G-8 nations met and adopted a political declaration supporting the goal of a cure or disease-modifying therapy for dementia by 2025 as well as collectively and significantly increasing resources committed to dementia research;

Whereas Alzheimer's takes an emotional and physical toll on caregivers that results in a higher incidence of chronic conditions, such as heart disease, cancer, and depression among caregivers;

Whereas the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease of the Department of Health and Human Services enables family caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's to provide care while maintaining personal health and well-being;

Whereas the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease supports informal caregivers by—

(1) identifying the support needs of caregivers;

(2) developing and disseminating modes for intervention;

(3) providing information that caregivers need, particularly in crisis situations; and

(4) assisting caregivers in maintaining personal health and well-being;

Whereas a strong and sustained research effort is the best tool to slow the progression and ultimately prevent the onset of Alzheimer's;

Whereas while the cost to the Medicare and Medicaid programs of caring for Alzheimer's patients is estimated to be \$153,000,000,000 in 2015, the United States, through the National Institutes of Health, will spend about \$586,000,000 on Alzheimer's research in 2015;

Whereas the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care, and Services created by the National Alzheimer's Project Act (42 U.S.C. 11225) has testified before Congress that the United States must devote at least \$2,000,000,000 each year to Alzheimer's research to reach the goal of preventing and effectively treating Alzheimer's by 2025; and

Whereas the public members of the Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care, and Services unanimously agree with the testimony of the Chairman regarding the amount of money required to reach the goal for 2025; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) is committed to strengthening the quality of care and expanding support for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (referred to in this resolution as “Alzheimer's”) and family caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's;

(2) declares that achieving the primary goal of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's by 2025 is an urgent national priority;

(3) recognizes that bold action and considerable increases in funding are necessary to meet that goal;

(4) encourages greater collaboration between the United States and other global governments, particularly the G-7 nations, to advance a global Alzheimer's and dementia research plan;

(5) supports innovative public-private partnership and the pursuit of innovative financing tools, incentives and other mechanisms to accelerate the pursuit of disease-modifying therapies; and

(6) strives to—

(A) double the amount of funding the United States spends on Alzheimer's research in fiscal year 2016; and

(B) develop a plan for fiscal years 2017 through 2020 to meet the target of the Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care,

and Services for the United States to spend \$2,000,000,000 each year on Alzheimer's research.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, Alzheimer's is a terrible disease that takes a tremendous personal and economic toll on the individual, the family, and society. In addition to the human suffering it causes, Alzheimer's costs the United States an estimated \$226 billion a year, including \$153 billion from the Medicare and Medicaid Programs. These costs will only skyrocket as the baby boom generation ages. Already our Nation's costliest disease, Alzheimer's is projected to cost more than \$1.1 trillion if nothing is done to change its current trajectory. It is now estimated that nearly one in two of the baby boomers reaching age 85 will develop Alzheimer's. As a consequence, chances are that members of the baby boom generation will either be spending their golden years suffering with Alzheimer's or caring for someone who has it. In many ways Alzheimer's has become the defining disease of this generation.

If we are to prevent Alzheimer's from becoming the defining disease of the next generation, it is imperative that we dramatically increase our investment in Alzheimer's research. At a time when the United States is spending some \$226 billion a year caring for Alzheimer's patients, we are spending less than three-tenths of 1 percent of that amount—under \$600 million a year—on research. This makes no sense. We currently spend \$4.5 billion a year for cancer research, \$3 billion a year for research on HIV-AIDS, and \$2 billion for cardiovascular research—all investments that have paid dividends.

Surely we can do more for Alzheimer's given the tremendous human and economic price of this devastating disease. Investments in research for other diseases have yielded tremendous results. We see that with cancer, with HIV/AIDS. Patients have access to new treatments, and death rates for some of these diseases are decreasing. At the same time, mortality due to Alzheimer's is escalating.

Alzheimer's is one of our Nation's leading causes of death, with recent data revealing that each year more than 500,000 deaths are attributable to Alzheimer's and other dementia, 6 times the amount previously estimated. Moreover, Alzheimer's is the only one of our Nation's top 10 deadliest diseases without an effective means of prevention, treatment or a cure.

Fortunately there is promising research that holds hope for Alzheimer's patients and their families. The research community is poised to make important advances through clinical trials and by investigating new therapeutic targets, but adequate funding is critical to achieve this promise. The National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease was authorized by the bipartisan National Alzheimer's Act, which I coauthored with then-Senator Evan Bayh.

The national plan has as its primary goal to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's disease by the year 2025. The chairman of the advisory council that was created by the act, Dr. Ronald Petersen of the Mayo Clinic, has testified before Congress that the United States should be devoting \$2 billion a year at a minimum to Alzheimer's research in order to reach that goal.

A dramatic increase in funding for Alzheimer's research will not just save lives, it will also save money. According to a report issued by the Alzheimer's Association last year, a Federal investment of \$2 billion a year between now and the year 2025, as recommended by the experts on the Alzheimer's Advisory Council and the scientific community more broadly, would be recouped within the first 3 years after a treatment delaying the onset of Alzheimer's by just 5 years becomes available.

I am therefore pleased to be introducing today, with my colleagues Senators KLOBUCHAR, MIKULSKI, WARNER, DURBIN, and STABENOW, a resolution declaring that the goal of preventing and effectively treating Alzheimer's is an urgent national priority. In recognition of the fact that bold action and considerable increases in funding are necessary to meet that goal, our resolution states that the Senate will strive to double the amount of funding the United States spends on Alzheimer's research in fiscal year 2016 and that we will develop a plan to meet the target of \$2 billion over the next 5 years.

Our bill is supported by a number of organizations including the Alzheimer's Association, UsAgainstAlzheimer's, the Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer's Disease—or the LEAD Coalition—and the Alzheimer's Foundation of America.

I ask unanimous consent that the letters from these organizations be printed in the RECORD.

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

LEAD—LEADERS ENGAGED
ON ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE,
February 11, 2015.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
Chairman, Special Committee on Aging, U.S.
Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COLLINS: As executive director of Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer's Disease (the LEAD Coalition), I write to thank you for your inspirational leadership in reintroducing the Senate resolution to strengthen care and support, encourage greater international collaboration, incentivize private sector research, double federal investments in Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research in FY 2016, and bring annual federal investments to at least \$2 billion by 2020. Your resolution is an important next step toward each of these vital goals and the LEAD Coalition will continue to work arm-in-arm with you and your colleagues to realize the resolution's promise.

