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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom. Nothing is impossible to You. Forgive us when we sometimes have anxiety about the future because we fail to remember what You have done in the past. Thank You for Your wisdom that guides us on life's journey, empowering us to walk with integrity. Today, enlighten our Senators, show them Your ways, teach them Your paths. May Your great love so encompass them that discord and confusion will be dispelled. Lord, let Your peace and tranquility guard their hearts and minds. Deal graciously with them, encouraging them to cast their cares upon You, receiving Your loving mercy and protection.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote with respect to the Alexander substitute amendment No. 3801 occur at 12

noon today; that the cloture vote on H.R. 2028 occur following disposition of the substitute amendment; and that the 10:30 a.m. second-degree filing deadline for both the amendment and the underlying bill be at 11 a.m. this morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. We have no problem moving the vote to noon, but I want everyone to be clear that we would be happy to have a vote to pass this bill right now. The only thing holding up the bill is, of course, the amendment of which the Presiding Officer is well aware.

We would be happy to move right now with the amendments that have been agreed to—the managers' package we agreed to the night before last—and finish this bill now.

I have no objection.

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

THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we have seen important progress in this appropriations season, with the committee reporting out one-third of the 12 funding bills already, each with unanimous backing. So let's continue our work to make progress on the bipartisan energy security and water infrastructure funding bill before us.

This appropriations measure will have positive impacts across the country and promote American priorities such as energy innovation, waterways infrastructure, commerce, and public safety. It is the product of much research and deliberation. It shows what can be achieved with the return to regular order.

We know it would not have been possible without the dedicated work and leadership of the Appropriations Committee and the Energy and Water De-

velopment Subcommittee. It is good to see this significant headway we have made thus far. With continued cooperation, we can pass the first appropriations bill of the season and continue our work to move through more of these individual funding measures.

OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it has been 6 years since the flawed health care policies of ObamaCare were signed into law. Six years later, my office continues to receive stories from Kentuckians who are reeling from the negative effects of this partisan law.

For instance, take the heartbreaking story from one middle-class husband and father of two from Covington who suffered a heart attack at the age of 42. Under ObamaCare, this Kentucky dad has seen his health care premium triple and his deductible increase to, as he put it, a "ridiculous" amount. He said he struggles to afford his medicine—which he says costs upward of \$1,000 a month—as he and his family struggle to survive week to week.

Put simply, he says, ObamaCare is a "terrible blight on the health care system" that has resulted in more "expensive, watered down, unaffordable health care for the middle class." Unfortunately, too many American families have had similar experiences under this administration's partisan law because from the start this health care policy was built on a mountain—a mountain of higher costs and broken promises, which only seem to grow larger by the day.

When it comes to ObamaCare, costs in the exchange are higher than its champions expected. A recent study found that ObamaCare exchange individual market enrollees experienced higher medical costs than people insured through employer-provided coverage: 19 percent higher in 2014 and 22 percent higher last year. When it comes to ObamaCare, it simply does

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



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not work like its champions promised either. As a result, we have seen increasing numbers of insurers pull out of the ObamaCare marketplace altogether.

Just last week, we learned that the Nation's largest health insurer will join the list, withdrawing from all but a "handful of States" next year, including Kentucky. What this means is that Americans in my home State and across much of the Nation are likely to face even fewer health insurance options. According to one analysis, if this insurer withdrew from the exchange market altogether, nearly 2 million marketplace enrollees would be left with only 2 insurers, while more than 1 million more would be left with only 1.

Fewer choices could also mean even higher premium costs. As one expert put it, either insurers will drop out or insurers will raise premiums. This only adds to the many Kentuckians who have already seen their premiums spike under ObamaCare, like the retired police officer whose premium increased to nearly \$5,000 a year, which he "simply cannot afford" or the Kentuckian whose rate tripled, leaving him uninsured and leaving him to pay a fine at the end of the year.

Not surprisingly, the insurance industry's chief spokesperson—who is a former top Obama administration official, by the way—is bracing the public for even more premium increases in the year to come. The administration's answer? More money from taxpayers. Whether they call it a risk corridor or a premium subsidy or a reinsurance mechanism, the source is still the same, the American taxpayer.

So the bottom line is this: Americans continue to be unfairly hurt by a health care law that was forced on them through backroom deals and is literally littered with broken promises. Too many have seen their premiums and deductibles skyrocket. Too many have suffered from tax increases and lost coverage. Now too many are set to face even fewer choices and significant price hikes in the year to come.

Middle-class families have endured the broken promises and failures of ObamaCare for far too long. It is past time for Democrats to own up to the many disappointments of this law and help us move toward better health care policies for our country.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks, the time until 12 noon be equally divided between the two managers or their designees.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is too bad my Republican friends continue to attack ObamaCare. It is working. The ranks of the uninsured are as low as they have ever been. More people are getting access to health care, and they are healthier. More people are healthier because they can go see a doctor or go to a hospital when they need to.

The Republicans need to get over it and accept the fact that ObamaCare is here to stay. If they are so concerned about it—they have no plan of their own—maybe they could give us some ideas as to how it should be changed. We hear nothing other than criticism of a program that is doing so much to change America forever.

WISHING CAPITOL POLICE OFFICER PAT MILLHAM A SPEEDY RECOVERY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want to take just a minute to talk about the tragedy that struck the Capitol Police yesterday. At 5 a.m., United States Capitol Police Officer Pat Millham was working out in the gym. He suffered a massive heart attack. Those who were present in the gym at the time rushed to his aid. They used a defibrillator three times before his heart started beating again. He was then flown to a nearby hospital and had surgery late last night.

He was revived. That is very good. He is a 28-year veteran of the Capitol Police. He has served in a variety of very important positions: a member of the criminal investigations unit, academy instructor, and he even worked on the hostage negotiation team.

He is an outstanding police officer by all accounts. The Department has recognized his performance and honored Officer Millham with the Service Medal and Commendation Award. He is well-liked by all of his colleagues and has a great sense of humor. He is currently a member of the Department's mountain bike patrol that we see around here. There are not a lot of mountains, but there are a lot of hills around this Capitol complex.

He is in very good shape. That is what you have to be to be a patrol officer on a bicycle. That is what makes what happened yesterday so shocking. I cannot imagine what a difficult time it has been for Pat and his wife Heidi and their two children at college, Skylar and Savannah. Heidi recently retired from the United States Capitol Police.

I hope they know the entire Senate and House family wishes Officer Millham a speedy recovery, and I express my personal appreciation and admiration to all of the Capitol Police for all they do and all the personnel who make the Capitol Police jobs functional. We look forward to having Officer Millham back at full health very quickly.

Mr. President, where are we on what is happening on the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2028, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2028) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Alexander/Feinstein amendment No. 3801, in the nature of a substitute.

Alexander amendment No. 3804 (to amend-ment No. 3801), to modify provisions relating to Nuclear Regulatory Commission fees.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided between the two managers or their designees.

NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE-BACK DAY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we have recently been talking quite a bit—because, frankly, unless we talk about it people won't know what happened—about how productive we have been over the last year and a half in advancing legislation that benefits the American people, which is, of course, the reason why they sent us here.

I say we have been talking about it, because if we don't talk about it, maybe they will never learn, and even if we talked about it, some of them may never believe it. But the fact of the matter is that we need to talk about what we are doing here for the people we represent.

Of course, nothing happens in the Senate or in Congress or in Washington unless it is done on a bipartisan basis. But leadership matters. Leadership matters.

We have seen with the new Republican majority in the 114th Congress, under Senator MCCONNELL and Speaker RYAN now, that we have been able to pass some important legislation. This includes legislation to combat the epidemic of opioid abuse throughout our Nation. We passed an important piece of legislation called the Comprehensive

Addiction and Recovery Act to deal with it.

But I want to talk about another aspect of the prescription drug problem or issue and reflect on some bipartisan legislation we passed 6 years ago—obviously, with people on both sides of the aisle and in both Chambers—when we came together to tackle another issue related to prescription drugs. This had to do with the fact that many prescription drugs are filled. They will sit in medicine cabinets and perhaps be subject to pilfering by people for whom they were not prescribed or be disposed of in a way that is bad for the environment. We found that the growing use of prescription drugs for nonmedical uses is particularly a problem among teenagers. When people take drugs for recreational or other purposes that have not been prescribed for them, unfortunately the consequences can be fatal.

We noticed that some State and local law enforcement agencies have had success with drug take-back programs. The programs allowed people to turn in their leftover prescription drugs, limiting the chances that these drugs would get into the hands of someone who doesn't need them or that they would hurt them.

I remember in Austin, TX, shortly after we passed this legislation in 2010, going to one of the locations where the take-back program was in use, and people were bringing garbage sacks full of prescription drugs they had in their home. In some instances, they had a relative who had been ill and passed away. They had all of these prescription drugs that were sitting there, and they didn't know what to do with them. Do you flush them down the toilet? Do you put them in the garbage can? What do you do? Fortunately, we provided a mechanism for people to deal with these unneeded drugs.

We focused our efforts on making it easier for Federal agencies to take and dispose of some of the most dangerous drugs, including opioids, and finding a way to encourage more communities to do the same.

The legislation we passed in 2010 was the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act, and it gave law enforcement officials the flexibility they need to be able to build these programs. Like most legislation nobody has ever heard of, it passed Congress unanimously. But just because we didn't fight like cats and dogs doesn't mean it is not worthwhile. I am thankful that this week we will be able to highlight the importance of legislation like this to address our Nation's prescription drug epidemic.

Today, folks on Capitol Hill can hand in any unused prescription medication they have as part of Federal take-back day. That is today. On Saturday, we will get a chance to see this in action across the country through the National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. Take-back days not only highlight the problem of prescription drug abuse, they help local communities

take control of the problem by rallying the community to turn in drugs that are either unwanted or expired and to make sure they are safely disposed of.

I look forward to going back home to Texas for national take-back day this weekend, where I will have a chance to join local law enforcement and city leaders in Dallas and Austin and Walgreens pharmacy—all working together to help highlight this important initiative. I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO RELATIONSHIP

Mr. President, separately, I want to talk for a moment about another matter of importance, and that is the importance of our Nation's relationship with our neighbor to the south. Coming from Texas, which has 1,200 miles of common border with Mexico, I often observe that this is a relationship from which we cannot get a divorce. We are bound together as countries, contiguous countries, and frankly our well-being depends in part on how well Mexico is doing. We know that Mexico, like the United States, has its own unique challenges.

As the largest exporting State in the country, Texas exported \$95 billion worth of goods to Mexico just last year—\$95 billion to Mexico just last year. In fact, Mexico is our largest export market, and it is the second largest export market of the United States. The truth is, Mexico and its economy are very important to our economy and how we do as a country.

In today's globalized world, we must continue to support our economic partnership with Mexico and find ways to build on it and certainly not do anything to undermine it. That is why I prioritized efforts such as the Cross-Border Trade and Enhancement Act, legislation I have introduced with my colleague in the House, a Democrat by the name of HENRY CUELLAR. I worked with him a lot on border-related and especially trade-related issues. This bill would help reduce wait times and upgrade infrastructure at our border ports of entry.

I bet most people don't realize that the single largest land port of entry into the United States is Laredo, TX. If you come with me to Laredo sometime, you will see semis and tractor-trailers stacked up literally for hours trying to get across the International Bridge, engaging in the kind of trade that helps support American jobs and helps our economy.

It is important that we move goods and people more efficiently, safely, and legally, and grow our trading relationships with partners like Mexico. The fact is, 6 million American jobs depend on binational trade with Mexico—things we send there and things they send here. A lot of the jobs that used to go to China because they could produce things in a manufacturing process that was cheaper because of lower wages and the like—because of the benefit of the proximity of Mexico, many of the maquiladoras and other manufacturing

facilities in Mexico are integral to North American manufacturing.

Our relationship with Mexico, as complicated as it can sometimes be, goes well beyond impressive trade statistics. Mexico is a key partner for the United States as we work to keep our country safe and to help them deal with the challenges they have from a law enforcement standpoint.

Mexico is critical to our joint goals of countering and interdicting illegal substances entering the United States from across the border. We know the supply is huge, and unfortunately the demand in the United States is huge, and our Mexican friends always remind us of that. Every time we are critical of them, they say: Well, if it weren't for the demand in the United States, the supply wouldn't be there. They have a point.

We have also worked with Mexico in trying to stem the tide of illegal immigration. I know most people may not quite accept that, but the fact is, Mexico has stepped up and dealt with immigration across its southern border from countries such as in Central America—some of the most challenging environments in this hemisphere. We have seen that manifested in the tens of thousands of unaccompanied children who come from Central America, across Mexico, and into the United States, ending up on our doorstep. But Mexico has worked with us to try to stem that flow of illegal immigration from Central America.

We have worked together to try to help make sure our border is not an easy target for terrorists and other bad actors seeking entry to our country.

There is no doubt that these shared challenges are just that—challenging. But what should be crystal clear to all of us is that we can't address them without working with Mexico. We can't ignore it. As I said earlier, we can't get a divorce. We have to work this out because our futures are joined together in many important respects. That is why I say that the success of the United States depends in part on Mexico's success, and we should diligently look for ways to grow that partnership for the good of both countries. One practical way we can do that is by confirming a U.S. Ambassador to represent us in Mexico City.

Roberta Jacobson was nominated last summer, and I believe she is qualified to represent us in this key relationship. Our bilateral relationship is simply too important to the people of Texas and to the people of the United States to leave this position unfilled. We have to get somebody representing the United States in Mexico City to advocate on behalf of the United States for all of the reasons I mentioned earlier—trade, security, immigration. Otherwise, I don't think we are going to be able to make the kind of progress we all would like to see, and we certainly can't afford to let our relationship with Mexico go stagnant. That is one of the risks of not having an ambassador there.

I was really glad to hear my friend, the junior Senator from Florida, call the U.S.-Mexico relationship one of the most important ones we have. He said that yesterday on the floor. I share his optimism that this impasse over the confirmation of Ms. Jacobson can be resolved soon. I certainly think it is time we come together to move her nomination forward. Here in the waning days of the Obama administration, it is very important that we have this important ambassadorship filled for all of the reasons I mentioned earlier.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time in quorum calls until 12 noon be evenly divided between the two parties.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, in a few minutes we will be voting on whether to end debate on the Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill. Most of what we have to say about it at this point is very good news. This is the first appropriations bill of the year. It is the earliest date an appropriations bill has been acted on in the Senate since 1974. If it goes through in the regular order, it will be the first Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill that has done so since 2009. More than 80 Senators have contributed policy suggestions and amendments to the bill on both sides of the aisle. In addition to that, we have dealt with 17 amendments on the floor. Now we are ready to end debate and move in our process toward a final solution on the bill.

I believe this bill was put on the floor because Senator FEINSTEIN and I have a good history of working together, and the expectation was that we would find a way to do that. Let me say the problem—and I will leave time for Senator FEINSTEIN or the Democratic leader or perhaps Senator COTTON or others who may want to say something.

An issue has arisen over an amendment offered by Senator COTTON. He did that after the administration made an announcement over the weekend that it would be purchasing heavy

water from Iran. Heavy water by itself is not much. It is just water. It is in drums. It doesn't hurt anybody. It is not dangerous. It is distilled water, and it is used primarily for two reasons: one, for scientific instruments—we use it for fiber optics and other scientific reasons—and it can be used to make plutonium. So it was a part of the agreement between the United States and Iran.

Senator COTTON—and I will characterize his amendment with his permission—sought to do two things. One was to say you couldn't use any appropriated funds for the fiscal year 2017—the one we are working on now—to buy more heavy water from Iran. The second thing he sought was to do something about Iran's business of selling heavy water. What would the implications be about that for our own national security? Remember, this is a decision by the U.S. Department of Energy that was announced over the weekend without any notification to the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee or to the Intelligence Committee or to the Armed Services Committee. So you have a U.S. Senator who is on the ball, and he says: OK, this is an issue I would like to do something about.

Our friends on the other side have raised an objection, especially Senator FEINSTEIN, for whom I have the greatest respect. So today, in talking with the Democratic leaders, I asked: May I talk with Senator COTTON and see if he will modify his amendment in a way that might be acceptable so that we can go on with the appropriations process and not blow it up?

It was blown up last year because we put controversial water language in the bill, and instead of bringing it to the floor and voting on it and letting the President veto it and then bringing it back, the Democrat majority decided we just wouldn't bring the bill to the floor.

This year I talked to the Democratic leaders. They wrote Senator MCCONNELL a letter, and we all agreed to try to have an appropriations process. What they said to me was, no controversial riders in committee. So I went through my whole committee with Senator FEINSTEIN, and we persuaded many Senators to leave their controversial amendments off the bill in committee, and we said to them: You can bring them up on the floor when they have 60 votes. If you can get 60 votes, you can put it in the bill, and if the President of the United States doesn't like it, he can veto it. Then it takes 67 votes to override it.

Here we are, early in the process in April, moving ahead, and all of a sudden I understand that the Democratic minority is going to block us from going forward because they don't like the Cotton amendment.

Let me say this, Mr. President, and I will stop my remarks. I think Senator COTTON has acted responsibly. He acted as soon as he knew about the Depart-

ment of Energy's decision. He has listened to the objections that were raised by the other side. He has amended his own bill. He has offered for it to be adopted by voice vote. He has offered for it to be voted on at 60 votes.

As I said, he has modified it. He has completely taken out the part that could limit American businesses from getting licenses to buy heavy water from Iran. That is to be discussed at a later time. He has left in only the part that says you can't use fiscal year 2017 money to buy heavy water from Iran. But the Department can use prior year appropriated money, and it can use revolving fund money. It can buy all the heavy water Iran has if this President or the next President wants to. I think that is a very reasonable step, and I would ask the Democratic leader and the whip and Senator FEINSTEIN, all of whom I work with very well and for whom I have great respect, if they are determined to block the bill at noon. But let's keep talking about this because I think it is the basic constitutional framework of our U.S. Senate to do our job on appropriations, and Senators should be allowed to offer germane amendments.

When confronted with an objection on the other side, if they say "well, 60 votes" or "voice vote" or "I will modify my amendment," that ought to be respected, and we should go ahead. Then if the President at the end still feels he wants to veto the bill, that is the way our process works. He vetoes it.

If we don't do this, we are going to end up with an omnibus bill. Senators won't have a chance to participate in it, and then the President will have to veto it in an omnibus bill at the end of the year. That is not the kind of process that earns the respect of the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have the deepest respect, without any question, for the Senator from Tennessee, who is my friend, and, of course, Senator FEINSTEIN is already legendary as a figure in Democratic politics and politics of this country. But I have some reservation, for lack of a better description, about my friend, the senior Senator from Tennessee talking about the appropriations process.

I was on the Appropriations Committee from the first day I came to the Senate, and I loved my service on the Appropriations Committee. For the last 8 years under President Obama, the Republicans have done everything they could—I am trying to find a pleasant word—to mess up the appropriations process—everything.

For those who understand the Senate, everyone should know we didn't ask that there be cloture on a motion to proceed. We are as cooperative as we can be on everything we have done during the time we have been in the minority, which is more than a year now.

I would suggest to my friend that cloture will not be invoked on this bill

in 2 or 3 minutes. If there is some proposal that the Republicans want to come back with that is reasonable and doesn't have a poison pill in it, fine; we are willing to move forward on this. For someone to give me the statement "Well, you know, it is germane"—the world is germane on this bill. I did this bill for 15 years. I did it. I know what is in this bill. Just about everything is germane. They have all kinds of defense stuff, energy and water—it is a big, big important bill, and this amendment by the Senator from Arkansas is nothing more than an effort to sidetrack the work we are doing here.

The Republicans are in the majority. I hope that it doesn't last that long, but that is where we are. It is up to them to move this process forward. We have tried our best to cooperate.

I suggest to my friend from Tennessee to see what happens and come back with something this afternoon. We have said on many occasions over the last 24 hours, we will vote right now on final passage of the bill—as it stood before this amendment was offered.

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

Mr. COTTON. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 2 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, as the Senator from Tennessee has said, the administration announced that they were purchasing heavy water from Iran on Friday night. On the first legislative day back on Monday, I proposed an amendment which is germane to the bill and thereby entitled to a simple majority threshold vote.

I have offered to give a voice vote to the Democrats so they don't have a record vote. I have offered to put it at a 60-vote threshold because there are 60 Senators who do not believe that the U.S. taxpayers should be subsidizing Iran's heavy water industry.

This morning, as Senator ALEXANDER said, I offered to revise my amendment, yet here we are. The Democrats are going to vote no on cloture, objecting to an amendment that is not pending and is not included in this legislation.

I, too, do not want to see the appropriations process end. I want to pass this bill. I want to move on to the next appropriations bill, and I am committed to continue working in good faith with the Senator from Tennessee and the Senator from California to try to reach some solution, whether on this bill or any other, that we can move forward on in an orderly fashion and pass all of our appropriations bills, as well as ensure that the U.S. taxpayer is not subsidizing a critical component of Iran's nuclear industry, which, I may add, we are not required to do under the nuclear agreement with Iran.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. May I speak for a few minutes prior to the cloture vote?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, we have the Democratic leader on the floor and the chairman of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee. I want him, particularly, to know how very much it has meant to me to work with him to try to reverse the deterioration of order of this body.

That deterioration of order was the inability to pass an appropriations bill on its own and go back to what is called regular order. I have watched the Appropriations Committee lose prestige over the years. I have watched something happen that never happened in the early years. Members would vote for a bill in committee. They would come out, and they would sustain it on the floor.

So the Appropriations Committee gained, I think, a prestige and an honor in this body. I think it has been very wounded. So the ability of Senator ALEXANDER, my chairman, and myself to try to restore that order by sitting down and working out problems—and seeing that he gives, I give, we put together a bill, and we believe that bill can get through this body and that we can conference that bill successfully—is a really big deal to change the nature of this body, and we can show that we can get our job done.

Well, into this climate, which is so amicable and so positive, comes an amendment. I go to the White House. I pick up the phone. I call the Chief of Staff. I say: This is an amendment. It may affect the Iran deal. I would like to know what the administration's position is. The word back is that the administration will veto this bill if these words are in it.

