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Senate

(Legislative day of Tuesday, May 30, 2023)

The Senate met at 10 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, we trust in Your unfailing love and commit our lives to You. Thank you for listening to our prayers. Help us to live in purity so that we will never dishonor You.

Lord, guard our minds so that our thoughts will please You, as we passionately seek Your truth.

Today, strengthen the Members of this body in their work. Use them to bring comfort and courage to the marginalized. Help our Senators to give their hearts to You and seek to please You in all they say and do. Empower them to live in such a way that by the wisdom of their words and the power of their example others may be moved to follow You.

We pray in Your awesome Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 31, 2023.

To the Senate:

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

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

DEBT CEILING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, later this afternoon, the House of Representatives will vote on a bipartisan agreement that will protect the U.S. economy and eliminate the risk of a disastrous default. Once this bill reaches the Senate, I will move to bring it to the floor as soon as possible. Although the House still has more work to do, Senators should be prepared to move on this bill quickly once it is the Senate's turn to act.

I cannot stress enough that we have no margin—no margin—for error. Either we proceed quickly and send this bipartisan agreement to the President's desk or the Federal Government will default for the first time ever.

It is imperative that we avoid a default. The consequences of slipping past the deadline would reverberate across the world and take years to recover from. Remember, a default would almost certainly trigger another recession, send costs soaring, kill millions and millions of jobs—hard-working people thrown out of work through no fault of their own. That would be a catastrophic nightmare for our economy and millions—millions—of American families.

So any needless delay, any last-minute brinksmanship at this point would be an unacceptable risk. Moving quickly and working together to avoid default is the responsible and necessary thing to do.

Nobody on either side thinks this agreement is perfect, that is for sure. Nobody got everything they wanted. But this agreement still accomplishes two major goals: It spares the American people from the catastrophe of default, and it preserves the most important investments we have passed over the past few years, many of them on a bipartisan basis. So moving forward on this agreement is the sensible, responsible, and very necessary thing to do.

We are getting close to finally putting the threat of default behind us, but there is more work to do. I hope that the House does its job when it takes up the bill later today. I urge my colleagues in this Chamber to be prepared to move quickly when the time comes.

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. President, now on the student debt CRA. Today, Senate Republicans will begin pushing a terrible measure that would end the pause on student loan payments and overturn President Biden's historic loan cancellation program.

Let me be clear. I strongly—strongly—oppose Republicans' cruel attempt to deny millions of student loan borrowers the critical relief they so desperately need. We should be in the business of helping Americans saddled with student loan debt, not making

their problem worse, as this measure would clearly do.

Even a casual examination of the Republican measure exposes it for what it is—a cruel, punitive, and extreme broadside against millions of American borrowers.

For one, the Republican measure would repeal the student loan payment pause—which has been a lifeline for millions of Americans—and even force borrowers to confront several months of retroactive payments from September to December of 2022. Let me say that again. This is so important. This measure not only repeals the payment pause, it forces many borrowers to make retroactive payments as well.

The Republican measure also targets our public service employees—first responders, nurses, educators, servicemembers—by jeopardizing their eligibility for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. Americans willingly chose career paths that pay less, and it is a slap in the face of these public servants to suddenly take away their eligibility for loan forgiveness.

Now, my Republican colleagues talk a big game about helping working families, but this legislation shows how callous and uncaring they are by trying to block relief that would immediately improve the lives of millions of borrowers. Republicans have tried to paint President Biden's plan as a ''tuition bailout,'' and a ''giveaway to high earners.''

That is just false. Republicans need to look at the facts: Under President Biden's plan, nearly 90 percent—90 percent—of relief dollars would go to out-of-school borrowers making less than $75,000 a year. Under President Biden's plan, no one in the top 5 percent of income would receive a penny in debt relief. So the Republican hypocrisy is enormous. They are willing to give huge tax breaks to billionaires and very wealthy people and big corporations, but now they say that 90 percent of former students making less than $75,000 dollars a year can't get this? Wow. Wow. What a canard.

President Biden's plan, which this Republican CRA would overturn, lifts up Americans from all walks of life: students of color, children of immigrants, poor Americans, and working families struggling to either get to the middle class or stay there.

So I will oppose this Republican CRA to overturn student debt relief and will continue working to make sure relief reaches every single borrower in need.

REMEMBERING KARL SODERSTROM

Finally, Mr. President, I want to conclude my remarks this morning by expressing my sorrow in the passing of a legendary New York educator, Karl Soderstrom, who passed away this week.

Karl was a teacher and longtime Head of School at Long Island's Stony Brook School. His influence on generations of students is undeniable, as is his influence on this body through his daughter, Sharon Soderstrom, who we all know is Leader MCCONNELL's Chief of Staff.

Our thoughts are with Sharon and the Soderstrom family. May they find peace knowing that Karl is now reunited with his beloved Jean.

I yield the floor.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING KARL SODERSTROM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wanted to start this morning by expressing my condolences to my chief of staff, Sharon Soderstrom, who lost her father a few days ago. Here is what she had to say about him.

She said:

My dad truly was one of the great good gifts of my life. I hope to be back tomorrow.

I think Sharon pretty well summed it up. Her dad was a special, special person, and our thoughts and prayers are with Sharon and her family this week.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. President, back in February, as Speaker MCCARTHY waited for President Biden at the negotiating table, the Democratic leader predicted the future:

The side that's unified has an upper hand.

Well, it is safe to say that our colleague from New York was exactly right. House Republicans stood united behind Speaker MCCARTHY. They lined up behind the only legislation that addressed the debt limit as well as out-of-control government deficits. They committed to the direct negotiations that I said repeatedly, going back to February, were the only way to avoid default, and they secured an outcome that confronts Washington Democrats' reckless spending in a serious way.

Republicans stood united. They forced President Biden to do his job, and they reached an agreement that preserves the full faith and credit of the United States and starts getting its financial house in order.

Along the way, the Speaker and his team notched important progress toward freeing American infrastructure from endless bureaucratic review. They put a dent in Washington Democrats' campaign to stand up a new army of IRS agents, and they slapped actual costs on the administration's regulatory overreach.

But here is the bottom line: The Senate will have an opportunity very soon to pass legislation that reduces Federal Government spending by $1.5 trillion over the next decade. That is $1.5 trillion that won't be put on the American taxpayers' tab. It is a downpayment on more progress that is yet to come.

House Republicans' unity gave them the upper hand, and they used it to secure a much needed step in the right direction. When this agreement reaches the Senate, I will be proud to support it without delay.

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. President, on another matter, this week, the Senate will have yet another opportunity to pump the brakes on Washington overreach using the Congressional Review Act. This time, we are up against an especially ridiculous example of leftwing spending fantasy from the Biden administration—student loan socialism.

For years, higher education in this country has been a choice. Some American families choose to cash in hard work and diligent savings to earn a college degree. Some even volunteer for military service with the promise of tuition assistance. Millions of others choose to avoid taking on extra debt and to pursue their careers without—without—going to college. It is a choice that families get to make for themselves, but on President Biden's watch, Washington Democrats have decided to try to take this choice away.

The way the Biden administration sees it, working Americans should foot the bill for the advanced degrees whether they choose to pursue them or not. The administration's outrageous plan would shift hundreds of billions of dollars in debt from the doctors, lawyers, and other high-earning professionals who chose—chose—to incur it onto American taxpayers, who wanted nothing to do with it. We are talking about the highest educated Americans, folks who already take in higher salaries on average. Apparently, Democrats have surveyed the devastation of their reckless spending and runaway inflation and decided these are the people who need their help the most.

For the party behind a long list of egregious and pandering giveaways, student loan socialism just might actually take the cake, and the Supreme Court is deciding right now whether the whole thing is actually downright illegal. But this week, thanks to the leadership of Ranking Member CASSIDY of the HELP Committee, along with Senator CORNYN and Senator ERNST, the Senate has a chance to intervene and stop the madness now. Their resolution would overturn the Biden administration's attempt to pad the pockets of elite professionals with taxpayer dollars. I would urge each of our colleagues to support it.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEBT CEILING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we got some good news over the weekend with the announcement that the President

and Speaker MCCARTHY had reached an agreement on debt ceiling legislation. The bill they agreed on, the Fiscal Responsibility Act, will increase the debt ceiling and finally—finally—after 2 years of out-of-control spending, begin to rein in our Nation's budget.

I am tremendously grateful to Speaker MCCARTHY and to House Republicans for their tireless work to make sure that any legislation to raise the debt ceiling was paired with meaningful spending reforms. The Fiscal Responsibility Act cuts discretionary spending next year and then limits discretionary spending increases to 1 percent each year over the subsequent 5 years. It claws back unspent COVID funds, repeals excess IRS spending, and ends the student loan repayment moratorium, which is currently costing taxpayers $5 billion a month.

In fact, the bill rescinds more unobligated government money than any bill in American history. It also places into statute pay-go rules on the executive branch which would require government Agencies to accompany new spending proposals with proposals that would save taxpayer dollars.

On top of all this, the Fiscal Responsibility Act makes a downpayment on permitting reform to help get energy projects off the ground more quickly, which will help encourage domestic energy production and drive down energy prices for American families. It also strengthens work requirements in Federal programs to help able-bodied Americans move from welfare to work.

And while this legislation doesn't go as far as it should and as Speaker MCCARTHY wanted, when it comes to funding for needed military modernization and readiness, the bill does provide an increase in defense funding and avoids a continuing resolution, while leaving open the possibility of supplemental funding as needed. And it is worth noting that this is the first time in recent history we have increased defense spending while decreasing nondefense spending.

Perhaps just as important as what is in the bill is what is not in the bill: tax increases. Speaker MCCARTHY and House Republicans held the line and ensured that the debt ceiling increase was not used as a vehicle to collect more taxpayer money, and they also ensured that the bill did not contain any new government programs.

Now, is this a perfect bill? Does it have everything Republicans would like included to get our Nation's fiscal house in order? No, it doesn't. But perfect bills are rare, and they are even more rare in a time of divided government. This is a good bill and, thanks to the efforts of Speaker MCCARTHY, a better bill than we might have hoped for. Let's not forget that Democrats wanted to pass a debt ceiling increase without any spending reforms at all. This bill may not be perfect, but it makes a real start at getting spending under control.

Now, our efforts can't end with this bill. Our national debt has already exceeded the size of our economy, and the interest on our debt is going to consume a greater and greater share of the Federal budget. On our current trajectory, within a few short years, we are going to be spending more just meeting the interest on our Nation's debt than we will on national defense. By 2044, we will be spending more on interest than on Medicare. And by 2050, we will be spending more on interest than on Social Security.

Think about that for just a minute: more on interest than on Social Security. Social Security is the largest line item in our Nation's budget and consumes approximately one-fifth of total Federal spending each and every year. The very fact that our national debt is on track to grow to the point where we are paying more just on interest than on Social Security should be a wake-up call to lawmakers in both parties that spending reform has to be a top priority here in Washington.

And let's be very clear: We have a spending problem, not a revenue problem. Tax revenues in 2022 reached a multidecade high of 19.6 percent of our gross domestic product, which is well above the historical average. We are not suffering from a lack of revenue. Federal spending, however, has soared to unsustainable levels. The Federal budget for 2023 is up approximately 40 percent from 2019, the last budget before the pandemic—a 40-percent increase going back to 2019. That is just not sustainable; it is not.

And whatever Democrats may say, we are not going to be able to fund that kind of reckless spending by taxing better-off Americans. We just flat have to get spending under control.

Now, any American who has ever found himself or herself mired in credit card debt knows that serious debt has serious consequences. Our national debt is already reducing the economic growth that we could otherwise achieve, and if our debt continues along its current trajectory, the consequences will be severe: diminished economic opportunities and growth and increasing difficulty meeting our government's most basic responsibilities, from national defense to Social Security and Medicare.

The best thing that we can do for the future of our country and for hard-working American families is to get our Nation's spending under control. So I want to once again express my gratitude to Speaker MCCARTHY and House Republicans for ensuring that the debt limit increase that we will be voting on is matched with real spending reforms. They have achieved an important victory, and I hope that the Fiscal Responsibility Act will be just the first step in a larger campaign to get our Nation's fiscal house in order and ensure a better economic future for the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to put us in recess.

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

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:24 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. ROSEN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

STUDENT LOANS

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, I rise today in opposition to Republican efforts to block President Biden's student loan debt relief plan, rescind the payment pause extension, and upend the lives of millions of hard-working Americans.

Now, it is no surprise that Republicans have prioritized an effort to block the President's plan to deliver critical relief to 43 million working- and middle-class student loan borrowers. Republicans in Congress have shown time and time again that they would much rather deliver relief to giant corporations and protect tax cheats than help working Americans whose biggest sin is to try to get an education.

I support the President's actions to help these hard-working Americans. But let's be very clear. The Republican plan goes far beyond rescinding President Biden's plan to cancel student debt. Republicans could have written their resolution to simply overturn debt cancelation. But, instead, they demanded something that is much more extreme. The Republican proposal would void the student loan payment pause that was in effect from last September through last December during the pandemic.

This means that if this CRA passes, it would rescind the President's plan to cancel debt for families that need it most. But it also means that everyone—everyone—whose payment was paused would immediately owe 4 months of back payments, plus interest. Republicans are asking Americans who benefited from a pause in payments to immediately pay back potentially thousands of dollars to Uncle Sam. Nearly 40 million Americans who are saving an average of $233 a month from the pause would be called on to cut a check to the Government for months of retroactive student loan

payments, plus interest, all because they relied on the U.S. Government's statement that their loan payments were paused.

This extreme Republican resolution would harm millions of hardworking Americans. But there is even more. By rescinding the payment pause extension, this Republican legislation also endangers our public servants: teachers, nurses, firefighters, servicemembers, and others who are working toward paying down their debt program through the Public Service Loan Forgiveness, or PSLF.

If you are a public servant enrolled in public service loan forgiveness, every month of the pause counts toward your total of 120 payments before your balance is forgiven.

According to the Department of Education, more than 400,000 borrowers received Public Service Loan Forgiveness credit during September through December payment pause last year. This CRA would retroactively disqualify those months of credit toward PSLF, leaving teachers and nurses and firefighters further behind on their path to being debt-free.

And if you are one of the 260,000 public servants around the country who received credit for your final payment since September of last year, and you finally got your student debt balance forgiven, you, under the Republican plan, would be at risk of seeing your relief clawed back and being thrown back into debt.

Just to give an example for that: In Massachusetts, more than 5,500 public servants across our Commonwealth could see their loan balances restored. So they owe the money again.

In Louisiana, more than 3,600 of Senator CASSIDY's own constituents could see their Public Service Loan Forgiveness taken away, and they would have to now pay more money.

Republicans have tried to sell this CRA as their attempt to block President Biden from canceling up to $20,000 of student debt for the working families that need it most. And they say there is nothing more here to see.

But make no mistake: Voting for this CRA is not just a vote against the President's student debt cancelation plan. It is also a vote to force nearly 40 million hardworking Americans to immediately pay back months of student loan payments and interest and restore an estimated $20 billion of student debt to the balances of tens of thousands of public servants.

Regardless of your feelings about student debt cancelation, that is a slap in the face to middle-class families, to working families everywhere in this country. And that is why labor unions, civil rights groups, and even centrist policy organizations are fighting against the Republican CRA, and it is why I urge every one of my colleagues to join me.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, over the last few years, President Biden and Washington Democrats have unveiled a large range of socialist-inspired policies. The ill-fated ''Build Back Broke'' plan, for example, would have driven up daycare costs for countless working families. Thankfully, that bill couldn't get enough votes to pass.

Then there was electric vehicles socialism, which actually did become law as part of Democrats' misnamed Inflation Reduction Act, which, by the way, did not reduce inflation. So thanks to them, today families earning up to $300,000 a year can receive a taxpayer handout to buy an electric vehicle made with batteries from China. It seems like a bad idea to me.

And last fall, President Biden rolled out his plan for student loan socialism. Over the last few years, liberal activists have called on Democrats to cancel student debt. But those calls were largely ignored until President Biden came along and decided to try it on his own. Not by coming to Congress and not by passing legislation, but with the stroke of a pen.

Last August, he announced he would cancel student loans for millions of borrowers. Well, ask any family with a mortgage, a car payment, a credit card debt, they all understand there is no such thing as canceling debt. Every dollar that was borrowed will eventually have to be repaid by someone. It is just a matter of who that someone is. Well, you can look around at the person you are sitting next to. You will be the ones to pay it back, the taxpayer.

Traditionally, the responsibility falls to the borrower—the person who agreed to repay the debt, the person who willingly took out tens of thousands, or even hundreds of thousands, of dollars in student loans.

The President decided to throw tradition and personal responsibility out the window in favor of a socialist approach where everyone chips in whether they want to or not. In other words, the American taxpayer. He said he would erase—erase—up to $20,000 in student loans for tens of millions of borrowers; thereby sticking taxpayers with the tab.

Well, to state the obvious, the vast majority of Americans do not benefit here, because 87 percent of Americans have no student debt.

Some people didn't go to college. Maybe they didn't want to. Maybe they couldn't afford it. Many worked while pursuing a degree. Many paid off their loans after graduating, just as they agreed to do.

Still, President Biden expects every person without college debt to shoulder the cost for someone else. In total, his plan would cost taxpayers more than $400 billion, even though only 13 percent of Americans would reap the benefits.

A college degree is not a shared experience. It is not like roads, hospitals, or police departments, which benefit everyone. Individuals in debt made the decision to borrow the money, and they alone will reap the benefit of that degree, whether it is in the form of increased compensation or other opportunities. It is fundamentally unfair to expect taxpayers with zero student debt to cover the cost of someone else's degree.

To state the obvious, the President does not have the authority to stick the taxpayers with this debt. And I hope the Supreme Court rules on that in the near future.

In the meantime, this is irresponsible overreach at its finest. And I am glad the Senate will have an opportunity to vote to overturn this reckless rule.

Senators CASSIDY, ERNST, and I introduced a Congressional Review Act resolution to overturn President Biden's student loan socialism. Our resolution would prevent the President from transferring the burden of student loans from willing borrowers to unwitting Americans. It would also end the pause on student loan payments—another renegade act by President Biden for which he has zero authority.

This is costing Americans $5 billion a month. This first went into effect in March of 2020 as the pandemic took hold. Now, more than 3 years later, it is time for borrowers to resume payment. Even President Biden has finally accepted how disruptive this never-ending pause is for our country.

He agreed to reinstate student loan payment requirements through the bipartisan debt ceiling deal that will soon be voted on by the House.

President Biden's student loan socialism is unfair, and it is irresponsible. And I hope it will soon be overturned by the Senate through this resolution.

I want to say, again, how much I appreciate Senator CASSIDY's leadership on this. And I encourage all our colleagues to support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 8 minutes prior to the rollcall vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, the Senate will soon vote on a Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval to overturn the Biden administration's unfair student loan schemes. These schemes transfer the burden of $400 billion in Federal student loans from those who willingly took on that debt to American taxpayers who never went to college and have already fulfilled their commitment to pay back their loans.

The resolution would also end the pause on student loan payments which, by August, will cost taxpayers almost $200 billion. President Biden has extended this pause 6 times for a total of 31 months, far beyond the original justification of the ongoing pandemic.

Make no mistake, these reckless student loan schemes do not forgive debt. They transfer the burden from those

who willingly took out the loans to go to college to make more money when they graduated to Americans who never attended college or who already paid back their loans.

These policies are as unfair as they are responsible. Where is the forgiveness for the guy who didn't go to college but is working to pay off the loan on the truck he takes to work? What about the woman who paid off her student loans but now struggles to afford her mortgage? Is the administration providing them relief? No. Instead, the administration would not only have them pay their bills but the bills of those who decided to go to college to make more money.

President Biden's plan does nothing to address the problems that created the debt in the first place. It doesn't hold colleges or universities accountable for rising costs.

According to the college board, in the last 30 years, tuitions and fees have jumped at private nonprofit colleges by 80 percent. Public 4-year institutions have jumped 124 percent.

According to the Center for Responsible Federal Budget, if the student loan transfer goes into effect, students and taxpayers would be back in the same situation in 5 years. In 5 years, we will be right back where we are now because we are not reforming that which got us here. And total debt will again reach $1.7 trillion.

What is the plan for 5 years from now? The scheme also does not ensure that students are prepared for life after college. It creates a terrible moral hazard that signals to students that Federal student loans are not real commitments. It tells colleges that no matter how high they raise their prices or how low the quality of education they provide, the Federal Government will cover the tab, courtesy of the American taxpayer.

This is not leadership. We cannot spend our way out of the problem of ever-increasing costs of higher education. For Americans who cannot afford their debt or who want a proactive approach for paying off their loan commitments, Congress has already authorized 31 different active programs that help or forgive student loans. That is 31 different programs already in place to help forgive or offset student loans. They range from total forgiveness for teachers to loan cancellations for law enforcement officers, military, early childhood educators, and social workers, to name a few.

There is also repayment for high-demand fields where education is specialized and the need is a public good. For example, through the Department of Health and Human Services, a variety of different healthcare providers, including therapists, behavioral health providers, and those needed to help our children as we face this mental health crisis, are eligible for loan repayment.

In addition, there are five different programs already to keep payments low compared to a person's income and which cap the total time for repayment.

The mass transfer of debt, though, under this reckless student loan scheme forgets that these existing programs were set up to target limited taxpayer resources, to benefit those using their degrees to serve, and to fill broader public needs or who demonstrate that they themselves have a personal individual need.

Our resolution prevents average Americans—87 percent of whom do not have student loans—from being stuck with a policy that the administration is doing not to be fair to all but, rather, to favor the few.

Our resolution also protects the rule of law, which President Biden must know he is violating. During Supreme Court arguments on the legality of student loan forgiveness in February, Justice Roberts clearly indicated that if $400 billion was to be spent on student loan cancellation, it would require congressional approval. That has not been given.

This is a clear example of this administration attempting to subvert Congress for what appears to be purely political purposes. It sets a wildly dangerous precedent if left unchecked.

President Biden, Secretary Cardona, come to the table. There are real problems in the student loan system and Federal financing of higher education. Let's fix them legally through a bipartisan, lasting solution.

I will close by encouraging all my colleagues to join me in voting to pass this Congressional Review Act resolution to prevent these unconstitutional student debt forgiveness schemes. It is unfair to the hundreds of millions of Americans who will bear the burden of paying off hundreds of billions of dollars of someone else's student debt.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELATING TO ''WAIVERS AND MODIFICATIONS OF FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS''—Motion to Proceed

Mr. CASSIDY. I move to proceed to H.J. Res. 45.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 45) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to ''Waivers and Modifications of Federal Student Loans''.

VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted ''yea.''

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 134 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blackburn	Grassley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Britt	Hoeven	Rounds
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Collins	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lee	Sinema
Cotton	Lummis	Sullivan
Cramer	Manchin	Tester
Crapo	Marshall	Thune
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Vance
Ernst	Mullin	Wicker
Fischer	Murkowski	Young

NAYS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Kelly	Schumer
Cardin	King	Shaheen
Carper	Klobuchar	Smith
Casey	Luján	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warnock
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Welch
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Fetterman	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	
Hassan	Peters	

NOT VOTING—3

Bennet	Tillis	Warner

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELATING TO ''WAIVERS AND MODIFICATIONS OF FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 45) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8

of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to ''Waivers and Modifications of Federal Student Loans''.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Illinois.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, my colleague Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM of South Carolina has been my friend and ally in many causes, and we notably disagree on others. He recognizes—and I share with him—the importance of continued support for Ukraine. He has been a steadfast partner in support of that country and holding Russia accountable for war crimes, but not addressing the manufactured debt ceiling crisis also could threaten to undermine continued U.S. support.

My colleague has raised concerns about the level of growth of defense spending in the bipartisan debt deal that was announced this last weekend. Specifically, the budget for the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2024 is $886 billion, at a 3-percent rate of growth over the previous year. That funding level does not threaten our national security. We are still, and we will be for the foreseeable future, the global leader in defense spending—the world's global leader in defense spending.

Now, there are valid concerns about China and Russia and the amount of money they are spending on the military, especially with the war in Ukraine and aggression in the South China Sea.

I have a chart here which demonstrates, in one respect, the difference. You can clearly see, when you look at the United States expenditure, when it comes to military spending in the year 2022, that it is dramatically larger than any other country. In fact, when it comes to our defense budget, the United States continues to outspend the next 10 countries in the world combined.

In the decade following the horrific attacks on September 11, U.S. military spending increased 50 percent, adjusted for inflation, compared to a fraction of that for other discretionary spending priorities.

Our spending wisely goes to competitive pay for servicemembers—to recruit and retain the best, most powerful, all-volunteer force. On average, the Chinese Army pays their soldiers $108 per month, compared to $1,733 per month average here in the United States.

Russian contract soldiers can make $1,100 a month. Conscripts can be paid as little as $25 a month in Russia.

Our spending has gone toward 11 world-class aircraft carriers. China just barely acquired a third carrier, which according to even Chinese analysts is still a long way from competing with the United States in that category.

Finally, our spending goes toward maintaining a global presence, ensuring sea lanes are open to commerce, and fostering stability in key areas of the world. Russia and China don't have that priority. Instead, they focus on aggression closer to their borders and exploiting other nations.

Now, much of the current budget discussion is also focused on responsible spending and oversight, and Congress has an important oversight responsibility.

Pentagon spending keeps increasing—and not just because of inflation but because of increased prices from defense companies—and as recently pointed out on the television show ''60 Minutes,'' in some cases because of what seems like obvious price gouging.

Put simply, increased defense spending does not automatically go toward deterring China or Russia. I chaired the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee for several years and was ranking member as well. It is an awesome responsibility. More than half of our Federal budget goes through that one subcommittee. Many times, I stopped in the middle of our deliberations about the appropriate spending to keep America safe and to protect our allies and interests around the world and asked how these other countries managed to be so powerful and spend so much less.

One explanation I have already accounted for, and that is, they pay their soldiers a lot less. We value the men and women in uniform. We want the best. We want to stand by them. We want them to make a career of service in the military, in many instances, and we need to pay them accordingly. I get it. But if you even take that and put it aside, it still puzzles me how many of these countries spend so little and yet compete with us in so many high-cost categories here in the United States.

We all know that global security goes beyond hardware and soldiers. The conflicts of today and tomorrow are no longer fought just on battlefields. Technology is dramatically transforming warfare through advanced platforms that can allow a single ship to perform what several ships did decades ago to a mass dissemination of propaganda that disrupts democracies and downplays autocracies.

Climate change also will fuel future conflicts and instability.

To quote former Defense Secretary Robert Gates, ''There are limits to what even the strongest and greatest nation on Earth can do—and not every outrage, act of aggression, oppression or crisis should elicit a U.S. military response.''