There are few more compelling or complex issues to confront our aging society now and over the coming decades than Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (including vas-

cular, Lewy body or frontotemporal dementia). Its place as a national priority was made clear by the effort you led resulting in unanimous congressional passage of the National Alzheimer's Project Act. That law directed creation of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and, as you know, the National Plan's goal number one is to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's disease and related dementias by 2025.

In fact, as your resolution highlights, Alzheimer's disease and related dementias are an urgent national priority that impose enormous costs to our nation's health and prosperity, costs that are skyrocketing. Today, more than five million Americans have dementia at an annual cost to our economy exceeding \$200 billion. Alzheimer's disease contributes to the deaths of approximately 500,000 Americans each year, making it the third leading cause of death in the United States. If the current trajectory of the disease persists, between 13 million and 16 million Americans will have dementia in 2050 and total costs of care are projected to exceed (inflation adjusted 2014 dollars) \$1 trillion annually. The federal government, through Medicare and Medicaid payments, shoulders an estimated 70 percent of all such direct care costs.

Globally, the stakes of American scientific leadership are higher still. Today, 44 million people have dementia with annual costs exceeding \$600 billion or about one percent of the world's GDP. If the current trajectory of the disease persists, upwards of 135 million persons worldwide will have dementia in 2050. American scientific leadership is nowhere more urgent than in Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Congress, the President and NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins have overcome enormous obstacles to increase funding and prioritization of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research over the past several years. The National Institute on Aging (NIA) and other NIH institutes—such as the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering, the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development—are supporting a number of promising research projects to: understand the genetic risk factors, address the disproportionate impact on women, African Americans, Hispanics, and persons with intellectual disabilities; and pursue cutting-edge but costly and time consuming trials aimed at preventing or substantially slowing disease progression by administering treatments much earlier in the disease process. These resources of time, talent and treasure are precious and indefensibly scarce. We owe it to the taxpayers, to the research community and—most of all—to people living with, or at risk of, Alzheimer's disease and related dementias to provide adequate and necessary resources proportionate to the disease burden, unmet medical need, and our nation's ethical and moral compass.

The broad, diverse, and unified Alzheimer's disease and related dementias community—working together as the LEAD Coalition—deeply admires and appreciates your remarkable leadership on this and so many other issues of vital importance to our nation's cognitive health, economic well-being, and global scientific leadership. We look forward to working with you for passage of the resolution and subsequent congressional action on each of its goals.

Sincerely,

IAN KREMER, Esq.,
Executive Director,
LEAD Coalition.

USAGAINSTALZHEIMERS,
February 10, 2015.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
Chairman, Special Committee on Aging, U.S.
Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COLLINS: On behalf of USAgainstAlzheimers, the national movement committed to mobilizing the nation around the goal of stopping Alzheimer's by 2020, I am writing to applaud you for recognizing the mounting threat of Alzheimer's and dementia and for leading the call for the level of public resources that are necessary to stop this disease before it destroys our nation's health and finances.

As you are well aware from your extensive history of leadership against Alzheimer's and dementia, more than five million Americans are currently suffering from this disease, and millions more are impacted as family members and caregivers. Economic estimates suggest that Alzheimer's disease costs the nation upwards of \$200 billion each year, with about 70 percent of costs shouldered by Medicare and Medicaid. Direct care costs of Alzheimer's have been found to be larger than similar costs of cancer and heart disease, and a groundbreaking 2014 study from Rush University indicates that more than 500,000 deaths each year are attributable to Alzheimer's disease, six times more than the levels that have been reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Fortunately, thanks to your leadership several years ago, our nation has a National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease that established as goal one preventing and effectively treating the disease by 2025, a mere 10 years away. As your resolution recognizes, while we can set bold goals, we simply will not achieve them absent the appropriation of necessary resources. I commend you for being a champion in Congress behind measures to substantially increase the amount of public resources committed to Alzheimer's disease research so we can reach the level of \$2 billion in annual funding that multiple experts have estimated as being needed to maximize our chances of achieving the 2025 goal.

I understand the multiple fiscal challenges confronting the nation. At the same time, we must recognize that the question is not whether or not we will pay for Alzheimer's. We are paying, dearly, today, and we will pay even more tomorrow unless we redouble efforts to achieve scientific breakthroughs and develop therapies and means of prevention. Your resolution outlines a sensible track to achieve the necessary level of funding within a timeframe during which we can achieve the necessary impact, and makes clear that preventing and treating Alzheimer's disease must be a national priority.

Thank you, again, for your tremendous leadership on behalf of all Americans impacted by this disease.

Sincerely,

GEORGE VRADENBURG,
Founder and Chairman.

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, February 11, 2015.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. AMY KLOBUCHAR,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR COLLINS AND SENATOR KLOBUCHAR: On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association and its nationwide network of advocates, thank you for your continued leadership on issues and legislation important to Americans with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. The Alzheimer's Association proudly supports your most recent Alzheimer's resolution, which supports the goals of National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease.

The Alzheimers Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in

Alzheimers care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease and other dementias through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's.

As one of our nation's strongest voices on behalf of Americans living with Alzheimer's, you know that more than 5 million Americans are living with the disease, and without significant action, as many as 16 million Americans will have Alzheimer's by 2050. A 2013 study funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and published in the New England Journal of Medicine further confirmed that Alzheimer's disease is the most expensive disease in America. Additionally, as the baby boomer generation ages, one in eight will develop Alzheimer's. This explosive growth will cause Alzheimers costs to Medicare and Medicaid to increase from \$153 billion today to nearly \$800 billion in 2050 (in today's dollars) and threatens to bankrupt families, businesses and our health care system. Unfortunately, our work is only growing more urgent.

The passage of the National Alzheimer's Project Act in 2010, and the subsequent release of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease, marks a new era for Alzheimers disease and other dementias. Achieving the first goal of the National Plan, to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's disease by 2025, and supporting individuals with the disease and their caregivers are critical to the success of this legislation.