So I began to learn a little bit about heavy water—what it is and what it is not—and how this all came about. So I understand the administration's problem with it, because it destroys something they are trying to do with the Iran agreement; that is, to show Iran a legal pathway with which it can proceed to go into the family of nations in a moderate way.

Iran happens to have a foreign minister whom I have known for at least 15 years. I know he believes in this Iranian agreement. I know he wanted to take Iran in another direction. I know it because he proposed an earlier plan when he was Ambassador to the United Nations.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I ask unanimous consent for such time as I may consume. I will be short.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I have no objection if I can have the same.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. So, to make a long story short, this body discussed the

joint agreement. We agreed that the President should go ahead and implement this agreement. Now, there are difficult problems because Iran is emerging and wanting to come into the family of nations in a positive way. They have to get this heavy water out. The heavy water is out. It is sitting in a store room in Oman.

Iran desires to sell it, just as India sells heavy water. Canada has sold heavy water to us. That heavy water is used for peaceful purposes, as the chairman said, for fiber optics, for medical research. Our National Labs are interested in it, and there are many companies that would use it to improve fiber optics and that kind of thing.

So it is a way of removing proliferation from the country. This is suddenly on our Energy and Water bill. I believe we have the votes to not enter into cloture at this time. I guess what I want to say is my very deep regret to my chairman. I don't want it to end this way. I want us to continue to work together. I truly believe that there is more in the interests of this country that we can do appropriations bills in regular order, with concurrence on both sides of the aisle, than the value of this amendment.

This amendment has raised hackles all over. So why can't it be left for another day? Why does it need to be on an appropriations bill? Why can't we have the ability to do one bill in this body that does not have a poison pill on it, to set an example for future bills? This was the bill—Senator ALEXANDER and I both know that—that was supposed to do that. Why can't a Member see this? Maybe he is a new Member. Maybe he does not understand what the years have been like.

Why can't he wait for another time? I have been here 24 years. I have waited for another time plenty of times, because someone said: Your amendment won't go well with the bill. Don't do it now. We may help you later.

I did it. Why destroy our chances? Because that is exactly what is happening.

So I just want Chairman ALEXANDER to know how very sad I am that we are at this point. I believe it is not necessary to be at this point. I believe we could show that we could do it. I would say that if cloture is not granted, we stand ready to continue to work to try to get a bill. But I would so appreciate it if a new Member could recognize this and say: Oh, I wanted to do this. It is my right to do it.

All of that I admit, but what you are doing is going to disturb our effort to produce a series of appropriations bills without poison pill riders.

I will predict that there will be more on other bills. Our effort, which the majority leader began with the Democratic leader—was to be able to put together a process where we could produce bills.

Please, think about that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I will make brief concluding remarks and then we can vote. We are not debating the Iran agreement here today. This is the Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill of the Appropriations Committee. We are not even debating the Cotton amendment. It is not even part of the bill. Senator COTTON has filed an amendment that could be part of the bill if the Senate decides to adopt it in our debate after we adopt cloture. He has done that.

Just to repeat, over the weekend, the U.S. Department of Energy, without any consultation with anybody in the Senate that I know about—without the Intelligence, Armed Services, or Foreign Relations Committees—decided it was going to buy heavy water from Iran. The Senator from Arkansas introduced an amendment on the subject.

My understanding of the way the Senate is supposed to work is that we save the controversial amendments for the floor. If you can get 60 votes, you pass them. Then, as Senators, if the issue is an important issue about which we disagree, we vote on it and we accept the vote. Sometimes we win, and sometimes we lose.

We also listen to each other. So if the other side says this is an especially difficult issue for us, we try to accommodate that. So the Senator from Arkansas has said that he will take 60 votes, although he is entitled to 51. He can force a 51-vote vote on this issue if he chose to do that, under parliamentary rules.

He said: I will take a voice vote. He does not have to do that. Then this morning he said: I will modify my amendment. I will eliminate all of the part about licenses. That is the second sentence of this very simple amendment. We will reserve that for discussion by the Armed Services, Foreign Relations, and other committees. So all that his amendment says is that you can't use money from this fiscal year to buy heavy water from Iran—except that the Department of Energy has potentially millions of dollars it could use from other years to do that, and it has a revolving fund it could use.

In effect, if this President or the next President wanted to continue to buy heavy water from Iran, it could do so. So I think the Senator from Arkansas is entirely within his rights, whether he has been here 2 years or 20 years. I think he is entitled to come up and ask for a vote. I think he has bent over backwards in offering three or four different ways to accommodate the concerns of the others.

I think it would be a real shame if we came up with yet one more reason not to have an appropriations bill after we have done all of this work, 80 Senators have made their contributions, and we have adopted 17 amendments.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Senate amendment No. 3801 to Calendar No. 96, H.R. 2028, an act making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Lamar Alexander, Jerry Moran, John Boozman, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, Roy Blunt, Orrin G. Hatch, John Hoeven, John Thune, Thad Cochran, Roger F. Wicker, Mark Kirk, John McCain, Lindsey Graham, Johnny Isakson, Pat Roberts.

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

The question, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on amendment No. 3801, offered by the Senator from Tennessee, Mr. ALEXANDER, as amended, to H.R. 2028, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 64 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Enzi	Moran
Ayotte	Ernst	Murkowski
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Blunt	Gardner	Perdue
Boozman	Graham	Portman
Burr	Grassley	Risch
Capito	Hatch	Roberts
Cassidy	Heitkamp	Rounds
Coats	Hoeven	Rubio
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Kirk	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Crapo	Manchin	Vitter
Daines	McCain	Wicker
Donnelly	Menendez	

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—4

Cruz	Sessions
Sanders	Toomey

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 46.

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

The majority leader.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I think we have come up with yet another definition of obstruction today. Our Democratic friends are going to prevent the passage of an energy and water appropriations bill because of an amendment that is not yet pending to the bill in yet a new way to blow up the appropriations process.

Our Democratic colleagues were great at dysfunction when they were in the majority, and they are pretty good at it when they are in the minority. No matter what the issue—no matter what the issue—there is some new and creative way to try and throw a monkey wrench into the gears.

I heard over and over and over again that there was broad support on both sides of the aisle for getting the appropriations process moving again. The Senator from Arkansas has been extraordinarily reasonable. He has offered to modify his amendment. He has offered to consider it in some other context. Our chairman, Senator ALEXANDER, has been working on this for 24 hours. It ought not to be this hard to pass an energy and water appropriations bill that would be good for the country and that most of us support.

So I just moved to reconsider my vote, and we need to continue to talk about this because this is a ridiculous place for the Senate to be—ridiculous. We are all adults. We have all been elected by the people of our various States to come and act responsibly.

We are not going to give up on this bill, and when we finish this bill, we will go to a couple more appropriations bills. I think we have a collective responsibility in the Senate—Democrats and Republicans—to work our way past this snag and figure out the way forward, so we will have time to do that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I would like to say a word in response from the Democratic side.

First, I cannot think of two colleagues I admire more than Senator ALEXANDER and Senator FEINSTEIN. They are honorable people. It has been a pleasure to work with them and even to consider issues where we opposed one another because I knew it would be done in a professional and courteous way. They have spent more hours than I can calculate constructing one of the most important appropriations bills—the Energy and Water appropriations bill.

This bill was brought to the floor first by Senator McCONNELL for good reason. We wanted to set a template, a model, for finishing the appropriations process, and I respect that. I have been honored to serve on the House Committee on Appropriations and now on the Senate Appropriations Committee, and I think it is a very important assignment. It has been many years since we have done our work in the way it was supposed to be done.

Without a budget resolution, we took the budget agreement, moved forward with the bills. There were countless opportunities for the minority, the Democrats, to slow down this process, to make it more difficult, to make it more complicated, and to demand votes and delays of 30 hours after 30 hours. We did not do that because we were trying to be positive and constructive.

I will not reflect on our experience in the majority, but I would say in response to the Republican leader, they broke the record in terms of filibusters on the floor of the Senate when the Republicans were in the minority. We don't want to go back to that era and we don't want to "get even." That isn't what this is about.

There were basically two or three things guiding us in the process that I thought everyone signed up for, and I believe they did. One of them was balance between defense and nondefense spending overall; second, that each one of the bills hits a number that can be explained and rationalized based on the budget agreement; and third, the contentious issue of poison pills. These are subjects that are so controversial that if they are included in a bill, it becomes impossible to either pass it on the floor or expect the President to sign it.

So we thought, if we are going to exercise our opportunity with an appropriations process that works, those three things have to apply. I give credit to both Senator ALEXANDER and Senator FEINSTEIN for producing a bill in subcommittee that met those tests and didn't include any great controversial items, going through full committee with exactly the same outcome, and bringing it to the floor.

We were this close to the finish line—this close to the finish line—when yesterday the Senator from Arkansas, as is his right to do, offered an amendment. That amendment was offered around noon yesterday and the whole conversation changed. It was an amendment related to the Department of Energy, yes, but it was an amendment of great controversy because it was an amendment related to the President's agreement with Iran to stop them from the development of nuclear weapons.

Everyone knows what that was about. Every Republican opposed the President's agreement and four of ours on the Democratic side. It was a highly controversial and volatile subject for many months and continues to be on

the Presidential trail. To bring this amendment into the bill at the last moment, as it was, is to invite a debate and a controversy which was not in the bill up to that point.

Now, was it the right of the Senator from Arkansas to do it? Yes. But I would just say that my experience in appropriations is, you would say to your colleague who had the right to offer an amendment: Let me just say in advance, this is going to slow down—it may even stop this bill. After all the work we have put into it, please don't offer that amendment, and if you do, I will have to oppose it.

Those are the basics for kind of going forward on a bipartisan basis to bring this bill to a conclusion.

We just had a procedural vote, and a few Republicans joined us, but the overwhelming majority of Democrats said we can't move forward on the bill until we resolve this basic question: If Senators will be allowed to offer amendments on the floor that are relevant to the bill and are controversial, we invite poison pills up to the very last moment when a bill can be considered.

There has to be a better way. We have to prove to America that we can get things done in its best interests. That means some Senators cannot offer every amendment they would like to offer. That is just part of the restraint which we ask of Members who are consciously trying to help us be constructive in the Senate.

I hope we can get back on track. The conversations are civil, as they should be between honorable people who are trying to work this out, and they need to continue. The underlying bill is very important. It is important to my State and to many other States. But let's finish this bill in the right way, in a bipartisan fashion, in a calm fashion, not in a confrontational fashion. We can do that. I am sorry we can't do it this morning. I hope we will all work together to achieve that goal as quickly as possible.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I would like to compliment my colleague from Illinois. He hit the nail on the head. I will be brief.

The Republican leader said this is a new level of obstruction. I don't know if it is a new level of obstruction; he has been pretty good at it over the years. But certainly, if we wanted to obstruct these bills, we wouldn't have let the motion to proceed go forward. We would have done 17 other things that were done time and time again in the past.

The way to stop this, I would say to the Republican leader, is very simple: Either prevail on Senator COTTON not to offer his amendment—no one is doing that. He has a right to do it. But in the old days, as Senator DURBIN said, the way the appropriations process worked, the chair of the sub-

committee would say: Don't offer your amendment because it will be defeated and we will help defeat it because it will blow up the bill. Plain and simple. That is still an option.

We didn't offer the Cotton amendment. We could have offered our version of Cotton amendments to blow up this bill. We did not. Whether or not that was his intent—and I will not doubt the sincerity of my friend from Arkansas. But it was offered by the other side, and the onus is on the other side to fix this. The way to fix it is one of two: Either prevail on the Senator from Arkansas to pursue his goal here—that is certainly his right, but don't do it using the appropriations process as a hostage to move forward on his bill—or tell him that if he offers the bill, Republicans will vote against it as well. Then we can move forward.

That was how it used to work. When I was a junior Member and I wanted to offer amendments, some of them controversial, I would go to our chair or ranking member—depending on whether we were in the majority or minority—and say: I want to offer this amendment. The chair would consult with the other side, and they would come back and say: We, the majority/minority, cannot support this amendment. Then I wouldn't offer it. It would lose. That is the way the process used to work.

I don't begrudge any individual—the centrifugal forces in our politics have pulled things apart, so it is much harder for Members on both sides of the aisle to do it. But let's not turn that around. The obstruction and the failure to deal with obstruction is not coming from this side, it is coming from the other side, and they have an onus to fix it.

One more point before my good friend—and I love him—from Tennessee comes forward. Whatever we did, the President said he was going to veto this. So the idea that this bill would go forward and we would spend all this time on it and then have the President veto it—that doesn't accomplish the goals that I know my good friends, the chair of the subcommittee and the ranking member of the subcommittee, want to pursue. The onus is on us to do it before we get to that.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I appreciate the comments of Senator SCHUMER, Senator DURBIN, and Senator FEINSTEIN, for whom I have great respect.

The people who can figure this out are on the floor, and we ought to be able to, is the bottom line. I suspect a big part of the problem is timing. The administration apparently decided to do this over the weekend. We are in the middle of this bill. Senator COTTON would say that he moved as quickly as he could. And there is no question that this is an issue which raises lots of temperatures on both sides of the aisle. There is no doubt about that.

We have to have a balance. Senators have a right to take important issues and present them in an appropriate way here in the Senate. In just this bill, there are several times when I was one of only one or two or three Republicans who voted for amendments just so we could get the amendments through and we could keep the bill going. I know how that works, and I intend to keep doing it.

But I would say to my Democratic friends: I hope we can put our minds together and think of some way to allow Senator COTTON to make his point, to achieve what is an important objective and do it in a way that, A, is acceptable to the Democratic side, and B, doesn't have the problems that are associated with the timing. This came up on us all of a sudden. There are several reasons for that which we don't need to go into, but let's see if we can't work it out. I would certainly like to do that. I would like for Senator FEINSTEIN and myself to be able to set a good example for the rest of the Senate and get our bill through.

The only other thing I would say that is a little different from what the Senators from New York and Illinois said is that I don't really agree that if the President threatens a veto, we should stop our work. I think we would only be here about half a day a week. It is fine for the President to veto a bill if he feels he needs to, and he can send it right back. We consider that and we consider that it takes 67 to override it, and what often happens is we take something out or change some provision and send it back to him. So just because the President says he will veto a bill I don't think means the Senate should stop its work.

Mr. SCHUMER. Will my colleague yield?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Of course.

Mr. SCHUMER. I understand that every time the President says "veto," we shouldn't freeze in our tracks, but it would be a lot better if we could avoid that situation because we want this bill to pass and be signed into law.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I agree with the Senator from New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I will not weigh in on this issue, but I might later. I am here for a different purpose. I did serve previously in the Senate several years ago, and this is my second time back. My experience with the amendment process was a pleasant one then. Any Senator at any time could offer an amendment to any bill, and it would be discussed and debated and voted on, and we accepted the fact that it was either a yea or a nay. It was part of a process that sometimes started here, sometimes started in the House, but it is a process that goes through many iterations.

So to determine that something at one step in the process takes the bill down ignores the fact that this bill will go over to the House of Representa-

tives; they will debate it, and they will add things and subtract things; and then we will go to a conference to resolve the differences even before it gets to the President's desk.

Unfortunately, what has happened here is that on anything the President of the United States doesn't like, he simply says: I am going to veto it, so drop it.

So I agree with the Senator from Tennessee, Mr. ALEXANDER, in saying that if that is the process and the way this Senate is going to operate, we might as well just close the place down. We can maybe show up just to show people that we showed up for work. But we are not going to accomplish anything on this floor if that is the case.

The responsibility falls not just on us to do the job we were elected to do but also falls on the President to not try to torpedo a bill—there are multiple dimensions—because one amendment gets passed with the will of the Senate, including bipartisan support, but the President doesn't like it and therefore shuts the whole thing down.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Madam President, I am here for the 40th-something week to talk about the waste of the week, and I will do that now. The other issue is being very ably handled by Senator ALEXANDER, who is a veteran here and knows how to work through these conundrums.

With a Federal debt that is over \$19 trillion and growing, it is fitting to take a long look at every penny the Federal Government appropriates to ensure that hard-earned taxpayer dollars are not wasted. I have been down here week after week with examples of waste.

Today, for my 41st edition of "Waste of the Week," I would like to bring attention to an app the Transportation Security Administration paid IBM more than \$47,000 to develop. "App" is a new word in our lexicon. We all carry around these new devices with which we can push a bunch of buttons and, by certain applications, access or do things that make life easier: monitor traffic on the road, getting the latest ballgame scores, checking on the weather. I have a whole bunch of apps on here.

I heard about an app that had been developed for the Transportation Security Administration called a randomizer app, and it does just two things. Very simply, it points an arrow to the right or to the left. Now, we might say, why would anybody need an app—a device—that randomizes an arrow to the right or an arrow to the left? Well, let's take a look at this picture here.

This is obviously a TSA agent. We have all been through this. This is a line at the airport. Those of us who go home every weekend—I go back to Indiana on Thursday night or Friday—are very familiar with these lines because we have to go through the security process.

This is a TSA agent using this app. As we can see, it is a screen and it has a big arrow.

When you walk through Reagan National Airport to go home every week—as I know the Presiding Officer does to go back to Iowa—there are several lanes you can go down. Almost always there is a transportation security agent or someone associated with the process standing at the beginning of the lines and, with an arrow, saying "Take this one" or "Take that one." Well, I don't know about the details, but for some reason, they didn't want that to be an individual decision, so they called up IBM and said: We need to develop an app that will allow us to have a screen that has an arrow pointing to the left or to the right. And it needs to be random; it can't be controlled by this person.

For whatever reason, it needs to be random. OK. Maybe there is a rational reason TSA needs to do that for security purposes, and without divulging what that is or knowing what that is, I won't get into that, but obviously it doesn't take a lot of money to develop a screen that has an arrow to the left, an arrow to the right, and a little bit of software running in the background randomizing so that you can't figure out whether it is going to be left or right. It does it all by itself.

I wondered, how much would this cost? So we did a little research. What we found is that this is such a simple application that it can be developed by a developer of apps within a 10-minute period of time.

So taxpayers paid \$47,000 to build an app that had an arrow pointing one way or the other. Now, \$47,000 is minuscule compared to what we waste around here, and I have a chart here that shows well over \$160 billion of waste, fraud, and abuse tallied up during my 40 visits to the Senate floor to talk about the various ways the government wastes taxpayer dollars. But this one baffles me because something which is so simple and which takes 10 minutes to produce costs \$47,000—well above the average income for the average worker in Indiana and in many cases significantly more than the TSA agent who is holding it is paid annually for the work they do.

So here we are once again. People might ask: Well, could we have done this in an easier way? Well, how about flipping a coin? That is random. Tails, go in this lane; heads, you are in this lane. How about drawing from a hat? The TSA person standing at the line can have a hat with a whole bunch of slips of paper in it that say "left" and "right." Go ahead, put your hand in, and pull it out.

What does it say?

Left.

That is over there.

What does it say?

Right.

That is over here.

Maybe we can do what I do with my grandkids. I put my fists behind my

back, and I will have one or two fingers extended. They all get excited and so forth. The brother is elbowing his little sister so she won't win, and the third child is crying, maybe, because they are not letting her play.

So I say: OK, Charlie, is it a one or a two?

Two.

Charlie: Yay, I won.

His sister starts crying.

No, no. You are going to get your chance.

All right, Maggie, you pick a one or a two.

Anyway, we may go through each. I have 10 grandkids, so this takes a long time when we have family reunions.

Any one of those processes could be used, and I don't think it would cost \$47,000. It wouldn't be \$4.70. It is just something we could do.

I used to serve as the lead Republican on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security. I know how difficult it is for the Homeland Security Subcommittee to fund the critical elements they need to fund and the programs they need to fund in order to keep us secure. Every penny counts, and every dollar counts in this regard.

This type of egregious waste has got to stop. Perhaps it is time for TSA to precheck—we are all familiar with precheck, another thing we have to go through—these programs before we fund them. As we continue to determine funding levels for various government programs and agencies, we must remember projects such as TSA's randomizer app. This is yet another example of why minimizing waste, fraud, and abuse will go a long way to restore trust in government decisions as to how our tax money is spent.

I just realized I missed out on naming one of my grandchildren who I play this with, and that is Avery—the sister of Charlie—who wants to make sure that she is in the game also. I will not go through the other seven. I will save those for another time.

Let me note that we add more money—ever more money and examples of taxpayer waste. We are up to \$162,277,955,817. This is big money. It is nothing to laugh about. This is a small example. We have had examples in the billions of dollars. We owe it to the taxpayer. We owe it to the hard-earned tax dollars that are earned by hard-working taxpayers to be as efficient and effective with the spending of their money as we possibly can. Once again, this is the waste of the week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

FIGHTING WILDFIRES

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, according to the Forest Service—and we checked with them this morning—there is right now an 11,000-acre fire burning in the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. This is just April, not the time when one normally thinks you are going to have fires when the fire season is on. But there is a fire

burning in the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia that has already cost more than \$3 million. This is the second largest fire in Shenandoah National Park history.

I have come to the floor this afternoon to once again make the case for the Senate, on a bipartisan basis—Democrats and Republicans—to come together to fix this dysfunctional system of fighting fire in America. I am going to describe it, but let me talk first a little bit about the consequences.

In the American West, we used to talk about the seasons in a way that Americans had done for decades and decades: harvesting crops in the fall, skiing in the winter, fishing during the spring salmon runs, and camping in the summers. We fought fire during the wildfire season. But when Americans in the West talk about the seasons now, they are talking about the seasons of yesteryear. That is because the wildfire season raging across our forests and special places is no longer limited to a single time of the year.

Fighting fires has become a continuous battle virtually year-round throughout the country. That is why this fire burning in the Shenandoah National Park ought to be a wake-up call once again to everyone to understand how important it is to fix this broken system of fighting fire, because the funding system for doing so is leading to dysfunction throughout the Forest Service and contributing to the breakdown of the national forest management that is needed to prevent catastrophic wildfires in the first place.

According to the Forest Service, 1.4 million acres have already burned across America this year. That is more than twice the 10-year average for this time of year. These numbers show, in my view, how important it is that urgent action be taken to fix the way we fund wildfire fighting operations. This is something that Senator CRAPO and I have been working on for some time.