An even bigger defense budget doesn't equal complete security. China knows this. It is investing billions on spending related to national security outside of defense: infrastructure projects, clean energy, artificial intelligence.

I can recall a trip to Israel on a congressional delegation led by Harry Reid. Shimon Peres was the leader in Israel and a well-respected man for many decades. And when Harry Reid asked him what is the greatest threat to the United States, he said very quickly: China. Don't you see it?

Of all the answers he could have given us—terrorism, loose nukes, other responses—he said it was China.

And I started asking the question then of visitors from foreign countries to my office here in Washington: What is the presence of China in your country? Without exception, every one of them said: Oh, China has a growing presence in our country. They are an important part of our economy and our future.

And I was thinking to myself, China has a plan. It has a vision. It is insinuating itself in countries all around the world. The Belt and Road project is a good example of that. Do we have a plan in the United States? Sometimes I wonder. We certainly have the right values. I have no question about that in my mind. But do we sell those values the way the Chinese sell their interests? I don't think we do. I think when it comes to the U.S. involvement in countries around the world, we believe that the magic of capitalism and free markets will be appreciated by so many other countries and that they will come to our side naturally. I think it takes more effort—effort like the Chinese.

It is interesting in research to compete on cutting-edge technology. My colleagues know this because they have supported the CHIPS and Science Act to precisely address the issue of America's place in the world. China uses these investments as diplomatic influence all over the world with its Belt and Road Initiative.

My colleague has been an excellent chair—LINDSEY GRAHAM—and ranking member of the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee. He knows the importance of these investments and the overall strength of the United States. If you want to beat China on spending on national security, we need to look beyond the Pentagon box and look at all the other Agencies that are facing caps and focus on the strength of our capabilities.

Here is the reality. The greater harm to national and global security is not perceived lower defense spending but rather a default on our debt. Let's hope we can avoid that this week, this manufactured political crisis. Not paying our bills would result in a loss of trust in the stability of the United States. That feeds right into Russia and China's narrative that the West is now weak, and they are strong.

A short-term debt limit extension will not project strength or stability. We have a responsibility in Congress to send a message of stability to the world. The choice is simple for me, and I hope my colleagues can see the greater picture as well.

I would just conclude on the obvious difference of opinion I have with Senator GRAHAM. He and I will agree on more than we disagree, but on this particular issue, I believe that larding the

budget at the Department of Defense has a deleterious impact on us in the long haul. We have to incentivize the people making these decisions to be careful about the money being spent, to spend it wisely, and not to overspend. The procurement system in the U.S. military, I am sad to say, the Department of Defense, is desperately in need of reform and improvement. That would be part of saving some money that doesn't make us any stronger but costs the taxpayers too much.

So this illustration here of the United States at this dramatic $877 billion compared to $292 billion in China is an indication of our spending and what we can expect from it for the security of our country. We can do a lot better. Just throwing money at the problem is not a solution.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. President, this past weekend marked a sacred and solemn day for Americans. On Memorial Day, we remember those who gave their lives for this country. And on this Memorial Day, we were reminded once again that the struggle to defend freedom is never over.

The peace and freedom, for which more than 1 million American servicemembers gave their lives for in World War II, is now threatened again in the same theater by a delusional despot, drunk on the fantasy of reclaiming a bygone Russian Empire. And once again, the free nations of the world are united in our determination to defend peace and freedom as we did in World War II.

Over the last 2 weeks, the world witnessed a stark contrast between a dictator seeking to crush democracy and leaders determined to defend it. We saw Ukrainian President Zelenskyy travel to the Arab League summit in Saudi Arabia and eloquently argue that nations cannot sit on the sidelines during Russia's brutal war of aggression. He said:

> Unfortunately, there are some in the world, and here among you, who turn a blind eye to . . . illegal annexations. . . . I am here so that everyone can take an honest look, no matter how hard the Russians try to influence.''

These were courageous and wise words to an important audience. Saudi Arabia did the right thing by inviting President Zelenskyy to address the Arab League, and it can do more to rehabilitate its tarnished international image by helping Ukraine.

President Zelenskyy then joined the G7 summit in Hiroshima, where he spoke with leaders of the world's major industrialized democracies. It is worth remembering that Russia was kicked out of that organization, what was then called the G8, nearly 10 years ago for its initial unprovoked invasion of the Crimea region of Ukraine.

At this most recent G7 summit, there was no longer any delusion that Russia is a struggling democracy or a major industrial power. Under Putin, Russia has become a mortal threat to freedom and to global security and prosperity. In pledging $375 million in additional military support for Ukraine, President Biden vowed, ''Together with the entire G7, we have Ukraine's back and I promise we're not going anywhere.'' The words of President Biden.

He confirmed the United States would join European allies in training Ukrainians to fly F–16s, a move I fully support.

At the G7, President Zelenskyy also met with Indian Prime Minister Modi, who said that India would do everything it could to stop the war, noting: For me, it is a matter of humanity.

Prime Minister Modi's comments are welcome. I hope he will at long last formally and forcibly condemn Russia's war and rethink India's troubling purchases of Russian oil.

Now contrast President Zelenskyy's statesmanship with the reprehensible conduct of Putin's Russia. I want to show a photo here of what, unfortunately, has been too common. It shows the near total destruction of Bakhmut, a once thriving Ukrainian city of more than 70,000 people; Russia's ongoing indiscriminate missile and drone attacks on civilian targets in Kyiv, including children; Putin's continued cowardly jailing of anyone in Russia who dares to speak out against him or his illegal war, including Vladimir Kara-Murza, Alexei Navalny, and more than 500 other innocent political prisoners; the outrageous hostage-taking of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, whose only offense is daring to report the truth about the rot inside Putin's Russia.

The prisons in Russia are not large enough to hide the truth forever.

Last week, Yevgeny Prigozhin, leader of the paramilitary Wagner Group and a longtime ally of Putin, said publicly that instead of ''demilitariz[ing]'' Ukraine, Russia's failed invasion has instead turned Ukraine's military into one of the ''most powerful in the world.''

That was a quote from the head of the Wagner Group.

Let me reiterate on the Senate floor for Vladimir Putin and his enablers: You have lost the war in Ukraine. Global opposition to your illegal war is growing. Your legacy will be one of an indicted war criminal and a failed leader who weakened his nation, strengthened and expanded NATO, robbed countless Ukrainians of their futures, and sent thousands of Russian conscripts to their graves for your political hubris. And despite your transparent and petty attempts to divide America, the world's democracies stand against Russian tyranny.

The overwhelming majority in Congress of both political parties understand this. President Biden understands it. Putin's warped Soviet nostalgia blinds him to the warning of President Ronald Reagan, who said: ''It is the Soviet Union that runs against the tide of history,'' accurately predicting its place on the ash heap of history among other tyrannies. The Soviet Union failed. So will Vladimir Putin's bloody and delusional attempt to resurrect it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

REMEMBERING ROBERT ZIMMER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to take just a few minutes to speak about Robert Zimmer, the former president of the University of Chicago.

Barbara and I, first, want to express our condolences to Shadi, his wife, and their three children.

President Zimmer's time at the University of Chicago was defined by his relentless defense of freedom of expression. As a result of his commitment, the University of Chicago remains a place where diversity of viewpoint is always welcome, and the enforcement of that welcoming is very sincere.

In 2014, President Zimmer appointed the university's Committee on Freedom of Expression. That committee issued what is called the Chicago Principles, which declare the importance of uncensored thought and inquiry in the university experience.

I think it was also common for the president to make sure that a letter went out to first-year students. I have never read the complete letter, but in reading about it, I get the impression that the letter said to those first-year students what this policy from the Committee on Freedom of Expression was all about and that if you have to worry about having safe spaces or if you are worried about being confronted by somebody you might disagree with because of their ideology, then don't come to this university.

But President Zimmer's impact is not limited just to that one university; his courage in pushing for free speech on college campuses has been felt nationwide. In my opinion, it is not as much as it should be, but still he has made a big impact. The Chicago Principles have now been adopted in some form by over 80 colleges and universities. You can see that the number 80 is small compared to the thousands of colleges and universities and community colleges we have in our country. That doesn't mean there are not more than 80 colleges that would have the principle of freedom of expression, but we know that 80 colleges have adopted the Chicago approach.

President Zimmer and the principles he stood for are absolutely right because college is a place for learning, not for coddling. Campus, then, should be a place where ideas run rampant. After all, you go to college to prepare yourself for life after college. Where

you go for a job or anyplace else, there are probably not these safe spaces that some students think they have to have while they are at various universities for a period of 4 years out of a possible life through the other 60 years they are going to live, on average, after they get out of college.

That mission is not possible if colleges only pursue the appearance of diversity instead of real diversity. That just isn't diversity from the standpoint of ethnicity, religion, color, gender; it is about diversity of thought and the willingness to discuss those diverse opinions among people so they can learn from each other and respect each other.

In recent years, campus administrators have retreated from free speech, even punishing professors who try to do the right thing by having honest discussions about issues of any kind, particularly controversial issues.

So we need students, we need professors, and we need alumni willing to sound the alarm about the chilling of debate on our university and college campuses. Most importantly, we need campus leaders like President Zimmer who will stand up for freedom of expression in the face of diversity. Without President Zimmer and his principles, our next generation will be taught regurgitation, not independent thought.

We ought to honor his legacy by advocating for learning and free expression and respecting people's opinions whom you might disagree with, even being willing to sit down and discuss with those people you might disagree with.

So with his death, I think he is going to be sorely missed, and I hope that college presidents across the country can learn from his example.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEBT CEILING

Mr. LEE. Madam President, $32 trillion—it is a colossal sum burdening every single American taxpayer. It is a tangible reflection of the prodigious debt accumulated over many decades of reckless spending.

Now, the ramifications of our bloated national debt are far-reaching, felt in the daily lives of hard-working families crushed under the weight of relentless inflation. The prices of everyday necessities continue to rise, eroding purchasing power and placing an intolerable burden on the shoulders of every American family. The staggering figure ought to jolt us from our complacency, send shivers down our spines, and compel us to confront the dire consequences of Congress's longstanding recklessness when it comes to fiscal matters.

Amidst the gravity of our Nation's current predicament, we find ourselves standing at a precipice, a pivotal moment where our choices today will inevitably shape our economic outlook tomorrow and for years and, in fact, decades to come. The burden of our national debt and the relentless grip of inflation have placed us at this critical juncture, demanding nothing less than a resolute and visionary response.

Regrettably, the lopsidedly negotiated Fiscal Responsibility Act, as it is called, heralded by Speaker MCCARTHY and President Biden, fails to provide the respite our Nation desperately needs. Rather than offering substantive solutions to tackle the root causes of our fiscal woes, it appears to be a palliative pill. It is a bad deal for America, a missed opportunity to confront our challenges, an abdication of our responsibility to protect Americans' economic security and well-being.

We can and must do better. We must abandon the complacency that has brought us to this point and chart a new course, a course that values something approaching fiscal sanity. We can no longer afford to settle for half measures or short-term fixes, and we desperately need a comprehensive and responsible plan, one that addresses the root causes of our fiscal predicament, curtails the bloated bureaucracy, and empowers American families once again to thrive.

It is time to go back to the drawing board. Failure to do so and to do so right now, at this very moment, is to ignore the lessons of history. Nations that neglect their fiscal health often face economic calamity and social upheaval as a result. We are obligated to ourselves and to future generations of Americans to break free from this cycle of debt and inflation and forge a path of prosperity and sustainability.

I talk about it in terms of the cycle of inflation and debt because the two go hand in hand. We cause inflation when we spend more than we have and spend more than we should. That makes every dollar that Americans earn, save, or have previously saved purchase less.

So I must express my profound disappointment over the Orwellian-named Fiscal Responsibility Act. In harsh juxtaposition to the Limit, Save, Grow Act, the ambitious plan by the House of Representatives, the meager offerings of the Biden-McCarthy deal are profound.

First, House GOP leadership proclaims that the Fiscal Responsibility Act will save $1.5 trillion over a 10-year period through the 2-year caps deal. But, see, therein lies the deception. The supposed savings are largely—in fact, almost entirely—illusory. The bill contains a mandatory 2-year caps deal for discretionary spending; but, in reality, the spending limits for the other 4 years, the out years, are unenforceable and easily waived—in fact, easily ignored.

It is a shell game of sorts, a carefully orchestrated act to create the false illusion of savings. But history has shown us that no caps deal has ever been fully enforced against future appropriations. The most recent and relevant example of this may well be Congress, in its decision in the Budget Control Act of 2011, to impose statutory caps on discretionary spending and then to raise those caps on four separate occasions, in a bipartisan fashion, over the decade that followed the adoption of those caps, completely negating the stated purpose of that bill.

And unlike the BCA's 10-year statutory caps, all of which were, in fact, statutory, the FRA has only 2 years, which can be maneuvered around themselves. Just 2 years of statutory caps; that is all. You can get around those, too. It is just a little bit harder. But after those first 2 years, it is not even a difficult thing because these aren't statutory caps at this point.

It is a largely symbolic and ultimately feckless gesture. Yet House leadership wants us in the Senate to rubberstamp a mammoth increase of $4 trillion in new debt in exchange for supposedly $1.5 trillion of claimed deficit reduction, the vast majority—in fact, the overwhelming share—of which will never be realized.

I am confident stating that, predicting it, right now. This is a pipe dream, and they know it.

And what did they demand in return for raising the debt ceiling, effectively by $4 trillion? What did they extract to ensure that this colossal sum, once borrowed, wouldn't go unchecked? A meager $12 billion, a drop in the ocean compared to our Nation's monumental burden. And that is a best-case scenario.

Considering that rather than raising the debt ceiling by a specific amount—which, I think, is the right way to do this and the way that Congress has usually done this in the past—the deal raises it; it suspends the debt ceiling altogether through January 1, 2025. It grants the Treasury authority to issue debt without any numerical limit to restrain its appetite. It is a carte blanche, a blank check of sorts, for the government to spend, to borrow more money without accountability.

This deal begs the question: With Republicans like these, who needs Democrats?

We deserve better. We deserve a deal that genuinely reflects the urgency of our economic challenges and delivers meaningful results. To grant such a colossal debt ceiling increase while settling for a mere $12 billion in immediate savings is also an act of fiscal irresponsibility and betrayal of the trust placed in us by those who elected us.

Equally disheartening is the state of work requirements within the deal. These work requirements were supposed to be part of the deal and a

meaningful change in the law and supposed to help things get better, help us not spend as much money, help people get out of poverty, help make sure that we don't have to come back to the well just 18 months or so from now and raise the debt ceiling yet again.

Limit, Save, Grow championed a robust approach, acknowledging the importance of promoting self-sufficiency through work requirements. In contrast, this swamp deal that we are actually facing offers only token requirements, riddled with exemptions and phaseouts. It is a farce of sorts. It is a charade that perpetuates the vicious cycle of entitlement, leaving countless Americans trapped in the clutches of dependency.

Limit, Save, Grow adds significant work requirements for TANF, food stamps, and for Medicaid. This bill strips the Medicaid work requirements altogether. With respect to TANF, arguably, it doesn't do much at all, if anything. With respect to food stamps, according to some figures that we are studying from CBO, it arguably costs more money than it saves.

In matters of fiscal prudence, Limit, Save, Grow stood firm in its determination to repeal the Democrats' $1.2 trillion Inflation Reduction Act. Talk about Orwellian names, that is one for you. Yet in its lamentable capitulation, the McCarthy-Biden deal preserves every cent of the Inflation Reduction Act, leaving our Nation mired in a quagmire of unsustainable and expensive policies that have done anything but reduce inflation.

In fact, when you go throwing around trillion-dollar increments that you don't have, that is what it does cost. It is more inflation, and that is, indeed, what it has caused.

Now, the consequences of this surrender in this bill are grave. If enacted, this bill would grant President Biden everything without meaningful safeguards or provisions to address the pressing issues.

While it may be hailed as some sort of triumph of bipartisanship, the American people will ultimately bear the brunt of its shortcomings. You see, not everything that is bipartisan is, in fact, in the interest of the American people.

Bipartisanship and compromise are an inevitability in anything that moves through the U.S. Congress. Some work for the benefit of the American people, but when a small handful of Members of Congress get together and decide what will be easiest for them, what will work best for them, what will make them look the best, without due regard to how it will impact the American people, that is not compromise. That is better described as collusion.

Look, it is the American people who will bear the brunt of this bill with the implementation of President Biden's half-trillion-dollar student loan plan—a plan which now stands as a testament to President Biden's misplaced priorities, a millstone around the neck of hard-working individuals who will never benefit from such largesse.

It is a stark reminder that, while the government claims to champion the cause of equality and opportunity, it is very often the very policies it enacts that perpetuate inequality and hinder genuine progress. The hard-working veterans, the diligent plumbers, and countless others are made to shoulder the weight of others' degrees—often, degrees of people who now earn a whole lot of money—while relegating their own aspirations and dreams to the sidelines. It is a profound injustice when we shift the burden of personal choices and individual responsibilities onto those who have already toiled and sacrificed.

That is what we are voting for with this bill. We are saying that it is OK to force those who labor in essential trades to bear the financial burden of others' educational pursuits.

This is a patently unfair and bold-faced patronage racket. And, like all good rackets, you need your strong-armed collector, and this administration found theirs in the IRS.

The egregious expansion of the IRS is epitomized by the Democrats' allocation of $80 billion to this bloated Agency with a demonstrated history of unethical targeting of conservative nonprofits, among others.

The compromise reached between Biden and MCCARTHY, which retains 98 percent of the IRS expansion—98 percent—is nothing short of a surrender, an anticipatory capitulation of sorts. It is a thing that is going to cause more problems.

And so armed with a hefty budget and a woke agenda, the IRS will become an even stronger instrument of political bias and partisan manipulation. The merging of ideology and bureaucracy poses a grave threat to the fabric of our Republic, eroding the trust and confidence that should underpin our tax system.

It might be true that this bill attempts to claw back some of the unspent COVID funds and the CDC global health funding. But while they point to rescinding roughly $28 billion in unspent COVID funds, we must acknowledge that much of that will merely offset spending increases elsewhere. This deal falls woefully short, failing to seize this opportunity to maximize the potential of these unutilized resources.

Perhaps the cherry on top of this deal from hell is the glaring omission of an essential regulatory reform measure, called the REINS Act. The REINS Act is a proposal. It is an acronym. It stands for Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny. Limit, Save, Grow, the debt ceiling bill passed by the House about a month ago, incorporated the REINS Act, which seeks to ensure that every major regulation put forth by a Federal Agency has to pass through congressional scrutiny. It has to be affirmatively enacted by Congress.

This is already required by the Constitution. The very first operative provision of the Constitution—the first clause, the first section of the first article—says: ''All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives.''

Legislative powers or the power to make law—article I, section 7 makes it clear that this is the only path to do it. Article I, section 7 reiterates and builds upon the legislative powers clause of article I, section 1 by saying that, in order to pass a law—a Federal law—any Federal law must become law only after it has been passed by the House and the Senate and presented to the President for signature, veto, or acquiescence. You cannot make a Federal law otherwise.

Executive branch Agencies have been getting around this for a long time with the assistance, sadly, of Congress. Congress has delegated, increasingly, lawmaking power to unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats—people who don't work for the American people, who can't be fired by them. This is a big problem.

Now, look, Limit, Save, Grow incorporated the REINS Act, and that would have done a lot of good by subjecting this lawmaking power to elected lawmakers to give them—us, the people elected to make laws—the final say.

We were finally going to close that loop and say that Agencies can write laws that would be considered proposed bills—bill proposals—within Congress, but only Congress can enact them.

They are laws—laws made by the unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats who have no constitutional lawmaking authority—that would not, under the REINS Act, be self-executing. Congress would have to be the lawmaker, as the Constitution already makes clear.

The REINS Act really is about so much more than regulatory reform. It is about accountability to the public, the same kind of accountability that was envisioned by the Founding Fathers when they wrote article I, section 1 and article I, section 7. It is about the republican form of government as a whole. It is about representative government, about people through the democratic process being able to elect those who will create laws to which they will become subject. It is about the American people being put adequately on notice as to what their legal responsibilities and obligations are.

James Madison, in Federalist 62, spoke somewhat presciently when he wrote:

> It will be of little avail to the people, that the laws are made by men of their own choice, if the laws be so voluminous that they cannot be read, or so incoherent that they cannot be understood: if they be repealed or revised before they are promulgated, or undergo such incessant changes, that no man who knows what the law is today, can guess what it will be tomorrow.

We are now suffering through a circumstance where not only are our laws

so voluminous, complex, and ever-changing that we can't read them and understand what they require of us, but they weren't even written by men and women of our own choosing. This is wrong. This is as big of a miscarriage of justice as exists in this country. This is unreviewable legislative discretion of the sort that has historically been reserved for despots and tyrants.

Despotism and tyranny to this degree, in this unique way, exist in America today in our executive branch Agencies. Limit, Save, Grow was going to address this through the REINS Act. But, sadly, that provision was removed from this measure.

Now, the sudden excuse for this glaring exclusion—something that was really important to Republicans and should be really important to Republicans and Democrats and everyone else—is that the deal imposes an administrative pay-as-you-go provision, or pay-go, as it is known. However, this is easily waived. It is bereft of any significant congressional role in the regulatory process.

Let's not be naive to the realities of implementation. This process will be artfully manipulated in the hands of the Biden-appointed Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The bureaucrats—the masters of their bureaucratic chicanery—will exploit every nook and cranny of the legislation, every nook and cranny that generates fake direct savings. The noble intentions behind this provision will be buried beneath a mountain of smoke and mirrors.

So when you read section 263 of the Biden-McCarthy deal, you will see this regulatory pay-go measure. But if you keep reading and you get to section 265, you see that section 265 destroys it. It takes it away. It effectively nullifies it. A restriction on a government actor that is then in a subsequent section, 265, given the power to exempt herself from that restriction is nothing at all. See, within the fine print of that loophole, in section 265, is language that renders the entire endeavor of regulatory pay-as-you-go completely toothless. The OMB Director possesses complete waiver authority. If she deems it ''necessary for program delivery,'' then she can circumvent the provisions that purport to rein in the excesses of the bureaucratic machinery—section 263. This is akin to placing the fox in charge of the henhouse and then granting the fox discretion to determine when the rules apply and when they can be conveniently cast aside. If the fox wants to consume the hen, the fox will, if the fox deems it necessary and appropriate.

Don't believe me?

Well, it didn't take long yesterday for the OMB Director to say the quiet part out loud. When asked about the PAYGO waiver authority included in the Biden-McCarthy deal, OMB Director Shalanda Young said:

> If that waiver is deemed necessary to make sure President Biden's agenda is carried forward, we're going to use that authority.

Translation. This means one thing: The regulatory PAYGO measure means nothing. It is worth no more than the paper it is printed on. Less than that, in fact. Nothing. It does nothing.

So if you are tempted to vote for this, perhaps taking some comfort in the idea that this is going to rein in regulatory excesses, please look elsewhere for comfort. It does not exist here.

What irks me is not just that the REINS Act measure was removed—that is plenty irksome in and of itself. It shouldn't have been removed. We should have insisted it be in there. If some objected to it, we should have at least insisted it be in there as long as this debt ceiling issuance Mardi Gras remains in effect. It should be there. If you are going to take that out and replace it with the regulatory PAYGO measure, don't claim that it is real when, in fact, it is fake.

This is appalling. With Republicans like these, who needs Democrats?

Look, they are not even pretending to negotiate in good faith. In fact, while Republicans claim that this is a big victory for Republicans, meanwhile, the Democrats are doing everything they can to hide their excitement over this deal. Representative JAMAAL BOWMAN, a Democrat from New York, Member of the House of Representatives who is listed as undecided, said President Biden ''kicked MCCARTHY'S butt.'' Fair point; he did.

Madam President, in contemplating the magnitude—the sheer weight, volume, mass of our national debt, a colossal sum of $32 trillion—$32 trillion that will soon escalate to $36 trillion under this awful deal—one cannot help but be seized by a sense of awful foreboding. This staggering figure should serve as a haunting reminder of the consequences of our profligate ways, a testament to the grave irresponsibility that has permeated our political landscape for decades far too long.

Instead of confronting this existential threat head-on, this deal is racked with complacency and false, cowardly compromise—placating the disconnected without addressing the root of the problem. It is the child of uncertainty, born out of cowardly fear of confrontation and lack of conviction; and it represents the victory of expediency over integrity. I cannot support it, and I will emphatically vote no absent material changes that will render this bill something other than what it is—a fake response to burdensome debt.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, my friend from Utah would be happy to know not everybody in the Democratic caucus thinks this is a great victory for President Biden. In fact, the original debt ceiling legislation that Republicans passed in the House would have, over a 10-year period, made unconscionable cuts to programs that working families, that children, the sick, the elderly, and the poor desperately need. It is a totally unconscionable piece of legislation passed by the Republican House.

And the best thing that I can say or that I think can be said about the current deal on the debt ceiling is that it could have been much worse. Instead of making massive cuts to healthcare, education, childcare, nutrition assistance, and other vital programs that low-income and working-class families depend upon over the next decade, this bill proposes to make modest cuts to these programs over a 2-year period.

This bill will also prevent an economic catastrophe by extending the debt ceiling until January 1, 2025, when, by the way, we will have to go through this absurd process once again.

Having said that—having said and made clear that what we have before us is far, far better than what emanated in the Republican House, I have to make clear that I cannot vote for this bill.

At a time of massive wealth and income inequality, at a time when the people on top have never had it so good while the middle class shrinks and millions of working-class families live in desperation, I cannot, in good conscience, vote for a bill that takes vital nutrition assistance away from women, infants, children, and seniors while refusing to ask billionaires to start paying their fair share of taxes.

So, again, not as bad by any means as the bill passed in the House, this bill will cut nutrition programs for kids and the elderly; and, yet, the billionaires continue to laugh all the way to the bank. They don't have to pay a nickel more in taxes. I cannot, in good conscience, vote for a bill that makes it harder for working families to afford the outrageously high price of childcare, housing, and healthcare while making it easier for the wealthiest people and most profitable corporations in America to cheat on their taxes.

It is no great secret that the people on top and the large corporations with all their lawyers and accountants know how to avoid their fair share of taxes.

Last year, we took a step forward to put money into the IRS to address that. This bill makes cuts in that effort.

At a time when climate change is, by far, the most existential threat that this country has perhaps—and this world have ever faced, I cannot, in good conscience, vote for a bill that makes it easier for fossil fuel companies to pollute and destroy the planet by fast-tracking the disastrous Mountain Valley Pipeline. When the future of the world and the lives of our kids and grandchildren is literally at stake, we must have the courage to stand up to the fossil fuel industry and tell them and the politicians they sponsor that the future of this planet is more important than their short-term profits.