The Alzheimers Association deeply appreciates your continued leadership on behalf of all American's living with Alzheimer's. If you have any questions about this or any other legislation, please contact Rachel Conant, Director of Federal Affairs, at rconant@alz.org or at 202.638.7121.

Sincerely,

ROBERT EGGE,
Executive Vice President,
Government Affairs, Alzheimer's Association.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, we have to face the facts that if we do not invest in Alzheimer's research at the levels the experts tell us is necessary to develop effective treatments for this disease or perhaps a means of prevention or eventually a cure, this disease is going to continue to cause untold suffering not only for its victims but for its families, and it will bankrupt America's health care system.

I urge our colleagues to join us as co-sponsors. I want, in particular, to recognize my partner in this effort, the Senator from Minnesota, Ms. KLOBUCHAR. The home of the Mayo Clinic is in her State. She has been stalwart in supporting the efforts to increase funding for Alzheimer's research.

With that, I am very pleased to yield to my partner, Senator KLOBUCHAR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor to join my friend and colleague from Maine, Senator COLLINS, who has for so long been a leader on this issue. I thank her for that and thank her for her very strong remarks.

This is a horrible disease. Senator COLLINS did a very good job of going through the costs to our country. Mr. President, 5.2 million Americans are

already living with Alzheimer's, and by 2050 an estimated 13.5 million Americans will be living with the disease. Also, \$226 billion is being spent in 2015 caring for individuals with Alzheimer's, and by 2050 costs will reach \$1.1 trillion.

Those are the numbers. They are pretty stunning numbers, but I think we all know we are not just here to talk about the numbers. We are here to talk about the people. Every single Senator in this Chamber knows someone who is suffering from Alzheimer's or someone who has died from Alzheimer's. So this resolution, yes, it is about the numbers and being smarter about how we spend our money to prevent this horrible disease from occurring in the first place, but it is also for that daughter who goes to see her mom every day in the assisted living care facility and with each and every day her mom's memory slips away to the point where she does not remember who she is anymore.

It is for that wife who has valiantly cared for her husband as it gets harder and harder and harder as he goes wandering around the neighborhood and gets lost. She does not know if she can leave him at home anymore. That is what this is about. Every single person in this Chamber and every single person back home knows of someone who suffers from this disease.

The only way to stem the tide of this devastating disease is through, as the great Senator from Maine mentioned, through research. Yes, a lot of that research is going on in Minnesota, both at the University of Minnesota and at the Mayo Clinic. If we were able to delay the onset of Alzheimer's by just 5 years, similar to the effect that anticholesterol drugs have had on preventing heart disease, we would be able to significantly cut the government's spending on Alzheimer's care, but more importantly we would be able to give these families extra years, extra time, less time battling this disease.

We all know the answers to Alzheimer's will not just drop out of the sky. If that was true, it would have been cured a long time ago. It will take dedicated scientists, advanced research initiatives, and skilled doctors with knowledge of the disease to conduct trials and care for as many patients as possible until we find a cure.

That is why we are coming together for this important resolution, which resolves simply that the Senate will strive to double the funding the United States spends on Alzheimer's research in 2016 and will develop a plan to meet the target of \$2 billion a year in Alzheimer's research funding over the next 5 years.

As Senator COLLINS mentioned, this effort is led on the national level by Dr. Ronald Petersen, a Minnesota native and a leading researcher. He agrees this is the time to move forward to get this research done. What kind of research are we talking about? I remember first hearing about some of the

work Mayo had done and realizing they were focusing on trying to identify this disease early to be able to figure out if people were getting it early.

I thought: That is great, but how does that help? They still have the disease. What I learned is the earlier they can identify the disease, then the earlier they can start those trials so they can tell what is working or not. If they wait too long to identify the disease, it is nearly impossible to tell what kind of potential cures work and what do not.

This is a very important part of this initiative, which is to be able to immediately identify what those risk factors are when they think someone actually has Alzheimer's. Two years ago the United States launched the BRAIN Initiative, which is a national research effort to map the human brain in hopes of finding new ways to prevent and cure brain diseases. Similar to the Human Genome Project, I think we can expect this initiative to truly be a game-changer that stimulates the next generation of scientific development.

There is always more knowledge we need to get. There are always more treatments to discover. There are more diseases to cure. That is why it is so important that we continue funding and actually increase funding to the National Institutes of Health. Earlier this year I introduced, with Senator DURBIN and others, a bill to boost funding for NIH by 5 percent a year and also other key Federal research agencies. The American Cures Act would reverse the trend of declining Federal investment in medical research and fuel the next generation of biomedical discoveries.

I care a lot about this. During the government shutdown I will never forget Senator COLLINS once again led the effort to find our way out of that with 14 of us in a bipartisan effort. I gave my entire salary to NIH because I wanted to make the point that every day we go without developing that cure for Alzheimer's, without supporting our scientists who are doing that work, is another day where someone else dies of this disease. It is another loved one we lose.

Another effort I think is very important when we look at this is precision medicine. We should be supporting efforts to further the field of precision medicine, which holds the promise of revolutionizing the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases. By better understanding genetic variations within diseases such as Alzheimer's, we can develop targeted, more effective treatments.

Of course caregivers are the last thing I wish to talk about. If you know someone with Alzheimer's, then you also know their family member or their friend who is taking care of them. Many of the caregivers have children themselves. That is why they are called the sandwich generation. They are literally sandwiched between taking care of their own children and tak-

ing care of their aging mother or father.

Just as we addressed the needs of moms and dads in the 1970s, started working on things such as childcare benefits, we must now address the needs of our working sons and daughters and those who are simply devoting their lives to taking care of an aging relative, someone with Alzheimer's. This goes on every day. People have decided to quit their jobs or they have to decide to take a different job or they have to decide to go part time simply to take care of their loved one.

In 2013 more than 15 million family members and friends cared for someone with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia, often at the expense of their own jobs and their own well-being. That is why I am continuing to work on legislation called the Americans Giving Care to Elders Act that would give family caregivers a tax credit and other assistance to help alleviate the financial burdens that come with caring for a loved one.

So these are some ideas, but we know at its core the best thing to do is to stop this terrible disease from the beginning. That means living up to the expectations the people of this country have for us; that is, to do what is best for them; that is, to put forward the dollars we need to do the research.