With the support of scores of organizations, well over 200, a significant number of bipartisan Senators and a significant number of bipartisan House Members have all joined in this effort, because it is not just the West that has been impacted. Forest Service work in States that manage timber sales, stream restoration, trail maintenance, and recreation get shortchanged when money has been diverted to fighting wildfires.

I was particularly struck last year when we had the good fortune of having the senior Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER, join as a cosponsor of our legislation. The reason he did so is because this absolutely dysfunctional system of fighting fires has resulted in important priorities for New York State not being in a position to secure the funding they need. That is because the rising costs of fighting fires keeps raiding all these other programs in the Forest Service that are needed to help prevent fires down the road.

The raids take place two different ways. Certainly, in my part of the world, we are very troubled by the fact that you have prevention getting short shrift. Then it gets really hot and dry. We have lots of thunderstorms in our part of the world, and all of a sudden we have an inferno on our hands. Then what happens is the agencies end up borrowing from the prevention fund to put the fire out, and the problem gets worse because you have repeatedly shorted the prevention program.

This is what is called fire borrowing, and it happens not just in the West. That is why the senior Senator from New York wanted to be a cosponsor of our legislation, because programs that were important in New York State, thousands and thousands of miles away from the forests of eastern and central Oregon—those were a problem for programs he cared about and to secure their funding as a result of this dysfunctional system, just like it has been for people in the West.

It is time for the Congress to find a solution to ensure that, one, wildfires can be fought; and, two, to control the cost of fighting these wildfires by better preparing our forests and making them healthier.

I am very pleased that the chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, the committee I had the honor of chairing in the past, Senator MURKOWSKI, and Ranking Member CANTWELL are committed to working on this issue, and I wanted to once again reaffirm my commitment. I know Senator CRAPO shares this view to work with them to find a solution to wildfire funding that can pass in this Congress.

I certainly have some ideas, and I am very interested in welcoming my colleagues' ideas and I have been for some time.

For example, last year in the summer, it was pretty clear that it was going to be a tough fire season. What I and others essentially sought to do was to find a way to get our colleagues working together to try to find some common ground and get this resolved. We couldn't quite get it done. We are now going to be at this day in and day out, week in and week out. Senator CRAPO and I will be working with our colleagues and their staff on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and on the Budget Committee and with Members from the other body to find a solution that works for all sides of the issue.

We saw last summer that this was going to be a problem. A big group of us got together and said we have to get it resolved. We couldn't quite thread the needle. This time we have to make sure that gets done. There are not a lot of certainties in life, but the fire season is one of them, and the Congress simply cannot let this problem continue.

I wanted to come to the floor, particularly today, to take note of the fact that the fire in the Shenandoah

area ought to be a wake-up call to everybody. If they are having one of the biggest fires they have ever had this early in April, that is a signal of what is to come. It has been the story of summer after summer. Now we are learning, as I indicated earlier—and it appears it is not just in the West—that we are thinking about the seasons and talking about the seasons of yesteryear because now it is fire season all year round.

My colleague is here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The Senator from Oregon.

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, the most important words in the crafting of our Constitution are the first three words: "We the People." With those three words, the Founders described what the government of our new Nation was all about.

As President Lincoln later summarized, it is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. In fact, even in the crafting of the Constitution, the Founders put special emphasis upon those three words, putting them in supersized font before all the details that were to follow.

Periodically, I will come to the floor to talk about issues that are closely related to the "we the people" vision of our Constitution and our responsibilities under the Constitution. This week, I rise to address the responsibility of the Senate and its advice and consent role under the Constitution.

The President's duty is to nominate a Supreme Court nominee when there is a vacancy. That responsibility is written very clearly into the Constitution. It says that "he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint . . . Judges of the supreme Court" in article II, section 2 of our beloved Constitution.

The Senate then has the responsibility to provide advice and consent, as required, and over time it has been understood that we need to vet the nominee, determine whether the nominee is fit to serve in the post he or she will serve in, which is particularly important in the Supreme Court. That is how this esteemed Chamber, our beloved Senate, has operated for more than 200 years.

In fact, we need to go back now and understand how this design was created. I have come to the floor before and read from Hamilton's *Federalist* Paper 76 that summarizes a conversation that was taking place over the nomination process. Some folks—in crafting the Constitution—thought that responsibility should be solely with what they referred to as "the assembly," which is this body, the Senate. The reason they argued that is, it would be a balance to the power of the President in the executive branch if the assembly, the legislative branch, were to make the appointments. However, they then realized that those ap-

pointments would probably never get done because there would likely be a lot of horse trading and the most qualified person probably wouldn't be nominated. Instead, it would most likely be the friend of one Senator traded for the friend of another Senator, and that didn't make sense. They said: No, it would make more sense to invest the responsibility for the quality of the individual in a single individual. As the expression goes, the buck stops here. It stops at the President's desk. The President would have the responsibility to nominate individuals to serve in the executive and judicial branches and will bear the public responsibility for the credibility and quality of those nominations, but in that conversation, they also thought that was too much power for the President to have. What if the President starts to appoint friends or those with little experience or those of unfit moral character? There needs to be some kind of check, so in that regard then came the role of the Senate to give advice and consent. In order to do that, the nomination would go before this body for debate and then this body would vote on that nominee.

The words that were the key words Hamilton used in describing the responsibility was to determine whether the individual was "of unfit character"—fit character, unfit character. Did that nominee have the qualifications necessary for the job and the personal characteristics required to fulfill the job effectively?

Well, here we are and President Obama has fulfilled his responsibility under the Constitution. He has nominated Judge Merrick Garland. We now have our responsibility in the Senate to vet this nominee, examine Judge Garland's record, examine any aspect of his writings or his previous court decisions, and determine whether Judge Garland is a fit character or unfit character. That is our responsibility in the Constitution.

A number of my colleagues across the aisle—my Republican colleagues—have said: We don't want to fulfill our responsibility under the Constitution. We are just going to ignore the responsibility that has been vested in the Senate of the United States. They are in the majority, and a nomination can't go to a committee for a hearing and determine whether an individual is of fit character or unfit character without the majority making it happen. The nomination can't come to the floor without a majority vote in committee so it can then be put forward for our consideration. Unfortunately, the job strike of the majority party in the Senate—failing to fulfill its responsibility under our Constitution—is now imposed on this entire body.

If we were within the usual timeline, we would be holding a hearing on Judge Garland this week. Since 1975, the average time from nomination to committee hearing has been about 42 days, but instead the leadership has

said: We are not going to honor our responsibility. I find that deeply disturbing. Each and every one of us stood before this body and took an oath to fulfill our responsibilities under this Constitution, and that is what we should be doing right now.

I say to my colleagues: Do your job. After a bit of reflection on the importance of how our government functions, one would think there would be a bit of reflection upon what we owe to maintain the integrity of our institutions and that this decision to go on a job strike would have been reversed.

I have talked to colleagues who are, quite frankly, somewhat embarrassed because they have been asked to toe the line, and they don't feel it is right that they should be, in fact, failing to fulfill their responsibility, but there is a lot of pressure on them. We need to set aside political pressure when it comes to the integrity of our institutions.

Since the 1980s, every person appointed to the Supreme Court has been given a prompt hearing and a vote within 100 days of their nomination. This chart shows three different phases as to the vacancies. Sometimes those vacancies have been longer or shorter in terms of before a nomination occurs. The red bar shows the start of the nomination process and the green bar shows the time before a vote is taken, which is the period of consideration. In every case, the red and green bar together are 100 days or less. This dates all the way back to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

It has now been 100 days. How many days are there between now and when the next President takes office? What is the math? Well, there are 268 days. So for anyone who comes to this floor and says there isn't time, that individual is making a case with no foundation because the record shows that from the time the nomination was made until a vote, time and time again—under Democrats or under Republicans—it has been less than 100 days. Yet we have more than 260 days left before the next President takes office.

There are other folks who have come to the floor of this Chamber and have invented this new principle called the job strike during the last year that a President is in office. They act as if there is something in the Constitution which gives this Senate permission not to do its job during the last year a President is in office. Well, I encourage my friends to pull out and read the Constitution, find that clause, and bring it to the floor because it does not exist. The Constitution anticipates that each of us will fulfill our responsibilities throughout the entire length we serve until we exit office, that a President will serve and work through all 4 years of his or her term, that a Senator will serve and work through all 6 years of his or her term. There is no vacation in the Constitution for the last year. There is no special permission to fail to do your constitutional

responsibility in the last year of a term. That simply doesn't exist.

Many Supreme Court Justices have been confirmed in the final year of a Presidency, and so for those who come to this floor and argue that there is some historical precedent, that precedent doesn't exist either. Republican and Democratic Presidents have issued nominations regardless of the party in control of the Senate and the Senate, regardless of the party of the President, has done its job in case after case after case throughout time. Until this moment, the Senate has vetted the nominees, individual Senators have met with the nominee, the nominee's record has been exposed, thereby giving the public the opportunity to give us their input, and we would have voted in committee and on this floor.

(Mr. BARRASSO assumed the Chair.) If we look to the recent past, Justice Kennedy was confirmed in the last year of President Reagan's final term. By the way, the Senate was controlled by Democrats. The Democratic leadership didn't say: We are going to go on a job strike and not vet the candidate and not hold a vote and not fulfill our responsibility. No, they honored their responsibility under the Constitution and so should every Senator today.

This is a black mark on the record of the Senate. Think about what it will lead to. For example, let's say the job strike we are engaged in is purely for political reasons in an effort to pack the Court with more conservative Justices. Let's say it succeeds in delaying a nomination until the next Presidency, and the next President nominates someone on the far edges and way out of the mainstream, then what does each party do? Do they say: Well, the other party worked to pack the Court and refused to do their job, and, now, because the consequences would be so destructive and so partisan to the Court, we will refuse to do our job but only because of what preceded it? That is not a conversation we should ever have. That is not a dialogue we should ever have in this Chamber of action to politicize the Court, pack the Court, followed by reaction to try to blunt the impact of the initial action, followed by reaction, back and forth. This will deeply undermine the integrity of the Supreme Court of the United States. Let me tell you, the Court is already in trouble. The activist Court decisions of the far right, trying to write legislation through Court decisions to change the fundamental understandings of how our Nation operates, have already deeply politicized the Court.

Citizens United turned the fundamental premise written into our Constitution on its head. Our Constitution was written all about, "We the People." Jefferson talked about the mother principle; that we could only claim to be a republic to the degree that the decisions reflected the will of the people and that in order for that to happen, citizens had to have an equal voice. His vision was one of the town's

square, where there was no cost to participate. Everyone had a chance to stand and have their say.

Lincoln talked about the equal voice principle for citizens. The fundamental premise in a republic is to express the will of the people. People have to have the ability to participate in roughly equal proportion, but now the town square is for sale. It is the television, the Internet, the Web sites, the radio, and our Court has decided it is OK for the very rich to buy it up and destroy the equal voice principle that our Founders so cherished.

This activist Court on the far right has decided to undermine those important first three words of the Constitution: "We the People." This has produced a great cynicism in America because once this massive concentration of money buys up the town square, buys up the airwaves, influences elections, it is no longer "We the People," it is "we the powerful" and "we the privileged." Wouldn't it be wonderful not to have had the Supreme Court decisions that have undermined the integrity of our Supreme Court, but we have them and now the majority in this body wants to further damage the Supreme Court, further politicize the Supreme Court, and that is a huge mistake. We should go in the other direction. We should invest in the integrity of the Supreme Court. That doesn't mean a nominee gets automatically passed through this body because we have a job under the Constitution. We have a responsibility to vet the nominee. We have the responsibility, as Hamilton said, to judge if the nominee is unfit or fit. But how can you have that judgment if we do not hold hearings? How can you have that judgment if the committee does not vote? How can you have that judgment if there is not a debate on the floor of the Senate? How can you have that judgment if there is not a vote on this floor?

So I say to my colleagues: End your job strike that is so out of sync with the tradition of the Senate. End your job strike that is so damaging to the Supreme Court's integrity. End your job strike that is so damaging to the "we the people" principles of our Nation. Do your job. Do your job. Hold the hearing. Meet with the nominee. Exercise your vote. Do your job.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF MERRICK GARLAND

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the nomination of Merrick Garland to the United States Supreme Court and to urge my colleagues to grant timely consideration to the President's nominee.

I recently had the pleasure of meeting Chief Judge Garland, as have many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I encourage all Senators to meet the nominee because I suspect that they will find, as I did, that the rumors are true; he is an exceptionally qualified nominee.

Since joining the DC Circuit, Chief Judge Garland has been recognized as one of the best appellate judges in the Nation. His reputation for working with colleagues to identify areas of agreement and to craft strong consensus decisions is well earned.

After meeting Judge Garland and discussing the way that he approaches his role as a judge and as a chief judge, I am pleased to agree with my colleague and friend Senator HATCH, who described Judge Garland in 1997 in this way:

I believe Mr. Garland is a fine nominee. . . . I know of his integrity. I know of his legal ability. I know of his honesty. I know of his acumen. And he belongs on the court.

Senator HATCH is right. He was talking about, of course, the DC Circuit—the second court in the Nation, really.

Before Judge Garland was nominated, the White House reached out to me and to many of my colleagues, especially those on the Judiciary Committee, to ask the type of nominee whom I hoped President Obama would put forward or whether I had any particular names in mind. I didn't. My only recommendation was that the President nominate someone whose intellect, experience, and demeanor would be apparent during a hearing and would cause the American people who watched the confirmation hearing to say: I want nine of those on the Supreme Court. This is what I told the White House.

Now that I have met Judge Garland, I will set about the task of reviewing Judge Garland's full record and all of his opinions. I will set that aside, but the American people deserve to meet him and decide for themselves whether he is qualified to sit on the highest Court in the land. The American people deserve a hearing.

In my view, confirmation hearings also serve a broader purpose. Hearings aren't just an opportunity for the public to get to know the nominee and discover how he or she views important issues; open, public hearings provide an opportunity for the American people to learn about the Supreme Court's jurisprudence and to demystify the Court's role in our democracy. Hearings also allow our constituents to see and judge for themselves how and whether their government is working, whether we are doing our jobs.

Before any of us knew whom the President would nominate, Senate Republicans wasted no time in refusing to fill the vacancy until after the election. The majority leader said that "this vacancy should not be filled until we have a new President." The Republican members of the Judiciary Committee gathered behind closed doors

and vowed to deny the eventual nominee a hearing. Many Republicans refused to even meet with the nominee. They said it didn't matter who the President nominated. This was about principle.

This type of obstruction marks a historic dereliction of the Senate's constitutional duty. Since 1916—for the past 100 years—the Senate Judiciary Committee has fulfilled that duty by holding hearings. Nonetheless, Senate Republicans stood firm in their opposition.

But within a day of Judge Garland's nomination being announced, some Republicans began to change their tune. Once they discovered that the President had nominated a consensus candidate—a judge who had earned the praise of so many Republican Senators during the course of his career—their calculus began to change.

Now my Republican friends are tying themselves in knots trying to explain to the American people how they plan to move forward. Quite a few Republican Senators broke ranks and agreed to meet Judge Garland privately while nonetheless maintaining that the Senate should not grant the nominee an open, public hearing. It would seem that some of my colleagues believe they—not the public and not their constituents—deserve the opportunity to meet and to question the nominee.

A few Republicans said that they would consider Judge Garland and even vote to confirm him in the lameduck session—but only if Democrats win the White House. That is a very odd sense of what the principle is here. I guess the thinking behind that is the Republicans are afraid that should the election not go in the direction they prefer, then the people shouldn't decide. They should decide unless they decide the wrong thing. That is the odd principle that I have heard in the Judiciary Committee when we have had business meetings, where members come in and make a statement and then leave. I hear a lot of contradictory stuff. Obviously, the theory is that should a Democrat be elected to the White House, they might eventually face a nominee who hasn't earned quite as much bipartisan praise, so then we will do Garland. That is absurd. That has nothing to do with principle. This has nothing to do with principle, and it never did. This is about politics.

The Supreme Court is too important, too central to our system of democracy to let it fall victim to partisan politics. It has been just over 1 month since President Obama nominated Judge Garland to fill the vacancy caused by the death of a Justice. During that month, the effect of allowing a vacancy to persist has been made clear. The eight-member Court has deadlocked twice, handing down two 4-to-4 decisions. Permitting a seat on the Supreme Court bench to remain vacant means that, in some cases, the Court is not able to fulfill its core function of resolving the splits among the courts

of appeals and serve as a final arbiter of our laws. The Court isn't able to do its job.

I think we have to go through our history and look at when Justice Marshall was appointed in the last weeks, I believe, of that administration.

I hope my Republican colleagues are finally coming to the understanding that they have an obligation to fill this vacancy. Members of the Senate and of the Judiciary Committee in particular have an obligation to do our jobs, to get to work.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEFEND TRADE SECRETS BILL

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, this afternoon the House of Representatives is poised to pass the Defend Trade Secrets Act, bringing this critical proposal one step closer to becoming law. Over the past few months, Senator COONS and I have witnessed a groundswell of support for our bill, which will strengthen the ability of American companies to defend their most valuable information from theft.

Businesses, both large and small, and lawmakers, both Republican and Democrat, have rallied around our legislation, providing the impetus we need to pass this key intellectual property bill. Passage of the Defend Trade Secrets Act marks not only a watershed moment for the intellectual property community, it also represents a victory for the American people.

To appreciate the significance of this legislation, we must first understand the importance of trade secrets in American industry. Trade secrets are the lifeblood of our economy. In simple terms, trade secrets are the groundbreaking ideas that give businesses a competitive advantage. They range from unique production and manufacturing processes to food recipes and software codes.

This critical form of intellectual property is not only invaluable to individual business owners, it is also directly responsible for creating millions of jobs in our country. But a lack of Federal legal protection leaves trade secrets vulnerable to theft and oversight that cost the economy billions of dollars each year.

Two years ago, Senator COONS and I set out to fix this problem together. From the very beginning, we sought the input of business owners and job creators so that we could better understand the obstacles facing American industry and chart a path forward for reform. The Defend Trade Secrets Act is the culmination of our work.

Under current law, companies have few legal options to recover their losses

when trade secrets are stolen. For example, if a disgruntled employee steals a Utah company's confidential information and leaks it to a competitor in another State, attorneys must navigate a complex labyrinth of State laws just to bring suit. This cumbersome process can take weeks, which is an eternity in a trade secrets case. During this time, the likelihood that valuable intellectual property falls into the wrong hands increases every day, as does the potential for permanent damage to the company.

Our bill solves this problem by creating a uniform Federal law that businesses can turn to when their trade secrets are stolen. This Federal standard keeps companies from getting bogged down in State laws by allowing business owners to take their case directly to a Federal court. Essentially, our legislation removes an unnecessary and time-consuming layer of bureaucracy, buying businesses precious time to recover stolen information. By providing America's businesses with the ability to protect their most valuable information in Federal courts, they will be better equipped to safeguard trade secrets and increase their competitiveness.

The President has expressed strong support for our legislation, which he intends to sign into law shortly after it passes the House.

The Defend Trade Secrets Act is not only a win for the intellectual property and business communities, it is also an example of what Congress can accomplish when we put party politics aside and find common ground. Indeed, it is always easy to make things look hard, but it is impossible to make things look easy.

Today's House passage of the Defend Trade Secrets Act truly embodies countless hours of negotiations and hard work. I wish to recognize those who made passage of this bill a reality, including Chairman BOB GOODLATTE, Representative DOUG COLLINS, and Representative JERROLD NADLER. They were indispensable in shepherding this legislation through the House.

I also wish to thank Senators GRASSLEY, LEAHY, GRAHAM, FEINSTEIN, FLAKE, WHITEHOUSE, and many others for their contributions to this bill. Likewise, I thank my dear friend Senator COONS for joining me in co-authoring this bill. He has been an invaluable partner throughout this process.

Enacting meaningful public policy in the midst of a toxic Presidential campaign is no small accomplishment. With the imminent passage of the Defend Trade Secrets Act, our Nation has cause for celebration.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I actually come to the Senate floor to talk about the urgent need to help make college more affordable for American families.

Earlier this year, I launched a comment form on my Web site encouraging people to share their struggles to afford college and how their student debt is affecting them. Since then, I have heard from so many students and families from my home State of Washington and across the country. By sharing these stories, I hope we can all come together to work on ways to bring down college costs and make sure students can graduate from college without the crushing burden of student debt.

I recently heard from a young woman named Katy. She is a junior studying psychology at Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA. Katy said she always knew that attending college was going to be financially difficult, although it never occurred to her to let that stand in her way. Because her parents were not in a position to help her out financially, and because she couldn't afford to make regular tuition payments, she has had to take on a large amount of student loans, and she wasn't able to live with her parents, so she has also had to plan and pay for room and board for all 4 years.

Now, here is a typical workweek for Katy. Katy works 12 hours a week as part of the Gonzaga Student Body Association. At least 2 nights a week, and usually on weekends, she makes hundreds of calls on behalf of the Gonzaga Telefund. On most weekend nights, she is not out with her friends and family. Instead, she is babysitting for some extra cash to put toward her textbooks. On top of all that, she is also a math tutor, which, until recently, was a paid position before the department's budget was cut, but she has kept tutoring anyway as her way to give back. That is just who she is. Of course, that is all on top of being a full-time student as well.

Let me be clear. Katy is very glad to be investing in herself and her future. She knows it is tough work and she appreciates that, but she, like millions of other students, is just looking for a little relief. In her own words, she admits "it's a constant stressor thinking of how to pay for life while at college, and how I'm going to pay for all of this after I graduate."

Students like Katy aren't alone. Across the country, the yearly cost of tuition and room and board at a public 4-year institution is 5½ times what it was in the early 1980s, and to afford those skyrocketing pricetags, people are turning to student loans to cover

the cost. Today, Americans across the country hold a total of \$1.3 trillion in outstanding student loan debt.

In my home State of Washington, the average college student owes more than \$24,000 in student debt. Think about what that debt means for our students. These students are doing everything right. They are investing in their futures. Many of them are the first in their families to go to college, but when it is time to look for that first job, just starting out, they are already in the red.

I have been so glad to work with other Senate Democrats on legislation actually called "In the Red" that would help students like Katy. Our bill would give students the chance to attend community college tuition-free. It would make sure the amount of Pell grants keeps up with the rising cost of college, and it would let borrowers refinance their student debt to today's lower rates. Our bill is fully paid for by closing corporate tax loopholes that only serve to benefit the biggest corporations and the wealthiest few.