At a time when we spend more on the military than the next 10 nations combined, I cannot, in good conscience,

vote for a bill that increases funding for the bloated Pentagon and large defense contractors who continue to make huge profits by fleecing American taxpayers with impunity. Let me remind my colleagues that the Pentagon, which now gets over $800 billion a year—a year—is the only Federal Agency that cannot pass an independent audit or account for trillions of dollars in spending.

At a time when the pharmaceutical industry is charging the American people, by far, the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs, I cannot, in good conscience, vote for a bill that does nothing to take on the greed of the big drug companies that are bankrupting Medicare and cancer patients while spending tens of billions on stock buybacks and dividends. If the United States paid the same price for prescription drugs as paid in Europe, we could cut Medicare spending by approximately $1 trillion over 10 years. But, apparently, we don't have quite the courage to take on the powerful pharmaceutical industry. It is easier to take on children and the elderly.

At a time when over 45 million Americans are drowning in student debt, I cannot, in good conscience, vote for a bill that eliminates the moratorium on student loan payments that has been a lifeline to millions of working-class families during the pandemic.

Deficit reduction cannot just be about cutting programs that working families, that children, the sick, the elderly, and the poor depend upon. They are the easy targets. You see, they don't have any lobbyists here. They don't make big campaign contributions. They don't wine and dine Members of the House and Senate. They are an easy target. We can cut programs that working-class and low-income people depend upon.

But when it comes to demanding that the billionaire class and profitable corporations start paying their fair share of taxes, when it comes to reining in out-of-control military spending and taking on the very powerful military industrial complex, when it comes to reducing the price of prescription drugs and taking on the pharmaceutical industry, and when it comes to ending billions of dollars in corporate welfare that goes to the fossil fuel industry and other corporate interests, well, that is another story. That is not something we are comfortable in doing. They are too powerful; make too many campaign contributions; have too many lobbyists. It is easy to go after the weak and the vulnerable.

The fact of the matter is that, in my judgment, this bill is totally unnecessary. The President of the United States has the authority and the ability to eliminate the debt ceiling today by invoking the 14th Amendment. I look forward to the day when he exercises that authority and puts an end, once and for all, to the outrageous actions of the extreme rightwing to hold our entire economy hostage in order to get what they want.

H.J. RES. 45

Madam President, I would like to say a few words on another subject, and that is the effort here on the part of some of my Republican colleagues to repeal President Biden's student debt plan.

I rise in strong opposition to H.J. Res. 45 that we will be voting on tomorrow. This resolution would repeal President Biden's plan to provide up to $20,000 in student debt relief to over 40 million Americans who desperately need that relief.

Almost 90 percent of this student debt relief would go to Americans who make less than $75,000 a year. So anytime you hear Republicans say this is going to the wealthy, that ain't the case. Ninety percent of student debt relief goes to Americans who earn less than $75,000 a year. These are working-class people who are struggling to pay the rent—rents which are, in many cases, skyrocketing. They are struggling to pay for groceries. They are struggling to pay for the basic necessities of life. And they desperately need this relief.

Despite what our Republican colleagues have told us, President Biden's student debt relief plan does not benefit the wealthy. In fact, the top 5 percent of American households would not see a nickel in benefits under Biden's student debt relief plan—not one nickel.

And let us be clear. Not only would this resolution that we vote upon tomorrow deny up to $20,000 in student debt relief to over 40 million Americans, it would retroactively overturn the moratorium in student loan payments during the pandemic.

What does that mean? It means that tens of millions of Americans would be forced to pay back thousands of dollars in student loans and interest that were paused during the pandemic.

This is a program that started under President Trump and was continued under President Biden. Further, this resolution would retroactively claw back student debt that was previously canceled for more than 260,000 teachers, nurses, veterans, firefighters, librarians, and other public servants who successfully completed 10 years of public service. That would be absolutely unacceptable.

Over and over again, I have heard my Republican colleagues tell us that the time has come for younger Americans to pay for their college education just like they did 40 or 50 or 60 years ago. Well, I have got news for my Republican colleagues.

Back in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, even 1980s, the cost of a college education, housing, healthcare, childcare, and the basic necessities of life were a heck of a lot cheaper then than they are today.

When I was a young man, I attended Brooklyn College in 1959. Do you know how much I paid for tuition during that 1 year? Zero, at a very good college. And that was not unusual. The reality is that back then, tuition at many of our Nation's public colleges and universities was either free or virtually free. Young people don't know that, but that is, in fact, the case.

The University of California system, the largest public college system in the country, considered to be the crown jewel of public higher education in America, did not begin charging tuition until the 1980s.

In 1970, the average tuition at a four-year public university in America was just $814 a year. Today, it costs more than $9,300 a year. And the total cost of attending a public college or university in America—including room and board—is over $25,000.

In 1978, a student could get a minimum wage job in the summer and fully pay for a year of tuition at virtually any public college or university in America. Today, the only way that millions of working-class Americans can get a college education is to take out student loans with very high interest rates and graduate with tens and tens of thousands of dollars in debt. And if you go to graduate school, we are talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt. Talk to medical students who will tell you they are going to graduate $4- or $500,000 in debt.

But it is not just the price of a college education that has soared. In 1970, the median cost of a home was $188,000 in real inflation-adjusted dollars. Today, it costs $497,000. And that is why many young people today are unable to afford to buy the kind of home that their parents were able to purchase.

In 1970, the average monthly rent was $805 in real dollars. Today, it costs nearly $2,000 a month. Over 40 years ago, a Federal Pell grant paid for over 80 percent of tuition, fees, room and board at a four-year public college. The Pell grant paid 80 percent. But today, because of massive cutbacks in education, Pell grants cover less than a third of those expenses.

Add all of that up and you understand why more than 45 million Americans are drowning in over $1.7 trillion in student debt.

So when my Republican colleagues in their sixties, seventies, and eighties lecture young people about the need to pay off their student debt, to get out of their parents' basement and to buy a home, just the way it used to be, I am afraid that they are way out of touch with the economic reality that so many young people are forced to live in today.

Further, my Republican colleagues want you to believe that it is just too expensive and too unfair to provide up to $20,000 in debt relief to a Pell grant recipient with an income of less than $60,000 a year—just too much. Can't afford it. We have big national debt; how can we possibly pay for it?

Well, actually, that is a pretty funny argument, given where many of my Republican colleagues are coming from. I remember not so long ago that my Republican colleagues had no problem

voting to give away over a trillion dollars in tax breaks to the top 1 percent and large corporations when Donald Trump was President—without paying for it. No concern about the national debt back then when it comes to tax breaks for the very wealthiest people and largest corporations.

My Republican colleagues had no problem voting for a $700 billion bailout for Wall Street when George W. Bush was President—without paying for it. Hey, we have to bail out the crooks on Wall Street. Not a problem; don't worry about the deficit; we have to do it.

My Republican colleagues had no problem with voting for an $858 billion budget for the Pentagon this year, despite the fact that the Department of Defense is the only Federal Agency in America that cannot pass an independent audit and cannot account for trillions of dollars in spending. Don't worry about the deficit; don't worry about the national debt. Can't afford to help young people struggling with their student debt. Can't do that. But we can pump all kinds of money into the military, an institution which is wasting huge amounts of money and has not been able to do an independent audit.

But now, my Republican colleagues want you to believe—after giving huge tax breaks to the rich and large corporations and spending unbelievable amounts of money on the military, they want you to believe that we cannot afford to provide $20,000 in student debt relief to a Pell grant recipient who is struggling to put a roof over his or her head, pay for childcare, or put food on the table.

Let me be as clear as I can be: If we can afford to provide trillions of dollars in tax breaks and corporate welfare to the wealthy and powerful, we can and we must cancel student debt. If we can afford to provide a $1.4 billion tax break to the Koch family—Charles Koch family, one of the wealthiest families in America, worth $120 billion—we can afford to cancel up to $20,000 in student debt for a struggling, working-class college graduate.

And my understanding is that within a few weeks after all the discussion about the national debt and how we are going to deal with that, my Republican colleagues in the House are going to come up with another bill to give even more tax breaks to the people on top.

If Donald Trump could take Executive action to pause student debt payments when he was in office, please don't tell me that President Biden cannot take the same action to cancel student debt for working families who desperately need it.

Let's be clear: Canceling student debt is the right thing to do, not only from a moral and economic perspective, it is precisely what the American people want us to do.

According to a recent Fox News poll, 62 percent of the American people support canceling at least $20,000 in student debt for individuals making $125,000 a year or less. The American people understand that we cannot continue to crush our young generation with a mountain of debt for doing the right thing—getting a college education. A vote for this resolution would deny relief to over 40 million Americans across every State and every Congressional district.

A vote for this resolution would reinstate tens of billions of dollars in interest charges and loans that have already been canceled for teachers, firefighters, and other public service workers throughout America. We cannot allow that to happen. I urge my colleagues to vote against this resolution.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

U.S. HOSTAGE AND WRONGFUL DETAINEE DAY ACT OF 2023

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 769 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 769) to amend title 36, United States Code, to designate March 9 as U.S. Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day and to designate the Hostage and Wrongful Detainee flag as an official symbol to recognize citizens of the United States held as hostages or wrongfully detained abroad.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

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

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

The bill (S. 769) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 769

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 ''U.S. Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day Act of 2023''.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION.

(a) HOSTAGE AND WRONGFUL DETAINEE DAY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 36, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by redesignating the second section 146 (relating to Choose Respect Day) as section 147; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''§ 148. U.S. Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day

''(a) DESIGNATION.—March 9 is U.S. Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day.

''(b) PROCLAMATION.—The President is requested to issue each year a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe U.S. Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.''.

(2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 1 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to the second section 146 and inserting the following new items:

''147. Choose Respect Day.
''148. U.S. Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day.''.

(b) HOSTAGE AND WRONGFUL DETAINEE FLAG.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 9 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 904. Hostage and Wrongful Detainee flag

''(a) DESIGNATION.—The Hostage and Wrongful Detainee flag championed by the Bring Our Families Home Campaign is designated as the symbol of the commitment of the United States to recognizing, and prioritizing the freedom of, citizens and lawful permanent residents of the United States held as hostages or wrongfully detained abroad.

''(b) REQUIRED DISPLAY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Hostage and Wrongful Detainee flag shall be displayed at the locations specified in paragraph (3) on the days specified in paragraph (2).

''(2) DAYS SPECIFIED.—The days specified in this paragraph are the following:

''(A) U.S. Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day, March 9.

''(B) Flag Day, June 14.

''(C) Independence Day, July 4.

''(D) Any day on which a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States—

''(i) returns to the United States from being held hostage or wrongfully detained abroad; or

''(ii) dies while being held hostage or wrongfully detained abroad.

''(3) LOCATIONS SPECIFIED.—The locations specified in this paragraph are the following:

''(A) The Capitol.

''(B) The White House.

''(C) The buildings containing the official office of—

''(i) the Secretary of State; and

''(ii) the Secretary of Defense.

''(c) DISPLAY TO BE IN A MANNER VISIBLE TO THE PUBLIC.—Display of the Hostage and Wrongful Detainee flag pursuant to this section shall be in a manner designed to ensure visibility to the public.

''(d) LIMITATION.—This section may not be construed or applied so as to require any employee to report to work solely for the purpose of providing for the display of the Hostage and Wrongful Detainee flag.''.

(2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 9 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''904. Hostage and Wrongful Detainee flag.''.

VETERANS GET OUTSIDE DAY

NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK

KIDS TO PARKS DAY

NATIONAL BRAIN TUMOR AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration on S. Res. 206, 223, and 226; that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following

Senate resolutions: S. Res. 206, Veterans Get Outside Day; S. Res. 223, National Public Works Week; S. Res. 226, Kids to Parks Day; and S. Res. 229, National Brain Tumor Awareness Month.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged from the relevant resolutions, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolution (S. Res. 206), with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of May 10, 2023, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

(The resolution (S. Res. 223), with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of May 18, 2023, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

(The resolution (S. Res. 226), with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of May 18, 2023, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

(The resolution (S. Res. 229), with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise and join my colleague Senator WARREN to discuss the unprecedented political holds the Senator from Alabama has placed on 221 general and flag officers. This hold is now into its fourth month, and it is beginning to have serious impacts on military personnel and their families. Commanders who are supposed to retire or move on to a new assignment cannot do so because there is no one to replace them. Commanders who are set to take new assignments remain in limbo. Family members don't know when they are going to move. Children don't know what new school they will attend or when. Thousands of lives are being disrupted, all because the Senator from Alabama has chosen to block merit-based, nonpolitical military promotions over a policy he does not like.

(Mr. OSSOFF assumed the Chair.)

I would like to address a few of the assertions raised by the Senator from Alabama that he has used to justify his unprecedented and damaging hold on military promotions.

First, on the matter of the Hyde Amendment and the prohibitions on Federal funding for abortions, the Senator says the Department of Defense does not have the authority to provide travel benefits and grant leave for reproductive health care not covered by TRICARE. He is in error.

Let's provide some clarity on terms. The so-called Hyde Amendment does not apply to the Department of Defense. Instead, the Department has its own statute that restricts the use of Department of Defense funding ''to perform abortions'' and restricts the use of Department of Defense medical facilities ''to perform an abortion,'' except when the life of the mother is endangered or in cases of rape or incest.

No reasonable interpretation of the policy can conclude that it authorizes the Department of Defense to pay for the performance of abortions unless under those conditions I mentioned—the life of the mother is in danger or in cases of rape or incest. Those costs for such abortions that are not covered under DOD will continue to be borne, as they are today, by servicemembers and dependents out of pocket. That does not change.

The Department's policy is legal and rooted in longstanding Department of Justice interpretation of the Hyde Amendment and similar restrictions. In fact, the Department of Defense General Counsel requested the Justice Department's views on its policy last fall. The Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel issued a lengthy and informative slip opinion concluding that ''10 United States Code Section 1093 does not bar the Department from using appropriated funds to pay for servicemembers and their dependents to travel to obtain abortions that the Department cannot fund directly.''

The opinion, which I encourage all my colleagues to read, traces the legislative history of the Hyde Amendment, similar Hyde-like restrictions, and the specific restriction applicable to the Department codified in section 1093.

Mr. President, I ask that an excerpt of the October 2022 Justice Department slip opinion considering the Department of Defense policy be printed in the RECORD.

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

(Slip Opinion)

AUTHORITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO USE APPROPRIATIONS FOR TRAVEL BY SERVICE MEMBERS AND DEPENDENTS TO OBTAIN ABORTIONS

The Department of Defense may lawfully expend funds to pay for service members and their dependents to travel to obtain abortions that DoD cannot itself perform due to statutory restrictions. DoD may lawfully expend funds to pay for such travel pursuant to both its express statutory authorities and, independently, the necessary expense doctrine.

(October 3, 2022)

MEMORANDUM OPINIONS FOR GENERAL COUNSEL DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

You have asked whether the Department of Defense (''DoD'') may lawfully expend funds to pay for service members and their dependents to travel to obtain abortions that DoD itself cannot perform due to statutory restrictions. We conclude that DoD may lawfully expend funds for this purpose under its express statutory authorities and, independently, under the necessary expense doctrine.

I.

By statute, ''[f]unds available to the Department of Defense may not be used to perform abortions except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or in a case in which the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest,'' 10 U.S.C. 1093(a), and ''[n]o medical treatment facility or other facility of the Department of Defense may be used to perform an abortion except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or in a case in which the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest,'' id. 1093(b). By its express terms, 10 U.S.C. 1093(a) applies only to funds used to ''perform abortions.'' As we have previously concluded in assessing identical language restricting the Peace Corps' use of its appropriations, the plain text is dispositive here. See Peace Corps Employment Policies for Pregnant Volunteers, 5 Op. O.L.C. 350, 357 (1981). This language ''does not prohibit the use of funds to pay expenses, such as a per diem or travel expenses, that are incidental to the abortion.'' Id.

This conclusion is confirmed by section 1093's legislative history. When Congress originally enacted the provision in 1984, it prohibited DoD only from using funds ''to perform abortions except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term.'' Pub. L. No. 98–525, 1401(e)(5), 98 Stat. 2492, 2617–18 (1984). DoD subsequently adopted a policy of prohibiting non-covered abortions from being performed at any DoD facility even when privately funded—a policy that President Clinton then directed DoD to reverse, stating that it went ''beyond . . . the requirements of the statute.'' Memorandum on Abortions in Military Hospitals, 1 Pub. Papers of Pres. William J. Clinton 11, 11 (Jan. 22, 1993). In 1996, Congress responded to President Clinton's directive by amending 10 U.S.C. 1093 to make clear that, in addition to the prohibition on using funds to ''perform abortions,'' ''[n]o medical treatment facility or other facility of the Department of Defense may be used to perform an abortion except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or in a case in which the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest.'' 10 U.S.C. 1093(b). It is notable that the amendment was targeted narrowly to address the specific issue of DoD's use of its medical treatment facilities, rather than reaching the same result via a broader prohibition on expenditures indirectly related to the provision of abortions.

The limited scope of the 1996 amendment is especially significant because when Congress has wanted to restrict abortion-related expenditures beyond those for the procedure itself, Congress has done so. For example, in 1988—prior to amending 10 U.S.C. 1093—Congress had attached a restriction to Department of Justice (''DOJ'') funds prohibiting the use of those funds ''to require any person to perform, or facilitate in any way the performance of, any abortion.'' Pub. L. No 100–459, tit. II, 206, 102 Stat. 2186, 2201 (1988) (emphasis added); see also, e.g., Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, Pub. L. No. 117–103, div. E, 726(d), 136 Stat. 49, 131 (''CAA 2022'') (referring to funding for ''abortion or abortion related services'' (emphasis added)). This DOJ restriction is also in the current appropriation. See CAA 2022, div. B, 203. That Congress chose not to include such capacious language in the 1996 amendment confirms that it did not intend for the prohibition to sweep so widely.

Other DOJ appropriation restrictions provide further evidence that Congress did not intend DoD's prohibition on the use of funds to perform abortions to reach ancillary expenses, such as travel costs. In addition to the provision noted above, section 202 of the current appropriation contains a general prohibition against using the appropriated

funds ''to pay for an abortion.'' Id., div. B, 202. Section 204 then contains a clarification that the prohibition on requiring any person to perform or facilitate an abortion does not ''remove the obligation of the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to provide escort services necessary for a female inmate'' to obtain an abortion ''outside the Federal facility.'' Id., div. B, 204. Importantly, this language in section 204 does not also create an exception to the general funding restriction in section 202, but rather only clarifies that nothing in section 203 ''remove[s] the obligation'' of the agency to provide transportation services. Id. Section 204 therefore is premised on an understanding that section 202's general prohibition on ''pay[ing] for an abortion'' does not affect the agency's ability to provide such escort services, showing that when Congress prohibits funds from being used ''to pay for an abortion,'' it does not intend that prohibition to reach transportation expenses.

Comparing 10 U.S.C. 1093 to the text and history of the longstanding funding restriction known as the Hyde Amendment is similarly instructive. The Hyde Amendment restricts expenditures by the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education by providing that no covered funds ''shall be expended for any abortion'' or ''for health benefits coverage that includes coverage of abortion,'' except ''if the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest; or . . . in the case where a woman suffers from a physical disorder, physical injury, or physical illness, including a life-endangering physical condition caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself that would, as certified by a physician, place the woman in danger of death unless an abortion is performed.'' CAA 2022, div. H, 506–507. In previous advice, we concluded that the Hyde Amendment would not bar the use of appropriated funds to provide transportation for women seeking abortions. See Memorandum for Samuel Bagenstos, General Counsel, Department of Health and Human Services, from Christopher H. Schroeder, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, Re: Application of the Hyde Amendment to the Provision of Transportation for Women Seeking Abortions (Sept. 27, 2022). In reaching that conclusion, we noted, among other considerations, that earlier versions of the Hyde Amendment only applied to funds ''for any abortion,'' and that in 1997 Congress added language to reach funds ''for health benefits coverage that includes coverage of abortion.'' Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998, Pub. L. No. 105–78, 509(a)–(b), 111 Stat. 1467, 1516 (1997); see Application of the Hyde Amendment to Federal Student-Aid Programs, 45 Op. O.L.C. ____, at *3 (Jan. 16, 2021); H.R. Rep. No. 105–390, at 119 (1997) (Conf. Rep.); see also 143 Cong. Rec. 17,448 (1997) (statement of Sen. Ashcroft). In the context of health insurance, the funds are paid to reimburse the provider or the insured for, and thus effectively pay for, the abortion procedure itself. As a result, payment for health insurance that covers abortions is more closely connected to the actual provision of abortion than transportation to and from the procedure. Thus, the fact that Congress revised the Hyde Amendment to specify that it applies to payments for health benefits coverage supports the view that the prohibition on expending funds ''for any abortion'' is limited to the direct provision of abortions and would not apply to transportation. More generally, the amendment suggests that when Congress has wanted to clearly encompass certain expenditures beyond the direct provision of the procedure, Congress has amended abortion-related funding restrictions to do so.

For these reasons, 10 U.S.C. 1093 does not prohibit the use of funds for expenses that are indirect or ancillary to the performance of abortion. We therefore conclude that 10 U.S.C. 1093 does not bar DoD from using appropriated funds to pay for service members and their dependents to travel to obtain abortions that DoD cannot fund directly.

Mr. REED. The Justice Department's opinion on the Defense Department's policy is not new and is not partisan. In fact, it relies on decades of executive branch interpretation of the Hyde Amendment through administrations of both parties.

In 1981, for example, the Justice Department considered what it described as identical language restricting the Peace Corps' use of Federal funds to ''perform abortions.'' In that opinion, President Reagan's Justice Department concluded that the language ''does not prohibit the use of funds to pay expenses, such as a per diem or travel expenses, that are incidental to the abortion.'' That opinion was authored by Ted Olson, then the Assistant Attorney General and the future Solicitor General of the United States under President George W. Bush.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an excerpt of the 1981 Justice Department opinion on the Peace Corps' policy be printed in the RECORD.

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

PEACE CORPS EMPLOYMENT POLICIES FOR PREGNANT VOLUNTEERS

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) would prohibit the Peace Corps from implementing an across-the-board policy of terminating or reassigning volunteers solely because they become pregnant while assigned overseas, or because they have an abortion. A decision to terminate a pregnant volunteer must be based on a case-by-case assessment of the volunteer's ability to function effectively in her assignment while pregnant or after delivery of the child.

Under the PDA, the fact that a volunteer who has been terminated because of pregnancy chooses to have an abortion cannot he considered in a decision on her reapplication for service.

Even though a specific restriction in the Peace Corps' appropriation prohibits the use of its funds to perform abortions, so that the Peace Corps may not pay for the cost of an abortion for one of its volunteers, the PDA would require the Peace Corps to continue to pay travel and per diem expenses to volunteers evacuated to have an abortion, as long as it provides such compensation to other volunteers evacuated for comparable medical conditions. The Peace Corps must also allow volunteers to draw upon their accumulated readjustment allowance to pay for an abortion, if similar access is allowed for other medical expenses.

(November 20, 1981)

MEMORANDUM OPINION FOR THE GENERAL COUNSEL, PEACE CORPS

This responds to your request for this Office's views on several questions about the Peace Corps' policies on hiring and reinstatement of volunteers who become pregnant while overseas and of pregnant volunteers who elect to have an abortion, and on reimbursement of travel and per diem expenses to volunteers evacuated to the United States for the purpose of obtaining an abortion. We conclude that the Pregnancy Discrimination Act would prohibit the Peace Corps from implementing any across-the-board policy of terminating volunteers who become pregnant while overseas or pregnant volunteers who elect to have abortions, but that in some limited circumstances termination or reassignment may be appropriate, on an ad hoc basis, because of the unique demands and constraints of Peace Corps service. We do not believe, however, that the Peace Corps may consider the fact that a volunteer who had been terminated because of pregnancy subsequently elected to have an abortion in reviewing that individual's application for reinstatement. With respect to the funding of abortion-related expenses, we conclude that the Peace Corps is not barred from using appropriated funds to pay travel costs and a per diem to volunteers who are evacuated for the purpose of obtaining an abortion, and, in fact, that the Pregnancy Discrimination Act requires the Peace Corps to continue paying those costs, so long as travel and per diem expenses are paid to volunteers evacuated for other comparable medical disabilities.

I. BACKGROUND

Current Peace Corps policy provides for an ad hoc determination whether volunteers who become pregnant or pregnant volunteers who elect to have an abortion will be allowed to remain in their assigned countries. In determining whether a pregnant volunteer (including her spouse) should be allowed to remain in service, the Country Director looks at a variety of factors, including health hazards to the mother and child, the ability of the parents to support the child, and the prospects for continued effectiveness by the parents. A pregnant volunteer who elects to have an abortion may be separated, or returned to duty if the Country Director determines she will be able to serve effectively under the circumstances. Pregnant volunteers, volunteers with dependent children, and volunteers who have had abortions while in service do serve in the Peace Corps, although individuals who are pregnant or who have dependent children are not encouraged to become volunteers. Volunteers who choose to have an abortion are generally evacuated to the United States for the procedure. The Peace Corps pays travel expenses and a per diem to those volunteers who have an abortion, as it does for volunteers evacuated for other medical or surgical treatment. Because of a prohibition in the Peace Corps' current appropriations authority against the use of appropriated funds to pay for abortions except where the life of the woman would be endangered or in cases of reported rape or incest, the Peace Corps does not now pay the costs of the abortion procedure itself. Volunteers may, however, draw upon accumulated readjustment allowance funds to pay for abortion procedures.

You have asked us to address the following questions:

1. Can the Peace Corps terminate any volunteer who becomes pregnant while a volunteer because of pregnancy? If so, could such a policy be limited to single volunteers?

III. REIMBURSEMENT OR EXPENSES

You have also asked whether the Peace Corps must, or indeed can, consistent with the PDA and current restrictions on the use of appropriated funds, continue to pay travel costs and a per diem for volunteers who obtain an abortion while in service. The Peace Corps now pays those costs under a general policy providing for evacuation to the United States of volunteers who require ''elective (necessary but not emergency) surgery of any consequence.'' Until the beginning of FY 1979, the Peace Corps also paid for the costs of the abortion procedure itself. In 1978, Congress included language in the Peace Corps' appropriations legislation limiting the use of

appropriated funds for abortions. We understand that the currently effective language is contained in Pub. L. No. 96–536, §109, 94 Stat. 3166, 3170 (1980), and prohibits the use of funds ''to perform abortions except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term; or except for such medical procedures necessary for victims of [reported] rape or incest . . . or for medical procedures necessary for the termination of an ectopic pregnancy.''

On its face, this restriction covers only payments made ''to perform abortions''; it does not prohibit the use of funds to pay expenses, such as a per diem or travel expenses, that are incidental to the abortion. We believe that the plain language of the appropriations restriction is dispositive, and does not require the Peace Corps to cease payment of incidental expenses other than the costs of the abortion itself.