I know some great doctors in Minnesota and across the country who will put that money to good use.

Let's go forward, let's cure this disease, and we call on the Senate to pass the resolution Senator COLLINS and I are submitting.

SENATE RESOLUTION 75—DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2015, AS "NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH"

Mr. DURBIN (for Mr. REID of Nevada (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE)) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 75

Whereas although dating violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking affect women regardless of age, teenage girls and young women are especially vulnerable;

Whereas a 2013 survey by the Center for Disease Control found that nearly 10 percent of high school students reported physical victimization and 10 percent reported sexual victimization from a dating partner in the 12 months before they were surveyed;

Whereas according to the Center for Disease Control, nearly 1,500,000 high school students experience physical abuse from a dating partner each year;

Whereas a 1997 Commonwealth Fund survey found that more than ¼ of high school girls had been either sexually abused, physically abused, or abused by a date or boyfriend;

Whereas the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that females between the ages of 16 and 24 experience intimate partner violence at a rate that is almost triple the national average;

Whereas in 2008, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency reported that ap-

proximately 1 in 3 adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a rate that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting young people;

Whereas a 2012 study, as part of an independent evaluation of Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships, an initiative aimed at building healthy relationships among middle school youth, found that teen dating violence behaviors were common even among seventh grade students, with nearly 1 in 6 students reporting physical dating violence;

Whereas according to data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, almost 20 percent of teenage girls who were exposed to physical dating violence did not attend school on 1 or more occasions during the 30 days preceding the survey because the girls felt unsafe at school or on the way to or from school;

Whereas schools are unequipped to handle the issue of teen dating violence, as a recent study by Ball State University found that—

(1) 81 percent of school counselors reported that they did not have a school protocol on how to respond to an incident of teen dating violence; but

(2) 61 percent of school counselors reported that they had assisted victims of dating-related violence in the past 2 years, despite a lack of formal training for some of the counselors;

Whereas a study published in Pediatrics suggests that teen dating violence "is a substantial public health problem" because victims of teen dating violence are—

(1) at increased risk of mood and behavior problems as young adults; and

(2) at increased risk for future violent relationships;

Whereas girls victimized by a teen boyfriend reported more heavy drinking, smoking, depression, and thoughts of suicide, and teens of both sexes who were in aggressive relationships were 2 to 3 times more likely to be in violent relationships as young adults;

Whereas being physically or sexually abused makes teenage girls up to 6 times more likely to become pregnant and more than twice as likely to contract a sexually transmitted disease;

Whereas according to the 2009 Parent/Teen Dating Violence Poll by Liz Claiborne Inc., although 82 percent of parents are confident that they could recognize the signs if their child was experiencing dating abuse, 58 percent of parents could not correctly identify all of the warning signs of abuse;

Whereas 74 percent of teenage boys and 66 percent of teenage girls report that they have not had a conversation with a parent about dating abuse in the past year;

Whereas 1 in 4 teens in a relationship report having been called names, harassed, or put down by a partner through the use of a telephone, including through texting;

Whereas according to the 2010 College Dating Violence and Abuse Poll by Liz Claiborne Inc., 43 percent of college women who date report experiencing abusive dating behaviors;

Whereas 70 percent of college students who experienced relationship abuse failed to realize that they were in an abusive relationship at the time, and 60 percent of college students who were in an abusive relationship said that no one stepped in to help them;

Whereas the severity of violence among intimate partners has been shown to be greater in cases where a pattern of violence was established during adolescence;

Whereas primary prevention programs are a key part of addressing teen dating violence, and successful examples of these programs include education, community outreach, and social marketing campaigns that are culturally appropriate;

Whereas educating middle school students and the parents of middle school students about the importance of building healthy relationships and preventing teen dating violence is key to deterring dating abuse before it begins;

Whereas skilled assessment and intervention programs are necessary for young victims and abusers; and

Whereas the establishment of the month of February 2015, as National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month will benefit schools, communities, and families regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or sex: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the month of February 2015, as “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month”;

(2) supports communities that are empowering teenagers to develop healthier relationships throughout their lives; and

(3) calls upon the people of the United States, including young people, parents, schools, law enforcement officials, State and local officials, and interested groups to observe National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month with appropriate programs and activities that promote awareness and prevention of teen dating violence in their communities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 76—WELCOMING THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL TO THE UNITED STATES FOR HIS ADDRESS TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COTTON, Mr. LEE, Mr. HELLER, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. MORAN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. VITTER, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. RISCH, Mr. DAINES, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SASSE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BURR, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. PERDUE, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. COATS, Mr. KIRK, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. ENZI, Mr. PAUL, and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 76

Whereas, since its founding in 1948, Israel has been a strong and steadfast ally to the United States in the Middle East, a region characterized by instability and violence;

Whereas the United States-Israel relationship is built on mutual respect for common values, including a commitment to democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, free-market principles, and ethnic and religious diversity;

Whereas the strong cultural, religious, and political ties shared by the United States and Israel help form a bond between our countries that should never be broken;

Whereas Israel continues to serve as a shining model of democratic values by regularly holding free and fair elections, pro-

moting the free exchange of ideas, and vigorously exercising a form of democratic government that is fully representative of its citizens;

Whereas nations such as Iran and Syria, as well as designated foreign terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas, refuse to recognize Israel's right to exist, continually call for its destruction, and have repeatedly attacked Israel either directly or through proxies;

Whereas, in particular, the Government of Iran's ongoing pursuit of nuclear weapons poses a tremendous threat both to the United States and Israel;

Whereas the negotiations between the so-called P5+1 countries and Iran over its illicit nuclear weapons program are entering a key phase, and Congress has heard the perspectives, both publicly and privately, of a number of close allies involved in the negotiations; and

Whereas the United States is committed to ensuring that Israel, as a strong and trusted ally, maintains its qualitative military edge: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) warmly welcomes the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, on his visit to the United States, which provides a timely opportunity to reinforce the United States-Israel relationship;

(2) eagerly awaits the address of Prime Minister Netanyahu before a joint session of the United States Congress;

(3) reaffirms its commitment to stand with Israel during times of uncertainty;

(4) continues to strongly support Israel's right to defend itself from threats to its very survival; and

(5) reaffirms its unequivocal and bipartisan support for the friendship between the people and Governments of the United States and Israel.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to speak on another matter, and that is an event that should be a historic and momentous event that is scheduled to take place on the other side of the Capitol early next month. For the third time since he has been Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu will be speaking to a joint session of Congress.