This issue for me is personal. When I was young, my dad was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Within a few short years, he couldn't work any longer. Without warning, my family had fallen on hard times. I have six brothers and sisters, and thankfully all of us were able to go to college with help from what is now called Pell grants, and my mom was able to get the skills she needed to get a job. She had been a stay-at-home mom. She needed to go to work, and she got that job through a worker training program at Lake Washington Vocational School with government help.

Even through those hard times, our family never lost hope that with a good education, we would be able to find our footing and earn our way to a stable, middle-class life. This country has never turned its back on my family, and today we can't turn our backs on the millions of families just like mine who need a path forward to afford college and pay back their student debt.

I hope we can pass this bill and pave the way for lower college costs and less student debt. I hope we can work together to give students and families some much needed relief. Let's make sure they know we will never let up and that we will always have their backs.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

VENEZUELA

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I wish to speak about two separate topics. The first is Venezuela.

Venezuela is a country in our hemisphere in total crisis, total chaos, and that is because of a number of things: failed leadership, failed economic policies, a complete societal breakdown, human rights abuses, and now a de facto political coupe that has plagued the country for about 15 years. This all started with Hugo Chavez and has now

continued with Nicolas Maduro, his successor.

Let's talk about the first cause of the disaster that has now befallen the people of Venezuela—failed leadership. For over 15 years now, Venezuela has been ruled by two strongmen who have mismanaged the country with an iron fist, have squandered its vast wealth and natural resources, they have imprisoned political opponents, they have corrupted all of the country's political institutions to ignore the will of the people and to entrench their power.

By the way, this failed leadership has only gotten worse because the successor to Hugo Chavez is a completely incompetent person. On top of the fact he is a strongman, he is incompetent. He does not know what he is doing. The result is this very wealthy country, with a highly educated population, is being led by someone who, quite frankly, isn't qualified to lead anything, much less a nation of the stature of Venezuela.

The second cause is failed economic policies. Venezuela suffers from shortages across the board. For example, there are shortages of medicine and medical equipment, which means—and this is not an exaggeration—people are literally dying because their doctors cannot prescribe drugs that aren't available, and the hospitals and the clinics don't have the equipment needed to conduct surgeries. When you speak to medical professionals in Venezuela, they will tell you there are simple medications that could save the life of an individual, but they can't do anything about it. I had someone tell me today they asked a doctor: What do you do when one of your patients is about to die? And he said: Nothing. We comfort them as they die. We don't have basic medicines to deliver to them.

Unlike the case of Cuba, by the way, where they are saying it is because of the embargo by the United States—which of course is ridiculous and is another topic for another day—there is no embargo on Venezuela. There are no sanctions on Venezuela and its people. So as a result, there is no explanation for this.

The supermarkets are bare. The shelves are completely bare. People there cannot buy food or even basics such as toilet paper, toothpaste, toothbrushes—anything.

In addition to the government's political censorship effort, its economic policies also help censor in the sense that there are shortages of paper that independent newspapers need to print their editions. So here is another Machiavellian move the government has made. There is a shortage of paper, and so they make sure the independent press has no access to paper. If you don't have paper, you can't print a newspaper.

Things are so bad in Venezuela, economists earlier this month compared Venezuela to Mugabe's Zimbabwe of 15 years ago. The reason that is an

unbelievable comparison is because, as I said earlier, Venezuela has one of the largest, if not the largest, oil reserves in the world; they have a highly educated population; they have a well-established business class of professionals; and last year their economy shrank by 5.7 percent, and this year it will shrink by another 8 percent. This is a country that now has rolling blackouts—an energy-rich country that has rolling blackouts. It has gotten so bad that today their so-called President, the incompetent Nicolas Maduro, announced that government employees are only going to work 2 days a week, Mondays and Tuesdays. Government offices will be open only 2 days a week because they aren't turning on the lights. This is the state of one of the richest countries in the world and one of the richest countries in our hemisphere.

They have had a total societal breakdown. Economic misery begets desperation, and we are seeing that reflected in the lawlessness that plagues Venezuela. Crime rates are among the highest in the hemisphere, particularly the murder rate. It stems from the top, at the highest levels of leadership. When an incompetent thug is running a country—someone whose government intimidates opponents by using what they call *colectivos*, which are nothing more than street gangs, to ride around on motorcycles, causing all kinds of mayhem, shooting and attacking people—it only contributes to the lawlessness. Caracas, Venezuela, which is a beautiful city, is one of the most dangerous places in the world, comparable with war zones in terms of the murder rate. It is basically every man and woman for himself and herself in Venezuela.

They have atrocious human rights abuses. Since the government's crackdown on demonstrators and political opponents began in February of 2014, dozens of innocents have been killed, thousands have been beaten and targeted for intimidation, and hundreds have been jailed, including Leopoldo Lopez, who has been a political prisoner now for more than 2 years.

We need to demand the release of all 115 political prisoners in Venezuela and respect their rights and those of their families. I heard another horrifying story today. Most political prisoners are men. When their wives go visit them in prison, their wives are strip searched by male guards as an ultimate act of humiliating them. This is the situation in Venezuela.

Last, but not least, we have a *de facto* political coup by the Maduro regime. This country faces a real political and constitutional crisis. Maduro has stacked the country's supreme court with his loyalists, and the supreme court is basically nullifying every law the Congress there passes.

The opposition won the election in the last cycle. By the way, they won because the discontent with the government is so massive that they

couldn't steal the election. It was so big that not even they could steal the election from them, so they sat this new Congress. He has stacked the supreme court, and the supreme court is literally nullifying law after law—doing it not for judicial reasons but for blatantly political ones.

Maduro basically ignores the law. The congressional branch there will pass a law with a veto-proof majority, and he just ignores it. Imagine passing a law out of the House, out of the Senate, and sending it to the President. He can't veto it, and so he just ignores it or refuses to do it.

That is the situation in our own hemisphere. The result is an incredible disaster—of deep interest to us, by the way, because of all the uncertainty it is causing in the region. So what can we do about it? First of all, it is in our national interest. The current situation is happening in our own hemisphere. It threatens to destabilize the region. It creates more pressure on our neighbors and our strategic allies, such as Colombia, where Venezuelans have been fleeing to. This creates migratory pressures on the United States. The lawlessness is fueling organized crime, including drug cartels, which senior government officials in Venezuela have established links to, which impacts our entire region.

For these reasons and more, the United States has an interest in making sure Venezuela does not spiral further out of control.

The first thing we should do is we should be active at the Organization of American States as it considers the situation in Venezuela, and they should ask that voting members recognize the humanitarian and political crisis in Venezuela.

The United States should ask our allies in the region, countries that receive an extensive amount of aid from this country—Haiti, Colombia, the Central American nations, our neighbors up north in Canada, among others—to support this effort. Right now we are about to give hundreds of millions of dollars to countries in Central America, in the Northern Triangle, the Alliance for Prosperity. I think that is a good idea, but we should ask them to support what I hope we will try to do at the OAS. The same with Haiti. We have poured millions of dollars into Haiti's reconstruction. We should use that as leverage to ask them to support something happening at the OAS.

What has happened in Venezuela is nothing short of a coup d'état, a *de facto* coup, and the Organization of American States—if it has any reason to exist anymore, it should be to defend democracy in the region. It is the reason we have an Organization of American States. We will soon find out whether that organization is even worth continuing to exist if it cannot pronounce itself collectively on the outright violation of democracy in a nation that purports to be a democratic republic.

Sanctions. We have to impose sanctions on human rights violators—not sanctions on the people of Venezuela, not sanctions on the government, on human rights violators, many of whom steal money from the Venezuelan people and invest it in the United States.

On the front page of the Miami Herald yesterday was a story that one of the individuals linked to the petroleum industry with the Government in Venezuela, a billionaire—and you become a millionaire with these links by basically stealing the money—is the secret developer behind a major development in Miami, FL, in my hometown, in my home State. Travel to Florida, come down there, and let me know—any of my colleagues—and I will show you where these people live, and I will show you the money they have stolen from the Venezuelan people, and they are living the high life on weekends in Miami. You will see them everywhere. That is why we imposed sanctions on them. There will be an effort here, I hope, in the next day or so to extend those sanctions for another 3 years.

Finally, I hope the United States uses our megaphone to highlight the corruption in the institutions of the Government of Venezuela. That should not be tolerated.

There is also a humanitarian component to this. We should help make sure the Venezuelan Government is not stealing or otherwise standing in the way of the Venezuelan people getting the medicines and food they need.

For far too long, the issues in this hemisphere have been ignored by administrations in both parties, by this administration. We can no longer ignore this. I hope we give Venezuela and the Western Hemisphere the attention and the priority they merit. It is in our national interests to do so.

PUERTO RICO

Mr. President, I want to briefly discuss the issue of Puerto Rico and the debt crisis Puerto Rico is facing. The island faces a major deadline coming up. A \$422 million debt payment is due on May 1, which is this Sunday. If this deadline isn't met, it is going to cause some serious problems, and not just for the people of Puerto Rico—who, let's not forget, are American citizens—but also for millions of others throughout the United States. Today I will focus on one example of an American community that would be very negatively impacted, and that is the city of Jacksonville in my home State of Florida.

Jacksonville is a port city, so its residents, businesses, and families depend in large part on trade. A recent article in the Florida Times-Union detailed exactly how close the relationship is between Puerto Rico and the shipping industry in Jacksonville.

In 2009, as much as 75 percent of the goods coming in and out of Puerto Rico flowed through the ports in Jacksonville, which brought about \$1 billion worth of economic impact to the city. In just the past year, between October and March, JAXPORT has seen a 32-

percent increase in cargo tonnage from the island. But this trend is likely to reverse if fiscal conditions in San Juan do not improve soon.

If Puerto Rico misses its payment on May 1 and its debt crisis further escalates, its economy is going to stagnate even more than it already has, and the harm is going to be passed on to any community like Jacksonville that has a significant economic stake in the island's well-being. We have already seen a massive exodus of professionals and others from Puerto Rico because of a lack of economic growth. They will likely continue leaving and heading to Florida and other places on the mainland, which will further cripple the island's economy and reduce the demand for trade.

So what can we do about all this? Some have suggested that Washington can deliver a silver bullet solution to help Puerto Rico out of its debt. This simply isn't true. The reality is that nothing Washington does will be effective until Puerto Rico and its government leaders turn away from decades of failed policies. Their tax rate continues to be too high, government regulations are stifling, and they are spending more than they take in. I don't care if you are an island, government, business, or family—if you spend more than you take in and you do it for long enough, you are going to have a debt problem. That is what is happening here in Washington, and that is what is happening in Puerto Rico. Anytime your economy isn't growing, you are going to have a further problem, and no restructuring is going to solve that until they restructure the way they spend money. Bankruptcy protection isn't going to solve it, either, at least not without serious fiscal reforms from San Juan. Otherwise, if we grant bankruptcy protection, Puerto Rico will simply go bankrupt again not far down the road.

That does not mean Washington should do nothing. All of us need to realize that this is an American crisis. It is taking place in an American territory. It impacts the people of Puerto Rico, who are American citizens. The impact will not be contained on the island; it will spread to cities like Jacksonville and other communities throughout the mainland United States.

So we need to take the irresponsible leadership in Puerto Rico seriously. We need to urge them to get their affairs in order. But we should also look closely at what we can do here in the Senate, which may mean taking up some of the ideas currently being worked on by House leadership. We can also help Puerto Rico by doing the same things necessary to help the rest of the American economy. This means passing pro-growth policies at the Federal level, including tax and regulatory reform. It means we need to stop spending more money than we take in.

In closing, the leadership in San Juan must view the deadline this Sun-

day as a wake-up call. They must show their willingness to get their fiscal house in order. If they don't, our options in Washington will be very limited and won't have support from taxpayers.

But I think this is a wake-up call for us. The notion that somehow this issue with Puerto Rico will figure itself out is not true. The notion that somehow this issue with Puerto Rico is not that important, that we can put it to the side because it is not a State, is not true. Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States. Its people are U.S. citizens. Its people, by the way, on a per capita basis serve in the Armed Forces of the United States at levels as high or higher than any ethnic or geographic group in the country.

The people of Puerto Rico deserve our voice, and they deserve our action. I commend leaders in the House for trying to do something responsible on this. I understand the majority leader has said that once the House acts, the Senate will look at it very carefully. I know we have leaders here doing that as well. I urge that work to continue. We cannot ignore this crisis, and neither can the leaders in San Juan. I hope we can find a solution sooner than later for what Puerto Rico is facing with its fiscal crisis, which this Sunday we are going to be reading about when they miss their debt payment.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NATO

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, we haven't discussed foreign policy issues on the floor for a while. It is not because all is quiet on the eastern front. It is not. As we know, what is happening in the Middle East and in Europe—the migration issue, Syria, across Northern Africa—is that there are major issues that are ongoing and that affect the United States in a number of ways, not only economically but strategically, and leave us vulnerable to threats to “take down America” in one way or another.

Obviously, we are in the middle of a heated campaign, which hopefully will be resolved in terms of our nominees in a short amount of time. But we do have to recognize the next President, whoever that President might be, is going to be facing some extraordinary challenges relative to foreign policy and national security issues. Making America great again—whatever it is that defines phrase—a new leader will have to deal with a number of very difficult challenges.

This past Monday, President Obama delivered a speech in Germany in which

he discussed the future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO. He said that NATO must be prepared to carry out its traditional missions while at the same time meeting the newly emerging threats to the alliance.

That was revealing to me and, frankly, welcoming because we have not heard anything from the President along those lines in my memory, but his recognition and his statement in that regard defines where we are; that is, we need to be prepared to carry out traditional missions through NATO while at the same time meeting the newly emerging threats to the alliance. We see these newly emerging threats to the alliance we are in almost every day.

The President also noted that Europe has been complacent about its own defense and called on our allies to do more. I welcome this renewed attention to NATO. It also gives us the opportunity to respond to those who believe NATO has outlived its usefulness, is too expensive, and should be done away with. Such a view needs a rebuttal.

It is not necessary nor correct to claim that NATO has no problems or its role has not changed or its future is clear. NATO does face challenges and has—in defining its mission, securing its resources, and providing the leadership that the world requires. But to deny that alliance's obvious value is, in my opinion, a major mistake. Such a judgment surely cannot be based on any real understanding of what NATO is or what it has accomplished, much less of what it can become and, candidly, what it must become, given the level of crisis and conflict so present in Europe, the Middle East, and in Africa.

I have been a strong supporter of the alliance and the transatlantic security relationship throughout my public life. NATO's proud past and enduring importance were a constant presence during my service as a U.S. Senator and as U.S. Ambassador to Germany for 4 years following 9/11. Since returning to the Senate, the alliance has remained a keen interest to me.

Contrary to the notion that NATO has served its purpose and is no longer needed or is no longer a viable organization, NATO has survived and thrived for half a century because it has proven itself to be an adaptable, flexible, and effective organization.

I think many of us know the alliance began all the way back in 1949 with the principle motive of protecting Western Europe from the threat of Soviet aggression. But many forget that the founding document, the Washington treaty of 1949, does not mention the Soviet Union. Instead, its founding treaty laid out the core values of the West, which values the alliance was designed to protect.

I want to state that again. What was trying to be accomplished through this alliance of NATO, all the way back to 1949, was a values-based organization that enabled the alliance and gave the

alliance those values which the alliance was designed to protect. It is exactly because the alliance was and remains values-based that it has been able to adapt to a changing strategic environment with newly defined missions and membership. The vital and permanent need to protect our shared values survived the collapse of the Soviet Union and the threat it represented and has enabled the alliance to define and confront the major threats and modern threats that we face today.

As NATO adapted to the post-Soviet world, the clearest proof of its foundation as a community of values was the process of enlargement. At the beginning of that process, few in the administration or Congress saw NATO enlargement as having very much to do with actually enhancing the military capabilities of the alliance. When the first countries were proposed for membership via the Partnership for Peace program, it was not only because of the military contributions those newly democratic nations could bring; rather, the most explicit motivation for extending the prospect of membership to the countries of what we then called Eastern Europe was to persuade them to make the political and economic changes that would make them worthy and complimentary allies. We were trying to cement in the democratic revolutions that occurred in these former Soviet-controlled states and make those changes permanent.

We were extending NATO's democratic values—along with its security umbrella—and we required prospective members to accept them and institutionalize those democratic values. That process continues today. NATO was and remains a political instrument of enormous persuasive power with historic consequences.

But are shared values enough to maintain the vitality and the relevance of a military alliance? For those new member countries themselves, the appeal of alliance membership was the vast military capabilities of the club they were about to join. They sought actual enhanced security in a still dangerous world, not just a political partnership of values.

Now, in the wake of renewed Russian aggression, most especially in Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea, the objective military capabilities of the alliance have become even more relevant. This renewed threat resulted in NATO, in effect, hitting the pause button on redefining NATO's post-Soviet missions. For many alliance members on Russia's periphery, it was "NATO—Back to the Future."

Russian behavior has once again provoked profound anxiety among our allies on Russia's periphery, especially the Baltic states, Poland, and Romania. In response, NATO has taken on new missions intended to reassure our allies, discourage Putin's aggressive designs, and renew NATO's urgent relevance. All of this has a heritage for

NATO's founding in the Soviet era, but it also is a new and, in many ways, more complicated response. While Russia is not the enemy it once was, it certainly is no friend to the NATO nations. It is perhaps a necessary partner in some places, but it is a dangerous obstacle in others.

In restating and reinforcing NATO's role in opposing Russian aggression, NATO needs to be creative and firm, active and present. It cannot be done on the cheap. This renewed mission emphasizes again the persistent issue of lagging resources. It has long been a problem that the great majority of NATO membership countries do not meet the alliance standard of the 2 percent of their GDP, gross domestic product, for defense.

Although it is true that robust defense of the transatlantic region does require a greater commitment of resources than most European countries have been willing to accept in the past, it is not true that U.S. taxpayers have simply been required to make up the difference.

The Department of Defense says that the direct U.S. contribution to NATO is about \$500 million a year, the largest share of NATO's budget, clearly, but not out of line with our comparative gross domestic product—compared to other European nations. It is true that NATO relies on the national assets of its members for operations, and in that regard, our portion is the largest. But our portion reflects our spending for the entire military, which has global responsibilities. In other words, if there were no NATO, those military expenditures presumably would be the same, if not larger, since our allies are contributors to our collective security as well.

In any case, the growing anxiety about Russian behavior seems to be generating some real progress on this resources front. Secretary General Stoltenberg said this week that five NATO members now meet the 2-percent requirement, while it was only two countries just a few years ago. Further, defense spending has increased in real terms in 16 of the 28 countries since 2014. Clearly, it is a wake-up call for NATO. What has happened on their borders, the periphery of Russia, has awakened NATO to the belief that it needs to strengthen our military, strengthen NATO's resources, and for those countries to live up to their obligations in providing the necessary resources.

Nevertheless, and having said this, we cannot be relaxed about meeting the resources gap. Despite the recent uptick, there has been a long and dramatic decline in European defense budgets for two decades before 2014, not to mention a significant absence of constituent support for defense expenditures in most NATO countries.

It is a battle of these nations who are dealing with slow or no growth—GDP stagnant—to come to the decision to meet the 2 percent obligation that they

have under the NATO treaty. They have other issues at home, migration simply being one of them, and a number of other domestic issues that have restrained them. But now the threat has become more real, and now the realization of how to address the threat has become more vital and necessary.

In his June 2011 farewell speech on NATO's future, Defense Secretary Bob Gates famously said that our European allies were and had been "apparently unwilling to devote the necessary resources or make the necessary changes to be serious and capable partners in their own defense." He declared that NATO faced "the real possibility of a dim, if not dismal, future."

But the response to this danger, now especially in the wake of Russian invasion and annexation of a neighbor—this is not the time to call for NATO's abandonment, but to press ahead in validating NATO's relevance, then finding the necessary resources. I believe that process is under way, as I have just described.

Given the new threats to NATO's eastern border states, our allies are finding greater support for making larger commitments to their own security. Another pressing reason to solve the resources problem is the host of new requirements this modern alliance needs to face.

Since the period of enlargement and the euphoria of democratic revolutions, NATO has made repeated attempts to define its new missions. The most recent strategic concept of January 2010 makes the alliance's newly global and political roles more explicit. It has identified numerous new transnational threats that a modern military and political alliance must confront. These include nuclear proliferation, cyber threats, terrorism, political instabilities, and missile capabilities.

No one can argue that these global threats are not the core of modern security challenges. Similarly, no one can dispute that the most effective and powerful alliance in world history should and must organize itself to confront them. And most certainly, no responsible leader should look at these threats and conclude an alliance built to confront them should be abandoned. Let me restate that. No responsible leader, now or in the future, should look at these threats and conclude that an alliance built to confront these problems and challenges should be abolished. Modern NATO activities extend well beyond Europe. These include combating piracy off the Horn of Africa, operational and training support for the African Union in Ethiopia, air policing of Europe's borders against Russian incursions, growing cyber defense alliance capabilities, expanded special operations capabilities and activities, development of a NATO response force for rapid reaction operations on land and sea, expanded joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations, and expanded

joint exercises to improve the alliance and member-state readiness. That is a big challenge, but that challenge is one that needs to be addressed.

In terms of more traditional warfighting, NATO has taken on missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Libya, and continued challenges will need to be addressed. It is not yet clear to me whether ISAF, the Afghanistan mission, will go down as a success or not, but it is clearly in the balance and needs to be carefully monitored.

It is clear that the Libya operation revealed numerous alliance shortcomings and was not a model of alliance coherence and cohesion. Rather, Libya was an example of failure at the political level to define the new NATO. The correct response to both, new challenges and admitted failure, is better leadership, better vision, and creative new thinking, along with the resources to carry out those goals.

I have suggested that these could be best applied in response to the Syria disaster, especially with the humanitarian catastrophe and the migrant crisis. I proposed that NATO could have helped member-state Turkey get control of its Syrian border to stop the flow of jihadists into and out of Syria.