This does not, however, dispose of the question whether the Peace Corps, in its discretion, may cease payment of travel and per diem expenses for volunteers who elect to have abortions. The statutory authority for payment of those expenses vests broad discretion in the President or his delegated representative to authorize ''such health care

Mr. REED. The Justice Department has likewise considered and concluded that the Hyde Amendment does not prevent the Bureau of Prisons from providing transportation services for inmates to seek abortion care outside the prison system, noting that the Bureau has ''long provided'' such benefits. This authority to provide transportation benefits dates at least to the 1996 version of Bureau regulations and continues uninterrupted to the present day.

So, again, this assertion that the Department's policy contravenes some long-held principle is wrong and contrary to fact.

Second, on the matter of travel authorities, the Defense Department has broad statutory authority to provide travel and transportation benefits to servicemembers and dependents and empowers the Secretary of Defense to define those parameters by regulation. As the Justice Department noted, 37 United States Code, section 452, authorizes the Secretary to provide ''actual and necessary expenses of travel and transportation, for, or in connection with . . . any travel as authorized or ordered by the administering Secretary.''

Further, the Justice Department aptly noted that 37 United States Code, sections 452 and 453, authorize travel benefits for servicemembers and dependents in connection with ''unusual, hardship, or emergency circumstances'' and leaves the definition of those terms and other implementing guidance to the Secretary.

I remind my colleagues again that never before in our history has a fundamental healthcare right been denied to servicemembers by a single decision on a single day by the Supreme Court. No matter what side of the abortion debate you are on, you cannot deny that what many women considered to be a fundamental, constitutionally protected right for 50 years was eliminated by the stroke of a pen and that those who depend on these rights now find themselves assigned to locations, through no choice of their own, where these services are no longer available in any meaningful way. In my view, this meets any definition of ''unusual, hardship, or emergency circumstances.''

The Defense Department's policy is a result, as I just suggested, of the Dobbs decision which places extraordinary hardships on servicewomen and dependents, resulting in military personnel no longer being treated equitably at every military base. The Department of Defense's policy seeks to provide a level playing field so that a woman's access to healthcare is not based on her assignment and such access is consistent throughout the force. It seeks further to ensure that these issues do not become determinant in a woman's decision to join the military or remain in the military.

The U.S. Government has provided transportation and other incidental benefits and support relative to healthcare not covered by government programs, including abortion, to certain populations for decades. Servicemembers and their dependents are, I believe, uniquely affected by the Dobbs decision and deserve at least that same level of support.

Lastly, the Senator from Alabama has stated that these officers whose promotions he is holding will receive backpay. That is simply not true. The Department of Defense confirmed for the Armed Services Committee this week that there is no backpay mechanism for these officers. Their date of rank is the date of their appointment, which for general and flag officers can only occur after Senate confirmation. There will be no backpay.

I want to state again what I stated before. It is deeply detrimental to our national security and harmful to the well-being of military families to delay the promotions of senior military leaders for political purposes or any purpose, really, unrelated to an officer's qualifications. It is contrary to the practice and traditions of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate. It does a great disservice to the men and women in uniform and their families.

I would ask that the Senator from Alabama release his holds immediately before more damage is done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from Rhode Island for his leadership. He has worked hard to make sure that the Senate Armed Services Committee works in a bipartisan manner to keep our country safe. His steadfast approach has rightfully earned him respect from our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and I appreciate his being here tonight on this issue.

Mr. President, several weeks ago, I came down to the Senate floor to ask the Senator from Alabama to reconsider his unprecedented action of blocking hundreds of promotions earned by our men and women in uniform. He refused, so I am here to ask again.

As I said the last time I spoke about this, most people are aware that the Senate votes on nominees appointed by the President to occupy top roles in government—Cabinet Secretaries, judges, Ambassadors. Less well known is the fact that the Senate must also vote to approve thousands of military promotions each year. If a colonel has done really well on the job and their services promotion board decides that they are ready to be a brigadier general, the Senate must vote to approve this promotion before it can go through.

Typically, this vote is a formality. These promotions are processed in big batches rather than one at a time, and they nearly always happen without taking a recorded vote. But right now, the Senator from Alabama all by himself is blocking every single senior military nomination and promotion from moving forward. This means that one Senator is personally standing in the way of the promotions for 221 of our top-level military leaders, holding up pay raises for 221 men and women in uniform, blocking 221 senior military leaders from taking their posts, and jeopardizing America's national security.

In April, I sent a letter to Defense Secretary Austin asking about the impact of holding up these military promotions. Secretary Austin didn't pull any punches. He said:

> The longer that this hold persists, the greater the risk the U.S. military runs in every theater, every domain, and every service.

He went on to point out that these unprecedented and unnecessary holds are creating ''rising disquiet from our allies and partners at a moment when our competitors and adversaries are watching.''

There is bipartisan opposition to the Senator from Alabama's actions. Thanks to Chairman REED, seven former Defense Secretaries, including ones who served under President Trump and President George W. Bush, sent a letter stating that leaving senior positions ''in doubt at a time of enormous geopolitical uncertainty sends the wrong message to our adversaries and could weaken our deterrence.''

The Senator from Alabama hurts Active-Duty military. He also hurts their families. In this letter describing the consequences of the Senator from Alabama's hold, Secretary Austin noted that it places an ''unconscionable burden on families that are already making significant sacrifices.''

There are mounting worries that the negative impacts on military families is threatening our military's ability to retain leaders who have completed thorough, months-long reviews to earn those promotions.

At a recent Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, the Secretary of the Air Force said:

One of the things that motivates our people in terms of retention . . . is how they feel that their families are being treated.

He said that he also knows that these families do not want to be treated liked the Senator from Alabama's political football.

The Senator from Alabama is punishing 221 dedicated men and women who serve in our military because he disagrees with one of the Pentagon's policy decisions. He is opposed to a Department of Defense policy established to help members of the military and their families access healthcare—specifically, reproductive healthcare.

I strongly support this particular policy, but it is no secret that I disagree with a lot of other policy positions at the Pentagon. And, as I reminded the Senator from Alabama the last time we had this discussion on the Senate floor, as Senators, we have many tools we can use to shape and influence government policy without putting our national defense at risk.

We can pass laws; we can conduct oversight; we can meet with administration officials; we can hold hearings. From time to time, Senators object to an individual nomination, usually to express opposition either to the nominee or to ensure that the Senator gets answers from a Federal Agency. I have done this in the past as have many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

That is not the approach the Senator from Alabama has taken. Instead, he is blocking every single top military leader from advancing indefinitely. The last time I came to the floor, he was holding up 184 nominees. Now he has snared 221 top-level servicemembers who are currently slated for advancement. He has stopped every one of them dead in their tracks.

The Senator from Alabama is singlehandedly holding up three 4-star commanders, 35 3-star commanders, multiple Silver Star and Purple Heart recipients, the next commander of our Fifth Fleet in the Middle East, the next commander of the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific, the Navy's air and surface warfare commanders; and as a preview of coming events, the Senator from Alabama has already promised to block the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Senator from Alabama has already held some of these nominees for as long as 3 months. That is 3 months that they won't have time in their next roles. That is 3 months that they won't get a pay bump, and there is no retroactive pay here. That is 3 months that they don't get the experience and the responsibilities of their new duty stations. That is 3 months, and there is no end in sight.

How many blows to their military careers and to their families do these men and women have to suffer before some of them simply walk away?

This isn't right.

The Senator from Alabama has not raised any objections to the process by which these men and women were vetted and nominated. Each of these nominees has undergone a thorough review, first by their military service and then by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Months after those reviews, their nominations were sent to the White House for additional scrutiny and then to Congress to officially authorize the promotions.

These are our military's best leaders, and they have proven themselves to the highest degree. As a reward for their service and their exemplary dedication, the Senator from Alabama holds them hostage, with no concern for what it means to their careers, to the servicemembers depending on them for leadership, or to their families.

The Senator from Alabama's actions are not just the usual back-and-forth in Washington. His holds pose a grave threat to our national security and our military readiness. They actively hurt our ability to respond quickly to threats around the world. That is not my conclusion; that is the conclusion of the Secretary of Defense.

When I tried to move these nominations forward the last time, I said I was concerned about how the actions of the Senator from Alabama were undermining military readiness. The Senator responded that he knew that I had sent a letter to Secretary Austin to ask him about the impact of the holds on military readiness but that the Secretary had not yet responded. The Senator said the last time we were on the floor here together that he would consider Secretary Austin's concerns. In fact, he said that he ''can't wait to read it,'' but he would not budge in the meantime.

So I am here this evening to place into the RECORD Secretary Austin's reply. In his letter, the Secretary makes his concerns clear. He explains how the actions of the Senator from Alabama pose a grave threat to national security by harming military readiness. The Secretary also explains how the Senator from Alabama harms military families.

I sincerely hope that the unvarnished assessment of our Secretary of Defense will be enough to move the Senator from Alabama to lift his holds and let these nominations go forward.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Secretary Austin's letter be printed in full in the RECORD.

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

Hon. ELIZABETH WARREN,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR WARREN: Thank you for your letter requesting a full accounting of the impact on our national security and the risks to our military readiness resulting from Senator Tuberville's indefinite hold on the confirmation of our general and flag officers.

I appreciate and share your deep concern over this hold, which is unprecedented in its scale and scope. Delays in confirming our general and flag officers pose a clear risk to U.S. military readiness, especially at this critical time.

The Department of Defense has 64 three- and four-star nominations pending for positions due to rotate within the next 120 days. These include the Chief of Staff of the Army; the Chief of Naval Operations; the Commandant and Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps; the Director of the National Security Agency and Commander of United States Cyber Command; and the Commander of United States Northern Command.

Additionally, several one- and two-star nominations are now on indefinite hold for general officers and flag officers slated to take command or support critical positions across the Joint Force. Within the next nine months, approximately 80 three- and four-star rotations are projected across the Department. Those positions include the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, and the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force. In total, between now and the end of the year, the Department projects that approximately 650 general and flag officers will require Senate confirmation.

This indefinite hold harms America's national security and hinders the Pentagon's normal operations. The United States military relies on the deep experience and strategic expertise of our senior military leaders. The longer that this hold persists, the greater the risk the U.S. military runs in every theater, every domain, and every Service.

MISSION VACANCIES

The tenure of Service Chiefs is limited by law, and thus, incumbents must vacate their positions at the appointed time and may only be extended under extraordinary circumstances. Collectively, these positions oversee more than 1.2 million active and reserve component Service members and provide Service personnel and resources to the commanders of the unified combatant commands. By law, Service Chiefs preside over the capabilities, requirements, policies, and plans of their Services and serve as the principal military advisors to the Secretaries of the Military Departments. Put simply, our Service Chiefs train and equip the Joint Force. Without these leaders in place, the U.S. military will incur an unnecessary and unprecedented degree of risk at a moment when our adversaries may seek to test our resolve.

The hold causes especially acute, self-inflicted problems in new domains of potential conflict. The Director of the National Security Agency and Commander of United States Cyber Command, is responsible for supporting every combatant commander and Service member around the globe—including troops in hostile or hazardous areas—with actionable signals intelligence and cybersecurity support. The Director also ensures that military communications and data remain secure and out of the hands of our adversaries, safeguarding our advanced command, control, communications, computer intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities against the People's Republic of China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, ISIS, and more. Failing to fill this position weakens the cybersecurity of the United States.

Furthermore, delays in confirming a large number of one- and two-star general and flag officers jeopardizes our current and future readiness. The Department relies on these experienced leaders to execute tactical actions every day and extend our strategic advantages for the long term. General and flag

officers at this level are responsible for executing strategy, acquiring new technologies, enhancing tactical effectiveness, conducting joint training, and strengthening global alliances. These general and flag officers also provide direct leadership and mentorship to thousands of enlisted Service members and junior and field grade officers across the Department. Their importance cannot be overstated.

POWER PROJECTION ABROAD

General and flag officers provide oversight of the Department's military and civilian staffs, help decide how we employ our forces, and take care of the Service members, civilians, and families in their organizations. Delays in confirmation will soon foist vacancies on the most senior military positions across each of the Services, imposing new and unnecessary risks on U.S. warfighters across multiple theaters of operations.

The hold also makes it harder for the United States to fulfil its global leadership responsibilities, including to our treaty allies and our valued partners around the world. Our smoothly running normal processes and predictable military transitions have long set helpful expectations among allies and partners. Now, however, this hold has created unnecessary uncertainty. That diminishes our global standing as the strongest military in the world, which is in large part based on our stable processes and orderly transitions.

General and flag officers have the authority to make decisions and commit resources, develop key policies, work with our allies and partners, and confront our rivals and foes. The full impact of this hold may not be immediately noticeable because of the resilience built into our military organizations, but over time, the hold will cause cascading impacts to our readiness and needlessly hinder our ability to meet our strategic objectives in the Inda-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and beyond.

The absence of experienced and Senate-confirmed senior leadership limits our ability to deepen our cooperation with our allies and partners through multilateral training and cooperative engagements. Recent exercises, such as Balikatan 2023 with the Armed Forces of the Philippines or joint U.S.-Israeli naval activity in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, may become even more difficult if delays in confirmation force other leaders to take on the responsibilities of officers held up by the Senate. This hold could force senior leaders to become dual-hatted, which would force them to juggle competing priorities and sap their ability to excel.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

Our general and flag officers cultivate their expertise and experience over decades of service. Military units need leaders, and our Service members deserve to be led by fully confirmed general and flag officers. The failure to confirm leaders in key roles transfers strategic risk down the chain of command and forces our units to operate with less experienced decision makers in charge. By destabilizing the senior military promotion and rotation process, we put our short- and long-term readiness at significant risk.

Failure to fill these positions in a timely manner is simply irresponsible. We owe it to our Service members to provide them with the best leadership possible, and the current hold jeopardizes the continuity and effective transition of leadership.

SERVICE MEMBERS AND FAMILIES

This hold disrupts not only our most senior military leaders but their families as well. Service members and military families are resilient, but the current hold adds another layer of stress and unnecessary uncertainty.

The damage here includes not just the disruption to our most senior officers, but also profound confusion and disturbance to our rising one- and two-star general and flag officers and their families. Extended holds increase the time from selection to promotion, which could further delay promotion timelines by 12 to 24 months. This impedes not only the current cadre of officers but those in the groups behind them as well.

General officer and flag officer end strength is tightly controlled by statute. Promotion of one cadre of officers is possible only with the retirement of others. Long-term holds have a corrosive and cascading effect: they prevent our rising officers and their families from being able to predict promotion and rotation windows, which can increase the pressure to leave the military in favor of greater stability. The more our normal promotion processes are jolted, the more we risk the loss of the diverse warfighting and technical expertise that America needs to confront its 21st-century security challenges.

The current hold also means delaying or canceling permanent change of station moves—not only for those now nominated and on hold but also for numerous officers and their families who must be extended on station to prevent critical gaps. Military children will be unable to move to new schools when the next school year begins, which imposes needless additional stress on those students and their families. Military families enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program may endure serious delays or be unable to access the services and support that they need and deserve when they transition to their new duty stations. And outstanding military spouses may not be able to accept or start new jobs because they cannot predict when they could start. The families of our general and flag officers serve right alongside their Service members. The current hold imposes additional burdens upon our military families that are both unnecessary and unconscionable.

A PERILOUS PRECEDENT

As such, the Department urges the Senate to resolve the current situation as swiftly as possible to limit these serious consequences. Never before has one Senator prevented the Department of Defense from managing its officer corps in this manner, and letting this hold continue would set a perilous precedent for our military, our security, and our country.

The ripple effects of this unprecedented and unnecessary hold are increasingly troubling. Ultimately, the breakdown of the normal flow of leadership across the Department's carefully cultivated promotion and transition system will breed uncertainty and confusion across the U.S. military. This protracted hold means uncertainty for our Service members and their families and rising disquiet from our allies and partners, at a moment when our competitors and adversaries are watching.

As public servants and officials sworn to protect and defend our Constitution, I hope that we can all acknowledge the national security risks posed by these needless delays and come together to safeguard the lethality and readiness of the most powerful fighting force in human history.

Thank you for your continued strong support for our Service members and our national security. I again urge swift action to confirm all U.S. general and flag officers.

Sincerely,

LLOYD J. AUSTIN, III.

Ms. WARREN. I am here today to ask my colleague from Alabama to let these promotions move forward and to find other ways to continue advocating for the policy changes that he wants to see. I am hopeful that he will do the right thing and allow these servicemembers to carry out their responsibilities to our country.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 204. This nominee is a native of Pittsfield, MA. If confirmed, he would be the Navy's next sub boss, making him the most senior operational submariner in the Navy. The Submarine Force is integral to deterring our enemies and keeping America safe.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 204; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the Record; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, I continue to reiterate my stance and my position over the last almost 4 months now about my opposition to this policy.

Now, the burden is not on me to pass legislation to stop this illegal policy. The burden is on the administration. The burden is on the administration to stop breaking the law.

So let me just say this one more time—because I keep getting asked the same question over and over again—I will keep my hold. I will keep it on until the Pentagon follows the law or changes the law. It is that simple. Those are the two conditions that would get me to drop the hold. So, until these conditions are met, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, let's be clear what is at issue here.

Servicemembers and their families don't get to decide where they serve. The policy that is at issue here allows servicemembers who need reproductive healthcare to request time to travel to receive the treatment that they need. The treatment could be an abortion, but it also could be IVF. It also could be helping a servicemember or a family member receive treatment after a miscarriage. Commanders respect a servicemember's privacy, and they don't want to be required to ask why the servicemember is taking leave. Now, I understand that the Senator from Alabama doesn't like that. He doesn't think that the Department should be facilitating certain types of reproductive healthcare in any way.

The administration—let us be clear—is not breaking the law. Chairman REED has already gone through all of

the legal precedent and the legal opinion that states that what the Department of Defense is doing is absolutely within its purview. The Department of Defense is following the law. I understand that the law could be changed, and the Senator from Alabama can advocate for the bill that he cosponsors that would ban the Department from providing paid leave or transportation to access legal reproductive care.

I think that such a policy would have a terrible impact on the privacy of our servicemembers and their families who would have to tell their commanding officers intimate details of their medical situations in order to get the time they need to seek care for things like IVF or a miscarriage. It could prevent servicemembers or their families from accessing important, legal care that would require them to travel or to take time away from work.

It would also have negative impacts on our commanders officers, who would spend less time training against our national security threats and more time asking invasive questions about their employees' health conditions or those of the employees' families.

Even so, the Senator from Alabama is free to advocate for this policy. As I have said before, the Senator does not have the votes in Congress for a bill like that. I think the Senator from Alabama knows that, which is why he has taken this radical step of opposing the swift passage of every high-level military nomination pending before the Senate.

This approach is dangerous. Many of us are frustrated by executive branch policies and actions, but that frustration is not an excuse to endanger our national security and to deprive servicemembers of the leaders they need.

The Senator from Alabama and I fundamentally disagree on the issue of abortion and on the DOD's policies, but we should all be able to agree that a blockade of the promotion of every senior member of our Nation's military creates unacceptable risks to our national security.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 192. If confirmed, this nominee would be the first female Superintendent for the Naval Academy. Of course, she is no stranger to breaking down barriers. She was also the first Hispanic woman to command a Navy warship. We are in the middle of a recruiting crisis. She is precisely the kind of leader we need to inspire our next generation to serve.

I yield to the Senator from Rhode Island. Then I will make my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I just want to reiterate what Senator WARREN pointed out: This policy is not illegal. It has been fully justified by the Department of Justice and by interpretations of many different agencies.

In fact, one of the excruciating ironies here is that Senator TUBERVILLE is denying promotions to general officers because he will not allow female members of the military to have some of the same protections that Federal prisoners have. If that is not absurd, I don't know what is.

Also, I have had the opportunity—really, the privilege—to serve in and command a paratrooper company. I have a lot of friends who have made careers in the U.S. military. When you get to the level of a colonel who is about to be voted brigadier general, it is a great honor. You have worked your whole life for it, and you very much want to do that, but you have family responsibilities, and you have other responsibilities. I can pretty much assure you that most people who are qualified to be a brigadier general in the Army are being courted assiduously by companies to work for several hundred thousand dollars a year.

The longer this goes on, the more demands of the family, the more the uncertainty, the more the frustration, we will lose these talented people at a moment in our history when we need the leadership to assist our allies and also to confront a very serious threat across the Indo-Pacific region at a time when the practice of warfare is changing second by second with technology.

When you have the proponents of AI warning us this week that AI could be the catastrophic destruction of our species, well, guess where that is going to be first manifested—in the military domain, I believe. That requires leaders of character, intelligence, compassion, and dedication to democracy. Those leaders now are questioning whether they can continue because of an attempt to suggest that this is not legal, which is wrong, and, ironically, again, to take away healthcare support for women who serve in the military that we extend to Federal prisoners in this country.

I yield to the Senator from Massachusetts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I thank Senator REED for underscoring the point that the Department of Defense is not breaking the law. There is legal precedence for what the Department is doing, and it has been reviewed by the Department of Justice that the Department of Defense is fully in accord with current law.

With that, I would like to go back to the nominee who would be the first female Superintendent of the Naval Academy. Mr. President, I renew my request with respect to Calendar No. 192.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let's talk about a few things.

First of all, we have heard talk of clear legal authority, clear legal precedent.

I wasn't here when the distinguished Senator from Rhode Island was providing that, but my understanding of it is that he is making the claim that there are judicial precedents for this. At least one of the cases he cited was from 1981. Significantly, that is a full 3 years before 10 U.S.C. section 1093 was even enacted into law. Talk about excruciating ironies. That was enacted into law as part of the Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1985, and it was voted on by, among others, then-Senator Joe Biden. He voted for it.

So whatever 1981 case you are citing I don't know, but I am certain that it couldn't have involved 10 U.S.C. section 1093, the very statute that we are dealing with here, because it did not yet exist.

I am equally certain that whatever personnel within the Department of Justice that blessed this, whatever lawyers within the Department of Defense that blessed this are also part of the Biden administration and are ultimately serving at the pleasure of the President. So I wouldn't expect that they would come back with an answer that he didn't want because he and his administration have made clear that this is an all-of-government approach to make sure that the more abortions, the better, in the wake of Dobbs.

So I find it impossible to believe that any court could have addressed this particular issue, setting aside whether that 1981 judicial precedent that he cited that I haven't seen is the only one. Let's assume there were others. If there were others—there couldn't have been others even if they were decided after this was enacted into law in 1984 as part of the Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1985 because this policy didn't exist. No, this policy didn't exist until just a couple of months ago. So it couldn't have come up.

Courts don't answer these questions in the abstract. Under article III of the Constitution, the courts are empowered only to resolve cases in controversy. The case in controversy requirement of article III means that you have to have standing. To have standing, you have to have an injury, in fact, fairly traceable to the conduct of the defendant that is subject to being remedied by competent authority of a court. That would have been lacking here because until just a couple of months ago, this did not exist. They could not have addressed this. So I am not sure what authorities the Department of Justice officials to whom my colleagues are referring were relying on, but it is not a ripe controversy that could have been capably adjudicated.

But, yeah, this is truly full of excruciating ironies—the fact that the same President who voted to support 10 U.S.C. section 1093 which unmistakably makes clear that we don't want Department of Defense funding going to perform abortions. No, they rely on this argument that is reminiscent of Pinocchio in the movie Shrek 3. I think it was technically called ''Shrek the Third.'' Pinocchio, in that movie, gets

away with all kinds of things by speaking in a form of legalese that would make any lawyer blush. It wouldn't be entirely untrue if I didn't say that I weren't entirely not opposed to this nonpolicy. It confuses people. That is sort of what they are doing here.

Now, look, if you want to make the argument that this is legal, first of all, I don't agree with it. This violates at least the spirit, if not also the letter, of the law. And even to the extent that it is somehow compliant with the letter of the law on a point that I am not willing to concede because this is, in fact, funding the process of getting abortions; this is, in fact, funding the endeavor of an abortion—something that we go out of our way in American law to do. This is one of the things that unite Americans of different political backgrounds, of different party affiliations.

Regardless of how you feel about abortion and under what circumstances it should or shouldn't be legal, Americans are overwhelmingly united behind the concept that we shouldn't use U.S. taxpayer dollars, thus forcing the American people at the point of a gun—because, ultimately, when you pay your taxes, you are paying at the point of a gun because, if you don't pay your taxes, people with guns are going to show up and make you pay. We don't force people, with the point of a gun, to fund abortions because we fundamentally recognize that is wrong regardless of how any individual feels about abortions themselves.

But this comparison is too cute by half. The very best I can say it is to analogize it this way: You really want to park in that handicap spot that is reserved for persons with disabilities and you are annoyed that it is there, so you park right up next to it, thus rendering it unusable space within the actual handicap spot. That is the best I can analogize this to.

To whatever extent you are complying with the letter of the law—and I don't concede that you are because I don't think you are—you are still really messing with the underlying purpose of the bill.

As to the point made moments ago by my colleague from Massachusetts—a distinguished lawyer, a Harvard law professor herself—that this somehow is lawful because Department of Justice lawyers said it is lawful, this is the same Department of Justice that has from time to time made mistakes, and I am understating that quite significantly here. This is, in any event, a clear affront to the men and women who elected each of us.

These laws are policy changes. Yes, they saw the need for a policy change in 1984 when they adopted the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1985. They understood that to put that in place, they couldn't just rely on Department of Defense policy; they needed to put it in statute. So they enacted a statute to do that. This flies in the face of that. You are actively promoting, encouraging, and facilitating the performance of abortions.

Make no mistake, don't think of this as an evenhanded approach, one that aims broadly to facilitate reproductive care. No. The American people are not stupid. They cannot be fooled. We certainly must not be here. This is about Dobbs. This is about their disagreement, their fundamental rejection of Dobbs. This is about their fundamental disagreement and rejection of the notion that the U.S. Constitution doesn't give this authority over abortion to unelected judges who sit across the street in the Supreme Court of the United States. And it was never a constitutional principle to begin with. The Constitution doesn't address it. They disagree with that. I get it. But it is their disagreement about this that prompted this policy. They have been unmistakably clear about that.

Look, at the end of the day, this is a policy change. Policy changes need to be made by Congress—policy changes that involve a departure from the policy established in statute in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1985, which remains legally binding and in effect to this very moment. If they want to get that changed, it is not incumbent upon those who oppose this policy to get the statute changed; it is those who want this policy to go into effect.

So I return to my long-used refrain. If Secretary Austin wants to make policy, he should run for the Senate. He can't set this kind of policy from the E-ring of the Pentagon. It is wrong.