In his invitation, the Speaker of the House indicated that the reason for the invitation is because of the grave threats radical Islam and the Iranian regime pose to our security and our way of life. I cannot think of a more timely or a more critical subject for the American people to hear about from one of the world's great leaders.

For some reason, some people are trying to turn this into a public controversy, but to me and I imagine to many others, it is mystifying and somewhat disappointing. The reasons for supporting and defending the nation of Israel are obvious: Both of our countries are pluralistic democracies with a staunch commitment to liberty, equality, and human rights; both of our countries are threatened by radical Islam; and both of our countries have responded to that threat while remaining free and open societies. Those are the reasons why most Americans stand with Israel and why U.S. aid to Israel enjoys such overwhelming support among Members of both parties here in Congress. Indeed, we have no closer Middle Eastern ally than Israel and I

would argue no bigger Middle Eastern adversary than the country of Iran.

I would also argue that we have no bigger foreign policy challenges than stopping the Iranian drive for nuclear weapons and keeping those weapons out of the hands of terrorists. A nuclear Iran would make this world a far more dangerous place. For starters, it would dramatically increase Iranian leverage, Iranian power, and Iranian aggression in the Middle East. We must remember that this is the same regime that has continued to violently target the United States since 1979. It is the same regime that has been on the State Department's terrorism blacklist since 1984. It is the same regime that not too long ago was plotting to blow up a restaurant right here in Washington, DC.

I was reminded that 1983, with the bombing of our Embassy in Beirut—a largely forgotten historical moment—was the beginning of America's deadly encounter with the political Islamist movement. It was also the birth of the Shiite political entity we know today by the name of Hezbollah, supported by Iran.

Perhaps most poignantly, the Government of Iran refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist, has continually called for its destruction, and has repeatedly attacked Israel either directly or through proxies. Make no mistake—Iran's ongoing pursuit of nuclear weapons poses a tremendous threat to the United States and to our ally Israel.

Given the very clear and present danger to the nation of Israel and the dangers they face on a perpetual basis from their neighbors in the region—Iran—the U.S.-Israel alliance has never been more important than it is today.

Israel is a shining model of democratic values for nations around the world. It is a great example for others to follow in the Middle East. The strong cultural, religious, and political ties shared by the United States and Israel have helped form a bond between our countries that should never be broken.

Now more than ever, the people of Israel need reassurance that we remain committed to seeing that their nation, as a strong and trusted ally, maintain its qualitative military edge in the face of ongoing threats from nations such as Iran and Syria and terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. That is why today we have filed a resolution here in the Senate welcoming Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu when he addresses a joint session of Congress next month. This resolution reaffirms the Senate's commitment to stand with Israel during times of uncertainty. It reaffirms this body's strong support for Israel's right to defend itself from threats to its very survival. And it reaffirms the Senate's unequivocal support for the friendship between the governments of our two nations.

As of this morning a majority of the Senate has signed on as a cosponsor to

this resolution, and this afternoon we are signing a "Dear Colleague" letter, which, as the Presiding Officer knows, invites all 100 Senators to join in support of this resolution. I hope the rest of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in welcoming the Prime Minister to Washington so we can continue to work together as he articulates in graphic detail, as no one else can, the threat of a nuclear Iran. During this time of such great instability and danger in the Middle East, the United States cannot afford to waver in our commitment to one of our closest and most important allies.

SENATE RESOLUTION 77—DESIGNATING FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2015, AS "\$2.13 DAY"

Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. BOXER, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 77

Whereas \$2.13 per hour is the Federal minimum wage that an employer is required to pay a tipped employee (as defined in section 3(t) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 203(t))) as a cash wage under section 3(m) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 203(m)) (referred to in this preamble as the "Federal minimum wage for a tipped employee");

Whereas when the Federal minimum wage for a tipped employee was established in 1966, such wage was linked to the Federal minimum wage for a covered nonexempt employee under section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1));

Whereas while the Federal minimum wage for a covered nonexempt employee increased in 2009, the Federal minimum wage for a tipped employee has not changed in more than 20 years;

Whereas in the 1980s, the Federal minimum wage for a tipped employee reached 60 percent of the Federal minimum wage for a covered nonexempt employee, and in 2015, the Federal minimum wage for a tipped employee is only 29 percent of the \$7.25 per hour Federal minimum wage for a covered nonexempt employee;

Whereas tipped employees work in many occupations, including working as restaurant servers, airport attendants, hotel workers, valets, and salon workers;

Whereas \$2.13 per hour is such a low wage that tipped employees are dependent on the discretionary contributions of consumers for the majority of their income;

Whereas 7 States have 1 minimum wage for both tipped employees and covered nonexempt employees, and the restaurant industry has continued to thrive in such States;

Whereas in States with a minimum wage for a tipped employee that is higher than \$2.13 per hour, the poverty rate for tipped employees is lower than the poverty rate for tipped employees in States without such a higher minimum wage for tipped employees;

Whereas restaurant servers have a poverty rate that is 3 times higher than the poverty rate of the general workforce and are nearly 2 times more likely to depend on the supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) than the general workforce;

Whereas States with a minimum wage for a tipped employee of \$2.13 per hour have a

poverty rate for employees of color that is more than 10 percent higher than such poverty rate in States that require the same minimum wage for tipped employees as other covered nonexempt employees;

Whereas women account for 67 percent of all tipped employees and approximately 70 percent of food servers and bartenders;

Whereas 25 percent of all tipped employees are parents who work hard to support their families;

Whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics projected that from 2008 to 2018, the food preparation and serving sector, as defined by the Bureau, would add more than 1,000,000 jobs;

Whereas such food preparation and serving sector has a mean wage of \$24,860, nearly \$25,000 less than the mean wage for all occupations in the United States; and

Whereas raising the Federal minimum wage for a tipped employee would provide hardworking people in the United States with more just wages, lift families in the United States out of poverty, and provide economic security to tipped employees in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the Senate designates Friday, February 13, 2015, as "\$2.13 Day"; and

(2) it is the sense of the Senate that the cash wage that an employer is required to pay a tipped employee (as defined in section 3(t) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 203(t))) under section 3(m) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 203(m)) should be increased to 70 percent of the Federal minimum wage for a covered nonexempt employee under section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)).