It is clear to me that the uncontrolled flood of refugees from Syria could best be handled by creating safe areas in and near Syria so that the Syrian people can remain there under safe and humane conditions. Building on NATO's Bosnia experience, the Alliance could be critical to providing the security for such areas on the ground and in the air. This would not be fighting the war in Syria but protecting the populations of U.N. designated areas. Difficult? You bet, but it has been done before, and NATO is the only possible organization that is in a position to do it.

Although I emphatically believe that NATO continues to have enormous value to U.S. interests and global stability, I do concede that it needs a new vision of its role. That is clearly a work in progress and will have some false starts and failures along the way. How it turns out will not only be a function of resources, as I have discussed, but also an issue of leadership. On that score, I have some concerns. Frankly, I am worried.

The Obama administration seems to be guiding us toward a dangerous deference to others to address emerging global security challenges that are and will be threats to our own national security. The most alarming example is our acquiescence to Russia's vigorous engagement in Syria. Russia basically hijacked our paltry efforts to bring the Syrian disaster under control, inserted its military forces to change the dynamic on the ground, and guided the political process toward their ends. It has all been a sad display of American incompetence and impotence. The United States and its allies are paying the price for this failure of engagement.

After reading President Obama's recent and lengthy interview on foreign policy that was published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, I can tell he has not drawn the correct conclusions from the foreign policy failures in recent years in Libya, Syria, Ukraine, Russia, and elsewhere. For me, we have abdicated America's traditional leadership role. For the alliance, I fear this could be the beginning phase of our disengagement from Europe, which, if it continues, will be at our peril. Without firm U.S. leadership of NATO, we will begin to see the commitment of our allies weaken. They simply do not have the muscle or the financial capability to support a NATO coalition without U.S. leadership. Without the right kind of leadership, the importance of the transatlantic security relationship and the continued robust presence of U.S. forces in Europe will begin to lose advocates, as perhaps has already occurred among those who do not support our efforts.

If Americans come to see NATO's value in financial terms—bang for the buck—we will lose sight of its real value in the proper terms of national security, American reliability, and the eternal appeal of our community of values—in other words, the values beyond price that must be preserved if we are to prevail against our adversaries.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. PERDUE. 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.

FUNDING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about why all of us are here. The primary role of Congress is to responsibly fund the Federal Government. To do that, we must set clear national priorities that we can financially support. All too often, the process of setting, and then sticking to these national priorities has become a purely political exercise, not a function of governing. It is the No. 1 complaint I hear when I travel back to my home State of Georgia.

Coming from the business world, I clearly see two interlocking crises we face as a country. First, we have a global security crisis. The world may be more dangerous right now than at

any point in my lifetime. Interlocked with that is our national debt crisis that threatens the ability we have to defend our country today.

As we begin the appropriations process, let's take an honest look at what we are appropriating for. One of our top national priorities is to provide for the national defense. It is one of only 6 reasons 13 Colonies got together in the first place; that is, to provide for the national defense. However, under Presidents Carter, Clinton, and Obama, we saw three different periods of disinvestment in our military. Our 30-year average of defense spending has been 4.2 percent of GDP. Following the Carter administration, the Reagan administration recapped the military. Then, we had another decline. You see the buildup in the surge in Afghanistan and Iraq, behind two wars.

We have been at war for 15 years. I believe in many cases we have burnt out our equipment, and in cases we are beginning to do that with our personnel, with longer tours and more difficult assignments in this hybrid war we are facing today.

Then you see under this administration a further decline, now to 3.1 percent of GDP. This is the lowest point since the Vietnam War, and the irony of that is that we are still spending \$600 billion of \$4 trillion total spending of the Federal Government on our military. The irony is the 30-year average of 4.2 percent, which is a hundred basis points below what we're currently spending—that's almost \$200 billion—in a \$19 trillion economy.

The question is how do we determine the priorities to keep a strong military? To make sure we can fulfill one of six reasons we came together as a country.

We are about to have the smallest Army since World War II, the smallest Navy since World War I, and the smallest and oldest Air Force ever. How can this be? The world is more dangerous right now than at any time in my lifetime.

We see increased aggression from traditional rivals, Russia and China. We also see the rise of ISIS, partly because of our own intransigence. They have to be stopped now, or we are going to have to deal with them later here. Boko Haram, Al Qaeda, ISIS—all of these threats are beginning to be interconnected and pose threats not just in the Middle East, but around the world.

Finally, we have nuclear threats from rogue regimes, like North Korea and Iran, and emerging, game-changing technologies, such as cyber threats, which nations like Russia are using for hybrid warfare right now in Eastern Europe. There is an emerging arms race in space. This is why our women and men in uniform need to have the tools and resources to complete their missions around the world.

This fiscal crisis is jeopardizing our ability to actually fund the missions being asked of our military today. Let me give two examples. JSTARS is a

fleet of planes, 16 in number. These planes in total have over 1 million hours of service. They were used when the Air Force bought them to start with some 30 years ago. They were flown by commercial airlines, such as Air India and Pakistan Air, around the world. Today they fly missions providing critical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance—ISR—ground targeting, and battlefield command and control capabilities to all branches of our military in multiple regions of the world. The problem is they have outlived their useful life and they are being replaced—or the theory was that they were going to be replaced. But because of our intransigence in Washington, the funding is not there to replace them. So we are now facing potentially 8 years where we will not be able to fulfill their mission.

These are the planes that provide oversight for our men and women who are in harm's way—in Afghanistan, Iraq, in Southern Command, where we are intercepting drugs, in the Far East. Wherever the men and women in American uniforms are facing danger, JSTARS is there protecting them in ways no one else can in the military. All of these planes have to be replaced, and the sooner we get started, the better. They will not be able to fulfill their mission over the next 8 years.

This chart shows the declining availability of the current fleet—down to zero by 2023. It also shows that under the current plan, pending DOD approval and funding, the replacement fleet doesn't even start coming online until 2023—a start date that is now in jeopardy because of the current administration's budget request.

JSTARS' recap is the No. 4 requisition priority for the Air Force, behind the long-range strike bomber, the new tanker, and the F-35. We are not going to be able to fulfill the mission of these airmen and soldiers over the next 8 years unless we do something about it right now—and even then, it might be too late.

This is a picture of a 1957 Chevrolet. Some of you will remember what this is like. I remember this car. This is a collector's item. Some of my friends own this car. This car is of the same genre, same age as many of the airplanes we are now flying around the world. That is great, but imagine if you had to drive this car—this was your everyday car and you drove it to work every day back and forth; you depended on it to get you to work every morning and to get you home every night. What would you do if you had to drive it to the west coast and back every week? Imagine what the maintenance time loss would be for breakdown. Imagine what it would be like traveling those distances without all the modern conveniences, such as satellite radio—Sirius, Pandora. What about the safety factor? These are antiques. The point is that this is a direct analogy of what we are doing with our military today in a

very dangerous world. That sounds ridiculous, but you know we have another example, and that is our marines around the world, who are the first to hit a crisis.

In Moron, Spain, we have a contingent of marines and one of their missions is to protect our embassies in Africa. Post-Benghazi, that takes on a new level of importance. These marines do a great job. They are the very best of what we have in America. They are ready to go. The problem is that because of budget constraints, their fleet of airplanes, the V-22 Ospreys, is getting cut in half, and that fundamentally cuts their ability to complete their mission in half. So they will not be able to fulfill the mission they have today the way they are supposed to because of our own intransigence.

So, what is causing this great disinvestment in our military? Well, there is only one answer: the national debt. These two crises interlock in a way they never have before. It used to be that defense hawks and budget hawks were separate people. Today, I am living proof that they can embody themselves in the same person, because I am both. We have to be. We no longer have the luxury of debating both issues separately.

In the past 7 years, Washington has spent \$25 trillion running the Federal Government. That is bad enough, but the problem is that we borrowed \$9 trillion of that \$25 trillion. That is 35 percent. The Congressional Budget Office says that over the next 10 years we will borrow 30 percent of that. What that means and why that is important is that fundamentally, all of our mandatory spending—some \$3 trillion—is mandatory, so our first dollars go to that. The problem is that all of our discretionary spending—all of USAID, our foreign programs, and our expenditures—are fundamentally borrowed under that scenario, and that is where we are today. Can you imagine that? With this level of borrowing, every dime we spend on foreign aid—I just want to reiterate—foreign aid, domestic programs, and military—we are borrowing that money today because we haven't faced up to this crisis.

First we have the period here under President Bush. In 2000 our debt was \$6 trillion. We added \$4 trillion on the back of two wars. In 2008, we had \$10 trillion in debt. Now we see we have another \$9 trillion in the last 7 years. We will be close to \$20 trillion by the time we are through.

The yellow here is what the Congressional Budget Office says we are about to face. If we do nothing from today, we will add another \$9 trillion to this Federal debt—close to \$30 trillion.

I am a business guy and I know the capital markets are under great stress today. The danger of this is this is totally unmanageable. If interest rates were to reach their 50-year average of just 5.5 percent, we would be paying \$1 trillion in interest on a \$4 trillion total budget. There is no way that is pos-

sible. That is about twice the amount we spend on our military.

Our debt crisis is directly impacting our ability to protect our Nation and project power around the world. This puts in jeopardy our very ability to deal with global threats as they come up every day, and believe me, they are coming up every day. Without a strong economy, without dealing with our debt crisis right now, we can't adequately fund our military to confront the growing threats we face. That is a fact.

It used to be that fiscal hawks and defense hawks, and I have said this, but today I see that more and more people who are one or the other are beginning to come together and recognize the other problem. They are interrelated in a way they have never been.

Believe me, we need a strong defense. I believe we need to be responsible for our Federal finances and the needs of our people here at home. The safety net needs to be maintained. Social Security needs to be saved. These are things we can't ignore, but we have to start dealing with our priorities today. That is why we have to find a way to come together—Democrats, Republicans, conservatives, whatever—and make sure we protect our economic and our national security priorities. We need to get in a room and iron this out. They are not that complicated. We can find the solutions.

As former Admiral Mike Mullen said in 2012, "I believe that our debt is the greatest threat to our national security. If we as a country do not address our fiscal imbalances in the near-term, our national power will erode."

That was 5 years ago, and what have we done since then? Nothing but add debt.

Last year, Congress passed a budget resolution. We laid out a conservative vision for what spending levels we should undertake and cut \$7 trillion from the President's budget. We passed a budget, but because our budget process is broken, we didn't pass most authorizations. We passed appropriations in committees, but we weren't able to get them to the floor and vote on them. So we ended up with a CR at the end of the year, and that led to a grand bargain, which I opposed, and an omnibus that added some \$9 trillion to our national debt. That was used to fund the government, in the absence of any appropriations bills having been approved. That pushed us to a first-quarter omnibus that really most of us wanted to avoid. At the end of that, eight people got in a room over a weekend and decided how we are going to spend \$4 trillion. That is not what our Founders had in mind. That means that the topline spending levels were set by a so-called grand bargain, which I voted against, because it increased spending and would add over \$9.5 trillion over the next decade to our national debt.

This mounting debt crisis will not fix itself—quite the contrary. It will only

grow worse because Social Security and Medicare are going to demand more and more funds from the general operating fund because of the imbalances in those two items. If we don't get serious about solving this debt crisis right now, we will not be able to fully support our national security and our domestic priorities.

Recently, Richard Haass, a former top State Department official, said in a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, "Our inability to deal with our debt challenge will detract from the appeal of the American political and economic model" as we try to influence young democracies around the world. He continued: "The result will be a world that is less democratic and increasingly less deferential to U.S. concerns in matters of security."

We must create restraint and fiscal sanity in Washington. In the private sector, you fix a business by first drilling down and finding the underlying problem. The way that Washington funds the Federal Government, the time it takes to complete the federal budget, and the fact that the current process allows Members of Congress to put off making tough decisions are the real problem. In business, this would never be allowed. In your personal home, this cannot be tolerated, but somehow we are able to do it here year after year. This process has only worked four times in the past 42 years.

It has been encouraging to hear the Senate Budget Committee chairman, Senator MIKE ENZI, and the House Budget chairman, Congressman TOM PRICE from my home State of Georgia, make this a priority for this year. I believe they are making great progress. Both are having hearings to find out if there are models around the world that do it better than we do. We are finding those examples, especially at a time when we cannot allow the process to break down and result in more continuing resolutions, omnibus bills, or short-term funding fights that don't solve anything.

We must also reduce redundant programs, roll back the regulatory regime, and focus on growing our economy through overhauling our archaic Tax Code, and unlocking, finally, our Nation's full economic and energy potential.

Finally, we have to save Social Security and Medicare and tackle the biggest problems of our overall health care costs. To do this, Washington needs to stop pretending that these crises will go away on their own and that the national debt will somehow solve itself. It won't. In fact, it has already done irreversible damage to our credibility and capability on the world stage. Our mounting debt crisis is already raising questions from our allies around the world about how we will be able to stand by our international commitments.

I just got back from a trip to Europe and the Middle East. The No. 1 point raised to us by leaders, heads of state

in those countries, was that America needs to lead again. To lead again, we need to get our financial house in order.

Our debt crisis and a failed foreign policy has served to confuse our allies and embolden our enemies. It threatens our ability to defend our country, period. Also, the interest payments on our debt is affecting our education, infrastructure, and more—here at home in the programs that are necessary. Imagine if we didn't have that unproductive responsibility of unnecessary interest. Every Member of this body knows we need to act now.

My question is, why aren't we acting? The challenge is to stop talking about it theoretically and start putting solutions into practice. That is why Georgians sent me to the U.S. Senate, and that is why I will continue fighting on this every day.

Let's not lose sight of Congress's No. 1 responsibility. We are charged in the Constitution under article I to responsibly fund the Federal Government and to ensure that the 6 reasons why 13 Colonies got together in the first place can actually be realized.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

INCORPORATION TRANSPARENCY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here today to highlight law enforcement legislation that would help crack down on human trafficking, terrorism financing, money laundering, Medicare fraud, the narcotics trade, tax evasion, public corruption, and a litany of other crimes in the United States and around the world. These crimes all involve money, and the United States has become a favorite destination for criminals looking to hide it.

Earlier this month, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists published the first of the so-called Panama papers, a leak of 11.5 million confidential documents from a Panama-based law firm that sets up shell corporations and tax shelters for wealthy clients. The documents we have seen so far show that, along with the Caribbean islands you might expect, several American States are popular places to form shell corporations.

Our friend Senator Kent Conrad, who used to be chairman of the Budget Committee, was fond of using this floor chart showing what is called the Ugland House building in the Cayman Islands. This little building claims to be the place from which an astonishing

18,000 companies do business. As unimaginable as it may be to have 18,000 companies claiming to be doing business out of that one little building, I am sorry to say that there is a building just a 2-hour drive from the U.S. Capitol Building that serves as the official address for a quarter of a million companies, many of them shell corporations.

A shell corporation is a company that serves no economic purpose and doesn't conduct any real business. Shell corporations exist primarily to hold legal title to bank accounts, real estate, or other assets, often obscuring the true human owners. While people can form shell corporations in just about any country, many American States make it especially easy to do so, perhaps even easier than getting a library card. You may actually need to go down to a library to sign up for a library card, but you can form a shell corporation with a few clicks of a mouse and payment of a small fee.

There is another reason that the United States has become so popular for shell corporations. Currently, none—zero—of the 50 American States require the disclosure of the beneficial owners—the real human beings who own the companies. Instead, corporate records can identify the owner as just another faceless shell corporation, or the owner could be identified as a professional agent paid to sign the needed forms and never speak of them again or a lawyer who refuses to disclose who his client is under attorney-client privilege. Behind this easy-to-establish veil of secrecy, criminals can and do use these shell corporations to open bank accounts, transfer funds, and even to hide the ownership of expensive assets.

This building shown here is at 650 Fifth Avenue in New York City. The Iranian Government used a string of generic businesses to obscure its ownership of this Fifth Avenue skyscraper. Profits from this enterprise helped fund Iran-backed terrorism for decades, until a U.S. Government investigation finally uncovered the scheme in 2008.

How could a state sponsor of terrorism own a piece of the New York City skyline and profit from owning that piece of the New York City skyline for so long without anyone knowing? Let's look at how Iran used anonymous shell corporations to hide its involvement.

On paper, 650 Fifth Avenue was owned by a partnership of the Alavi Foundation, a New York-based charity, and the Assa Corporation, a New York shell company. Assa Corporation was, in turn, owned by yet another shell company, Assa Company, Limited, and formed in the Isle of Jersey, a notorious banking center and tax shelter. The Isle of Jersey company was in turn owned by individuals representing Bank Melli, the Iranian Government's financial arm, and there is the connection to Iran.

So to the public, that building—worth about half a billion dollars—was

owned by a charity and a faceless shell company. Because there is no requirement in the United States that States keep track of the real owners of a company formed under State law, New York State only knew that the Assa Corporation was owned by another shell corporation. Ultimately, investigators were able to connect those dots and tie Iran to the structure from a clue in the corporate records kept on the Isle of Jersey.

How is that for irony? A notorious tax shelter actually had better ownership records than we have in the United States. Once Iran's investment and involvement was uncovered, the Department of Justice moved to seize and sell the building and to distribute the proceeds of that sale to American victims of Iranian-backed terror. After years of legal appeals, the victims look close to receiving this compensation.

Of course, Iran isn't the only criminal enterprise hiding behind American shell companies. Other recently uncovered examples of enterprises hiding behind American shell companies include a Mexican drug cartel using an Oklahoma corporation to launder money through a horse farm, a crime syndicate setting up a web of corporations in eight States as part of a \$100 million Medicare fraud scheme, and a human trafficking ring based in Moldova that hides their crimes behind anonymous corporations in Kansas, Missouri, and Ohio.

According to the Rhode Island State Police, corporate secrecy in my own State has complicated their investigations into real estate fraud, illegal prescription drug distribution, and sales tax evasion.

In January, just months before the Panama Papers hit the headlines, "60 Minutes" aired a segment showing just how easy it can be for criminals to hide money in the United States. The program featured an investigator with the anticorruption organization Global Witness. That investigator pretended to represent a corrupt African leader, and "60 Minutes" brought a hidden camera along into his meetings with lawyers in New York.

The investigator, presenting himself as representing the corrupt African leader, made clear that his client wanted help using suspicious funds to buy a mansion, a jet, and a yacht in the United States and to hide his ownership of these assets. Of the 16 lawyers who met with the undercover investigator, only 1 turned him away. It seems the others were comfortable helping a corrupt foreign official hide money in opaque American shell corporations.

While the underlying criminal schemes may be colorful and complex, the answer to this shell corporation problem is simple and straightforward. The Incorporation Transparency and Law Enforcement Assistance Act would direct States to require applicants forming corporations and limited liability companies to include basic in-

formation about the actual human beings who own the company.

The States would maintain and periodically update this information, and it would be available to law enforcement officers who present valid court-ordered subpoenas or search warrants. It is simple. Have each State keep track of who actually owns companies they charter and ensure that information is available for Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies through proper processes.

Transparency in business ownership is not a novel idea. Every member of the European Union will be transparent by 2017. The United Kingdom and the Netherlands have even announced plans to make their corporate ownership registries available to the public. With the light of corporate transparency about to shine on criminal assets hidden in Europe, their shell corporations will not be effective for these purposes. So that money will be looking for new dark homes.

America should take swift action to make sure these assets don't find new hidden homes in opaque American shell corporations. We are supposed to be an example to the world, not the place where the world's corrupt and the world's criminals hide their cash and their assets.

The Incorporation Transparency and Law Enforcement Assistance Act enjoys broad support from the national law enforcement community, including the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI, and the U.S. Marshals Service Association, as well as the Rhode Island State Police.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to finish my statement.

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Chuck Canterbury, president of the National Fraternal Order of Police, explains it this way: "When we are able to expose the link between shell companies and drug trafficking, corruption, organized crime, and terrorist finance, the law enforcement community is better able to keep America safe from these illegal activities and keep the proceeds of these crimes out of the U.S. financial system."

Of all places, the United States should not be a safe haven for criminals, foreign or domestic, to hide their illegal assets. We could take a simple major step in fighting money laundering, financial fraud, and terrorist financing by passing this bill. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to cosponsor it and to help us get it passed.

I thank the Chair. I appreciate the extra time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

NOMINATION OF ROBERTA JACOBSON

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, it has been nearly 9 months since the United States had an ambassador to Mexico. The President's nominee to that post, Roberta Jacobson, is eminently qualified, as all of us know, to serve in that position. However, she has been waiting for the Senate to confirm her since the Foreign Relations Committee reported her nomination to the Senate in November of last year with a vote of 12 to 7.

Yesterday I took to the floor to talk about our important trade relationship with Mexico. That is not the only reason finalizing this nomination is so critical. The bilateral work on migration, security, and border issues of the United States and Mexico requires top-level leadership at our Embassy in Mexico City. It is critical for the United States to have an ambassador to ensure cooperation on border security issues and to identify threats to our national security.

We continue to engage Mexico in disrupting organized criminal networks that facilitate human trafficking. According to Mexico's National Institute of Migration, Mexico apprehended more than 190,000 migrants in 2015, including nearly 19,000 unaccompanied minors, children, better known as UACs. This is a significant increase from 2014, when 127,000 migrants, including just over 11,000 UACs, were apprehended.

It is clear these complex issues require top-level diplomacy, and we would benefit from an experienced leader who can navigate the nuances of these regional relations. In addition to these migration issues, the United States and Mexico need to address security challenges from transnational drug trafficking. As we hear all too often, we are witnessing an increase in heroin use leading to rising levels of violence and heroin-related deaths.

While the United States and Mexico are cooperating on a strategy to fight heroin, this represents a priority that requires the leadership of an ambassador. We need someone in place as our top diplomat in Mexico with experience with Mexican security and with law and to engage the most senior Mexican Government officials on the narcotics issues.

In addition, there are specific ongoing cases that necessitate having an ambassador in place to ensure that our Nation's interests are being represented. As I said yesterday, Mexico represents one of our most important bilateral relationships. It is clear the longer the United States goes without having an ambassador to Mexico, the greater our partnership will suffer.