As to the points about military readiness, look, I don't think there is anyone more concerned about military readiness than my colleague from Alabama. He sits on the Armed Services Committee. He is a faithful member of that committee. He performs his oversight responsibilities very faithfully, very conscientiously. Nobody is more concerned about military readiness than Senator TOMMY TUBERVILLE—no one. But to whatever extent this impinges upon military readiness—the fact that he has concerns with this and is therefore raising objections—that door swings both ways. If anything, it cuts stronger in the opposite direction. To the extent this is interfering with military readiness, we should set down this policy right now and allow Congress to decide this in connection with the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024, which we will be turning to in the coming weeks and months. Let's let Congress decide that. In the meantime, set aside this policy—this policy that is a departure, a clear violation of at least the spirit if not also the letter of the law—and let that be decided. If, in fact, this interferes with military readiness, let's put this down and not allow American national security to be impaired by that.

Now, I don't believe we are in that position. I believe that while it is ideal for us to be able to move these nominees forward and get them moved, it is also very legitimate for a U.S. Senator to identify a problem, a simple problem arising out of the fact that the Department of Defense has a couple of things it wants to get done. It wants to get these people confirmed so that they can be promoted, and it also wants to put in place a policy. It wants to do both at the same time.

Senator TUBERVILLE won't—in fact, Senator TUBERVILLE can't physically—under the rules of the U.S. Senate, he cannot, he is physically unable to stop them from confirming these people. There are ways of going about it; it is just time-consuming to do it without his assent. So they want a shortcut, and they are asking for him to do them a favor—a favor that is unreciprocated—not just unreciprocated but a favor that he warned them he would not give them if they took this unfortunate step. He did that, I think, back in December. So knowing that as they did, they incurred this risk, to whatever degree.

They are right that this impacts military readiness at the expense of American national security. This is on him. He knew it would have this effect, and now he wants to force Senator TUBERVILLE, shame him—to shame him into doing him a favor by expediting this process so that the Senate won't have to go through the additional steps that the Senate will have to go through in order to get these people confirmed without Senator TUBERVILLE relinquishing it.

That is a shameful strategy on the Secretary of Defense, and he should be ashamed of the fact that he has become a policymaker. You can't legislate from the E-ring of the Pentagon. He has no business doing that here. He is thwarting, he is desecrating, he is disrespecting this institution and the sacred laws of our country—passed with really good reasons—in order for him to promote his own woke policy agenda. Shame on him for doing that.

I object, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, first, anyone who suggests that the Secretary of Defense does not have a role—in fact, a responsibility—to shape policy in the Department of Defense—it is nonsense, and I would suspect that the person has never served in the military forces of the United States.

This is a policy that the Secretary of Defense is not only legally entitled to promulgate, but is, I think, compelled to clarify the position of the Department of Defense when it comes to this Dobbs decision and its effect on the military.

Now, the gentleman from Utah did not hear my opening remarks. I did not refer to judicial decisions; I was referring to opinions—very valid opinions—of the Department of Justice, dating back to 1981.

Section 1093, which he cites, is the most significant provision of the law.

What it does, it prevents funding to perform abortions and restricts the use of Department of Defense medical facilities to perform an abortion except when the life of the mother is in danger or in the case of rape or incest. I might suggest that I think my colleagues over there wouldn't even recognize that part of the law, but that is part of the law. There is no discussion of other aspects—i.e., providing transportation—and I pointed out Federal prisons provide transportation for female inmates requesting an abortion.

These are policy decisions that are reserved to the Secretary of Defense by statute, the same types of decisions he has to make every day. What are the physical standards for the troops in the U.S. military? Is that an act of Congress? No. I don't think anyone here would reasonably argue that we are the experts who should decide that and we know better than the Secretary of Defense.

There are a whole bevy of reasons, but section 1093 is the key statute, and it prevents Department funding being used for the performance of non-covered abortions. It makes no comment whatsoever in terms of any other aspects of incidental expenses.

The Department's policy is legal, as I pointed out. It is rooted in the longstanding Department of Justice interpretations of both the Hyde amendment and similar restrictions.

In fact, the Department of Defense General Counsel requested the Justice Department's views on the policy last fall because they wanted to be sure they were right before they went ahead, and they issued a lengthy and informative slip opinion, which is part of the record.

And they concluded that 10 United States Code section 1093, which my colleague from Utah continually refers to, does not prevent the Department from using appropriated funds to pay for servicemembers and their dependents to travel to obtain abortions that the Department cannot fund directly because of section 1093.

So this is not illegal. And what is contemptuous, I think, is not this debate over this policy. That is what we would do. It is ignoring years and years and years of respecting the promotion of military officers by the Department of Defense based on merit, based on their abilities, not their politics; and, for the first time, using military officers as tokens in a political game of trying to change things that they don't like, even though these policies are absolutely legal and have been confirmed by the Department of Justice and provide, I think, benefits that we provide to Federal prisoners. I would hate to see our soldiers—our female soldiers, particularly—treated any less appropriately than Federal prisoners.

So this argument is a lot of ''sturm und drang.'' I think that is the German pronunciation for it.

The policy is legal. On one other point—a sort of simple-minded point—if it is not legal, why hasn't it been challenged in court? Because it is legal.

Now, you can disagree with the policy, and many of my colleagues do. In fact, many of our colleagues have submitted legislation, and that legislation will be considered at some point. But no one has risen to the point of invoking this block of military promotions. It affects the military. It affects families. It affects our readiness. It affects our recruitment, if people look far enough down the road. And every day it continues, it does more and more damage. It is a cumulative effect. And I very, very strongly object to the continued decapitation of our military.

Let's carry this forward for 6 months or a year. We don't have a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I think we will because I think a majority of my colleagues will realize how important it is to have that. But it won't be done in an efficient, coordinated way. It will be objected to. It will be argued about.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps—no, we have to put this gentleman, General Smith, through the ringer. The Chief of Staff of the Army, the same thing.

We are in a situation with a tremendous pressure globally, assisting the Ukrainians in their battle; particularly, our new peer competition with China, trying to assimilate the technology that is changing the battlefield literally every second.

And now we are spending time arguing about what is within the legal authority of the Secretary of Defense and doing it by taking military officers and making them political tokens that you trade for something. I personally resent such treatment of professional officers in our military.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, the Senator from Alabama earlier claimed that the Department of Defense's policy violates the law. The Senator from Utah then made a slight shift in how he described his complaint with the Department of Defense policy. He said it violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the law, and therein lies the difference.

The law that we are talking about here is the Hyde amendment, and that is a congressional prohibition on the Federal government paying for abortions.

Let's be clear about the Department of Defense policy. Servicemembers remain personally responsible for bearing the medical cost of abortion, just like they did before the Dobbs opinion, just like they did the year before that and the year before that and the year before that, and all the way back to when the Hyde amendment was passed.

Instead, what DOD policy does is it clarifies that servicemembers who need to travel out of State to access any kind of reproductive healthcare that is not available where they are stationed can request the time off to go get that care for themselves or a family member. That is it.

That is what people in the Peace Corps can do. That is what people in Federal prisons can do. And that is what our servicemembers can do. That is not a violation of the explicit language in the Hyde amendment.

And to stand up and claim that somehow what the Department of Defense has done is violate the law is simply not to read the law. The law is clear, and the Department of Defense continues to follow it.

But there are real consequences to this argument. I understand that there are Members of the Republican Party, Members of the Senate, who would like to change that policy. They would like the Department of Defense to follow a different policy. They can try to change the law. They can introduce an amendment. In fact, they already have introduced an amendment. But, in the meantime, they cannot hold hostage the promotions of our top military leaders. This jeopardizes our national defense.

Secretary Austin's letter that I earlier entered into the RECORD goes into great detail about how these holds that the Senator from Alabama has put on our top military leaders create mission vacancies that ''incur an unnecessary and unprecedented degree of risk at a moment when our adversaries may seek to test our resolve.''

He goes on to explain that the holds undermine power projection abroad, which, ''diminishes our global standing as the strongest military in the world, which is in large part based on our stable processes and orderly transitions''—precisely what the Senator from Alabama is holding up.

The risks are even greater in new domains of potential conflict, and Secretary Austin does not mince words on who benefits.

Who benefits? Our Secretary of Defense identifies them: China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and ISIS. The leaders whose nominations currently stand in purgatory are responsible, according to Secretary Austin, for ''executing strategy, acquiring new technologies, enhancing tactical effectiveness, conducting joint training, and strengthening global alliances.''

This isn't rhetoric. These are specific examples of U.S. national security interests that are endangered by these reckless holds.

I understand that the Senator from Alabama may not be persuaded by Secretary Austin's letter, but we have to face reality here. While we argue over the fact that the Republicans want to change current law under the Hyde amendment, we are endangering our national defense.

We need to move forward on the nominations that have already been approved by the servicemembers, by the White House, by our own committee. In the Senate Armed Services Committee, we need a vote so that these people can move to their next posts and do their jobs.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 199. If

confirmed, this nominee would be Deputy Commander for Air Force Materiel Command, which employs nearly 86,000 military and civilian airmen and manages a $71.3 billion budget.

She is also a mama. She calls her kids the ''Three Musketeers'' and says they are the center of her universe.

These holds are the hardest on military families who are trying to figure out how to sign up for new schools, trying to establish their lives in their next deployment.

This nominee has already moved 17 times during her career, and she is now held by the Senator from Alabama, cannot move to her next deployment, cannot establish herself and her ''Three Musketeers'' and get them settled in school, and get her family in the place where they will be so that she can do her job for the American people.

We need people with decades of logistics management experience, and we need to treat them with some respect.

I renew my request with respect to Calendar No. 199.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I rise today to support my friend, my colleague Senator TOMMY TUBERVILLE as he continues to do the right thing, to do justice, as he continues this fight against the radical pro-abortion policies put in place by the Defense Department earlier this year.

And I remind everybody that this is a fight the Department of Defense picked. We didn't pick this fight. They picked this fight. They are the ones who decided to change their policies to break the law.

This February 16 policy provides military personnel 3 weeks of paid leave and uses taxpayer dollars for travel expenses incurred while seeking an abortion—a clear violation of the Hyde amendment.

The policy is illegal. It violates Federal law, prohibiting funds to the DOD from being used to perform abortions except where the life of the mother is endangered, rape, or incest.

This policy takes the number of the Department of Defense abortions from less than 20 per year to an estimated 4,500 abortions.

The policy also describes abortion as reproductive healthcare. And I think that is the true issue here. You know, as an obstetrician, I am often asked two questions: When does life begin? What was the favorite part of a pregnancy for me?

I want to talk about the pregnancy for a second. I took care of hundreds, maybe thousands, of infertile couples, and, certainly, that first time when they had a pregnancy test that was positive was a great moment for me to share with them.

Four weeks after conception, we can see a baby's heartbeat on the ultrasound. That is another spectacular moment, for every couple to see that little baby's heartbeat at 4 weeks after conception.

At 12 weeks, we could hear the baby's heartbeat on a doppler. And it was one of the favorite moments for that mom and dad to hear that baby's heartbeat, as well, especially those women who had recurrent miscarriages, those who had lost life early repeatedly and, through miracles and medicines, they were able to conceive and carry that pregnancy. They get through the first trimester. They hear their baby's heartbeat. They know they are pretty much out of the woods.

One of my favorite visits came at about 15 to 16 weeks after conception. And the mom would come into my office, and I would ask her: How are you feeling?

And the nausea and vomiting are now over with, and I would ask her: Are you feeling the baby move yet?

And her eyes would light up. And she would say: Yes, Doctor. I can feel the baby move now. Isn't that incredible?

So I always loved that.

And maybe the next visit—maybe, you know, at 18, 20 weeks along—they would come into the room, and I would examine the mom and put my hands on her abdomen. I could feel the baby's head and the baby's buttocks and maybe the limbs. And I would see the baby kind of start to move as I would kind of push on one spot. And maybe there was a little brother or sister in the room as well. And I would listen to the heartbeat. And almost every time that brother or sister would screech out: Mommy, is that my baby brother or sister?

This is at 18 weeks.

And, then, what was miraculous of all of this is that little baby, that fetus—the baby inside of the mom, the unborn baby—you could hear the heartbeat increase. You could hear it increase in intensity and the rate, recognizing this baby brother or sister's voice.

The rest of the pregnancy, you know, maybe there was another 6 or 8 visits, and they were all fun, and they were all special.

I delivered a baby almost every day of my life for 25 years, and every labor was different. It was touchy; it was hard; it was easy—all those things. We had prolapsed cords, placentas separate, women with blood pressure problems seizing. I was blessed. I never lost a mom—never lost a mom. God blessed us and gave me the skill to get them through that.

Some labors were short, and some were long. Some lasted 30 minutes, and some lasted 2 days. Sometimes they would push for 2 minutes, and sometimes a woman would push for 3 hours. But my favorite moment of every pregnancy was delivering the baby and rubbing it down, and I would be checking its pulse and its heart rate and see if it was breathing and making sure it was dry and quietly praying to myself for this newborn baby until I heard it start crying.

The favorite moment was giving that newborn baby to that mom and just watching her and observe her and just being able to watch that total nonjudgmental love of a mom for a newborn baby.

I take it backward from there and talk about when life begins. There are those people in this Congress that, even after a baby would survive abortion, they think that baby should not be treated and cared for. Certainly, I believe life certainly begins when the baby survives an abortion, and it is past the point of viability. We should do everything we can to help that baby out.

You know, you go backward. Viability is probably 20, 21 weeks—21 weeks probably today. Does life begin at 21 weeks? If that baby was born outside the womb, would it survive? At 21 weeks, it has a chance. I think most of us certainly agree life begins then. What about 18 weeks when that baby recognizes its brother's or sister's voice or at 16 weeks when mom can feel the baby move or at 12 weeks when we can hear the heartbeat or 6 weeks when we can see the heartbeat? Well, after years of study and doing this, I just—my heart tells me life begins at conception, and no one has been able to prove me wrong. I think we have to assume life begins at conception.

That is why it is so struggling for me to hear people calling abortionists reproductive healthcare. Reproductive healthcare, to me, means helping patients who can't conceive, helping moms to have a healthy pregnancy, getting them—taking folic acid a year before they are trying to conceive, making sure they are doing everything they can to prevent spina bifida or encephalic babies, getting their sugars under control—all those things. That is what reproductive healthcare means to me, not taking the life of a baby.

Labeling abortion as ''healthcare'' is a tactic that is used to avert the radical abortion agenda. This irresponsible and unethical scheme politicizes our doctors' offices and, in almost all cases, does not improve women's health.

I am sorely disappointed in the military that I once served in, that my dad served, my uncle served, my great uncles, my mom's dad, my mom's uncle who died in World War II, my son who is now serving. I am disappointed in the military. It turned its attention and resources to terminating life.

I want to remind the Department of Defense they exist to protect the citizens of this great Nation, not to push a radical abortion agenda; that they took an oath to the Constitution to defend this country. Why are they picking this fight to end the lives of unborn babies? It is morally wrong; it is illegal; and the Pentagon needs to be held accountable.

The Biden administration has created the most politicalized Pentagon in

history, destroying their own morality, destroying recruiting, destroying the readiness of our military. Unelected bureaucrats cannot ignore Congress and change the law with a memo. This policy is outside the Department of Defense's mission to uphold and fight for life, not destroy it.

I am honored to stand up here and support my colleague Senator TUBERVILLE to fight back against this outrageous abortion policy, both in the name of protecting life and ensuring that our military uses resources to protect our homeland and our interests abroad. The policy is wrong. The DOD's policy is wrong, and until the military gets back to providing for our common defense and out of the business of providing abortions, I am proud to stand with Senator TUBERVILLE.

Madam President, I object and yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, the Department of Defense has adopted a healthcare policy that is both legal and necessary to protect the readiness of our forces. It also protects our national defense. These policies were also reviewed by the Department of Justice.

The prohibition to which my colleagues refer is the prohibition in the Hyde amendment of using Federal dollars to pay for abortions. Let me say this as clearly as I can. Under the Department of Defense's policy, servicemembers remain personally responsible for bearing the medical cost of abortion. That is true today; it was true last week; it was true the day after the Dobbs opinion; it was true the day before the Dobbs opinion; and for years, that has been the policy.

What has changed is that the DOD has clarified that servicemembers who need to travel out of State to access any kind of reproductive healthcare that is not available where they are stationed and what kind of healthcare might not be available—it might be abortion care; it might be IVF; it might be care for someone who has suffered a miscarriage—that any person who has suffered that personally or someone in their family can request time off to go get that care for themselves or for a family member. That is it. That is all we are talking about here.

Servicemembers do not get to decide where to serve. I am proud to support the DOD in saying that a change in station should not mean a change in your basic rights.

I appreciate that my colleagues have strong views on abortion. So do I. We are not going to agree on that. But all of us should be able to agree that we should not take steps that harm the people who volunteered to serve in our military; that if they need care that they cannot get in the State where they are, they should have an opportunity to go somewhere else. That is it.

There is no prohibition in law. There is no Hyde amendment violation here. Instead, what we have is wholesale holding up the nominations of more than 200 of our top military leaders who cannot advance to the posts that they have been thoroughly vetted and are ready to be promoted into, cannot advance to their duty stations, cannot settle their families in their next assignments, cannot receive the increase in their pay that they are entitled to.

So, in a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 90. This is the person who would be America's military representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization but is currently being held up by the Senator from Alabama.

I will be asking for the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 94. Collectively, these are 37 nominees who have served in the Army for nearly 1,000 years.

I will be asking for the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 84. This nominee would command the Fifth Fleet, which operates in the Middle East.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 49. This is the man who is the Chief of Staff for Operation Warp Speed—one of the greatest achievements of the Trump administration—to rapidly develop tests and distribute lifesaving COVID vaccines.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 82. These 27 Air Force nominees have collectively served their country for more 600 years. One of them, in fact, is a NASA astronaut who received his master's degree from MIT and commanded NASA's third longest duration commercial crew mission.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 47. This nominee would be Commanding General for the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command and U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 97. Collectively, these 16 nominees have served in the Navy for more than 400 years.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 46. This nominee studied at the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama and currently serves as Commander of the 10th Medical Group and Command Surgeon for the U.S. Air Force Academy.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 83. This nominee studied at the Squadron Officer School at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama and she is now capable and ready to serve as the Chief of Staff for Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 48. She would serve as Deputy Chief of Staff for the Army's G–4, which is responsible for the Army's strategy policy plans and programming for logistics sustainment.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 50. Collectively, these two women have served in the Army for over 60 years. They deserve to be promoted.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 51. This man would serve as Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration for the Air Force.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 52. This nominee would be the Military Deputy and Director for the Army Acquisition Corps.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 86. Collectively, these 11 nominees have over 275 years of service in the Air Force.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 87. These two nominees have served the Air Force for over 55 years.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 88. These 10 nominees have served over 288 years. Together, they have nearly 20,000 flying hours of experience.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 89. This nominee is currently commanding the largest Army command in the Caribbean.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 91. This nominee is currently serving in Birmingham, AL, as Chief of Staff to the U.S. Army Reserve Deployment Support Command.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 92. This nominee is currently the Director for Joint Reserve Intelligence Support Element for Europe and Eurasia for the Defense Intelligence Agency, helping to make sure that Ukraine and our allies in Europe have the critical national security information they need so that they can compete on the battlefield.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 93. This nominee is currently the Deputy Commander for Support, providing security assistance to Ukraine.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 95. Collectively, these eight nominees have served in the Marine Corps for over 200 years. They deserve their promotions.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 96. These nominees have served in the Navy for over 55 years. Both are currently serving in the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, making them responsible for the health and safety of our sailors, marines, and their families.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 98. Collectively, these two nominees have served in the Navy for 55 years. I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 99. These two have collectively served in the Navy for over 60 years, managing major weapons systems programs.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 100. This nominee is currently serving as the Director of Health and Training at the Defense Health Agency, and he is recognized as a Diplomate of the American Board of General Dentistry.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 101. This nominee will be the Commander of Naval Supply Systems Command, which makes sure the Navy has everything they need all around the world.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 102. These 13 nominees collectively served in the Navy for over 400 years.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 103. This nominee is currently serving as the Executive Assistant for the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency. We need people like this.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 104. These two nominees have collectively served the Navy for over 55 years, one currently serving as Information Warfare Commander.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 105. These four nominees have collectively served the Navy for over 100 years.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 106. These two nominees have served the Air Force for over 65 years. One of these nominees earned her nursing degree at Boston College and rose to become the chief nurse of the entire Air Force. She deserves her promotion.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 107, currently serving as the Commanding General for the Marine Corps forces in Japan.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 110. Collectively, these 23 nominees have over 620 years of service to the Air Force.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 111. This nominee would be the Deputy Commandant for Aviation for the Marine Corps, who advises the Marine Corps top officer of all aviation matters.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 205. This nominee would be the Commander of the 2nd Fleet and Joint Forces Command Norfolk—the only operational NATO command in North America, responsible for the North Atlantic and the Arctic. We need capable leaders like this.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 203. This pilot has flown more than 3,000 hours in the F–16 and the F–35. We need capable people like this.

In a moment, I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 202. This nominee will be the Director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 201. This nominee is an experienced information warfare officer. We need him in his post.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 200. This nominee is someone you can count on in a crisis. A native of San Juan, he was there to help his fellow Puerto Ricans after the earthquakes forced 7,500 people to leave their homes. He has stepped up and stepped up again for people who need him.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 198. This nominee will be the Commander of Air Combat Command, which is the primary provider of air combat forces to U.S. warfighting commands all around the world.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 197. This nominee would be the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for War-Fighting Requirements and Capabilities.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 196. He will be the Deputy Commander for U.S. Central Command.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 195. He has logged more than 500 carrier-assisted landings and 2,800 flight hours in tactical aircraft. We need him.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 194. This nominee from Falmouth, MA, if confirmed, will be the Deputy Commander of the U.S. Fleet Forces Command, which is responsible for training and providing combat-ready Navy forces wherever combatant commanders need them, and we need him.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 193. This nominee will be the Commander of Naval Surface Forces and Commander of Naval Surface Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet, where his mission will be to make sure the Navy has every capability we need for a force that is balanced, affordable, and resilient.

I will be asking the Senate to consider Calendar No. 191. This nominee will be the Commanding General for the Marine Expeditionary Force in U.S. Marine Corps Forces Japan.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 190. This nominee will be Deputy Commanding General for Futures and Concepts at Army Futures Command.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 188. This nominee will be Commander of Pacific Air Forces, which integrates airspace and cyber space capabilities to keep the Indo-Pacific open and free. He has flown more than 4,000 flight hours and previously served as the Commander for U.S. Forces in Japan.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 189. As a leader, she sees that our power as a nation comes from our moral strength and standing up for what we know as right. This nominee would be Pacific Air Forces Deputy Commander, making her the No. 2 for the nominee I just spoke about.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 187. If confirmed, this nominee would be Deputy Commander of U.S. Forces Korea and the Commander of the 7th Air Force.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 186. This nominee will be Deputy Chief of Staff for Air Force Futures, which is charged with representing the voice of tomorrow's airmen to be ready to defeat any future threats and capabilities our enemies wield. We need this person.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 185. If confirmed, this nominee would be Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, making him the primary military adviser for everything the Air Force buys to keep us safe.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 184. This nominee took his first flight at 2 weeks old and became a command pilot with more than 2,500 flying hours.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar Nos. 182 and 183. This nominee will be the next Navy Surgeon General, making him the principal adviser to the Secretary of the Navy on medical matters.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 181. During his service, he has accumulated over 5,000 flight hours and over 1,100 carrier-assisted landings. He was a Top Gun instructor and later the Commander for the Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center. He is entitled to his promotion.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 180. This nominee is also a Top Gun graduate, completing eight carrier deployments in the Western, Pacific, North Atlantic, Mediterranean, and North Arabian Seas.

I will be asking the Senate to confirm Calendar No. 112. He would be the Director of the Defense Contract Management Agency, which manages 225,000 contracts valued at more than $3½ trillion and 15,000 contractor locations worldwide.

I don't know what to say except that we have more than 200 people here who have dedicated their lives to the United States. They have volunteered for military service. They are all career. They are in it all the way. They are capable. They are talented. They serve our country. And right now, they have become the political football for the Senator from Alabama, and that is wrong.

These people deserve their promotions. They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect for the work they have put in for our Nation. It is the least we can do for them, for their families, and for the national security of the United States of America.

We need these people. We don't need to tell them we don't care about them. We need them. We need to retain them. We need to promote them. We need to use their talents.

Madam President, I renew my request with respect to each of the calendar numbers I have identified.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Reserving the right to object, my position continues to be, follow the law or change the law. For that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Does the Senator from Massachusetts yield?

Ms. WARREN. I will yield to the Senator from Utah.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I want to be very clear about a couple things. No.

1, this is the law. It is not called the Hyde amendment. There is a thing called the Hyde amendment that applies elsewhere outside the military. The military, the Pentagon, has its own statutory provision. It is not the Hyde amendment; it is 10 U.S.C. section 1093, adopted in 1984 as part of the Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1985. It has been the law ever since then.

You can't use Pentagon money for this purpose, nor can you use Pentagon facilities for this purpose. Saying that you are not doing that even though you are paying people, you are giving them 3 weeks of paid leave time and paying all their travel expenses and their per diem in order to do this—that is openly flouting the spirit of the law, if not also the letter, in order to circumvent it.

I will go back to the analogy I used earlier. You go up to a parking space, thinking you want to park there, but it is a handicap space. It is reserved for people with disabilities. You don't have the disability symbol on your car, so you park next to it, but you deliberately park so close to the line that you render that spot unusable for anyone with disabilities who should need access to it. It still has the same effect because you are openly flouting the law. You are doing it in a deliberate attempt to cause the very same harms that particular law was designed to prevent.

Now, this is a policy choice, and it is a policy choice that Congress deliberately took away from the Department of Defense, deliberately took out of the hands of the Secretary of Defense. He seized that back.

Senator TUBERVILLE saw this coming. Back in December, he told Secretary Austin in no uncertain terms: You should not do this. This is in violation of the law, and if you do this, there will be problems. I will no longer cooperate with you if you try to seek unanimous consent to facilitate the confirmation of these flag officer promotions.

He made that really clear.

Secretary Austin made his choice the moment he decided to legislate from the E-ring of the Pentagon. He took on that risk, and now he has the audacity, through surrogates in the Senate, to come back to Senator TUBERVILLE and say: I got what I wanted. I did so in violation of the law. I am openly flouting the law—its spirit if not also the letter—and I also want you to cooperate with me, Senator TUBERVILLE. I want you to do what I say because that is more convenient for me.

That is not fair. That is not lawful. It is not legal. It is not kosher. It is not cool.

Look, the fact is, we could end this right now. I would love to end it right now. I can't speak for Senator TUBERVILLE, but I have a sneaking suspicion he would let these go right now. He would let you get every one of these men and women confirmed this very moment if you take this thing off the table. But Secretary Austin took this hostage. He took all of these men and women hostage the moment he did this, having been forewarned by Senator TUBERVILLE. He can't now be heard to come back—having waived his right to do that—to come back and demand that Senator TUBERVILLE be somehow shamed into cooperating, into facilitating.