SENATE RESOLUTION 78—RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF JERRY TARKANIAN, FORMER HEAD BASKETBALL COACH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. REID of Nevada) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 78

Whereas Jerry Tarkanian was born August 8, 1930, in Euclid, Ohio, graduated from Fresno State in 1955, and earned a Master's degree from the University of Redlands in 1956;

Whereas Jerry Tarkanian is survived by his wife, 4 children, and 11 grandchildren;

Whereas Jerry Tarkanian never had a losing season during the 19 years he coached the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) men's basketball team from 1973 to 1992, leading the "Runnin' Rebels" to a 509-105 record, 4 Final Four appearances, and the 1990 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Men's Basketball National Championship;

Whereas UNLV won the 1990 championship game by defeating the Duke University Blue Devils 103 to 73, the highest margin of victory in a championship game in NCAA Division I history;

Whereas Jerry Tarkanian unified the Las Vegas community, and became beloved by Nevadans and many more throughout the United States who watched as Tarkanian coached his teams to victory in the Thomas & Mack Center (also known as "the Shark Tank"), often while nervously chewing a towel at courtside;

Whereas over the course of a 38-year career that spanned high school, junior college, Division I of the NCAA, and the National Basketball Association, Jerry Tarkanian won

990 career games and received the 1983 United Press International Coach of the Year award;

Whereas Jerry Tarkanian's immeasurable contributions to the game of basketball, which included his signature usage of the amoeba defense to wear down opposing teams, were recognized when he was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame in 2013; and

Whereas Jerry Tarkanian's off-the-court contributions to Las Vegas and the entire State of Nevada are admired and deeply appreciated by all who call Nevada home: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of Jerry Tarkanian; and

(2) requests the Secretary of the Senate to prepare an official copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Jerry Tarkanian.

SENATE RESOLUTION 79—HONORING DEAN EDWARDS SMITH, FORMER HEAD COACH FOR THE MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 79

Whereas Dean Edwards Smith, born in Emporia, Kansas, on February 28, 1931, spent 44 years dedicating himself to the sport of collegiate basketball;

Whereas Dean Edwards Smith was educated at the University of Kansas and was a member of the men's basketball team for the University of Kansas, which won a National Collegiate Athletic Association (referred to in this preamble as the "NCAA") title in 1952;

Whereas Dean Edwards Smith served as an assistant coach for the men's basketball team for the University of Kansas in 1953 after he graduated;

Whereas Dean Edwards Smith served as an assistant coach for the men's basketball team for the United States Air Force Academy from 1954 through 1958;

Whereas Dean Edwards Smith coached the men's basketball team for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as an assistant coach from 1958 through 1961, and as the head coach from 1961 through 1997;

Whereas Dean Edwards Smith, during his time at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, led the men's basketball program to 11 appearances in the semifinals of the NCAA tournament (commonly known as the "Final Four"), 2 NCAA championships in 1982 and 1993, and 1 National Invitation Tournament in 1971, becoming the most successful men's collegiate basketball coach at the time of his retirement with 879 career victories;

Whereas Dean Edwards Smith led the men's basketball team for the United States to a gold medal in the 1976 Olympics; and

Whereas Dean Edwards Smith made invaluable contributions to his community, State, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) has profound sorrow and deep regret at the announcement of the death of Dean Edwards Smith; and

(2) requests the Secretary of the Senate to prepare an official copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Dean Edwards Smith.

SENATE RESOLUTION 80—RECOGNIZING THE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. REID, and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 80

Whereas Lunar New Year begins on the second new moon following the winter solstice, or the first day of the new year according to the lunisolar calendar, and extends until the full moon 15 days later;

Whereas February 19, 2015, marks the first day of Lunar New Year for calendar year 2015;

Whereas the 15th day of the new year, according to the lunisolar calendar, is called the Lantern Festival;

Whereas Lunar New Year is often referred to as “Spring Festival” in various Asian countries;

Whereas many religious and ethnic communities use lunar-based calendars;

Whereas Lunar New Year began in China more than 4,000 years ago and is widely celebrated in East and Southeast Asia;

Whereas the Asian diaspora has expanded the Lunar New Year celebration into an annual worldwide event;

Whereas Lunar New Year is celebrated by millions of Asian Americans, and by many non-Asian Americans, in the United States;

Whereas Lunar New Year is celebrated with community activities and cultural performances;

Whereas participants celebrating Lunar New Year travel to spend the holiday reuniting with family and friends; and

Whereas Lunar New Year is traditionally a time to wish upon others good fortune, health, prosperity, and happiness: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the cultural and historical significance of Lunar New Year;

(2) in observance of Lunar New Year, expresses its deepest respect for Asian Americans and all individuals throughout the world who celebrate this significant occasion; and

(3) wishes Asian Americans and all individuals who observe this holiday a happy and prosperous new year.

SENATE RESOLUTION 81—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT CHILDREN TRAFFICKED FOR SEX IN THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT BE TREATED OR REGARDED AS CHILD PROSTITUTES BECAUSE THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A “CHILD PROSTITUTE”, ONLY CHILDREN WHO ARE VICTIMS OR SURVIVORS OF RAPE AND SEX TRAFFICKING

Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 81

Whereas the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimates that hundreds of thousands of children in the United States are at risk of being commercially exploited through sex trafficking;

Whereas children as young as 11 years old may be subjected to the commercial sex market as victims of sex trafficking;

Whereas many child victims of sex trafficking have experienced previous physical or sexual abuse, vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit to manipulate the victims into a life of sexual slavery through sex trafficking;

Whereas many child victims of sex trafficking are hidden in plain view, standing at bus stops, in runaway and homeless youth shelters, and advertised online; and

Whereas many child victims of sex trafficking who have not yet attained the age of consent are arrested and detained for juvenile prostitution or status offenses directly related to their exploitation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) encourages the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, and Labor, and all other relevant Federal entities, to treat children trafficked for sex as victims or survivors of rape and sex trafficking;

(2) supports efforts to arrest and prosecute sex traffickers and buyers of children trafficked for sex, in accordance with applicable State and Federal sex trafficking statutes, and State child protection laws against abuse and statutory rape, in order to take all necessary measures to protect the most vulnerable children in the United States;

(3) supports survivors of child sex trafficking, including efforts to raise awareness of this tragedy and of the comprehensive services necessary to heal from the trauma of sexual violence and exploitation;

(4) urges lawmakers, law enforcement, the media, and the public to reframe the trafficking of children for sex as an act of violence against children and not as mere vice, prostitution, or sex work, because there is no such thing as a “child prostitute”, only children who are victims or survivors of rape and sex trafficking; and

(5) supports an end to the demand for children in the commercial sex market, by supporting efforts to ensure that children in the United States are not for sale and that any person who is trafficking or purchasing a child for sex shall be punished under the full force of the law.