There is simply no reason to go any longer without an ambassador to Mexico when we have someone as qualified as Roberta Jacobson. I come with good news; that is, it is my understanding that a deal—an agreement—is in the works that will ultimately lead to the

successful confirmation later this week. As such, I will not be making a unanimous consent request today, but I intend to come here as long as it takes, to keep up the pressure and to monitor this process, to ensure that it has a successful resolution.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IRAN

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, earlier this month, the Governor of Iran's central bank, Dr. Valiollah Seif, spoke at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington and he made three primary claims. First, he said sanctions did not, in fact, lead Iran to agree to the terms of the nuclear agreement between Iran and the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the EU, Russia, and China. He said sanctions did not force Iran to agree. Second, he said Iran's nuclear program has always been entirely peaceful. Third, he said that the United States and our European allies have not honored our commitments under the terms of the nuclear deal also known as the JCPOA.

Today I wish to push back against all three of these claims.

First, on sanctions, Governor Seif said: "Contrary to baseless allegation[s] that some people made, sanctions did not and could not force [Iran] to engage into a negotiation with our P5+1 colleague[s]," the nations I referenced.

The facts clearly say otherwise.

U.S. sanctions have been a major feature of U.S. policy toward Iran since Iran's 1979 revolution. The imposition of international sanctions and worldwide bilateral sanctions on Iran began in 2006 and increased dramatically in 2010.

In June of 2010, the Congress passed the Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act, also known as CISADA, which weakened Iran's access to the international financial system and bolstered existing sanctions specifically against Iran's human rights abuse.

That same month, with the support not just of our European allies but also Russia and China, the Obama administration and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton led the passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929, which created the most comprehensive and stinging international sanctions the Iranian regime has ever faced.

Two years later, in 2012, the National Defense Authorization Act designated the Central Bank of Iran for additional sanctions, which the Obama adminis-

tration successfully used to undermine Iran's ability to sell oil on world markets.

The Obama administration also convinced key allies, such as Japan, Australia, South Korea, and Canada, to agree to additional bilateral measures that increased pressure on Iran's financial banking, insurance, transportation, and energy sectors.

The effects of these coordinated sanctions were clear, swift, and direct. The value of the Iranian currency decreased dramatically. Obstacles to Iranian trade forced businesses to close and increased inflation within Iran. Iran's oil exports and government revenues declined sharply. In 2011, for example, Iran exported about 2.4 million barrels of oil per day. By March of 2014, Iran's exports were down to just 1 million barrels a day—in a nation for which petroleum makes up 80 percent of all commodity exports.

In July of 2012, former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called the sanctions regime "the most severe and strictest sanctions ever imposed on a country."

The coordinated sanctions regime was so effective that Iran's current President even described Iran's economic situation as if the country had "returned to the 19th century" under the sanctions regime. I think it is clear on this first point that sanctions imposed an unsustainable cost on Iran and forced it to the table to engage in negotiations with the West regarding its nuclear program.

That brings me to his second erroneous argument that Iran has pursued nuclear technology with only peaceful purposes in mind. Iran's actions directly contradict this claim.

In 2002, members of the international community revealed that Iran had, in fact, been attempting to build a secret uranium enrichment facility at Natanz in Central Iran and a heavy water plutonium reactor at its Arak facility in the northwestern part of the country. Only because Iran failed to keep these facilities secret did the IAEA—or the International Atomic Energy Agency—finally begin having the opportunity to monitor these sites in 2002.

In 2009, the United States, France, and Britain revealed the existence of another uranium enrichment plant buried deep under a mountain near the city of Qom.

The evidence continues. In 2011, the IAEA released a report on the "possible military dimensions" of Iran's nuclear effort, known as PMD. The report detailed areas in which the agency had evidence of Iran's past—and potentially ongoing—work on nuclear weaponization and the development of nuclear warheads for missile delivery systems.

The IAEA's final report on the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program, issued in December of 2015, found "a range of activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device were conducted in Iran

prior to the end of 2003 as a coordinated effort." The report also found that Iran conducted certain activities relevant to nuclear weaponization for at least several years after 2003 and that some of these activities didn't end until 2009.

It is not just on-the-ground reports and secret nuclear facilities that suggest that Iran's nuclear efforts have not always been entirely peaceful. Let me remind my colleagues that just last month Iran tested a ballistic missile that supposedly had a message on its side proclaiming in Hebrew: "Israel must be wiped off the Earth."

An Iranian regime that continues to advocate for the destruction of Israel, America's vital ally Israel, does not sound like a nation that has been and hopes to continue to develop nuclear technology for anything remotely peaceful.

An Iranian regime that ships illicit weapons to support the murderous regime of Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria or the Houthi rebels in Yemen or Hezbollah in Lebanon is not seeking to develop weapons for peaceful purposes.

An Iranian regime that illegally tests dangerous ballistic missile technology—some of which is capable of carrying a nuclear weapon, all of which violates U.N. Security Council resolutions—does not have peaceful intentions.

Because of this behavior, we have every reason to distrust Iran's claims that its nuclear efforts were always peaceful. Iran continually misled the international community about the nature of its nuclear program, and it continually disguised its efforts to conduct research and other activities to help it better understand how to develop a nuclear weapon. It continues to threaten Israel, to test ballistic missiles, and to support terrorism throughout the Middle East.

That is why I simply cannot accept Seif's argument that Iran's nuclear program has always been entirely peaceful.

The third claim made by Seif last week was that the United States and our European allies have not honored our obligations under the nuclear deal known as the JCPOA. Iran's evidence for this claim is that the sanctions relief granted to Iran for complying with the terms of the agreement hasn't suddenly unleashed a flurry of Iranian economic activity. As Adam Szubin, our own Department of the Treasury's Acting Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, recently put it, throughout the negotiations between the United States, our allies, partners, and Iran, the U.S. and our allies "did not guarantee economic outcomes, or a flood of immediate business into Iran."

Acting Under Secretary Szubin is right. Iran is responsible for making Iran an attractive, safe place to do business. For many individuals and businesses, Iran appears neither attractive nor safe. For example, in October,

Iran arrested Siamak Namazi, a businessman who is a dual American-Iranian citizen. Namazi worked for a petroleum company in the UAE and previously ran a consulting business in Iran. He still has not been charged. In fact, the only recent development in Mr. Namazi's case is his father Baquer—an 80-year-old man who suffers from heart problems—was arrested in February and sent to Iran's notorious Evin Prison. Why would Iranian leaders expect foreign investment to flow into their country when it arbitrarily arrests and detains those seeking business opportunities for their own country.

It is not only Iran's flawed legal system or its ongoing human rights violations, more than half of Iran's economy consists of shadowy organizations controlled in part by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, the IRGC, the hard-line military force committed to the preservation of the Iranian regime. The pseudo-private entities that are tied to the IRGC include banks, businesses, religious foundations, pension funds, and welfare projects that also serve as front companies for the IRGC.

During his question-and-answer session at the Council on Foreign Relations, Mr. Seif was asked whether foreign businesses considering investing in Iran or doing business with Iran could be confident that the money invested in Iran would not fund the IRGC. He was unable to declare definitively that it would not.

The onus, the burden, is on Iran—not the international community or the United States—to reform Iran's domestic economy and to make sure its businesses are not linked to the IRGC, to make it a country—transparent and open—and to engage in actions that suggest to the world it is a trustworthy partner. The burden is on Iran to comply with the JCPOA. The burden is on Iran to stop testing ballistic missiles, abusing human rights, and supporting terrorists. If Iran is unhappy with the level of economic relief it has received since this agreement came into effect, it only has its own actions to blame.

As Acting Under Secretary Szubin put it, "the JCPOA [the nuclear deal] is an international arrangement, not a cashier's check."

I commend Dr. Seif for his willingness to travel to the United States and to make his case in front of our Council on Foreign Relations. I think this is a constructive step, but as I have shown, I think the case he made is a weak one. The evidence is clear. A coordinated sanctions regime did, in fact, force Iran to negotiate. Iran's nuclear program was not entirely peaceful in its intent or execution. The United States and EU aren't holding the Iranian economy back—the Iranian Government is. The Iranian Government's actions are.

In my travels throughout the Middle East and in conversations with regional leaders and Ambassadors here, it is apparent these nations all share

one overriding concern, Iranian aggression. This challenge unites countries as diverse as Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

As my colleagues may have seen in an op-ed in the Washington Post just last week, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Zarif sought to justify recent steps Iran has taken to dramatically build up its defenses.

Countries do, indeed, have a right to self-defense, but there is a difference between self-defense efforts undertaken by responsible members of the international community and some of Iran's recent aggressive and destabilizing actions.

Responsible nations don't support terrorist groups throughout the Middle East and stoke sectarianism to undermine the security of their neighbors. Responsible nations don't directly threaten the destruction of Israel. Responsible nations seek common ground and the pursuit of mutual interests with their neighbors. Responsible nations abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Iran's actions make it clear it is not yet a responsible member of the international community. If Iran then has complaints about the relief it has received under this agreement, it should move its behavior and begin to uphold its commitments under the deal while changing the dangerous aspect of its ongoing behavior. Yet, instead, Iran continues to try and dominate its region, a valuable reminder we must continue to enforce the terms of the JCPOA strictly and push back on Iran's bad behavior that is outside the parameters of the agreement.

While I commend the Obama administration for its recent action in interdicting illicit arms shipments from Iran to the Houthis, continuing to designate IRGC-linked entities for more sanctions, and taking other critical steps to push back on Iran's bad behavior and destabilizing activities in the region, I also remain concerned about the administration's willingness to entertain Iranian complaints about sanctions relief.

I urge the United States and our allies to remain cautious in our dealings with Iran. We must remember that the most important contract with Iran is the one we have already agreed to—that is, this nuclear deal—and we must continue to remind Iran that its own behavior is the real cause of its continuing international isolation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ST. JUDE'S RANCH FOR CHILDREN, NEVADA CAMPUS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 50th anniversary of the St. Jude's Ranch for Children, Nevada Campus.

St. Jude's Ranch for Children was founded by Father Jack Adam to support abused and neglected children and give them an opportunity to learn and grow. Father Adam initially faced challenges in acquiring funding for the project. However, with the help of Nevada community leaders, including Claudine and Shelby Williams, Forrest Duke, and the Sisters of Charity, the project raised \$30,000, and the facility was built. Eddie, a resident of Elko, NV, became the first child to attend St. Jude's Ranch for Children. Since then, the organization has been a sanctuary for numerous abused and neglected children and is a recognized landmark in southern Nevada.

St. Jude's Ranch for children offers supportive housing and nutritional services for children and families. The Therapeutic Residential Foster Care program provides children an opportunity to live together, receive the nutritious foods they need to be successful, attend school, and participate in extracurricular activities. Children are nurtured in the program until they are ready to transition out of therapeutic care. Later, children are placed with loving foster families, and siblings are kept together.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention month. It is important that every April we work together to raise awareness for programs that support the physical and emotional well-being of children and recognize organizations, such as St. Jude's Ranch for Children, that transform the lives of children and families in our community.

Our youth are an important part of our history and future. We must ensure that children are protected and have a nurturing home that allows them to succeed. When a child suffers from abuse or neglect, the whole community and country suffers with them. The services provided by St. Jude's Ranch for Children ensure safety, health, and opportunity for many of our Nation's children. Their work is appreciated and admired, and I wish them continued success for years to come.

REMEMBERING RICHARD F. SCHOLZ, JR.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week the city of Quincy, in my home State of Illinois, lost a tough, principled, and fair public servant—but more importantly, a fine man. Judge Richard F. Scholz, Jr., passed away at the age of 87.

Judge Scholz was the quintessential public servant. He was a voice for the underprivileged and a passionate advocate for the most vulnerable in the community. He spent more than 24

years as a judge, fighting for at risk youths and a more equitable juvenile justice system. Although Judge Scholz could be tough, he had a softer side that put a gentle and compassionate face on the criminal justice system. He was celebrated in the courts for his well-reasoned and thoughtful decisions. Throughout his tenure, he was honored by several civic organizations and community groups, but it was dealing one-on-one with people that gave him the greatest joy and satisfaction.

Chuck Scholz, former Quincy mayor and Judge Scholz's nephew, recalled meeting a longtime Quincy resident who told him a story: "Your uncle sent me to jail, and it was the best thing that ever happened to me." He went on to explain how Judge Scholz visited him one day at the correctional facility in St. Charles. The reason for his visit? To make sure he got his diploma while he was incarcerated. And when he was released, Judge Scholz got him a job. That is the kind of man Judge Scholz was. He understood that the job didn't end in his courtroom.

Judge Scholz believed in serving the community by serving the individual. He knew the recipe for building strong, healthy communities was getting the right people involved in the right way. And the community was better for it.

Born in 1928, Judge Scholz grew up in Quincy and attended St. Francis grade school, Quincy Notre Dame High School, St. Ambrose College, and the University of Illinois. After college, he moved down south and received his law degree from Mercer University in Macon, GA. While studying law, he met and married Ellen W. Scholz and shared 58 wonderful years before her death in 2009.

Following law school, the young couple returned to Quincy to raise their family and practice law with his father and brother. In 1958, he was elected judge of the 8th Judicial Circuit and served as chief judge from 1975 to 1979. In 1982, Judge Scholz retired from the bench and returned to private practice.

During his time on the bench, Judge Scholz presided over high profile cases, fought for higher pay for the county's chief probation officer and the Youth Home superintendent, and he worked tirelessly with community leaders to build the Adams County Youth Home, now the Adams County Juvenile Detention Center—one of only nine facilities of its kind in Illinois.

Hanging above the doorway at the Scholz family farm, there was a sign that read: "You will only be a stranger here but once." Always willing to offer a helping hand, Judge Scholz made time for everyone. He helped young attorneys understand the right way to conduct themselves in and out of the courtroom. As a mentor to countless attorneys, judges, and children, Judge Scholz's mark on the community will endure for years.

I will close with one more story. Years ago, a mother from a Quincy family had been murdered. Her chil-

dren were orphaned, and State welfare officials planned on placing them into different foster homes. Judge Scholz wouldn't hear of it. He said: "No, you are not breaking up this family." The family stayed together, and there is a photo of them standing around Judge Scholz, with the words: our hero, carved into the picture—a hero indeed.

The stories of Judge Scholz's kindness and affection to the children and families in Quincy go on and on—what a legacy and what a great friend to the people of Quincy. Judge Scholz will certainly be missed.

NOMINATION OF MERRICK GARLAND

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday I had the honor of speaking at an event hosted by the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the U.S. Senate on this body's role in considering Supreme Court nominees. The institute is a wonderful organization "dedicated to educating the public about the important role of the Senate in our government." My friend Ted Kennedy loved the Senate and worked hard every day here to improve the lives of the people of Massachusetts and the people of America. I thank Vicki Kennedy for all of her efforts to build the institute. She has also continued the Kennedy legacy by working to advance medical research and health care for all Americans. I was honored by her invitation to speak at the event.

The institute's event was held on the important and timely issue of the Senate's constitutional role in providing advice and consent on nominees to the Supreme Court. As Senator Kennedy once said, "Few responsibilities we have as Senators are more important than our responsibility to advise and consent to the nominations by the President to the Supreme Court." Ted understood the momentous nature of Supreme Court nominations, as well as the Senate's undeniable and irreplaceable constitutional role in providing advice and consent on the President's nominees.

And the Senate Judiciary Committee, on which Senator Kennedy and I served together for years, plays a singularly important role in considering nominees to serve in our Federal judiciary. But that critical role has been abdicated by the Senate Republicans' unprecedented decision to deny any process to Chief Judge Merrick Garland, who has been nominated to the Supreme Court.

In the last 100 years since public confirmation hearings began in the Judiciary Committee for Supreme Court nominees, the Senate has never denied a nominee a hearing and a vote. No nominee has been treated the way Senate Republicans are treating Chief Judge Garland. Even when a majority of the Judiciary Committee did not support a nominee, the committee still reported out the nomination for a vote on the Senate floor. This allowed all

Senators to exercise their duty to consider the nominee.

In fact, when I became chairman of the Judiciary Committee in 2001 during the Bush administration, I and Senator HATCH—who was then the ranking member—memorialized how the committee would continue in this tradition to consider President George W. Bush's Supreme Court nominees. In a letter to all Senators, Senator HATCH and I wrote, "The Judiciary Committee's traditional practice has been to report Supreme Court nominees to the Senate once the Committee has completed its considerations. This has been true even in cases where Supreme Court nominees were opposed by a majority of the Judiciary Committee." Senator HATCH and I agreed to that. And then-Majority Leader Trent Lott agreed, too, saying this back in 2001: "the Senate has a long record allowing the Supreme Court nominees of the President to be given a vote on the floor of the Senate." We all agreed to this because that is what we in the Senate have done for a century, in an open and transparent manner, allowing the American people to see us doing our work.

This is exactly what the Judiciary Committee should be doing this very day. It has now been 42 days since Chief Judge Merrick Garland was nominated to the Supreme Court. If we follow the average confirmation schedule for Supreme Court nominees over the last 40 years, the Judiciary Committee should be convening a hearing today on Chief Judge Garland's nomination. The late Justice Scalia, whom Chief Judge Garland would replace on the Court, received a hearing 42 days after his nomination. And Democrats were in charge when the Senate last voted on a Supreme Court nominee in an election year when Justice Anthony Kennedy was confirmed in 1988. Justice Kennedy received a hearing in the Judiciary Committee just 14 days after President Reagan nominated him. Had he been nominated at the same time as Chief Judge Garland, his hearings would already have been completed.

Last month, the Kennedy Institute released a national poll that showed just 36 percent of Americans know that the Senate confirms Supreme Court nominees. Our response as Senators to this unfortunate fact should not be to deny Chief Judge Merrick Garland a public hearing and a vote, breaking 100 years of Senate tradition and failing to do our jobs as Senators. Instead, our response should be to engage with the American people and to show them through our actions that the Senate can hold up its part of the constitutional framework.

And although many Americans may not be able to tell you that the Senate confirms Supreme Court nominees, a solid majority of the American public does know—by a 2-to-1 margin—that Chief Judge Garland deserves to have a hearing. That strong majority of the public is telling us that the Senate should show up for work and carry out

its constitutional duty by holding a hearing for Chief Judge Garland.

We are hearing that call from so many around the country, including historians, faith groups, civil rights organizations, and legal leaders. In an op-ed yesterday, the president of the Vermont Bar Association, Jennifer Emens-Butler, and others, including a former president of the American Bar Association, made clear that Republicans' obstruction of Chief Judge Garland's nomination undermines the rule of law. They wrote: "As leaders in the legal profession, we are committed to protecting the rule of law. Thus, we cannot remain silent as the Senate refuses to consider Garland. This level of obstructionism is unprecedented in American history and undermines the rule of law, the very foundation on which this great nation was built." I ask unanimous consent that a copy of this op-ed be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

Some Republican Senators have claimed that their unprecedented obstruction against Chief Judge Garland is based on "principle, not the person." There is no principle in refusing to confirm Supreme Court nominees in election years, as the Senate has done over a dozen times, most recently for President Reagan's last nominee to the Court. Furthermore, we have seen Republican Senators and outside interest groups attack Chief Judge Garland's judicial record, but then refuse to allow him the chance to respond at a public hearing. This is not principled, it is not fair, and it is not right.

To deny Chief Judge Garland a public hearing and a vote would be truly historic—but that is not the kind of history the Senate should be proud of. Over the more than 40 years I have served in the Senate, I recall times when the consideration of Supreme Court nominees was controversial.

But in every one of those instances, the nominee received a public hearing and a vote. We did not avoid doing our jobs simply because it was hard.

We must remember why we are here in the United States Senate. We are all here to serve the American people by carrying out our sworn oaths to uphold the Constitution. Protection of our enduring constitutional system requires that we hold our constitutional duties as Senators above the partisan politics of the now. I hope that Republicans will soon reverse course and put aside their obstruction to move forward on Chief Judge Garland's nomination.

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

[From The Hill, Apr. 26, 2016]

SENATE'S REFUSAL TO MOVE ON GARLAND
CONTINUES TO UNDERMINE RULE OF LAW

(By Monte Frank, James R. Silkenat, and
Jennifer Emens-Butler)

A month ago, Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Monte Frank (one of the co-authors of this piece) warned that the Senate's refusal to consider President Obama's nomination of Chief Judge Merrick Garland to the

U.S. Supreme Court would undermine the rule of law. Despite this warning, the Senate Judiciary Committee has continued its blocking tactics and has rebuffed calls for hearings and a vote. As leaders in the legal profession, we are committed to protecting the rule of law. Thus, we cannot remain silent as the Senate refuses to consider Garland. This level of obstructionism is unprecedented in American history and undermines the rule of law, the very foundation on which this great nation was built.

The rule of law is the restriction of the arbitrary exercise of power by subordinating such exercise to well-defined and established laws. As discussed in the earlier piece with Blumenthal, in the United States, the rule of law is grounded in our Constitution, which unambiguously lays out the process for filling vacancies to the Supreme Court. Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution states the roles the president and the Senate must play in the appointment process: "The President . . . shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint . . . Judges of the Supreme Court." The Constitution is also clear that the president's term is four years, not three or three-and-one-fourth years.

Now that Obama has fulfilled his constitutional responsibility and made a nomination promptly to fill the current Supreme Court vacancy, the Constitution requires the Senate to likewise fulfill its responsibility to consider and act promptly on the nominee. The Senate needs to move forward by holding meetings, conducting hearings and ultimately taking a vote.

While Garland is preeminently qualified, having served as chief judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit since 1997, whether the Senate ultimately confirms him is an entirely different question than whether the Senate should even consider him. The current arbitrary exercise of power to deny Garland a hearing and a vote is the kind of abuse the rule of law is designed to protect us from. If the well-defined and established provisions of the Constitution are permitted to be willfully ignored, then the rule of law will be undermined.

In a letter to the leadership of the Senate, 15 past-presidents of the American Bar Association emphasized their utmost respect for the rule of law and the "need for the judicial system to function independently of partisan influences. The founding fathers understood this as well, and structured the constitutional system of government to insulate the judiciary from changing political tides. The stated refusal to fill the ninth seat of the Supreme Court injects a degree of politics into the judicial branch that materially hampers the effective operation of our nation's highest court and the lower courts over which it presides."