The other point here is, they can still get these people confirmed even without that compromise, which you could make tonight. If you put this thing off the table, you stop trying to achieve this through extortion, he will let them go right now. I am 99.99 percent sure of that, and that is pretty confident from me. He will do that right now. But even if you are not willing to do that, you could still get these people confirmed. You just don't want to do the hard work of doing it. It takes more time to do it without Senator TUBERVILLE's full cooperation.

So, look, if you really are serious about end-strength readiness, then that is what you would do. That is what someone would do if they were worried about end-strength readiness.

Let's talk about that for a moment. End-strength readiness shouldn't be confused with flag officer promotions. It is not where we see end-strength readiness, with flag officer promotions. It doesn't mean these men and women aren't deserving of their promotions or we wouldn't be willing and interested to see them confirmed so that they can have their promotions. But to say that it affects end-strength readiness disregards what flag officers are doing in the capacity they hold. I am not aware of any reason why that would affect our end-strength readiness, nor am I aware of any compelling reason why, without this policy—this policy that openly flouts the law—our military would suffer from an end-strength readiness problem. It is an absurd argument. In any event, it violates the law. They can't do this. It is the wrong branch of government. He doesn't have this power. He was forewarned, and he did the wrong thing anyway. We don't reward bad behavior that way. We certainly don't reward unlawful behavior.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, the Senator from Utah and the Senator from Alabama have repeatedly said that the Department of Defense is somehow violating the law.

Let's pull the statute out and just take a look at it. I want to read the words into the RECORD.

Under part (a) Restriction on Use of Funds:

> Funds available to the Department of Defense may not be used to perform abortions except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or in a case in which the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest.

Period. That is it. It does not say that funds from the Department of Defense may not be used for travel. It does not say that people may not have time off. It does not say that people may not be allowed to travel out of State. It has exactly one thing that it prohibits Federal funds from being used, and that is ''may not be used to perform abortions.''

Let me say again as clearly as I know how: The Department of Defense's rule clearly states that the servicemember will pay for her own medical services. It will not be the case that the Department of Defense will pay for abortion.

If the Senator from Utah wants to change that law, he certainly can introduce an amendment to do that. The same with the Senator from Alabama. But right now, the Department of Defense is following the law in the United States.

The Senator from Alabama's actions pose a grave threat to our national security and readiness. That is not just my view. It is the view of the Secretary of Defense and the former Secretaries of Defense serving in both Democratic and Republican administrations.

If the Senator from Alabama stays on this path, his actions will soon endanger the nomination of the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, an action we have never seen in the history of our Nation. We have 221 good people who have earned their promotions, who are ready to go to their next duty stations and serve their nation. They are being treated with disrespect; and this action is undermining our national defense.

I urge the Senator from Alabama to release his holds immediately and allow these senior military officers to receive the promotions that they have earned.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. With great respect for my friend and colleague from Massachusetts, the Pentagon itself acknowledged that while military abortions had been counted at maybe 20 or 30 per year in the past, this policy, which funds abortion—it just does—has increased to about 4,400 to maybe 4,500 a year. The causation and the number were estimated by the Pentagon itself based on this subsidy. This is a subsidy for abortion. They are, in fact, subsidizing abortion. The fact that they have engineered in a way that they think gets them around the technicalities of the law should mean very little to us as policymakers, as lawmakers, to the fact that they are openly flouting the law.

They are going through this trickery only because they don't like the law. They hate the fact that this became law, so they are trying to find a way to get around it.

They are, in fact, funding abortions. That is what you do when you pay somebody to travel, when you give them 3 weeks of paid leave to do something, when you fund their per diem—so you cover everything for them—you are funding abortion.

If the only argument you are left with is ''we are not paying for the actual surgery itself; we are just paying for everything around it,'' when the value attached to the travel, to the per diem, to the paid leave time is a significant expense—an expense that I suspect in many, if not most, instances would well outpace the cost of the medical procedure itself—that's too cute by half. They are, in fact, funding abortion. That is what this does. It is done knowing, expecting, anticipating, and desiring that this would increase the number of abortions performed in the military every year to a significant degree. That is what they are doing, and it is wrong.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Ms. BALDWIN assumed the Chair.)

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

BICENTENNIAL OF THE KENTUCKY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as a polio survivor, I have a special appreciation for organizations that help those with conditions often overlooked in our society. The Kentucky School for the Deaf—KSD—in Danville, KY, is a remarkable example of such an organization, having dedicated itself to serving the deaf and hard of hearing for over two centuries. Today, I would like to recognize this institution for its outstanding work, as its students and faculty celebrate the school's bicentennial.

In a hearing world, it can be hard to imagine the life of the deaf. Nowhere was this misunderstanding more pronounced than throughout early human history. For centuries, the deaf were relegated to the outskirts of society, frequently sent to asylums for the insane, or otherwise forgotten. Many contended with Aristotle's opinion that the deaf were ''incapable of education'' due to their inability to hear. This was, unfortunately, the standing belief on deaf education for hundreds of years.

Gradual shifts in cultural attitudes and educational techniques led to slow but steady progress over time. The early days of deaf education were typically born from the philanthropic efforts of wealthy citizens, while schools were privately held and operated out of the country's east coast.

In the early 19th century, General Elias Barbee, then a member of the Kentucky State Senate, hoped to change that. Senator Barbee launched an effort to establish the first State-supported school for the deaf in the United States. In 1822, legislation was signed into law, bringing deaf schooling west of the Alleghenies for the first time in American history. Shortly thereafter, Barbee's daughter, who had been deaf since childhood, enrolled as the first of three students at the Kentucky school.

From the start, the institution intended to educate the whole person, preparing the deaf and hard of hearing for success in both academic and real-world settings. The school secured two Federal land grants, with the help of Kentucky's illustrious statesman Henry Clay, that were used to fund the construction of KSD's campus.

The board of trustees faced their first great hurdle early on: finding faculty to lead the fledgling school. They soon took up the training of John A. Jacobs, a young student at Centre College. Jacobs, often described as the ''founding father'' of the institution, would go on to serve as faculty for over 40 years and was integral to the school's success throughout its infancy. Under his leadership, the school prevailed through some of the most perilous periods of our Nation's history, even resisting three attempts from Confederate soldiers to occupy the school during the Civil War.

In recent history, the school has seen its campus and its student population flourish and expand. Meanwhile, opportunities for deaf children in public schools also became more widespread. In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was signed into law by President Ford. This landmark legislation ensured equal access to education for every child, regardless of their disability, and marked a major turning point for deaf education in the United States.

Today, KSD remains a leading institution for deaf education throughout the country. It promises an academic experience uniquely suited to the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing and affords its students a rare opportunity to learn as the hearing do: directly communicating and connecting with their peers.

Through English and sign language, students freely exchange ideas in the classroom, participate in afterschool activities, and learn the skills needed to succeed on their own after graduation.

For over 200 years, KSD has empowered deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to lead a life of dignity and self-sufficiency when many thought it impossible. This Kentucky institution has made an indelible impact on the history of deaf education and the thousands of students who have called it home.

I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in recognizing the Kentucky School for the Deaf for their tireless dedication to educating and enriching the lives of America's deaf and hard of hearing. Thank you for 200 years of remarkable service to the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

58TH ANNIVERSARY OF HEAD START

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate and extend my heartfelt congratulations to Head Start on its 58th anniversary to celebrate the program's 58 years of providing early learning to more than 30 million children since 1965. As the only Head Start alumnus along with Senator RAPHAEL WARNOCK serving in the U.S. Senate, I am proud to honor this transformative program that has made a significant and positive difference in the lives of millions of children and families across our great Nation.

Head Start's legacy is one of hope, opportunity, and equity. Since its inception in 1965, this comprehensive early childhood education program has been a beacon of support for vulnerable children and families, helping break the cycle of poverty and providing a strong foundation for success. By prioritizing the educational, health, and developmental needs of low-income children, Head Start has been instrumental in leveling the playing field and ensuring that every child has an equal chance to thrive.

My personal experience as a Head Start alumnus fuels my unwavering commitment to championing policies that strengthen early childhood education and invest in the future of our Nation's youth. I understand firsthand the profound influence that Head Start can have on a child's life, setting them on a trajectory towards academic achievement, social-emotional growth, and lifelong success. By nurturing the whole child and fostering a love for learning, Head Start equips children with the tools they need to reach their full potential.

Head Start has demonstrated its ability to adapt and evolve with the changing needs of our society. Over the past 58 years, the program has expanded its reach, providing comprehensive services to millions of children and families. Head Start has embraced innovation, incorporating evidence-based practices and leveraging community partnerships to ensure that children receive the highest quality early education and support services available.

I applaud Head Start's ongoing commitment to inclusivity and diversity, recognizing that every child brings unique strengths and experiences to the classroom. By embracing cultural competency and promoting bilingual education, Head Start celebrates the rich tapestry of our nation and prepares children to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

As we celebrate this important milestone, we must also acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. Access to high-quality early childhood education remains a critical issue for many families, especially those living in underserved communities. As Head Start continues to grow and evolve, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that all children, regardless of their ZIP Code or socioeconomic background, have access to this life-changing program.

Head Start's success is a testament to the power of investing in our children and communities. The return on investment in early childhood education is well documented, yielding significant long-term benefits for individuals, families, and society as a whole. We must seize this moment to strengthen and expand Head Start, recognizing that our Nation's future prosperity depends on the opportunities we afford our youngest citizens.

I would also like to express my gratitude and provide special recognition to my home Head Start program that helped to give me the best start in life—Nambe Head Start—and Senator WARNOCK's home Head Start program—Savannah Head Start. Without the dedicated educators and program directors at these programs, we would not be where we are today.

In conclusion, I proudly stand before my distinguished colleagues to commemorate the 58th anniversary of Head Start and extend my heartfelt congratulations to this remarkable program. Let Congress reaffirm its commitment to early childhood education and its Members work together to ensure that Head Start's profound effect reaches every child in need. By investing in our children today, we will build a brighter, more equitable future for all Americans.

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ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO NATHAN SMALL

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, with my colleague Senator JIM RISCH and Representative MIKE SIMPSON, I congratulate Nathan Small, who is retiring from serving as chairman of the Fort Hall Business Council, the governing body of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes on the Fort Hall Reservation.

Chairman Small has been an unwavering voice for his people for roughly 40 years, leading in various roles for the Fort Hall Business Council since the late 1980s. He has dedicated his life to protecting the Tribes' rights under the 1868 Treaty of Fort Bridger and other Federal laws and tirelessly worked to preserve the traditional ways of life of the Shoshone-Bannock people. He is respected not only in Idaho for his efforts to protect the rights of all Idaho Tribes but also on the national level for his inspiring and effective advocacy in ensuring the United States upholds its treaty and trust responsibilities to Tribal governments.

We have been grateful for his steady leadership, especially while we partnered with him and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes on various efforts over the years. Chairman Small's wealth of knowledge and experience was pivotal to his advocacy on the Tribes' behalf. He is also a member of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Bar Association and has been both a prosecutor and public defender in Tribal court. He was instrumental in opening the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' first gaming operation and was gaming manager from 1990 to 1998. He also served in the Tribes' Water Resources Department in the Environmental Waste Program, advocating for the protection of the Reservation's water and land. He is a founding Board member and is Secretary of the Coalition of Large Tribes, which advocates for the sovereign rights of Tribes.

Thank you, Chairman Small, for working with us to properly recognize tribal sovereignty and the Federal Government's treaty and trust obligations to Tribes. We hope that retirement will provide you more time to spend enjoying the outdoors you love. We thank you for your leadership and wish you all the best.●

TRIBUTE TO LORELEY GODFREY

● Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, as we mark Mental Health Awareness Month, I am honored to recognize Loreley Godfrey of Portsmouth as May's Granite Stater of the Month. At age 18, Loreley has become a powerful force advocating for youth mental health education in New Hampshire.

Loreley was driving when her best friend had a panic attack next to her in the passenger's seat. Pulling to the side of the road, Loreley felt ill-equipped to handle the situation, and she did not know what to do besides hold her friend's hand and urgently search online for resources. The experience made Loreley wonder why many teens such as herself are not prepared to respond to a mental health crisis, where seconds can make a difference. Since she was a member of the Governor's Youth Advisory Council on Substance Misuse and Prevention, she interviewed the 17 other students on the panel and found that her experience was not unique—few had had any mental health education at school.

Loreley teamed up with a New Hampshire State senator to craft a bipartisan bill to provide schools with lesson plans on mental health. Although the bill did not pass the house in April, Loreley is committed to continuing her advocacy for mental health education in New Hampshire, even as she goes off to college this fall. Loreley's efforts are a testament to how young people can make a tremendous difference in New Hampshire. And her leadership extends beyond mental health advocacy, having led multiple rallies for sustainability in Portsmouth and being one of New Hampshire's first female Eagle Scouts. Loreley exemplifies the Granite State spirit of engaged, citizen-led public service, and I look forward to seeing all that she will do in the future to make New Hampshire and our country an even better place.●

TRIBUTE TO KARLA APONTE

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Karla Aponte, a spring 2023 intern in my Miami office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Karla recently graduated from the St. Thomas University College of Law. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Karla for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO VICTOR BETANCOURT

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Victor Betancourt, a spring 2023 intern in my Miami office, for the hard work he has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Victor attends Florida International University, with FIU Embrace Program. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Victor for his work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of his successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO GRACE LILI BOULOY

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Grace Lili Bouloy, a recent intern in my Tallahassee office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Grace is a student at Florida State University, where she is majoring in political science. She possesses many wonderful qualities that include an aptitude to evaluate complex issues, a strong work ethic, and a kindness that inspires.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Grace for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO LENA MARIA DUQUE

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Lena Maria Duque, a spring 2023 intern in my Tallahassee office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Lena is a student at Florida State University, where she is majoring in economics and management. She possesses many wonderful qualities that include an aptitude to evaluate complex issues, a strong work ethic, and a kindness that inspires.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Lena for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO ISABELLA FURELOS

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Isabella Furelos, a spring 2023 intern in my Miami office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Isabella is a student at Miami-Dade Honors College, where she majors in political science. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Isabella for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO ANA CAROLINA MERLO

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Ana Carolina Merlo, a spring 2023 intern in my Tallahassee office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Ana is a student at Florida State University, where she is majoring in political science. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Ana for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO ELIJAH MIDGLEY

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Elijah Midgley, a spring 2023 intern in my Miami office, for the hard work he has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Elijah is a student at the University of Central Florida, where he is an anthropology major. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Elijah for his work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of his successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO DANIEL ENRIQUE NIETO

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Daniel Enrique Nieto, a spring 2023 intern in my Tallahassee office, for the hard work he has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Daniel is a student at Florida State University, where he is majoring in international affairs and political science. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Daniel for his work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of his successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO CATHERINE ELIZABETH PATTILLO

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Catherine Elizabeth Pattillo, a recent intern in my Tallahassee office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Catherine is a student at Florida State University, where she is majoring in history and pre-law. She possesses many wonderful qualities that include an aptitude to evaluate complex issues, a strong work ethic, and a kindness that inspires.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Catherine for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come as she pursues a career in law.●

TRIBUTE TO DEBORAH LYN PHILIPS

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Deborah Lyn Philips, a spring 2023 intern in my Orlando office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Deborah is currently studying at Polk State College, where she is majoring in political science and government. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Deborah for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER RESTREPO

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Christopher Restrepo, a spring 2023

intern in my Tallahassee office, for the hard work he has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Christopher is a student at Florida State University, where he is majoring in finance. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Christopher for his work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of his successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH RICHARDSON

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Elizabeth Richardson, a recent intern in my Tallahassee office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Liz recently graduated from Florida State University, where she majored in history. She possesses many wonderful qualities that include an aptitude to evaluate complex issues, a strong work ethic, and a kindness that inspires.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Liz for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come as she pursues a career in law.●

TRIBUTE TO REBECA RODRIGUEZ

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Rebeca Rodriguez, a recent intern in my Tallahassee office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Becky is a student at Florida State University, where she is majoring in human resource management. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

Becky believes that service and sacrifice are essential to achieving the American dream. She learned this lesson, along with many others, from her grandparents who fled Cuba to make a better life for their family in the United States. Becky strives to honor them by being the best version of herself in all that she does.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Becky for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come as she pursues a career in law.●

TRIBUTE TO MICHELLE ROSENBURG

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Michelle Rosenburg, a spring 2023 intern in my Miami office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Michelle recently graduated from Florida International University, where she majored global affairs. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Michelle for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of his successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO IAN SEIBERT

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Ian Seibert, a spring 2023 intern in my Tallahassee office, for the hard work he has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Ian is a student at Florida State University, where he is majoring in finance. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Ian for his work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of his successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO LUIS ADRIAN SORIA

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Luis Adrian Soria, a spring 2023 intern in my Orlando office, for the hard work he has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Luis recently graduated from the University of Central Florida, where he majored in legal studies. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Luis for his work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of his successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO LILLIETTE SOTOLONGO

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Lilliette Sotolongo, a spring 2023 intern in my Miami office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Lilliette recently graduated from Florida International University, where she majored in political science and international relations. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Lilliette for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 7:30 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2792. An act to require the Securities and Exchange Commission to carry out a study and rulemaking on the definition of the term ''small entity'' for purposes of the securities laws, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2795. An act to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require issuers with a multi-class stock structure to make certain disclosures in any proxy or consent solicitation material, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2796. An act to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation to provide educational resources and host events to promote capital raising options for traditionally underrepresented small businesses, and for other purposes.

At 9:50 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3746. An act to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 2792. An act to require the Securities and Exchange Commission to carry out a study and rulemaking on the definition of the term ''small entity'' for purposes of the securities laws, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 2795. An act to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require issuers with a multi-class stock structure to make certain disclosures in any proxy or consent solicitation material, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 2796. An act to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation to provide educational resources and host events to promote capital raising options for traditionally underrepresented small businesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

(Legislative Day May 30, 2023)

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 3746. An act to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

EC–1254. A communication from the Director of External Relations, United States International Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a corrected report entitled ''Economic Impact of Section 232 and 301 Tariffs on U.S. Industries, Investigation No. 332–591, USITC Publication 5405, March 2023''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1255. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to Congress: Planning Grant Implementation Initial Report''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1256. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to Congress: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Report''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1257. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting,

pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Child Welfare Outcomes 2020: Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1258. A communication from the Branch Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Procedures for Exempt Organizations determination letters for the electronically submitted Form 8940'' (Rev. Proc. 2023–12) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 10, 2023; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1259. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to Congress on Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) Section 1332 State Innovation Waivers''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1260. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''FY 2021 Report to Congress: Review of Medicare's Program for Oversight of Accrediting Organizations and the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Validation Program''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1261. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Data Mining Activities by Federal Agencies'' received in the Office of the President pro tempore; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1262. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a certification entitled ''Certification of Countries That Are Not Fully Cooperating with U.S. Anti-Terrorism Efforts'' received in the Office of the President pro tempore; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1263. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2023–0029 - 2023–0033); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1264. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Determination Under section 7034(I) (5) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2023 (Div. K, P.L. 117–328)''; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1265. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a notification of intent to provide assistance to Ukraine, including for self-defense and border security operations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1266. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Determination Under Section 506(a) (1) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA) to Provide Military Assistance to Ukraine''; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1267. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2023–0034 - 2023–0039); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1268. A communication from the Supervisory Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Policy and Regulatory Changes to the Omnibus COVID–19 Health Care Staff Vaccination Requirements; Additional Policy and Regulatory Changes to the Requirements for Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities and Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals With Intellectual Disabilities (ICFs-IID) to Provide COVID–19 Vaccine Education and Offer Vaccinations to Residents, Clients, and Staff; Policy and Regulatory Changes to the Long Term Care Facility COVID–19 Testing Requirements'' ((RIN0938–AU75) (RIN0938–AU57) (RIN0938–AU33)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 26, 2023; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1269. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary, Department of Education, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 22, 2023; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1270. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary, Department of Education, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 22, 2023; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1271. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary, Department of Education, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 22, 2023; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1272. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Annual Reporting and Disclosure'' (RIN1210–AB97) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 22, 2023; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1273. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''2020–2021 Report to Congress on Organ Donation and the Recovery, Preservation, and Transportation of Organs''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1274. A joint communication from the Chairman and the General Counsel, National Labor Relations Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report for the period of October 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1275. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the third transmittal of legislative proposals that support the President's Fiscal Year 2024 budget request for the Department of Homeland Security; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1276. A communication from the Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's fiscal year 2022 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1277. A communication from the Staff Director, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's fiscal year 2022 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act) received in the Office of the President pro tempore; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1278. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Chief Human Capital Officers Council's annual report to Congress for 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1279. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's fiscal year 2022 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act) received in the Office of President pro tempore; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1280. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a legislative proposal entitled ''To extend the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security and for other purposes''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1281. A communication from the Director of the Peace Corps, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Peace Corps' fiscal year 2022 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1282. A communication from the Chair of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023 and the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1283. A communication from the Chief Executive Officer, Agency for Global Media, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Bureau's fiscal year 2022 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act) received in the Office of the President pro tempore; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1284. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a legislative proposal entitled ''Foreign Language Proficiency Awards for Immigration Officers''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1285. A communication from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1286. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1287. A communication from the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for

the period from October 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1288. A communication from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Semiannual Management Report on the Status of Audits for the period from October 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1289. A communication from the Director of Equal Employment Opportunity, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Service's fiscal year 2022 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation (No FEAR) Act of 2002 received in the Office of the President pro tempore; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1290. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25–94, ''Street Vendor Advancement Amendment Act of 2022''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1291. A communication from the Director, Office of Acquisition Policy, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2023–03, Introduction'' (FAC 2023–03) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 10, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–20. A resolution from the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico expressing its enthusiastic support for the agreement entered into by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Forum of Presidents of the Legislative Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean Basin (FOPREL), which provides for the establishment of a FOPREL branch office in Puerto Rico; establish the rules and objectives of said office; provide for the duties and operations of the branch office; for the purpose of strengthening the cooperation among the various parliaments that are members of this International Body and cementing ties among all Latin American peoples; among others; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 987

Laws are the vehicle that implements the will of the People and establish the foundation for a progressive, inclusive, and democratic society. The role of parliaments, which are the institutions that best represent the power of citizens within the government structure, is to create legal frameworks that are innovative, efficient, and consistent with the goal of creating the necessary conditions to meet the challenges faced in a modern society. Thus, a parliamentary system is not just an internal mechanism that each country can use to find answers, but one that can be used to exchange experiences and ideas with other legislative bodies in order to face the challenges of the 21st century in a comprehensively and thoroughly.

The Forum of Presidents of the Legislative Bodies of Central America, the Caribbean Basin and Mexico (FOPREL, Spanish acronym) is the highest inter-parliamentary organization in the Central American, Caribbean Basin, and Mexico region. Its mission is to be: (i) a space for political dialogue, (ii) an organization that promotes inter-parliamentary diplomacy, (iii) a Forum to reach agreements on regional legislative initiatives directed at strengthening national legislation, (iv) a facilitator for the generation of knowledge and to strengthen the parliamentary sphere, (v) a nexus between the legislative, executive, and judicial powers, civil society, and multilateral organizations, (vi) an inter-parliamentary network that promotes the sharing of experiences, good practices, and technical and financial cooperation; and (vi) an institution for the formation of alliances geared towards achieving common goals. Therefore, FOPREL has the authority to enter into agreements with parliaments within and without the region as well as to enter into cooperation agreements with other institutions in order to support its projects and programs.

FOPREL's Charter establishes that the institution ''may open branch offices in all countries that are full members of the Forum in order to implement and create programs and projects that contribute to capacity building and strengthen the ties between the aforementioned parliaments and International Organizations.'' FOPREL's ''2022–2027 Institutional Development Plan'' states that ''branch offices shall be established in the countries that are members of FOPREL and such offices shall be granted the institutional tools necessary for their administration and operation.''

During FOPREL's 25th Special Meeting held on November 26, 2021, in the Dominican Republic, an agreement was reached to ''create a FOPREL branch office within the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico that shall serve as a liaison between Puerto Rico and the countries of the Caribbean Basin that are members of FOPREL.'' The new office shall undertake, administer, and carry out projects to further FOPREL's institutional goals, and shall serve as a liaison between Puerto Rico, the countries of the Caribbean Basin and all other full and observer members of FOPREL.

This Legislative Assembly believes that the establishment of a FOPREL branch office on our Island shall enable Puerto Rico to join in progressive conversations on different topics and challenges and provide Puerto Rico with access to answers and solutions that shall, in turn, allow for the development and drafting of more effective, sensible, and appropriate legislation to address the needs of Puerto Rican society.

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of Puerto Rico:

Section 1.—To express our enthusiastic support for the agreement entered into by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Forum of Presidents of the Legislative Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean Basin (FOPREL) at the 25th Extraordinary Meeting held on November 26, 2021, which provides for the establishment of a FOPREL branch office in Puerto Rico for the purpose of strengthening cooperation among the different parliaments that are members of this International Body and cementing ties among all Latin American peoples.

Section 2.—A branch office of the Forum of Presidents of the Legislative Bodies of Central America, the Caribbean Basin and Mexico (FOPREL) is hereby established within the House of Representatives, in the city of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Section 3.—FOPREL branch office shall be subject to FOPREL's regulatory framework, depending hierarchically and administratively on the Permanent Secretary, as provided in Articles 9, 10, and 11 of the Institutional Bylaws, adopted in the 24th Special Meeting of the International Body held on August 10, 2021.

Section 4.—FOPREL branch office, in coordination with the FOPREL's Permanent Secretary shall enact bylaws to provide for its operation and management. Furthermore, it shall take legal and administrative actions as appropriate for its efficient operation as an International Parliamentary Body in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Section 5.—FOPREL branch office may undertake, administer, and carry out projects to further FOPREL's institutional goals, as well as to collaborate as necessary in any and all processes at the request of the House of Representatives upon authorization of FOPREL's Permanent Secretary.

Section 6.—The FOPREL branch office's work agenda includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Facilitating and promoting actions within the framework of Collaboration Agreement No. 2021–003 which is the governing instrument of the Institutional Fellowship and Collaboration Alliance between the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic, entered into under Resolution No. RE–VVV–01–28112021.

(b) Developing a Regional Program for Inter Parliamentary Action and the Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals, as provided in Resolution No. RE–XXXIX–04–25022021.

(c) Serving as a liaison between the countries of the Caribbean Basin and all other full and observer members of FOPREL.

(d) Addressing all other matters assigned by FOP REL.

Section 7.—Upon its approval, a copy of this Resolution shall be delivered to the Forum of Presidents of the Legislative Bodies of Central America, the Caribbean Basin and Mexico (FOPREL) as well as to each member thereof. Furthermore, this Resolution shall be translated into English and delivered to the President of the United States and the leadership of the United States Congress.