SENATE RESOLUTION 82—COMMENDING KATHLEEN ALVAREZ TRITAK ON HER SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. ALEXANDER, 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. CORKER, 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. SULIVAN, 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. 82

Whereas Kathie Alvarez Tritak, a native of Louisiana, began her career as a 7th grade history teacher before coming to work in the Office of Secretary of the Senate in 1984;

Whereas Kathie Alvarez Tritak, has served the Senate with distinction as a staff member in the Senate Document Room, as an assistant Bill Clerk, as Bill Clerk, as an assistant Legislative Clerk and as Legislative Clerk;

Whereas Kathie Alvarez Tritak set many milestones in Senate history, including becoming the first female Bill Clerk, the first female Legislative Clerk and, in 1991, the first female to take a roll call vote in the Senate;

Whereas Kathie Alvarez Tritak has, since 2008, served as the Senate's Legislative Clerk and Director of Legislative Services, supervising 36 employees and has at all times discharged her duties faithfully;

Whereas Kathie Alvarez Tritak's distinctive southern accent is known to all in the Senate the press gallery and the C-SPAN audience;

Whereas Kathie Alvarez Tritak has earned the respect and affection of the Senators, their staffs and her colleagues for her dedication to the institution of the Senate; and

Whereas Kathie Alvarez Tritak now retires from the Senate after 30 years to spend more time with her husband, John, and their daughter, Georgia: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate expresses its appreciation to Kathie Alvarez Tritak and commends her for her lengthy, faithful and outstanding service to the Senate.

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate shall transmit a copy of this resolution to Kathleen Alvarez Tritak.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 251. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CARDIN) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 52, calling for the release of Ukrainian fighter pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who was captured by Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine and has been held illegally in a Russian prison since July 2014.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 251. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CARDIN) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 52, calling for the release of Ukrainian fighter pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who was captured by Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine and has been held illegally in a Russian prison since July 2014; as follows:

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following: “That the Senate—

(1) condemns the Government of the Russian Federation for its illegal imprisonment of Nadiya Savchenko;

(2) calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to immediately release Nadiya Savchenko;

(3) calls on the United States, its European allies, and the international community to aggressively support diplomatic efforts to release Nadiya Savchenko; and

(4) expresses solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 12, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 12, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 12, 2015, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "Regulatory Relief for Community Banks and Credit Unions."

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 12, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 12, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 12, 2015, at 9:45 a.m.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 12, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Mark Baba, a detailee on the Finance Committee, be allowed on the Senate floor for the remainder of the day.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Maj. Warren Bruce, a Marine fellow in my office, be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of the legislative session.

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

AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 18, S. Res. 73.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 73) authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015, October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016, and October 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017.

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 and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 73) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF UKRAINIAN FIGHTER PILOT NADIYA SAVCHENKO

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 52 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 52) calling for the release of Ukrainian fighter pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who was captured by Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine and has been held illegally in a Russian prison since July 2014.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the plight of Ukrainian fighter

pilot Nadiya Savchenko. My resolution, S. Res. 52, which Senators WICKER, BROWN, RUBIO, and GARDNER have co-sponsored, calls for the release of former Ukrainian fighter pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who has been languishing in Russian prisons since she was abducted by pro-Russian forces in eastern Ukraine last July and illegally transferred across the border in handcuffs and with a bag over her head.

In the 8 months Nadiya has been incarcerated on specious and unsubstantiated charges, she has endured interrogations, involuntary psychiatric evaluations, and solitary confinement in the same pretrial detention center where Sergei Magnitsky was tortured and killed in 2009. The resolution is especially timely as Nadiya is in the 62nd day of a hunger strike. Her health is rapidly deteriorating. Her situation is critical. And yet, on Tuesday, a Moscow court extended her detention until May 13, ignoring clear evidence compiled by the defense proving her non-involvement in the deeds the Russian authorities claim as justification for holding her.

Nadiya is yet another victim of the Putin regime's lawlessness, brutality, and contempt for human life. And we need to recognize that this isn't just about her; it's a highly visible manifestation of Putin's contempt for a Ukraine that wishes to remain free, independent, and democratic. She was elected in absentia to the Ukrainian parliament in October and a member of Ukraine's delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, PACE. As such, she enjoys diplomatic immunity and PACE has called for her immediate release.

According to the September Minsk agreements between Russia and Ukraine, hostages on both sides were supposed to be released. Russia has made a mockery of the Minsk agreements, just as it has the Helsinki Final Act and numerous other Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE, agreements. The illegal detention of Nadiya and other Ukrainian citizens represents yet another violation of international agreements and the norms of civilized behavior. S. Res. 52 sends a strong message of solidarity to the Ukrainian people and calls on the Putin regime to release Nadiya immediately. I am pleased the Senate is poised to pass this important resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Cardin amendment to the resolution be agreed to; the resolution, as amended, 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 amendment (No. 251) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To provide a complete substitute)
Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following: "That the Senate—

(1) condemns the Government of the Russian Federation for its illegal imprisonment of Nadiya Savchenko;

(2) calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to immediately release Nadiya Savchenko;

(3) calls on the United States, its European allies, and the international community to aggressively support diplomatic efforts to release Nadiya Savchenko; and

(4) expresses solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

The resolution (S. Res. 52), as amended, was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 52