The Senate should follow the example set by President Reagan and then-Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Joe Biden (D-Del.) in considering Justice Anthony Kennedy, who was confirmed in an election year. Reagan urged the nation to "join together in a bipartisan effort to fulfill our constitutional obligation of restoring the United States Supreme Court to full strength." He asked the Senate for "prompt hearings conducted in the spirit of cooperation and bipartisanship." Biden responded: "I'm glad the President has made his choice. We will get the process under way and move as rapidly as is prudent. We want to conduct the committee's review with both thoroughness and dispatch." Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) was also on the Senate Judiciary Committee at that time. Now that he is the chair, he should follow the example set by Reagan and Biden.

The Senate's refusal to process the nomination has already impacted the lives of everyday people throughout the United States. If lower court decisions are confirmed simply because of a tie in the Supreme Court, as has already occurred and will continue to occur until the vacancy is filled, then the court will not have created precedent and the lower courts will not be able to rely on those decisions. Open questions of law on significant issues will continue to be left unanswered. To fill this void, the Senate must move forward on a bipartisan basis with meetings and hearings, consideration of and a timely vote on the nominee.

President Reagan's words in 1988 on the confirmation of Justice Kennedy are just as applicable today: "The Federal Judiciary is too important to be made a political football. I would hope, and the American people should expect . . . for the Senate to get to work and act." We urge the Senate to put partisan politics aside for the good of the American people and to avoid undermining the rule of law.

PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I wish to speak in strong support of the United Nations' Paris climate change agreement and the President's decision for the United States to be among the first nations to sign the agreement.

Last Friday, April 22, the United States and more than 170 nations came together in New York to sign the international climate agreement negotiated last year that would slow global warming and help poorer nations most affected by it. I find it very symbolic that April 22, the first day that nations could officially sign the agreement, was also Earth Day. Earth Day is a reminder of our obligation to preserve and protect our environment for our children and future generations to come.

Last year, I joined nine of my Senate colleagues in Paris to attend the 21st United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP 21, where the climate agreement was negotiated. What we witnessed at COP 21 was monumental: 195 countries, representing more than 95 percent of global carbon emissions, came together to adopt the first universal climate agreement that calls for international cooperation on addressing the causes of global warming and helping poorer nations most affected by it.

I am proud to say that the United States was a big part of that effort. President Obama's leadership was key in encouraging China, the world's largest emitter, to submit an aggressive climate action plan, and helping countries to find consensus necessary to make such a landmark agreement.

The Paris agreement establishes a long-term, durable global framework for countries to work together to reduce carbon emissions and keep the global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius in order to avoid some of the worst consequences of climate change. For the first time, countries have committed to putting forward ambitious, nationally determined climate targets and reporting on their

progress towards those targets using a standardized process of review. The Paris agreement encourages transparency, accountability, and collaboration among nations not only to meet their climate targets, but to encourage innovation while doing so.

No country is insulated from the increasingly present and escalating effects of climate change. In the United States, we are seeing it throughout the country, and we are certainly feeling its effects in New Hampshire. Rising temperatures are shortening our fall foliage season, which is so important to our State's tourism economy. Milder winters have led to increases of insect-borne diseases that endanger our wildlife. In New Hampshire, we have already seen a 40 percent decline in our moose population. The changing climate is also putting more stress on sugar maples, and this is already affecting syrup production.

Investments to improve the resiliency of our communities at all levels is critically important to our ability to mitigate the impacts of climate change. And that is what we are doing in New Hampshire. At the grassroots and statewide, Granite Staters recognize the urgency of addressing climate change and are leading the way by reducing pollution and transitioning to a more efficient, clean energy economy.

For example, last month in Durham, the New Hampshire Climate Action Coalition joined with the University of New Hampshire to host a pancake breakfast and discuss the negative impact of climate change on the maple syrup industry. The event featured a panel of local maple syrup producers, scientists, and others who understand the impacts that climate change is having on forests and maple trees. Over 80 people came together to enjoy maple syrup, hear the speakers, and take action to protect our environment.

New Hampshire is also a part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, RGGI—the Nation's first regional cap-and-trade program designed to reduce harmful carbon emissions from the power sector. Through our participation in RGGI, New Hampshire has reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the power sector by nearly 50 percent since 2008 and is on track to meet the administration's Clean Power Plan's carbon-reduction goals 10 years ahead of schedule.

The events happening in New Hampshire show that there truly is broad momentum in the fight against climate change. But in order to achieve our goals, State and local actions must be accompanied by national and international involvement. This is why the international climate change agreement is so essential.

Under the Paris agreement, the United States has made a commitment to reduce carbon emissions by at least 26 percent below 2005 levels by 2025. While this goal is indeed ambitious, it is something that we can achieve. By implementing administrative policies

like the administration's Clean Power Plan, which will reduce pollution from our Nation's dirtiest power plants, and by doing what this Chamber did last week, which was to take up and pass a comprehensive energy bill that will encourage energy efficiency and improve our Nation's energy policies, we can meet our commitments.

The United States must also be responsive to climate change's impact on our friends in the world's least developed and most vulnerable countries. As one of the world's largest emitters of carbon emissions, we have a responsibility to the world on climate change.

Climate change represents an enormous challenge, but the solutions are within reach if we put into place policies that allow for swift action. The world must work together to ensure that the goals of the Paris agreement are realized. We have a responsibility to help protect our children and grandchildren from the most severe consequences of global warming by reducing emissions now.

101ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, last Sunday I had the opportunity to attend the 101st anniversary commemoration of the Armenian genocide, hosted at the Armenian Martyrs Memorial in Providence, RI. I was pleased to be able to join with so many in the Armenian community in my home State for this solemn event.

Over a century ago, the Young Turk leaders of the Ottoman Empire summoned and executed over 200 Armenian community leaders and intellectuals, beginning an 8-year campaign of oppression and massacre.

By 1923, an estimated 1½ million Armenians were killed, and over a half a million survivors were exiled. These atrocities affected the lives of every Armenian living in Asia Minor and, indeed, throughout the world. The survivors of the Armenian Genocide, however, persevered due to their unbreakable spirit and steadfast resolve and went on to greatly contribute to the lands in which they found new homes and communities, including the United States. This genocide should no longer be denied, which is why I have joined with several of my colleagues on resolutions over the years to encourage the United States to officially recognize the Armenian genocide.

But as we remember our history, we must also look to the present and to our future.

Violence against Armenians in Nogorno-Karabakh has escalated in recent months. These attacks on the Armenian people are completely unacceptable and call into question the sincerity with which Azerbaijan has approached recent peace negotiations. We must remain vigilant and do all that we can to encourage Azerbaijan to return to the negotiating table and make a good faith effort to ensure a lasting peace agreement in the region.

As ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, I remain committed to supporting efforts to provide assistance to Armenia to strengthen security, promote economic growth, and support democratic reforms and development.

We also must find a way to come together to recognize our past and to show our unwavering support to those facing persecution today.

TRIBUTE TO DR. RUTH ELLEN WASEM

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, Dr. Ruth Ellen Wasem, a specialist in immigration policy, will be retiring from CRS at the end of this month. Dr. Wasem is a graduate of the University of Michigan, where she received a Ph.D. and M.A. in history. She completed her undergraduate degree at Muskingum College—a private university located in New Concord, OH—where she graduated magna cum laude. Dr. Wasem was raised in Cadiz, OH.

Dr. Wasem came to CRS in 1987 as an analyst in social legislation, where she worked on teenage pregnancy, youth policy, homelessness, and immigration policy. She eventually moved full time into immigration policy, where she became a recognized and leading expert in the field.

Throughout her time at CRS, Dr. Wasem provided substantial legislative support to Members and congressional staff on various aspects of immigration and social welfare policy. Dr. Wasem's work was used by Congress in hearings, legislative development, markups, and preconference negotiations.

Dr. Wasem wrote numerous analytic and concise reports for Congress—well over 300 during her tenure at CRS. Dr. Wasem also testified before congressional committees numerous times throughout her tenure at CRS, providing testimony on issues ranging from asylum to unauthorized migration to immigration and social policy data.

As CRS's immigration team leader, Dr. Wasem served as a mentor to all of the other team members, and she always displayed great generosity and selflessness in devoting time and energy to their professional development.

The Congressional Research Service has given Dr. Wasem a number of outstanding commendations and special achievement awards for legislative analysis in the areas of immigration policy, Haitian relief, health care reform, homeland security, temporary foreign workers, and welfare reform.

Dr. Wasem recently spent a year as a Kluge Staff Fellow at the Library of Congress where she researched legislative efforts to end national origins and race-based immigrant admissions to the United States, all of which culminated in the Immigration Act of 1965. During her time as a Kluge Fellow, Dr. Wasem was awarded the Abba P. Schwartz Research Fellowship, which is administered by the John F.

Kennedy Library Foundation, to further her research in this area.

During her 29 years at CRS—and her 2 years of previous Federal service—Dr. Wasem won the respect and admiration of her colleagues. Her steadfast dedication to serve Congress and her commitment to the highest standards of analytic, unbiased, and timely response to congressional requests for information and analysis have made a positive and lasting contribution to the congressional policy discourse.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING DR. BETTYE CALDWELL

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Dr. Bettye Caldwell, who pioneered early childhood education in the United States.

Dr. Caldwell's groundbreaking research at Syracuse University in the 1960s paved the way for the national Head Start Program and was the inspiration for countless researchers and programs to educate young children in the United States and around the world.

She received her bachelor's degree from Baylor University in 1945 and went on to earn a master's from the University of Iowa and her doctorate from Washington University in St. Louis.

As a developmental psychologist, her work with pediatrician Dr. Julius B. Richmond convinced her of the need infants and toddlers have for emotional and cognitive support. They focused on the development gap for children in disadvantaged homes and sought to combine childcare with education, while keeping families strong. With this mission, she founded and directed the Children's Center in Syracuse, NY. It was the first enrichment program for young children in the United States.

Dr. Caldwell and her husband, Dr. Fred Caldwell, moved to Little Rock, AR, in 1969, where she became the principal of the Kramer School. Under her leadership, "the Kramer Project" gained national attention as the site of the Center for Early Development and Education. Bettye's family notes that she considered the Kramer School her most significant work.

She joined the faculty of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in the mid-1970s and continued at the university for almost 20 years. UALR chancellor Joel E. Anderson noted recently, "Dr. Caldwell changed the way parents and policymakers understood early childhood development." She eventually retired from UAMS College of Medicine as a professor of pediatrics in child development.

Many scholars know her best as one of the developers of the HOME research tool that helps observe the impact of a supportive home environment on a child's development. It is used today by researchers around the world.

A popular speaker and prolific writer, Dr. Caldwell spoke in all 50 States and many foreign countries. She published more than 300 articles and edited several books. She served as president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and gave her time and knowledge to organizations in Arkansas and throughout the Nation.

She received many honors and awards for her work, including being named Woman of the Year by Ladies Home Journal in 1978. Later in life, she was honored with the prestigious Dolley Madison Award for Outstanding Lifelong Contribution in 2001.

Dr. Caldwell passed away on Sunday, April 17, 2016, at the age of 91. In addition to her incredible professional contributions, her family noted, "There was just little that Bettye could not do." She was married for 58 years to her college sweetheart, raised twins—her son Paul Caldwell and daughter Elizabeth Lawson—and adored her two granddaughters, Becca Ray and Rachel Caldwell. She was a talented seamstress, gourmet cook, and gardener. She loved to sing and enjoyed having guests in her home.

I am honored to work with Dr. Caldwell's granddaughter, Becca, and to know what an extraordinary legacy she left as an educator, researcher, mother, and grandmother. She was a true leader and pioneer whose work will continue to impact millions of children each day.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:51 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it request the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 1523. An act to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the National Estuary Program, and for other purposes.

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

H.R. 223. An act to authorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1684. An act to amend the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to impose penalties and provide for the recovery of removal costs and damages in connection with certain discharges of oil from foreign offshore units, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2615. An act to establish the Virgin Islands of the United States Centennial Commission.

H.R. 2908. An act to adopt the bison as the national mammal of the United States.

H.R. 3583. An act to reform and improve the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Office of Emergency Communications, and the Office of Health Affairs of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4096. An act to amend the Volcker Rule to permit certain investment advisers to share a similar name with a private eq-

uity fund, subject to certain restrictions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4359. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that Federal employees may not be placed on administrative leave for more than 14 days during any year for misconduct or poor performance, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4360. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that a Federal employee who leaves Government service while under personnel investigation shall have a notation of any adverse findings under such investigation placed in such employee's official personnel file, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4698. An act to enhance aviation by requiring airport security assessments and a security coordination enhancement plan, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4820. An act to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to use the testimonials of former violent extremists or their associates in order to counter terrorist recruitment, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1493) to protect and preserve international cultural property at risk due to political instability, armed conflict, or natural or other disasters, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 1684. An act to amend the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to impose penalties and provide for the recovery of removal costs and damages in connection with certain discharges of oil from foreign offshore units, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 2615. An act to establish the Virgin Islands of the United States Centennial Commission; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 3583. An act to reform and improve the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Office of Emergency Communications, and the Office of Health Affairs of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 4096. An act to amend the Volcker Rule to permit certain investment advisers to share a similar name with a private equity fund, subject to certain restrictions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 4359. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that Federal employees may not be placed on administrative leave for more than 14 days during any year for misconduct or poor performance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 4360. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that a Federal employee who leaves Government service while under personnel investigation shall have a notation of any adverse findings under such investigation placed in such employee's official personnel file, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 4698. An act to enhance aviation by requiring airport security assessments and a security coordination enhancement plan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 4820. An act to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to use the

testimonials of former violent extremists or their associates in order to counter terrorist recruitment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 223. An act to authorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2908. An act to adopt the bison as the national mammal of the United States.

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-5271. A communication from the Director of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Agency Final Regulations Implementing Executive Order 13559: Fundamental Principles and Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations" (RIN0503-AA55) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 13, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-5272. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Five-year Comprehensive Range Plan for Melroe Military Range"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5273. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Yemen that was originally declared in Executive Order 13611 on May 16, 2012; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5274. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995, with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5275. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulations, Office of the Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Agency Final Regulations Implementing Executive Order 13559: Fundamental Principles and Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations" (RIN2501-AD65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 13, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5276. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the export to the People's Republic of China of items not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5277. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Research, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Safety Eval-

uation of BWRVIP-100, Revision 1, 'BWRVIP Vessel and Internals Project: Updated Assessment of the Fracture Toughness of Irradiated Stainless Steel for BWR Core Shrouds'" (BWRVIP-100, Revision 1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5278. A communication from the Regulatory Policy Officer, Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, U.S. Agency for International Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Agency Final Regulations Implementing Executive Order 13559: Fundamental Principles and Policymaking Criteria for Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations" (RIN0412-AA75) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 13, 2016; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5279. A communication from the Director, Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Agency Final Regulations Implementing Executive Order 13559: Fundamental Principles and Policymaking Criteria for Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations" (RIN0991-AB96) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 13, 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5280. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Office of the Secretary, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Agency Final Regulations Implementing Executive Order 13559: Fundamental Principles and Policymaking Criteria for Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations" (RIN1290-AA29) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 13, 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5281. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Agency Final Regulations Implementing Executive Order 13559: Fundamental Principles and Policymaking Criteria for Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations" (RIN1895-AA01) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 13, 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5282. A communication from the Senior Advisor to the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Office of the Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Agency Final Regulations Implementing Executive Order 13559: Fundamental Principles and Policymaking Criteria for Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations" (RIN1601-AA40) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 13, 2016; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5283. A communication from the Acting Director, Pay and Leave, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Family and Medical Leave Act; Definition of a Spouse" (RIN3206-AM90) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2016; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5284. A communication from the Associate Administrator for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's

fiscal year 2015 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-5285. A communication from the Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Agency Final Regulations Implementing Executive Order 13559: Fundamental Principles and Policymaking Criteria for Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations" (RIN1105-AB45) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 13, 2016; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5286. A communication from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Agency Final Regulations Implementing Executive Order 13559: Fundamental Principles and Policymaking Criteria for Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations" (RIN2900-AP05) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 13, 2016; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-5287. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting proposed legislation relative to major medical facility construction projects and major medical facility leases for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Veterans' 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-160. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan urging the United States Congress to enact legislation that will enhance hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, and other outdoor recreational opportunities for sportsmen and women nationwide; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 228

Whereas, Conservation in the United States is funded primarily by sportsmen and women. This American System of Conservation Funding is a user pays—public benefits approach that includes excise taxes on hunting, fishing, and boating equipment. This strategy is widely recognized as the most successful model of fish and wildlife management funding in the world; and

Whereas, Through the pursuit of their outdoor passions, sportsmen and women support hundreds of thousands of jobs and contribute billions to our economy annually through salaries, wages, and product purchases; and

Whereas, Currently pending legislation in the U.S. Senate would create or renew several important programs that are vital to the continued conservation of our natural resources, the health of America's local economies, and the enhancement and protection of our time-honored outdoor pastimes. Senate Bill 659, the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2015, pulls together fourteen separate programs that impact sportsmen. The bill will advance the cause of making public lands more accessible for multiple recreational uses including hunting and fishing; and

Whereas, The bill will renew several important programs, including reauthorization of the federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The reauthorization of these

programs as well as the creation of new programs will enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation enthusiasts, improve access to public lands, and help boost the outdoor recreation economy. Conserving our fish and wildlife resources and their habitats, and ensuring that future generations have access to public lands and continued recreational opportunities protects our hunting, shooting, and conservation heritage for generations to come: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the United States Congress to enact legislation that will enhance hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, and other outdoor recreational opportunities for sportsmen and women nationwide; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 438. A bill to provide for the repair, replacement, and maintenance of certain Indian irrigation projects (Rept. No. 114-245).

By Mr. ALEXANDER, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 480. A bill to amend and reauthorize the controlled substance monitoring program under section 399O of the Public Health Service Act.

S. 1455. A bill to provide access to medication-assisted therapy, and for other purposes.

S. 2256. A bill to establish programs for health care provider training in Federal health care and medical facilities, to establish Federal co-prescribing guidelines, to establish a grant program with respect to naloxone, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. THUNE for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*Andrew J. Read, of North Carolina, to be a Member of the Marine Mammal Commission for a term expiring May 13, 2016.

*Coast Guard nominations beginning with Jennifer K. Grzelak and ending with Andrew R. Sheffield, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on December 14, 2015.

*Coast Guard nominations beginning with Rear Adm. (lh) Meredith L. Austin and ending with Rear Adm. (lh) Paul F. Thomas, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 24, 2016.

*Coast Guard nominations beginning with Jonathan P. Tschudy and ending with Matthew B. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 17, 2016.

*Coast Guard nomination of Vice Adm. Charles D. Michel, to be Admiral.

*Coast Guard nomination of Vice Adm. Charles W. Ray, to be Vice Admiral.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed sub-

ject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. 2856. A bill to streamline certain feasibility studies and avoid duplication of effort; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2857. A bill to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain membership status for India in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 2858. A bill to amend part D of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate for lower prices for Medicare prescription drugs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. FRANKEN:

S. 2859. A bill to establish a competitive grant program to incentivize States to implement comprehensive reforms and innovative strategies to significantly improve postsecondary outcomes for low-income and first generation college students, including increasing postsecondary enrollment and graduation rates, to reduce the need of postsecondary students for remedial education, to increase alignment of high school and postsecondary education, and to promote innovation in postsecondary education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2860. A bill to establish the Climate Change Advisory Commission to develop recommendations, frameworks, and guidelines for projects to respond to the impacts of climate change, to issue Federal bonds, the proceeds of which shall be used to fund projects that aid in adaptation to climate change, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ROUNDS:

S. 2861. A bill to require the Secretary of Defense to review and monitor prescribing practices at military treatment facilities of pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of post-traumatic stress; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2862. A bill to amend section 3606 of title 18, United States Code, to grant probation officers authority to arrest hostile third parties who obstruct or impede a probation officer in the performance of official duties; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2863. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to remove limitations on Medicaid benefits for persons in custody pending disposition of charges; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BENNET, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 2864. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prevent catastrophic

out-of-pocket spending on prescription drugs for seniors and individuals with disabilities; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 2865. A bill to promote stability and security in the Asia-Pacific maritime domains, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 2866. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the sharing of health information concerning and individual's substance abuse treatment by certain entities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself, Mr. HELLER, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 2867. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to establish an Office of the Advocate for Small Business Capital Formation and a Small Business Capital Formation Advisory Committee, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SCOTT (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 2868. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the deferral of inclusion in gross income for capital gains reinvested in economically distressed zones; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

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

S. Res. 442. A resolution condemning the terrorist attacks in Brussels and honoring the memory of the United States citizens murdered in those attacks, and offering thoughts and prayers for all the victims, condolences to their families, resolve to support the Belgian people, and the pledge to defend democracy and stand in solidarity with the country of Belgium and all our allies in the face of continuing terrorist attacks on freedom and liberty; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. Res. 443. A resolution designating April, 2016, as "National Sarcoidosis Awareness Month"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. Res. 444. A resolution honoring the life and achievements of Prince; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 445. A resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of Coast Guard aviation and the contribution of Coast Guard aviators to naval aviation and the safety and security of the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. BURR):

S. Res. 446. A resolution designating April 2016 as "National 9-1-1 Education Month"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 27

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from California

(Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 27, a bill to make wildlife trafficking a predicate offense under racketeering and money laundering statutes and the Travel Act, to provide for the use for conservation purposes of amounts from civil penalties, fines, forfeitures, and restitution under such statutes based on such violations, and for other purposes.

S. 71

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 71, a bill to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality towards the labor relations of Federal Government contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects.

S. 298

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 298, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide States with the option of providing services to children with medically complex conditions under the Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program through a care coordination program focused on improving health outcomes for children with medically complex conditions and lowering costs, and for other purposes.

S. 579

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 579, a bill to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 to strengthen the independence of the Inspectors General, and for other purposes.

S. 616

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 616, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide recruitment and retention incentives for volunteer emergency service workers.

S. 804

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 804, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to specify coverage of continuous glucose monitoring devices, and for other purposes.

S. 812

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 812, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 901

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a co-

sponsor of S. 901, a bill to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a national center for research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of the descendants of veterans exposed to toxic substances during service in the Armed Forces that are related to that exposure, to establish an advisory board on such health conditions, and for other purposes.