Section 8.—This Resolution shall take effect upon its approval.

POM–21. A joint resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee urging state agencies to expand comprehensive cardiovascular screening programs to allow for earlier identification of patients at risk of cardiovascular events; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 44

Whereas, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States; and,

Whereas, in the United States, approximately 21 million patients have been diagnosed with atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) and are at risk of a cardiovascular event, according to the U.S. Census Bureau; and,

Whereas, the Mayo Clinic states that ASCVD is linked to the buildup of cholesterol in the arteries, and the risk of associated events can be modified by lowering low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C); and

Whereas, in 2016, nearly 70 million adults in the United States had higher than recommended LDL-C levels; and

Whereas, 43.1 million people in the United States are currently treated with lipid-lowering therapies to manage cardiovascular risk; and

Whereas, only 20 percent of people with ASCVD who are taking statins, one of the

leading lipid-lowering therapies, actually achieve healthy levels of LDL-C; and

Whereas, the total direct and indirect cost of ASCVD in the United States was $555 billion in 2016 and is projected to climb to $1.1 trillion by 2035, according to the American Heart Association; and

Whereas, in Tennessee, 579,200 adults have been told by a health professional that they had angina, a stroke, a heart attack, or coronary heart disease, which are some of the manifestations of ASCVD; and

Whereas, in Tennessee, 10,491 people had ASCVD as an underlying cause of death; and

Whereas, in Tennessee, 280,700 adults reported experiencing a heart attack in their lifetime, and 243,600 adults reported experiencing a stroke in their lifetime; and

Whereas, Tennessee spends an estimated $3.41 billion on direct medical expenses for ASCVD care each year; now, therefore;

Be it resolved by the Senate of the One Hundred Thirteenth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, the House of Representatives concurring, That we urge state agencies to expand comprehensive cardiovascular screening programs to allow for earlier identification of patients at risk of cardiovascular events; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge state agencies to explore ways to collaborate with federal and national agencies to establish or expand comprehensive cardiovascular screening programs; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge an update of the State's cardiovascular plan to accelerate quality improvements in the care rendered to these patients such that screening, treatment, monitoring, and improved health outcomes are achieved.

Resolved, That we support the creation of policies to decrease the rising number of deaths of Americans as a result of ASCVD; and be it further

Resolved, That a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, the members of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

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 Ms. CORTEZ MASTO:

S. 1763. A bill to include smoke in the definition of disaster in the Small Business Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO:

S. 1764. A bill to improve Federal activities relating to wildfires, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 1765. A bill to require the Federal Aviation Administration to establish evacuation standards for transport category airplanes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. KING, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 1766. A bill to require the Secretary of Defense to submit a report on overdoses among members of the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Ms. WARREN):

S. 1767. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for emergency grants to safeguard essential health care workers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. BUDD, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. ERNST, Mr. GRAHAM, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 1768. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to the Taliban, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 1769. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to establish a demonstration project testing Whole Child Health Models, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1770. A bill to expand the imposition of sanctions under the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020 with respect to human rights abuses in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China and to counter the genocidal policies of the Government of the People's Republic of China; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. PADILLA:

S. 1771. A bill to authorize additional district judges for the district court for the eastern district of California; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. CARPER):

S. 1772. A bill to establish a national mercury monitoring program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 1773. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for a national outreach and education strategy and research to improve behavioral health among the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander population, while addressing stigma against behavioral health treatment among such population; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WARNOCK (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. CARPER, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. FETTERMAN):

S. 1774. A bill to amend the Social Security Act to provide for an increased Federal medical assistance percentage for State expenditures on certain behavioral health services furnished under the Medicaid program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself and Mr. MARSHALL):

S. 1775. A bill to amend the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 to require recipients of Federal awards to collect and report data relating to subawards granted to entities outside of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1776. A bill to provide for the protection of and investment in certain Federal land in the State of California, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself, Ms. ERNST, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1777. A bill to engage in cybersecurity cooperation with Abraham Accords countries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 1778. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out a study and research and demonstration on agrivoltaic systems; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1779. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the new clean vehicle credit to include clean vehicles with fewer than 4 wheels; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MULLIN (for himself and Ms. SMITH):

S. 1780. A bill to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to allow the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into self-determination contracts with Tribal organizations to carry out the authority of the Food Safety and Inspection Service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 1781. A bill to amend the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to provide a uniform 8-digit subheading number for all whiskies; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BUDD, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 1782. A bill to provide for the entry of infant formula and infant formula base powder free of duty and free of quantitative limitation; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MULLIN:

S. 1783. A bill to provide for the equitable settlement of certain Indian land disputes regarding land in Illinois, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 1784. A bill to increase language access to behavioral health services at eligible health centers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CARPER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 1785. A bill to establish programs to address addiction and overdoses caused by illicit fentanyl and other opioids, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

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

S. Res. 227. A resolution calling on the President to support the creation of an international special tribunal to prosecute Russia's aggression against Ukraine; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself and Mr. YOUNG):

S. Res. 228. A resolution recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Indiana Pacers' 1972–1973 American Basketball Association Championship and their third American Basketball Association Championship in 5 seasons; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. WARREN, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. Res. 229. A resolution designating May 2023 as ''National Brain Tumor Awareness Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. KAINE, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. CASEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. WARNER):

S. Res. 230. A resolution recognizing the 102nd anniversary of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PADILLA:

S. Con. Res. 11. A concurrent resolution expressing the need for the Senate to provide advice and consent to ratification of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 120

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 120, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against tax for charitable donations to nonprofit organizations providing education scholarships to qualified elementary and secondary students.

S. 173

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 173, a bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to require the safe storage of firearms, and for other purposes.

S. 179

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 179, a bill to require the designation of composting as a conservation practice and activity, to provide grants and loan guarantees for composting facilities and programs, and for other purposes.

S. 305

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 305, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps, and to support programs at the Marine Corps Heritage Center.

S. 363

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 363, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the individuals and communities who volunteered or donated items to the North Platte Canteen in North Platte, Nebraska, during World War II from December 25, 1941, to April 1, 1946.

S. 364

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 364, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to expand access to school-wide arts and music programs, and for other purposes.

S. 474

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 474, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to strengthen reporting to the CyberTipline related to online sexual exploitation of children, to modernize liabilities for such reports, to preserve the contents of such reports for 1 year, and for other purposes.

S. 613

At the request of Mr. TUBERVILLE, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 613, a bill to provide that for purposes of determining compliance with title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 in athletics, sex shall be recognized based solely on a person's reproductive biology and genetics at birth.

S. 626

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 626, a bill to recommend that the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation test the effect of a dementia care management model, and for other purposes.

S. 668

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 668, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins to honor and memorialize the tragedy of the Sultana steamboat explosion of 1865.

S. 704

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 704, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for interest-free deferment on student loans for borrowers serving in a medical or dental internship or residency program.

S. 754

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 754, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to modify requirements for local school wellness policies.

S. 759

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) were added as cosponsors of S. 759, a bill to authorize the National Detector Dog Training Center, and for other purposes.

S. 761

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 761, a bill to combat forced organ harvesting and trafficking in persons for purposes of the removal of organs, and for other purposes.

S. 815

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 815, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the female telephone operators of the Army Signal Corps, known as the ''Hello Girls'' .

S. 831

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 831, a bill to address transnational repression by foreign governments against private individuals, and for other purposes.

S. 838

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 838, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to mental health services under the Medicare program.

S. 886

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 886, a bill to authorize the location of a monument on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the women's suffrage movement and the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, and for other purposes.

S. 889

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 889, a bill to provide consumer protections for students.

S. 928

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 928, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to prepare an annual report on suicide prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 954

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) and the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) were added as cosponsors of S. 954, a bill to provide for appropriate cost-sharing for insulin products covered under private health plans, and to establish a program to support health care providers and pharmacies in providing discounted insulin products to uninsured individuals.

S. 1024

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1024, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to eligible entities

to develop and implement a comprehensive program to promote student access to defibrillation in public elementary schools and secondary schools.

S. 1159

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1159, a bill to amend the Equal Credit Opportunity Act to modify the requirements associated with small business loan data collection, and for other purposes.

S. 1161

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1161, a bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to reauthorize the voluntary public access and habitat incentive program.

S. 1176

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1176, a bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to issue an occupational safety and health standard that requires covered employers within the health care and social service industries to develop and implement a comprehensive workplace violence prevention plan, and for other purposes.

S. 1191

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1191, a bill to direct the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to establish a K–12 Cybersecurity Technology Improvement Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1236

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1236, a bill to add suicide prevention resources to school identification cards.

S. 1256

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1256, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require certain air carriers to provide reports with respect to maintenance, preventative maintenance, or alterations, and for other purposes.

S. 1271

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1271, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to trafficking of illicit fentanyl and its precursors by transnational criminal organizations, including cartels, and for other purposes.

S. 1280

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) were added as cosponsors of S. 1280, a bill to require coordinated National Institute of Standards and Technology science and research activities regarding illicit drugs containing xylazine, novel synthetic opioids, and other substances of concern, and for other purposes.

S. 1288

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1288, a bill to ensure that contractors of the Department of Agriculture comply with certain labor laws, and for other purposes.

S. 1323

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1323, a bill to create protections for financial institutions that provide financial services to State-sanctioned marijuana businesses and service providers for such businesses, and for other purposes.

S. 1334

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1334, a bill to require the Secretary of Defense to develop, in cooperation with allies and partners in the Middle East, an integrated maritime domain awareness and interdiction capability, and for other purposes.

S. 1354

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1354, a bill to increase the quality and supply of child care and lower child care costs for families.

S. 1375

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1375, a bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to apply additional payments, discounts, and other financial assistance towards the cost-sharing requirements of health insurance plans, and for other purposes.

S. 1408

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1408, a bill to amend title 9, United States Code, with respect to arbitration of disputes involving race discrimination.

S. 1456

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1456, a bill to provide for certain energy development, permitting reforms, and for other purposes.

S. 1512

At the request of Mr. MARSHALL, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1512, a bill to amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act to allow for the interstate internet sales of certain State-inspected meat and poultry, and for other purposes.

S. 1529

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1529, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to provide for greater protection of roosters, and for other purposes.

S. 1566

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1566, a bill to require the Secretary of Defense to identify certain aircraft shelters for aviation assets in the Indo-Pacific region and submit a plan to make improvements to such shelters, and for other purposes.

S. 1582

At the request of Mr. WELCH, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1582, a bill to amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to expand the national organic certification cost-share program into a comprehensive organic program, and for other purposes.

S. 1610

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1610, a bill to authorize administrative absences and travel and transportation allowances for members of the Armed Forces to travel and obtain reproductive health care.

S. 1624

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1624, a bill to require certain civil penalties to be transferred to a fund through which amounts are made available for the Gabriella Miller Kids First Pediatric Research Program at the National Institutes of Health, and for other purposes.

S. 1641

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1641, a bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit reports to Congress on theft of mail and United States Postal Service property, and for other purposes.

S. 1666

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1666, a bill to amend the Animal Health Protection Act to reauthorize animal disease prevention and management programs.

S. 1669

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1669, a bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

S. 1673

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1673, a bill to amend title XVIII to protect patient access to ground ambulance services under the Medicare program.

S. 1684

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1684, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a vehicle summer meal delivery pilot program, and for other purposes.

S. 1698

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1698, a bill to require group health plans and group or individual health insurance coverage to provide coverage for over-the-counter contraceptives.

S. 1714

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1714, a bill to provide paid family leave benefits to certain individuals, and for other purposes.

S. 1745

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1745, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand access to the Veterans Community Care Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs to include certain veterans seeking mental health or substance-use services, and for other purposes.

S. 1753

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1753, a bill to amend the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to allow individuals with drug offenses to receive benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 25

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 25, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to ''Adverse Effect Wage Rate Methodology for the Temporary Employment of H–2A Nonimmigrants in Non-Range Occupations in the United States''.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. PADILLA:

S. 1771. A bill to authorize additional district judges for the district court for the eastern district of California; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to introduce the CASELOAD Act of 2023.

This legislation would address the critical need for additional judges in California's Eastern District, which faces disproportionately high workloads and significant litigation backlogs.

This legislation would add five new judges to the Eastern District of California over the next 4 years to increase that court's capacity to address the needs of its roughly 8.4 million citizens.

The bill adds the judges in three tranches. Two judges would be added in 2025, one judge would be added in 2027, and two would be added in 2029.

It also would authorize the funds necessary for the additional positions.

The Eastern District of California encompasses 34 counties and has roughly 8½ million residents. Despite this massive geographic size and population, the Eastern District has only six permanent judgeships and has not added a permanent seat since 1978.

The judges of the Eastern District face a staggering caseload. The total pending cases per judge as of June 2022 was 1,308, over 2½ the national average for districts.

The people of the Eastern District, as well as the hard-working judicial officers who serve them, would greatly benefit from the additional judgeships that this bill would add.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. CARPER):

S. 1772. A bill to establish a national mercury monitoring program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise today to introduce the Comprehensive National Mercury Monitoring Act. I want to thank Senator CARPER, the chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, for his partnership on this bill. Our bipartisan bill would help ensure that we have accurate information about the extent of mercury pollution in the United States.

Mercury is a potent neurotoxin. It poses significant ecological and public health concerns, especially for children and pregnant women. Mercury exposure has gone down as U.S. mercury emissions have declined; however, levels remain unacceptably high in some areas. It is estimated that nearly 100,000 to 200,000 children born in the United States have been exposed to levels of mercury in the womb that are high enough to impair their neurological development. This exposure can impose a lifelong disability.

In Maine, some of our lands and bodies of water face higher mercury pollution compared to the national average. Maine has been called the ''tailpipe of the nation,'' as the winds carry pollution, including mercury, from the west into Maine.

A system for collecting information, such as we have for acid rain and other pollution, does not exist currently for mercury, even though it is a more toxic pollutant. A comprehensive national mercury monitoring network is needed to help protect human health and track the effect of emissions reductions. This monitoring network would also help policymakers, scientists, and the public better understand the sources, consequences, and trends in U.S. mercury pollution.

Specifically, our legislation would do the following: First, it would direct the Environmental Protection Agency, in conjunction with the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and other appropriate Federal Agencies, to establish a national mercury monitoring program. This program would be tasked to measure and monitor mercury levels in the air and watersheds, water and soil chemistry, and in marine, freshwater, and terrestrial organisms at multiple sites across the Nation.

Second, our bill would establish a scientific advisory committee to advise on the establishment, site selection, measurement, recording protocols, and operations of the monitoring program.

Third, our bill would establish a centralized database for existing and newly collected environmental mercury data that can be accessed on the internet and that is compatible with similar international efforts.

Fourth, our bill would require a report to Congress every 2 years on the program, including trend data, and an assessment every 4 years of the reduction in mercury deposition rates that would need to be achieved in order to prevent adverse human and ecological effects.

Fifth, the bill would authorize $95 million over 3 years to carry out these activities.

We must establish a comprehensive, robust national mercury monitoring network to provide the data needed to help make decisions that can protect the people of Maine and the Nation. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important bipartisan legislation, the Comprehensive National Mercury Monitoring Act.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1776. A bill to provide for the protection of and investment in certain Federal land in the State of California, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to reintroduce the Protecting Unique and Beautiful Landscapes by Investing in California, PUBLIC Lands Act. This measure would increase protections for over 1 million acres of Federal public lands throughout northwest California, the central coast, and Los Angeles, including nearly 600,000 acres of new wilderness, more than 583 miles of new wild and scenic rivers, and over 100,000 acres of an expanded national monument.

This legislation would preserve our public lands for the benefit of current and future generations and help protect California communities from the impacts of the climate crisis.

The PUBLIC Lands Act is grounded in the best conservation principles: It expands access to the outdoors for all, addresses disparities in access to nature, supports locally led efforts, and is based on science.

In northwest California, this bill would designate new wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, recreation and conservation areas, and forest and watershed restoration areas. Importantly, it would increase wildfire resiliency in northwest California, where the impacts of the climate crisis have resulted in more frequent and severe wildfires.

Along the central coast, the bill would designate nearly 250,000 acres of public land in the Los Padres National Forest and Carrizo Plain National Monument as wilderness and establish a 400-mile-long Condor National Recreation trail, stretching from Los Angeles to Monterey County. The designations in the bill would protect the Central Valley's abundant biodiversity, including threatened and endangered species.

In Southern California, the bill would expand the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument to include more of the San Gabriel Mountain range. Los Angeles County is one of the most park-poor, densely populated, and polluted regions in the Nation, and this legislation would begin to rectify that by providing increased outdoor opportunities for Angelenos and ensuring that disadvantaged communities can benefit more easily from our public lands.

I want to highlight that this legislation protects existing water rights, property rights, and land-use authorities. The bill also does not create any new public lands—rather, it protects existing public lands through the designation as wilderness in order to keep these lands as untouched and wild as possible.

The science is becoming increasingly clear that we must conserve 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030 as part of our efforts to solve the climate crisis, protect nature, and save America's wildlife. This legislation would provide significant progress on that goal, helping California and the Biden administration meet our 30x30 goals and reverse the worst effects of climate change.

The bill would also provide outdoor recreation opportunities for park-poor communities. It is imperative that as we conserve our public lands, we do so in a way that also reverses racial and economic disparities in access to nature and parks.

This bill enjoys the support of hundreds of local municipalities and elected officials, community groups, and businesses and local outfitters. It is the product of significant public engagement in the legislative process over decades.

I would like to thank my colleagues and conservation champions, Representatives JARED HUFFMAN, SALUD CARBAJAL, and JUDY CHU, for championing these bills in the House.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass the PUBLIC Lands Act as quickly as possible.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 227—CALLING ON THE PRESIDENT TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL TRIBUNAL TO PROSECUTE RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. KAINE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 227

Whereas on February 24, 2022, Russia unleashed a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in contravention of international law and the Charter of the United Nations;

Whereas the Russian armed forces committed mass atrocities in Bucha, Irpin, Kherson, Izyum, Mariupol, Dnipro, and Ukrainian towns occupied by the Russian Federation, including rape, summary execution, and unlawful violence and threats against civilians;

Whereas the Russian armed forces deliberately choose to target civilian infrastructure to terrorize Ukrainian citizens;

Whereas on September 21, 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated to the United Nations General Assembly that an aggression tribunal must be established as a ''signal to all 'would-be' aggressors, that they must value peace or be brought to responsibility by the world'';

Whereas on January 19, 2023, the European Parliament, by a vote of 472 to 19, called for the establishment of ''a special international criminal tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine'' in order to ''send a very clear signal to both Russian society and the international community that Putin and the Russian political and military leadership can be convicted for the crime of aggression in Ukraine'';

Whereas on March 27, 2023, the United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice, Dr. Beth Van Schaack, stated, ''There is no question that Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a manifest violation of the UN Charter.'';

Whereas Article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations states, ''All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.'';

Whereas United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3314 (XXIX), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 14, 1974, defines aggression as ''the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations, as set out in this Definition'';

Whereas Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as amended by Resolution RC/Res. 6, adopted by the Review Conference at the 13th plenary meeting on June 11, 2010, states, in part: ''For the purpose of this Statute, 'crime of aggression' means the planning, preparation, initiation or execution, by a person in a position effectively to exercise control over or to direct the political or military action of a State, of an act of aggression which, by its character, gravity and scale, constitutes a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations.'';

Whereas on March 17, 2023, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for President Vladimir Putin and Russian Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova for their responsibility in the war crimes of unlawful deportation and transfer of children, and the International Criminal Court continues to investigate other international crimes within its jurisdiction that have been committed in Ukraine;

Whereas the International Criminal Court has jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Ukraine, but it does not have jurisdiction over crimes of aggression in Ukraine because neither Ukraine nor the Russian Federation have ratified the Rome Statute and its amendments related to the crime of aggression;

Whereas the Russian Federation has committed manifest aggression against the Ukrainian state for which its leadership must be held accountable;

Whereas the international community must hold those responsible for these atrocities to account for their actions, including Russian President Putin and all of the Members of the Security Council of Russia; and

Whereas an international special tribunal must be based on the adoption of a United Nations General Assembly Resolution: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns, in the strongest terms, the Russian Federation's full-scale war and aggression against Ukraine;

(2) regards the Russian Federation's aggression in Ukraine as an affront to humanity and in contravention of international law;

(3) calls on the United States to use its voice and vote in international institutions to support the creation of a special international criminal tribunal to hold accountable the leaders of the Russian Federation who led and sanctioned aggression in Ukraine;

(4) states its expectation that such a tribunal will be formed pursuant to a United Nations General Assembly resolution put forward by friends of Ukraine that would—

(A) direct the Secretary General of the United Nations to negotiate with Ukraine the terms of the tribunal's scope; and

(B) ensure that the role of the United Nations—

(i) would be complementary to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court; and

(ii) would not limit or affect the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, including its exercise of jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity, and possible genocide committed in the context of

Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine; and

(5) stands with people of Ukraine in support of their freedom and Ukraine's sovereignty against tyranny.

SENATE RESOLUTION 228—RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDIANA PACERS' 1972–1973 AMERICAN BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIP AND THEIR THIRD AMERICAN BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIP IN 5 SEASONS

Mr. BRAUN (for himself and Mr. YOUNG) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. RES. 228

Whereas the Indiana Pacers were founded in 1967, as members of the American Basketball Association;

Whereas the Indiana Pacers won American Basketball Association Championships in the 1969–1970, 1971–1972, and 1972–1973 seasons and had 2 other championship appearances;

Whereas, during the seasons between 1970 and 1975, the Indiana Pacers averaged 51 wins per season;

Whereas Mel Daniels, Freddie Lewis, Roger Brown, and Billy Keller were members of all 3 Indiana Pacers championship teams;

Whereas the 1973 Indiana Pacers championship team had a strong native Hoosier presence on the team;

Whereas the 1973 Indiana Pacers championship team was built around George McGinnis, who attended George Washington Community High School in Indianapolis, Indiana, and later attended Indiana University;

Whereas Billy Keller attended George Washington Community High School in Indianapolis, Indiana, and later attended Purdue University;

Whereas Don Buse attended Holland High School in Holland, Indiana, and Evansville College in Evansville, Indiana;

Whereas, during the 1972–1973 season, Don Buse, a rookie, made several contributions, and Gus Johnson, a National Basketball Association veteran at the end of his career, was brought onto the team to bring bench strength and leadership;

Whereas the revived group finished with a 51 to 33 record after winning 11 consecutive games late in the 1972–1973 season, the fourth-best record in the league behind the Carolina Cougars and the Kentucky Colonels in the East and the Utah Stars in the West;

Whereas the Indiana Pacers took control of the 1972–1973 series by winning Game 4 on the home court of the Houston Rockets, as Billy Keller hit a game-winning 3-pointer from the left wing off a broken play with 14 seconds left for a 97 to 95 victory;

Whereas that shot gained historical value in passing years because William Robert ''Slick'' Leonard rose off the bench and shouted, ''Boom, Baby!'' as the ball dropped through the net;

Whereas ''Boom, Baby!'' would become William Robert ''Slick'' Leonard's signature call as a broadcaster on every 3-pointer by the Indiana Pacers in following decades;

Whereas, on May 12, 1973, the Indiana Pacers beat the Kentucky Colonels 88 to 81 in Game 7 of the American Basketball Association Championship; and

Whereas that win gave the Indiana Pacers their third and final American Basketball Association title, the most titles held by a team in the history of the American Basketball Association: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) basketball has a rich history and passionate fan base in the Hoosier State and the Indiana Pacers have highlighted that rich history during the time in which they participated in the American Basketball Association; and

(2) the history of the Indiana Pacers and their storied legacy should be recognized, especially during 2023, which marks the 50th anniversary of the Indiana Pacers' third and last American Basketball Association title and championship.

SENATE RESOLUTION 229—DESIGNATING MAY 2023 AS ''NATIONAL BRAIN TUMOR AWARENESS MONTH''

Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. WARREN, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. WARNOCK) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 229

Whereas more than an estimated 94,390 individuals will be diagnosed with a primary brain tumor in the United States in 2023, and an estimated 93,470 individuals in the United States were diagnosed with a primary brain tumor in 2022;

Whereas an estimated 1,000,000 Americans are living with a brain tumor in the United States;

Whereas, in the United States, brain tumors are—

(1) the leading cause of death from cancer in children who are under 14 years of age and teens who are under 19 years of age; and

(2) the second leading cause of death from cancer in young adults who are between 15 and 39 years of age;

Whereas the average 5-year survival rate for an individual in the United States following the diagnosis of a primary malignant brain tumor is only 35.7 percent;

Whereas it is estimated that 18,990 individuals in the United States will die as a result of a malignant brain tumor in 2023;

Whereas brain tumors may be malignant or benign but can be life-threatening in either case;

Whereas treatment of brain tumors is complicated by the fact that more than 100 types of brain tumors exist;

Whereas the treatment and removal of brain tumors present significant challenges due to the uniquely complex and fragile nature of the brain;

Whereas brain tumors affect the primary organ in the human body that controls not only cognitive ability, but the actions of every other organ and limb in the body, leading to brain tumors being described as a disease that affects the whole individual;

Whereas brain tumor research is supported by a number of private, nonprofit research foundations and by Federal medical research institutions;

Whereas basic research may fuel advancements and development of new treatments for brain tumors;

Whereas obstacles to the development of new treatments for brain tumors remain, and there are limited strategies for the screening or early detection of brain tumors;

Whereas, despite the high number of individuals diagnosed with a brain tumor every year and the devastating prognoses for those individuals, only a few treatments have been approved for malignant brain tumors since the 1980s and none of the treatments extend survival more than 2 years of life, on average, or are considered to be curative.

Whereas the mortality rates associated with brain tumors have changed little during the 30-year period preceding the date of introduction of this resolution;

Whereas there is a need for greater public awareness of brain tumors, including the difficulties associated with research on brain tumors and the opportunities for advances in brain tumor research and treatment; and

Whereas May 2023, during which brain tumor advocates nationwide unite in awareness, outreach, and advocacy activities, is an appropriate month to recognize as ''National Brain Tumor Awareness Month'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates May 2023 as ''National Brain Tumor Awareness Month'';

(2) encourages increased public awareness of brain tumors to honor the individuals who have lost their lives to a brain tumor or currently live with a brain tumor diagnosis;

(3) supports efforts to develop better treatments for brain tumors that will improve the quality of life and the long-term prognoses of individuals diagnosed with a brain tumor;

(4) expresses its support for individuals who are battling brain tumors, as well as the families, friends, and caregivers of those individuals; and

(5) urges a collaborative approach to brain tumor research, which is a promising means of advancing understanding of, and treatment for, brain tumors.