Whereas Nadiya Savchenko is the first-ever female fighter pilot in Ukraine's Armed Forces and is an Iraqi war veteran;

Whereas in the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine, Nadiya Savchenko volunteered her services to the Ukrainian Aidar battalion;

Whereas Nadiya Savchenko was elected in absentia from the Batkivshchyna Party to Ukraine's Parliament in October 2014, and appointed to the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) as a representative from Ukraine;

Whereas as a member of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Lieutenant Nadiya Savchenko was conducting operations in eastern Ukraine against pro-Russian forces in the summer of 2014 when she was captured and taken into captivity;

Whereas during her mission in Eastern Ukraine, she was captured by the Donbas People's Militia, detained on Ukrainian territory, deprived of rights to due process, and illegally transferred to the Russian Federation to stand trial on unsubstantiated charges of terrorism;

Whereas, since July 2014, Nadiya Savchenko has endured involuntary psychiatric evaluations and solitary confinement;

Whereas Nadiya Savchenko is currently entering her sixth week of a hunger strike as a symbol of her protest;

Whereas Nadiya Savchenko is denied access to urgently needed medical attention and access to legal counsel;

Whereas the Minsk Protocol of September 2014, signed by Ukraine and the Russian Federation, calls for the "immediate release of all hostages and illegally held persons";

Whereas appeals have been made to the United Nations Human Rights Council and the International Red Cross to secure Nadiya Savchenko's release;

Whereas the international community, including representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and of the United States, have urged her immediate release;

Whereas, on January 26, 2015, the opening day of the Parliamentary Assembly, the global community embarks on a public campaign to bring attention to the plight of Nadiya Savchenko and demand her immediate release; and

Whereas the Government and people of the United States express concern about the deteriorating health of detained pilot Nadiya Savchenko and her continued illegal imprisonment: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the Government of the Russian Federation for its illegal imprisonment of Nadiya Savchenko;

(2) calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to immediately release Nadiya Savchenko;

(3) calls on the United States, its European allies, and the international community to

aggressively support diplomatic efforts to release Nadiya Savchenko; and

(4) expresses solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed en bloc to the consideration of the following Senate resolutions that were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 78 regarding Jerry Tarkanian; S. Res. 79 regarding Dean Smith; S. Res. 80 regarding the Lunar New Year; and S. Res. 81 regarding trafficking.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

COMMENDING KATHLEEN ALVAREZ TRITAK ON HER SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 82, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 82) commending Kathleen Alvarez Tritak on her service to the United States Senate.

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. 82) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during this adjournment of the Senate, running until February 23, 2015, the majority leader and the junior Senator from Missouri be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions.

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

APPOINTMENTS AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the upcoming adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President pro tempore, and the majority and minority leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses or by order of the Senate.

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

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Democratic leader, pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 64, adopted March 5, 2013, appoints the following Senators as members of the Senate National Security Working Group for the 114th Congress: DIANNE FEINSTEIN of California (Democratic Administrative Co-Chairman), BARBARA A. MIKULSKI of Maryland (Democratic Co-Chairman), JACK REED of Rhode Island (Democratic Co-Chairman), ROBERT MENENDEZ of New Jersey (Democratic Co-Chairman), RICHARD J. DURBIN of Illinois, BILL NELSON of Florida, BENJAMIN L. CARDIN of Maryland, ROBERT P. CASEY, JR., of Pennsylvania, and HEIDI HEITKAMP of North Dakota.

The Chair, on behalf of the Democratic leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 113-146, appoints the following individuals to serve as members of the Commission on Care: Dr. Ikram Khan of Nevada, Phillip Longman of the District of Columbia, and Dr. Marshall Webster of Pennsylvania.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16 THROUGH MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn to then convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted, on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Monday, February 16, at 4:45 p.m., and Thursday, February 19, at 10 a.m. I further ask that the Senate adjourn on Thursday, February 19, until 3 p.m. Monday, February 23, and 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. I ask that following leader remarks, Senator HOEVEN be recognized to deliver Washington's Farewell Address; further, that following the reading of Washington's Farewell Address, the Senate recess until 4:30 p.m., and that upon reconvening the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R.

240. Lastly, I ask that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the mandatory quorum call in relation to the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to H.R. 240 be waived, and that the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 240 occur at 5:30 p.m. Monday, February 23.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2015, AT 4:45 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 previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:34 p.m., adjourned until Monday, February 16, 2015, at 4:45 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

BRODI L. FONTENOT, OF LOUISIANA, TO BE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, VICE DANIEL M. TANGHERLINI, RESIGNED.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

DEBORAH WILLIS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 26, 2020, VICE CAROL M. SWAIN, TERM EXPIRED.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

ANN ELIZABETH DUNKIN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE MALCOLM D. JACKSON, RESIGNED.

JANE TOSHIKO NISHIDA, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE MICHELLE DEPASS, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

SETH B. CARPENTER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE MATTHEW S. RUTHERFORD, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CHARLES C. ADAMS, JR., OF MARYLAND, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND.

SARAH ELIZABETH MENDELSON, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR.

UNITED NATIONS

SARAH ELIZABETH MENDELSON, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, DURING HER TENURE OF SERVICE AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MARY CATHERINE PHEE, OF ILLINOIS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

DAVID MICHAEL BENNETT, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2018, VICE THURGOOD MARSHALL, JR., TERM EXPIRED.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be general

LT. GEN. ELLEN M. PAWLIKOWSKI

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. WILLIAM M. KNIGHT

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. JOHN B. COOPER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS THE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCE AND APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 8036 AND 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. MARK A. EDIGER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

BRIG. GEN. JOHN L. DOLAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. LEE K. LEVY II

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. KENNETH E. TOVO

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) LAWRENCE B. JACKSON
REAR ADM. (LH) SCOTT B. J. JERABEK
REAR ADM. (LH) LUKE M. MCCOLLUM

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) CHRISTINA M. ALVARADO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. KATHERINE A. MCCABE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. GRAFTON D. CHASE, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. DANIEL V. MACINNIS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPTAIN ALAN D. BEAL
CAPTAIN DARREN J. HANSON
CAPTAIN BRIAN S. HURLEY
CAPTAIN ANDREW C. LENNON

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate February 12, 2015:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

ASHTON B. CARTER, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.