SENATE RESOLUTION 230—RECOGNIZING THE 102ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1921 TULSA RACE MASSACRE

Ms. WARREN (for herself, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. KAINE, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. CASEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. WARNER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 230

Whereas, in the early 20th century, de jure segregation confined the Black residents of Tulsa, Oklahoma, into the ''Greenwood District'', which they built into a thriving community with a nationally renowned entrepreneurial center known as the ''Black Wall Street'';

Whereas, at the time, White supremacy and racist violence were common throughout the United States and went largely unchecked by the justice system;

Whereas reports of an alleged and disputed incident on the morning of May 30, 1921, between two teenagers, a Black man and a White woman, caused the White community of Tulsa, including the Tulsa Tribune, to call for a lynching amidst a climate of White racial hostility and White resentment over Black economic success;

Whereas, on May 31, 1921, a mob of armed White men descended on the Greenwood District in Tulsa and launched what is now known as the ''Tulsa Race Massacre'';

Whereas Tulsa municipal and county authorities failed to take actions to calm or contain the violence, and civil and law enforcement officials deputized many White men who were participants in the violence as their agents, directly contributing to the violence through overt and often illegal acts;

Whereas, over a period of 24 hours, the violence of the White mob led to the death of an estimated 300 Black residents, and over 800 reports of injuries;

Whereas the White mob looted, damaged, burned, or otherwise destroyed approximately 40 square blocks of the Greenwood District, including an estimated 1,256 homes of Black residents, and virtually every other structure, including churches, schools, businesses, a hospital, and a library, leaving nearly 9,000 Black residents of Tulsa homeless and effectively wiping out tens of millions of dollars in Black prosperity and wealth in Tulsa;

Whereas, in the wake of the Tulsa Race Massacre, the Governor of Oklahoma declared martial law, and units of the Oklahoma National Guard participated in the mass arrests of all or nearly all of the surviving residents of Greenwood, removing them from Greenwood to other parts of Tulsa and unlawfully detaining them in holding centers;

Whereas Oklahoma local and State governments dismissed claims arising from the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre for decades, and the event was effectively erased from collective memory and history until, in 1997, the Oklahoma State Legislature finally created a commission to study the event;

Whereas, on February 28, 2001, the commission issued a report that detailed, for the first time, the extent of the Tulsa Race Massacre and decades-long efforts to suppress its recollection;

Whereas none of the law enforcement officials or any of the hundreds of other White mob members who participated in the violence were ever prosecuted or held accountable for the hundreds of lives lost and tens of millions of dollars of Black wealth destroyed, despite the Tulsa Race Massacre Commission confirming their roles in the Tulsa Race Massacre, nor was any compensation ever provided to the victims of the Tulsa Race Massacre or their descendants;

Whereas State government and city officials not only abdicated their responsibility to rebuild and repair the Greenwood community in the wake of the violence, but actively blocked efforts to do so, contributing to continued racial disparities in Tulsa akin to those that Black people face across the United States;

Whereas the pattern of violence against Black people in the United States, often at the hands of law enforcement, shows that the fight to end State-sanctioned violence against Black people continues; and

Whereas this year marks the 102nd anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the 102nd anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre;

(2) acknowledges the historical significance of this event as one of the largest single instances of State-sanctioned violence against Black people in the history of the United States;

(3) honors the lives and legacies of the estimated 300 Black individuals who were killed during the Tulsa Race Massacre and the nearly 9,000 Black individuals who were left homeless and penniless;

(4) condemns the participants of the Tulsa Race Massacre, including the White municipal officials and law enforcement who directly participated in or who aided and abetted the unlawful violence;

(5) condemns past and present efforts to cover up the truth and shield the White community, and especially State and local officials, from accountability for the Tulsa Race Massacre and other instances of violence at the hands of law enforcement;

(6) condemns the continued legacy of racism, including systemic racism, and White supremacy against Black people in the United States, particularly in the form of police brutality;

(7) encourages education about the Tulsa Race Massacre, including the horrors of the massacre itself, the history of White supremacy that fueled the massacre, and subsequent attempts to deny or cover up the Tulsa Race Massacre, in all elementary and secondary education settings and in institutions of higher education in the United States; and

(8) recognizes the commitment of Congress to acknowledge and learn from the history of racism and racial violence in the United States, including the Tulsa Race Massacre, to reverse the legacy of White supremacy and fight for racial justice.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 11—EXPRESSING THE NEED FOR THE SENATE TO PROVIDE ADVICE AND CONSENT TO RATIFICATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Mr. PADILLA submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 11

Whereas human actions are contributing to an unprecedented and increasing loss of biodiversity worldwide;

Whereas nearly 1,000,000 species could be threatened with extinction;

Whereas every United Nations member state has ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity, done at Rio de Janeiro June 5, 1992, with the exception of the United States;

Whereas the United States signed the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1993 but has not ratified the treaty;

Whereas the United States, under current domestic law, is already legally compliant with the obligations of the Convention;

Whereas Federal agencies often design their plans to align with Convention on Biological Diversity initiatives;

Whereas the absence of the United States from the Convention on Biological Diversity limits the United States to holding the status of an ''observer'' to deliberations and decision making processes of the Convention on Biodiversity;

Whereas, not being party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United States does not have a vote within the convention, which diminishes our voice and influence;

Whereas the decisions and rules made by the Convention on Biological Diversity affect both national security and economic interests of the United States in spite of the United States' non-party status;

Whereas the United States is one of the world's largest contributors in international conservation funding and biological diversity expertise; and

Whereas we are inextricably interconnected on this planet, and the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity has a direct impact on all Americans: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is in the national interest for the Senate to provide its advice and consent for the ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was signed by the United States in New York on June 4, 1993.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 91. Mr. BRAUN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 92. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 93. Mr. HAWLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 94. Mr. VANCE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 95. Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 96. Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 97. Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 91. Mr. BRAUN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. RESCISSION OF DISCRETIONARY SPENDING AND HONORING DEBTS DURING A DEBT CEILING CRISIS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) CURRENT FISCAL YEAR.—The term ''current fiscal year'' means the fiscal year during which the applicable rescission of discretionary appropriations under subsection (b) occurs.

(2) DEBT CEILING CRISIS PERIOD.—The term ''debt ceiling crisis period'' means a period—

(A) beginning on the date on which, but for subsection (c), the Secretary of the Treasury would not be able to issue obligations under chapter 31 of title 31, United States Code, or other obligations whose principal and interest are guaranteed by the United States Government, because of the limit on the face amount of such obligations that may be outstanding at one time under section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code; and

(B) ending on date on which the first measure suspending or increasing the limit under section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code, is enacted into law after the date described in subparagraph (A).

(3) DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATIONS.—The term ''discretionary appropriations'' has the meaning given such term in section 250(c) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 900(c)).

(b) RESCISSION OF DISCRETIONARY SPENDING.—For each discretionary appropriations account, effective on first day of a debt ceiling crisis period, and every 30 days thereafter until the end of the debt ceiling crisis period, 1 percent of the amount provided for the discretionary appropriations account under the appropriation Act for the current fiscal year is permanently rescinded.

(c) TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF DEBT CEILING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code, shall not apply for the period—

(A) beginning on the first day of a debt ceiling crisis period; and

(B) ending on the last day of the debt ceiling crisis period.

(2) SPECIAL RULE RELATING TO OBLIGATIONS ISSUED DURING EXTENSION PERIOD.—Effective on the last day of a debt ceiling crisis period, the limitation in effect under section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code, shall be increased to the extent that—

(A) the face amount of obligations issued under chapter 31 of such title and the face amount of obligations whose principal and interest are guaranteed by the United States Government (except guaranteed obligations held by the Secretary of the Treasury) outstanding on the first day of the debt ceiling crisis period; exceeds

(B) the face amount of such obligations outstanding on the last day of the debt ceiling crisis period.

(3) EXTENSION LIMITED TO NECESSARY OBLIGATIONS.—An obligation shall not be taken into account under paragraph (2)(A) unless the issuance of such obligation was necessary to fund a commitment incurred pursuant to law by the Federal Government that required payment on or before the last day of the applicable debt ceiling crisis period.

(d) REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the first day of a debt ceiling crisis period, and every 30 days thereafter until the date that is 30 days after the end of the debt ceiling crisis period, the Director of the Office of Management shall submit to Congress a report detailing the rescission of discretionary appropriations under subsection (b) with respect to the debt ceiling crisis period.

(2) REVIEW BY GAO.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Director of the Office of Management and Budget submits each report under paragraph (1), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report evaluating the description of the rescission of discretionary appropriations in the report by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

SA 92. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division C, in section 311, strike subsection (a) and insert the following:

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6(o)(3) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(6)(o)(3)) is amended by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following:

''(A)(i) under 18 years of age; or

''(ii) in—

''(I) fiscal year 2023 over 51 years of age;

''(II) fiscal year 2024 over 53 years of age;

''(III) fiscal year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter over 55 years of age;''.

SA 93. Mr. HAWLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. IMPOSITION OF DUTIES TO BALANCE TRADE WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

(a) CALCULATION OF TRADE WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.—Not later than January 31 of each year, the President shall calculate and publish in the Federal Register, for the preceding calendar year—

(1) the total value of articles imported into the United States from the People's Republic of China; and

(2) the total value of articles exported from the United States to the People's Republic of China.

(b) IMPOSITION OF DUTIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the total value calculated under paragraph (1) of subsection (a) exceeds the total value calculated under paragraph (2) of that subsection for the preceding calendar year, the President shall impose an additional duty with respect to each article imported into the United States from the People's Republic of China of 25 percent ad valorem.

(2) ADDITIONAL DUTIES.—A duty imposed under paragraph (1) shall be in addition to any duty previously applicable with respect to an article.

(c) CONTINUED IMPOSITION OF DUTIES.—The duties imposed under subsection (b) with respect to articles imported into the United States from the People's Republic of China shall remain in effect until the total value calculated under paragraph (1) of subsection (a) is equal to or less than the total value calculated under paragraph (2) of that subsection for the preceding calendar year.

SA 94. Mr. VANCE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

TITLE _____—INCOME TAX PROVISIONS

SEC. _01. AMENDMENT OF 1986 CODE.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this title an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Subtitle A—Repeal of Electric Vehicle Incentives

SEC. _11. CLEAN VEHICLE CREDIT.

(a) PER VEHICLE DOLLAR LIMITATION.—Section 30D(b) is amended by striking paragraphs (2) and (3) and inserting the following:

''(2) BASE AMOUNT.—The amount determined under this paragraph is $2,500.

''(3) BATTERY CAPACITY.—In the case of a vehicle which draws propulsion energy from a battery with not less than 5 kilowatt hours of capacity, the amount determined under this paragraph is $417, plus $417 for each kilowatt hour of capacity in excess of 5 kilowatt hours. The amount determined under this paragraph shall not exceed $5,000.''.

(b) FINAL ASSEMBLY.—Section 30D(d) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (E), by adding ''and'' at the end,

(B) in subparagraph (F)(ii), by striking the comma at the end and inserting a period, and

(C) by striking subparagraph (G), and

(2) by striking paragraph (5).

(c) DEFINITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 30D(d), as amended by subsection (b), is amended—

(A) in the heading, by striking ''CLEAN'' and inserting ''QUALIFIED PLUG-IN ELECTRIC DRIVE MOTOR'',

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''clean'' and inserting ''qualified plug-in electric drive motor'',

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''qualified'' before ''manufacturer'',

(iii) in subparagraph (F)(i), by striking ''7'' and inserting ''4'', and

(iv) by striking subparagraph (H),

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in the heading, by striking ''QUALIFIED MANUFACTURER'' and inserting ''MANUFACTURER'', and

(ii) by striking ''The term 'qualified manufacturer' means'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''The term 'manufacturer' has the meaning given such term in regulations prescribed by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency for purposes of the administration of title II of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7521 et seq.).'', and

(D) by striking paragraph (6).

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 30D is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking ''new clean vehicle'' and inserting ''new qualified plug-in electric drive motor vehicle'', and

(B) in subsection (b)(1), by striking ''new clean vehicle'' and inserting ''new qualified plug-in electric drive motor vehicle''.

(d) CRITICAL MINERAL REQUIREMENTS REMOVED.—Section 30D is amended by striking subsection (e).

(e) LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF VEHICLES ELIGIBLE FOR CREDIT RESTORED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 30D is amended by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

''(e) LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF NEW QUALIFIED PLUG-IN ELECTRIC DRIVE MOTOR VEHICLES ELIGIBLE FOR CREDIT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a new qualified plug-in electric drive motor vehicle sold during the phaseout period, only the applicable percentage of the credit otherwise allowable under subsection (a) shall be allowed.

''(2) PHASEOUT PERIOD.—For purposes of this subsection, the phaseout period is the period beginning with the second calendar quarter following the calendar quarter which includes the first date on which the number of new qualified plug-in electric drive motor vehicles manufactured by the manufacturer of the vehicle referred to in paragraph (1) sold for use in the United States after December 31, 2009, is at least 200,000.

''(3) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the applicable percentage is—

''(A) 50 percent for the first 2 calendar quarters of the phaseout period,

''(B) 25 percent for the 3rd and 4th calendar quarters of the phaseout period, and (C)

''(C) 0 percent for each calendar quarter thereafter.

''(4) CONTROLLED GROUPS.—Rules similar to the rules of section 30B(f)(4) shall apply for purposes of this subsection.''.

(2) EXCLUDED ENTITIES.—Section 30D(d), as amended by Public Law 117–169, is amended by striking paragraph (7).

(f) SPECIAL RULES REPEALED.—Section 30D(f) is amended by striking paragraphs (8), (9), (10), and (11).

(g) TRANSFER OF CREDIT REPEALED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 30D is amended by striking subsection (g).

(2) RESTORATION OF TEXT RELATING TO PLUG-IN ELECTRIC VEHICLES.—Section 30D is amended by inserting after subsection (f) the following:

''(g) CREDIT ALLOWED FOR 2- AND 3-WHEELED PLUG-IN ELECTRIC VEHICLES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a qualified 2- or 3-wheeled plug-in electric vehicle—

''(A) there shall be allowed as a credit against the tax imposed by this chapter for the taxable year an amount equal to the sum of the applicable amount with respect to each such qualified 2- or 3-wheeled plug-in electric vehicle placed in service by the taxpayer during the taxable year, and

''(B) the amount of the credit allowed under subparagraph (A) shall be treated as a credit allowed under subsection (a).

''(2) APPLICABLE AMOUNT.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the applicable amount is an amount equal to the lesser of—

''(A) 10 percent of the cost of the qualified 2- or 3-wheeled plug-in electric vehicle, or

''(B) $2,500.

''(3) QUALIFIED 2- OR 3-WHEELED PLUG-IN ELECTRIC VEHICLE.—The term 'qualified 2- or 3-wheeled plug-in electric vehicle' means any vehicle which—

''(A) has 2 or 3 wheels,

''(B) meets the requirements of subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), (E), and (F) of subsection (d)(1) (determined by substituting '2.5 kilowatt hours' for '4 kilowatt hours' in subparagraph (F)(i)),

''(C) is manufactured primarily for use on public streets, roads, and highways,

''(D) is capable of achieving a speed of 45 miles per hour or greater, and

''(E) is acquired—

''(i) after December 31, 2011, and before January 1, 2014, or

''(ii) in the case of a vehicle that has 2 wheels, after December 31, 2014, and before January 1, 2022.''.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS REVERSED.—Section 30D(f), as amended by Public Law 117–169, is amended—

(A) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

''(3) PROPERTY USED BY TAX-EXEMPT ENTITY.—In the case of a vehicle the use of which is described in paragraph (3) or (4) of section 50(b) and which is not subject to a lease, the person who sold such vehicle to the person or entity using such vehicle shall be treated as the taxpayer that placed such vehicle in service, but only if such person clearly discloses to such person or entity in a document the amount of any credit allowable under subsection (a) with respect to such vehicle (determined without regard to subsection (c)). For purposes of subsection (c), property to which this paragraph applies shall be treated as of a character subject to an allowance for depreciation.'', and

(B) in paragraph (8), by striking '', including any vehicle with respect to which the taxpayer elects the application of subsection (g)''.

(h) TERMINATION REPEALED.—Section 30D is amended by striking subsection (h).

(i) ADDITIONAL CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) The heading of section 30D is amended by striking ''**CLEAN VEHICLE CREDIT**'' and inserting ''**NEW QUALIFIED PLUG-IN ELECTRIC DRIVE MOTOR VEHICLES**''.

(2) Section 30B is amended—

(A) in subsection (h)(8) by inserting '', except that no benefit shall be recaptured if such property ceases to be eligible for such credit by reason of conversion to a qualified plug-in electric drive motor vehicle'', before the period at the end, and

(B) by inserting after subsection (h) the following subsection:

''(i) PLUG-IN CONVERSION CREDIT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of subsection (a), the plug-in conversion credit determined under this subsection with respect to any motor vehicle which is converted to a qualified plug-in electric drive motor vehicle is 10 percent of so much of the cost of the converting such vehicle as does not exceed $40,000.

''(2) QUALIFIED PLUG-IN ELECTRIC DRIVE MOTOR VEHICLE.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'qualified plug-in electric drive motor vehicle' means any new qualified plug-in electric drive motor vehicle (as defined in section 30D, determined without regard to whether such vehicle is made by a manufacturer or whether the original use of such vehicle commences with the taxpayer).

''(3) CREDIT ALLOWED IN ADDITION TO OTHER CREDITS.—The credit allowed under this subsection shall be allowed with respect to a motor vehicle notwithstanding whether a credit has been allowed with respect to such motor vehicle under this section (other than this subsection) in any preceding taxable year.

''(4) TERMINATION.—This subsection shall not apply to conversions made after December 31, 2011.''.

(3) Section 38(b)(30) is amended by striking ''clean'' and inserting ''qualified plug-in electric drive motor''.

(4) Section 6213(g)(2) is amended by striking subparagraph (T).

(5) Section 6501(m) is amended by striking ''30D(f)(6)'' and inserting ''30D(e)(4)''.

(6) The table of sections for subpart B of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 is amended by striking the item relating to section 30D and inserting after the item relating to section 30C the following item:

''Sec. 30D. New qualified plug-in electric drive motor vehicles.''.

(j) GROSS UP REPEALED.—Section 13401 of Public Law 117–169 is amended by striking subsection (j).

(k) TRANSITION RULE REPEALED.—Section 13401 of Public Law 117–169 is amended by striking subsection (l).

(l) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraphs (2), (3), (4), and (5), the amendments made by this section shall apply to vehicles placed in service after December 31, 2022.

(2) FINAL ASSEMBLY.—The amendments made by subsection (b) shall apply to vehicles sold after August 16, 2022.

(3) MANUFACTURER LIMITATION.—The amendment made by subsections (d) and (e) shall apply to vehicles sold after December 31, 2022.

(4) TRANSFER OF CREDIT.—The amendments made by subsection (g) shall apply to vehicles placed in service after December 31, 2023.

(5) TRANSITION RULE.—The amendment made by subsection (k) shall take effect as if included in Public Law 117–169.

SEC. __12. REPEAL OF CREDIT FOR PREVIOUSLY-OWNED CLEAN VEHICLES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart A of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 is amended by striking section 25E (and by striking the item relating to such section in the table of sections for such subpart).

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 6213(g)(2) is amended by striking subparagraph (U).

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to vehicles acquired after December 31, 2022.

SEC. __13. REPEAL OF CREDIT FOR QUALIFIED COMMERCIAL CLEAN VEHICLES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart D of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 is amended by striking section 45W (and by striking the item relating to such section in the table of sections for such subpart).

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 38(b) is amended by striking paragraph (37).

(2) Section 6213(g)(2) is amended by striking subparagraph (V).

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to vehicles acquired after December 31, 2022.

SEC. __14. ALTERNATIVE FUEL REFUELING PROPERTY CREDIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 30C(i) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2032'' and inserting ''December 31, 2021''.

(b) PROPERTY OF A CHARACTER SUBJECT TO DEPRECIATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 30C(a) is amended by striking ''(6 percent in the case of property of a character subject to depreciation)''.

(2) MODIFICATION OF CREDIT LIMITATION.—Subsection (b) of section 30C is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''with respect to any single item of'' and inserting ''with respect to all'', and

(ii) by inserting ''at a location'' before ''shall not exceed'', and

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking ''$100,000 in the case of any such item of property'' and inserting ''$30,000 in the case of a property''.

(3) BIDIRECTIONAL CHARGING EQUIPMENT NOT INCLUDED; ELIGIBLE CENSUS TRACT REQUIREMENT REMOVED.—Section 30C(c) is amended to read as follows:

''(c) QUALIFIED ALTERNATIVE FUEL VEHICLE REFUELING PROPERTY.—For purposes of this section, the term 'qualified alternative fuel vehicle refueling property' has the same meaning as the term 'qualified clean-fuel vehicle refueling property' would have under section 179A if—

''(1) paragraph (1) of section 179A(d) did not apply to property installed on property which is used as the principal residence (within the meaning of section 121) of the taxpayer, and

''(2) only the following were treated as clean-burning fuels for purposes of section 179A(d):

''(A) Any fuel at least 85 percent of the volume of which consists of one or more of the following: ethanol, natural gas, compressed natural gas, liquified natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas, or hydrogen.

''(B) Any mixture—

''(i) which consists of two or more of the following: biodiesel (as defined in section 40A(d)(1)), diesel fuel (as defined in section 4083(a)(3)), or kerosene, and

''(ii) at least 20 percent of the volume of which consists of biodiesel (as so defined) determined without regard to any kerosene in such mixture.

''(C) Electricity.''.

(c) CERTAIN ELECTRIC CHARGING STATIONS NOT INCLUDED AS QUALIFIED ALTERNATIVE FUEL VEHICLE REFUELING PROPERTY; WAGE AND APPRENTICESHIP REQUIREMENTS REMOVED.—Section 30C is amended by striking subsections (f) and (g) and redesignating subsections (h) and (i) as subsections (f) and (g), respectively.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to property placed in service after December 31, 2021.

Subtitle B—Elimination of Marriage Penalty

SEC. __21. EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 32(b)(2)(B) is amended by striking ''increased by $5,000'' and inserting ''equal to 200 percent of the amount otherwise applicable under such subparagraph''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2022.

SA 95. Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. PRIORITIZE OBLIGATIONS ON THE DEBT HELD BY THE PUBLIC, SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS, MEDICARE, VETERANS, AND MILITARY PAY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—If the debt of the United States Government reaches the statutory limit under section 3101 of title 31, United States Code, the following obligations shall take equal priority over all other obligations incurred by the United States Government:

(1) The authority of the Department of the Treasury provided under section 3123 of title 31, United States Code, to pay with legal tender the principal and interest on debt held by the public.

(2) The authority of the Commissioner of Social Security to pay monthly old-age, survivors', and disability insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.).

(3) The payment of pay and allowances for members of the Armed Forces on active duty and members of the United States Coast Guard.

(4) The payment of compensation and pensions, and payments for medical services, provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(5) The Medicare programs under parts A, B, C, and D of title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395c et seq.).

(b) LIMITED DEBT LIMIT AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary of the Treasury determines, after consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, that incoming revenue will not be sufficient to pay the priority obligations specified under subsection (a) over an upcoming 2-week period during a period during which the debt of the United States Government has reached the statutory limit under section 3101 of title 31, United States Code—

(A) the Secretary, in coordination with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall notify Congress of the amount of the expected revenue shortfall from the revenue required to pay in full the priority obligations specified under subsection (a) for such 2-week period; and

(B) the amount of the limit on debt held by the public under section 3101 of title 31, United States Code, shall be increased by the amount of the expected revenue shortfall.

(2) EXCESS REVENUE.—If incoming revenue exceeds the amount projected under paragraph (1), any amount in excess shall be held in reserve and applied to the following 2-week period.

SA 96. Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 251 and insert the following:

SEC. 251. RESCISSION OF CERTAIN BALANCES MADE AVAILABLE TO THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE.

The unobligated balances of amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by paragraphs (1)(A)(ii), (1)(A)(iii), (1)(B), (2), (3), (4), and (5) of section 10301 of Public Law 117–169 (commonly known as the ''Inflation Reduction Act of 2022'') as of the date of the enactment of this Act are rescinded.

SA 97. Mr. SCOTT of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3746, to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In division C, strike sections 311 and 312 and insert the following:

SEC. 311. SNAP WORK REQUIREMENTS.

(a) REPEAL OF WAIVER.—Section 2301 of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (7 U.S.C. 2011 note; Public Law 116–127) is repealed.

(b) WORK REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting '', or, in the case of a parent or other member of a household with responsibility for a dependent child, 6 months (consecutive or otherwise),'' before ''during which'';

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''50'' and inserting ''60'';

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by adding ''under 6 years of age'' before the semicolon at the end;

(iii) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''or'' at the end after the semicolon;

(iv) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(v) by adding at the end the following:

''(F)(i) responsible for a dependent individual; and

''(ii) married to, and resides with, an individual who is in compliance with the requirements of paragraph (2).''; and

(C) in paragraph (6)—

(i) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''(H)'' and inserting ''(G)'';

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''(F) and (H)'' and inserting ''(E) and (G)'';

(iii) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''(F) through (H)'' and inserting ''(E) through (G)'';

(iv) by striking subparagraph (E);

(v) by redesignating subparagraphs (F) through (H) as subparagraphs (E) through (G), respectively; and

(vi) in subparagraph (E) (as so redesignated), by striking ''(C), (D), or (E)'' and inserting ''(C) or (D)''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 16(h)(1)(E)(ii)(I) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2025(h)(1)(E)(ii)(I)) is amended by striking ''3-month period'' and inserting ''3-month or 6-month period, as applicable,''.

SEC. 312. WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING AND TENANT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) PUBLIC HOUSING.—Section 3 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR FAMILIES.—The requirements described in section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o)) shall apply with respect to any individual who—

''(1) is a member of a family residing in a public housing dwelling; and

''(2) is not exempted from those requirements under paragraph (3) of such section.''.

(b) TENANT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 8(o) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(22) WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR FAMILIES.—The requirements described in section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o)) shall apply with respect to any individual who—

''(A) is a member of a family receiving tenant-based assistance; and

''(B) is not exempted from those requirements under paragraph (3) of such section.''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I have 10 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 10 a.m.,. to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 9:45 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 2:15 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND SPENDING OVERSIGHT

The Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Spending Oversight of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WATER, AND WILDLIFE

The Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife of the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EAST, SOUTH ASIA, CENTRAL ASIA, AND COUNTERTERRORISM

The Subcommittee on Near East, South Asia, Central Asia, and Counterterrorism of the Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet du ring the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 3746

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3746) to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:11 P.M. TONIGHT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to adjourn until 10:11 p.m. tonight.

The motion was agreed to.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:10 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 10:11 p.m.