S. 1062

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1062, a bill to improve the Federal Pell Grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 1567

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1567, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for a review of the characterization or terms of discharge from the Armed Forces of individuals with mental health disorders alleged to affect terms of discharge.

S. 1996

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1996, a bill to streamline the employer reporting process and strengthen the eligibility verification process for the premium assistance tax credit and cost-sharing subsidy.

S. 2034

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2034, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide additional aggravating factors for the imposition of the death penalty based on the status of the victim.

S. 2279

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2279, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program to increase efficiency in the recruitment and hiring by the Department of Veterans Affairs of health care workers that are undergoing separation from the Armed Forces, to create uniform credentialing standards for certain health care professionals of the Department, and for other purposes.

S. 2392

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2392, a bill to enhance beneficiary and provider protections and improve transparency in the Medicare Advantage market, and for other purposes.

S. 2437

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2437, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the burial of the cremated remains of per-

sons who served as Women's Air Forces Service Pilots in Arlington National Cemetery, and for other purposes.

S. 2441

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2441, a bill to provide that certain Cuban entrants are ineligible to receive refugee assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 2454

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2454, a bill to limit the period of authorization of new budget authority provided in appropriation Acts, to require analysis, appraisal, and evaluation of existing programs for which continued new budget authority is proposed to be authorized by committees of Congress, and for other purposes.

S. 2551

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2551, a bill to help prevent acts of genocide and mass atrocities, which threaten national and international security, by enhancing United States civilian capacities to prevent and mitigate such crises.

S. 2595

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2595, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 2628

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2628, a bill to authorize the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, and for other purposes.

S. 2644

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2644, a bill to reauthorize the Federal Communications Commission for fiscal years 2017 and 2018, and for other purposes.

S. 2702

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2702, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals with disabilities to save additional amounts in their ABLE accounts above the current annual maximum contribution if they work and earn income.

S. 2703

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2703, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow

rollovers between 529 programs and ABLE accounts.

S. 2704

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2704, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the age requirement with respect to eligibility for qualified ABLE programs.

S. 2707

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) and the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) were added as cosponsors of S. 2707, a bill to require the Secretary of Labor to nullify the proposed rule regarding defining and delimiting the exemptions for executive, administrative, professional, outside sales, and computer employees, to require the Secretary of Labor to conduct a full and complete economic analysis with improved economic data on small businesses, nonprofit employers, Medicare or Medicaid dependent health care providers, and small governmental jurisdictions, and all other employers, and minimize the impact on such employers, before promulgating any substantially similar rule, and to provide a rule of construction regarding the salary threshold exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, and for other purposes.

S. 2736

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2736, a bill to improve access to durable medical equipment for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 2760

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2760, a bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to address certain issues related to the extension of consumer credit, and for other purposes.

S. 2790

At the request of Mr. HELLER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2790, a bill to provide requirements for the appropriate Federal banking agencies when requesting or ordering a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account, to provide for additional requirements related to subpoenas issued under the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989, and for other purposes.

S. 2796

At the request of Mr. ROUNDS, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2796, a bill to repeal certain obsolete laws relating to Indians.

S. 2843

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Min-

nesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2843, a bill to provide emergency supplemental appropriations to address the Zika crisis.

S. 2845

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2845, a bill to extend the termination of sanctions with respect to Venezuela under the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014.

S. RES. 432

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 432, a resolution supporting respect for human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia.

AMENDMENT NO. 3857

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3857 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2028, a bill making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3877

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3877 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2028, a bill making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. 2856. A bill to streamline certain feasibility studies and avoid duplication of effort; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2856

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 "Corps' Obligation to Assist in Safeguarding Texas Act" or the "COAST Act".

SEC. 2. COASTAL TEXAS PROTECTION AND RESTORATION STUDY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Study—

(1) the Secretary of the Army shall take into consideration studies, data, or information developed by the Gulf Coast Community Protection and Recovery District to expedite completion of the Study; and

(2) any studies, data, or information used in the development of the final recommenda-

tions of the Chief of Engineers shall be credited against the non-Federal share of study costs.

(b) EXPEDITED COMPLETION.—The Secretary shall expedite completion of the reports for the Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Study and, if the Secretary determines that a project described in the completed report is justified, proceed directly to project preconstruction, engineering, and design.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2857. A bill to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain membership status for India in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2857

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

SECTION 1. PARTICIPATION OF INDIA IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION REGIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Republic of India is the world's ninth largest economy in nominal terms and the third largest economy based on purchasing-power parity.

(2) The United States-India partnership is vital to United States strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific region and across the globe, and is an integral aspect to the Administration's Rebalance to Asia.

(3) United States-India bilateral trade and investment continue to expand, supporting thousands of United States jobs.

(4) The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) regional economic forum is the premier Asia-Pacific economic forum with a goal to support sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

(5) APEC works to champion free, open trade and investment, to promote and accelerate regional economic integration, to encourage economic and technical cooperation, to enhance human security, and to facilitate a favorable and sustainable business environment.

(6) APEC held a moratorium on new membership from 1997 to 2010, which has since been lifted.

(7) India has pursued membership in APEC for over 20 years, and became an APEC observer in November 2011 at the invitation of the United States, when the forum met in Hawaii.

(8) India enjoys a location within the Asia-Pacific region which provides an avenue for continued trade and investment partnerships with APEC member states.

(9) India has been or is pursuing bilateral or multilateral trade agreements with the majority of APEC member states.

(10) India's "Look East, Act East" strategy to expand economic engagement with East and Southeast Asia demonstrates its effort to pursue external oriented, market-driven economic policies.

(b) ACTIONS.—The Secretary of State shall—

(1) develop a strategy to obtain membership status for India in APEC, including participation in related meetings, working groups, activities, and mechanisms; and

(2) actively urge APEC member states to support such membership status for India.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to Congress a report, in unclassified form, describing the United States strategy to obtain membership status for India in APEC. Such report shall be updated and submitted annually until such time as India obtains membership in APEC. Each such report shall include the following:

(1) A description of the efforts the Secretary has made to encourage APEC member states to promote India's bid to obtain membership status.

(2) The further steps the Secretary will take to assist India in obtaining membership status for APEC.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2862. A bill to amend section 3606 of title 18, United States Code, to grant probation officers authority to arrest hostile third parties who obstruct or impede a probation officer in the performance of official duties; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the Probation Officer Protection Act, which I introduced today with Senator FEINSTEIN. I would like to begin by thanking Senator FEINSTEIN for cosponsoring this bill and also thank Representatives REICHERT and PASCRELL for introducing companion legislation in the House.

Under current law, a Federal probation officer may arrest a probationer or individual on supervised release if the officer has probable cause to believe that the offender has violated a condition of his or her probation or release. The officer may make the arrest with or without a warrant.

In practice, formal arrests by probation officers are rare. Rather, probation officers use this authority to lawfully engage in less restrictive uses of force, such as ordering an offender to stand aside during a search; instructing an offender not to interfere with the officer's movements; or, in rare cases, temporarily restraining an offender who poses a physical danger.

Current law does not, however, address a probation officer's arrest authority in situations where a third party attempts to physically obstruct the officer or cause the officer physical harm. Although obstructing a probation officer in the performance of his or her official duties is illegal, when a probation officer encounters an uncooperative or violent third party, the officer may be forced to retreat because he or she lacks authority to restrain the third party. This lack of authority and resulting need to retreat exposes probation officers to greater risk of harm and allows the third party—along with any evidence or individual the third party is attempting to shield—to elude capture. As a result, evidence that an offender has violated a condition of his or her probation or supervised release, or evidence of other criminal activity, may be lost.

In some circumstances, a probation officer may be able to enlist the assistance of local police in responding to a

hostile third party. But this is not, in and of itself, an adequate solution. First, unless the probation officer knows in advance that he or she is likely to encounter a hostile third party and can find an available police officer to accompany him or her, the probation officer must wait for police backup to arrive. This is often not a viable option. Second, even if a local police officer is available to accompany the probation officer, because the probation officer lacks arrest authority, he or she cannot lawfully assist the police officer if the police officer is accosted. Third, requiring federal probation officers to rely on local law enforcement in responding to uncooperative or violent third parties burdens local police departments and diverts police resources from other uses.

My bill addresses these problems by authorizing Federal probation officers to arrest a third party if there is probable cause to believe the third party has forcibly assaulted, resisted, opposed, impeded, intimidated, or interfered with the officer, or a fellow probation officer, while the officer was engaged in the performance of official duties. This language parallels 18 U.S.C. §111, which makes it a crime to forcibly assault, resist, oppose, impede, intimidate, or interfere with an officer or employee of the United States while the officer or employee is engaged in the performance of official duties.

The bill additionally provides that this arrest authority shall be exercised in accordance with rules and regulations prescribed by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

It is important to note, that this legislation does not give probation officers general arrest authority. Rather, it merely authorizes arrest in the narrow circumstance where a third party forcibly interferes with a probation officer in the course of the officer's performance of his or her official duties. This limited arrest authority will protect officers, offenders, and third parties alike by preventing obstruction from escalating to actual violence, consistent with the rehabilitative mission of the Federal probation system. State probation officers in many jurisdictions have similar third-party arrest authority.

This legislation has the strong support of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, and numerous other law enforcement groups. It will make a meaningful difference in the lives of our Federal probation officers and local police officers and in the homes and communities they serve.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 442—CONDEMNING THE TERRORIST ATTACKS IN BRUSSELS AND HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE UNITED STATES CITIZENS MURDERED IN THOSE ATTACKS, AND OFFERING THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS FOR ALL THE VICTIMS, CONDOLENCES TO THEIR FAMILIES, RESOLVE TO SUPPORT THE BELGIAN PEOPLE, AND THE PLEDGE TO DEFEND DEMOCRACY AND STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE COUNTRY OF BELGIUM AND ALL OUR ALLIES IN THE FACE OF CONTINUING TERRORIST ATTACKS ON FREEDOM AND LIBERTY

Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 442

Whereas, on March 22, 2016, three suicide bombers and their accomplices conducted three coordinated terrorist attacks across the city of Brussels, Belgium, killing at least 32 civilians and wounding over 340 innocent men, women, and children;

Whereas these terrorist attacks were conducted in order to maximize casualties, the 7:58 a.m. explosions targeted the Brussels-Zaventem Airport morning rush and the 9:10 a.m. metro attack targeted those commuting to and from the Maelbeek metro station, which is near the United States Embassy and the European Union headquarters buildings;

Whereas evidence suggests that these attacks explicitly targeted United States interests by placing explosive devices in front of the American Airlines, Delta, and United Airlines check-in counters;

Whereas the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) has claimed responsibility for these attacks, which marks the second time in just over four months that ISIS has used suicide bombers to attack innocent civilians in a Western European capital;

Whereas the world still grieves for those innocent lives lost and injured in Paris, the 129 murdered civilians and the 350 injured men, women, and children;

Whereas Charles Michel, the Prime Minister of Belgium, has responded to these horrors by calling for solidarity: "[W]hat we feared has happened. Our country and citizens have been hit by a terrorist attack, in a violent and cowardly way . . . To those who have chosen to be the barbaric enemies of liberty, of democracy, of fundamental values, I want to say with the greatest strength that we will remain assembled and united.";

Whereas President Barack Obama has called these attacks "yet another reminder that the world must unite; we must be together, regardless of nationality or race or faith, in fighting against the scourge of terrorism";

Whereas Justin and Stephanie Shults, an American married couple, were murdered at the airport, where they had just taken Stephanie's mother for her flight back to the United States after visiting the Shults' home in Belgium;

Whereas Justin and Stephanie Shults met at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, close to both where Justin grew up in Gatlinburg, Tennessee and Stephanie grew up in Lexington, Kentucky;

Whereas Justin and Stephanie lived in Brussels and worked for CLARCOR and Mars,

respectively, both United States corporations;

Whereas Alexander and Sascha Pinczowski, Dutch siblings who called New York home, were murdered at the airport while speaking on the phone with their mother;

Whereas Mayor Bill de Blasio called Alexander and Sascha “two of our own”;

Whereas Gail Minglana Martinez, wife of United States’ Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Kato Martinez, was injured in the airport attack with her husband of 21 years and their four children;

Whereas that blast ultimately claimed the life of Gail Minglana Martinez, a native of Corpus Christi, Texas;

Whereas the Governments of Belgium, France, and Germany have expanded counterterrorism operations, resulting in the arrest of over twelve suspected terrorists across their countries between March 24 and 25, 2016; and

Whereas these attacks represent a continued assault on freedom and democracy and an unmitigated evil that plagues the Middle East and the wider world, against which the United States and our allies must stand united in fighting: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the terrorist attacks on March 22, 2016, in Brussels, Belgium that killed 32 people and injured hundreds;

(2) honors the memories of Justin and Stephanie Shults, Alexander and Sascha Pinczowski, and Gail Martinez, who were murdered by the Islamic State in these heinous terrorist attacks;

(3) expresses its heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies for the victims of these attacks and their families;

(4) renews the solidarity of the Government and people of the United States with the people and the leadership of Belgium, as well as those throughout the world who work to eliminate terrorism;

(5) pledges United States support to Belgium, Europe, and all United States allies in the effort to defeat ISIS and associated groups; and

(6) reaffirms its commitment to the transatlantic relationship and the shared values of freedom, democracy, and human rights.

SENATE RESOLUTION 443—DESIGNATING APRIL, 2016, AS “NATIONAL SARCOIDOSIS AWARENESS MONTH”

Mr. SCHUMER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 443

Whereas sarcoidosis is an inflammatory disease that can affect almost any organ of the body, but most commonly affects the lungs;

Whereas sarcoidosis causes the immune system to overreact, causing damage to tissue in the form of granulomas, which are microscopic clumps of inflammatory cells, and interference with the functioning of an organ when too many granulomas form in that organ;

Whereas sarcoidosis is a multisystem disorder, which means that symptoms vary depending on which organ is affected, and ⅓ of individuals diagnosed with sarcoidosis will experience damage to multiple organs;

Whereas the cause of sarcoidosis is unknown;

Whereas sarcoidosis is classified as a rare disease, but there are an estimated 200,000 individuals in the United States who live with sarcoidosis;

Whereas sarcoidosis affects all demographics, regardless of age, race, or gender,

but is most common among adults between the ages of 20 and 40 and more likely to be severe and chronic in African-Americans;

Whereas sarcoidosis was the first diagnosis for an overwhelming majority of rescue workers responding to the site of the attacks on September 11, 2001;

Whereas sarcoidosis patients are often left undertreated or misdiagnosed due to the diverse presentation of sarcoidosis, the lack of knowledge of sarcoidosis among some physicians, and the diagnosis of sarcoidosis through exclusions;

Whereas the average time it takes to diagnose sarcoidosis is 7 years, and many sarcoidosis patients struggle to find knowledgeable physicians and emotional support resources relating to sarcoidosis;

Whereas treatment options for sarcoidosis are limited due in part to the lack of informative research and funding specific to sarcoidosis;

Whereas the Sarcoidosis of Long Island and the Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research—

(1) actively advocate for more research to better understand how environmental or occupational exposures may increase the risk of sarcoidosis; and

(2) strive to serve individuals afflicted by sarcoidosis by focusing efforts relating to sarcoidosis on public policy, research, funding, patient services, public awareness, education, and finding a cure; and

Whereas April 2016 is appropriate to designate as “National Sarcoidosis Awareness Month”, with worldwide events—

(1) to increase public awareness of the need to support individuals with sarcoidosis;

(2) to raise awareness of the environmental and occupational issues associated with sarcoidosis; and

(3) to educate medical professionals who care for individuals with sarcoidosis: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of “National Sarcoidosis Awareness Month”; and

(2) designates April 2016 as “National Sarcoidosis Awareness Month”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 444—HONORING THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF PRINCE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. FRANKEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 444

Whereas Prince Rogers Nelson (referred to in this preamble as “Prince”) was born on June 7, 1958, in Minneapolis, Minnesota;

Whereas Prince developed an interest in music at an early age and wrote his first song at the age of 7 years;

Whereas Prince pioneered the Minneapolis sound, which is a mixture of funk, rock, and pop that emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s and influenced music for decades;

Whereas Prince and his band, the Revolution, shot many scenes of the classic film “Purple Rain” at First Avenue, making the downtown Minneapolis music venue a landmark;

Whereas Prince was a superstar composer, an amazing performer, and a music innovator with a fierce belief in the independence of his art;

Whereas Prince—

(1) sold more than 100,000,000 records worldwide;

(2) released 39 studio albums;

(3) had 5 number 1 Billboard hits; and

(4) had 40 singles in the top 100 songs;

Whereas Prince won 7 Grammy Awards, an Academy Award, and a Golden Globe Award;

Whereas Prince was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2004, the first year in which Prince was eligible for induction;

Whereas in 2010, Prince accepted a Black Entertainment Television Lifetime Achievement Award;

Whereas Prince wrote songs about Minnesota sports teams, including “Purple and Gold” during the Minnesota Viking’s run to the 2010 National Football Conference championship game, and held a concert for the Minnesota Lynx after the Minnesota Lynx won their third Women’s National Basketball Association championship;

Whereas even after all of his success, Prince still called the State of Minnesota home and never lost the sense that he was a beloved son, a neighbor, and the superstar next door;

Whereas Prince reminded the people of the United States that “there’s a world waiting for us after this life, a world of never ending happiness, where you can always see the sun, day or night”; and

Whereas on April 21, 2016, Prince passed away at his Paisley Park Estate in Chanhassen, Minnesota, leaving behind millions of fans and a legacy of music that touched hearts, opened minds, and made the people of the United States want to dance: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate honors the life of Prince Rogers Nelson and his achievements as a musician, composer, innovator, and cultural icon.

SENATE RESOLUTION 445—RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF COAST GUARD AVIATION AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF COAST GUARD AVIATORS TO NAVAL AVIATION AND THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 445

Whereas, on December 17, 1903, members of the United States Lifesaving Service stationed at Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, assisted the Wright brothers during their first successful flight;

Whereas April 1, 1916, marks the official establishment of Coast Guard aviation as the date on which the first Coast Guard aviator, Third Lieutenant Elmer F. Stone, reported to United States Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, for flight training;

Whereas, on August 29, 1916, Congress authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to establish 10 Coast Guard air stations;

Whereas Coast Guard First Lieutenant Elmer F. Stone—

(1) took off from the Naval Air Station at Rockaway, New York, on May 8, 1919, and landed in Lisbon, Portugal, on May 27, 1919, completing the first successful trans-Atlantic flight; and

(2) was later assigned to duty with the United States Navy as a test pilot, during which First Lieutenant Stone aided in the development of shipboard catapult systems and arresting gear for use on United States Navy aircraft carriers;

Whereas in early 1925—

(1) the first permanent Coast Guard air station was established at Ten Pound Island, Massachusetts; and

(2) Lieutenant Commander Carl von Paulsen, with approval of the Commandant of the

Coast Guard, initiated the transfer to the Coast Guard of a surplus Navy aircraft for 1 year and during that year, Lieutenant Commander von Paulsen coordinated daily patrols to combat alcohol smuggling in the waters off New England;

Whereas the Coast Guard Air Station Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn, New York, was designated as a helicopter training base on January 14, 1942, at which

(1) the Coast Guard led the rotary wing training program of the military; and

(2) by 1944, Coast Guard instructor pilots had trained 125 military helicopter pilots from the United States and Great Britain and 200 helicopter mechanics;

Whereas, on January 3, 1944, despite high winds and blowing snow that closed all of the airfields in the New York area, Commander Frank Erickson, the first Coast Guard helicopter pilot, flew a Sikorsky helicopter from New York City to Sandy Hook, New Jersey, to deliver 2 cases of blood plasma for 150 injured United States Navy sailors, completing the flight in just 14 minutes and conducting the first lifesaving helicopter flight;

Whereas, on March 15, 1946, the Coast Guard first used aircraft to scout for ice and determine the limits of the ice fields along critical North Atlantic shipping lanes in support of the International Ice Patrol and since that date, Coast Guard surveillance aircraft have conducted the primary reconnaissance work for the International Ice Patrol, monitoring for ships transiting the North Atlantic the movement of icebergs throughout thousands of square miles of ocean;

Whereas, on December 17, 1951, President Harry Truman presented to the Coast Guard, the Department of Defense, and the helicopter industry the Collier Trophy in a joint award for outstanding development and use of rotary-winged aircraft for air rescue operations;

Whereas Bobby Wilkes—

(1) on March 25, 1957, was designated as Coast Guard aviator number 735; and

(2) was the first African-American—

(A) Coast Guard aviator;

(B) promoted to the rank of captain in the Coast Guard; and

(C) to command a Coast Guard air station;

Whereas, on January 9, 1963, the Coast Guard received the first of 99 HH-52A helicopters, which was instrumental in the rescue of more than 15,000 people during its 26 years of service, more lives than have been rescued by any other helicopter;

Whereas, on March 31, 1967, the Coast Guard established an aviator exchange program with the United States Air Force that authorized Coast Guard pilots to serve with combat search and rescue forces during the Vietnam War and as part of the program, 11 Coast Guard pilots served heroically with Air Force pilots on harrowing missions behind enemy lines during the rescue of downed United States airmen;

Whereas, on March 4, 1977, Janna Lambine was designated as Coast Guard aviator number 1812, becoming the first woman Coast Guard aviator;

Whereas, on October 9, 1982, a Coast Guard aircraft participated in the first rescue mission using a satellite search and rescue system;

Whereas, on October 30, 1984, Congress authorized the Coast Guard to establish a Rescue Swimmer program to train personnel to rescue incapacitated people from the water and since that date, Coast Guard Rescue Swimmers have demonstrated exceptional bravery and dedication during the rescue of innumerable people from the ocean under extreme conditions;

Whereas Commander Bruce E. Melnick—

(1) on June 5, 1987, became the first Coast Guard aviator to participate in the space program; and

(2) in October 1990, serving as a mission specialist aboard STS-41, became the first Coast Guard aviator to complete a space mission;

Whereas, on February 13, 1991, during Operation Desert Storm, 2 HU-25A Falcon jets from Air Station Cape Cod, equipped with specialized oil detection technology—

(1) were deployed to Saudi Arabia to serve with the interagency oil spill assessment team;

(2) provided a critical service by mapping over 40,000 square miles to locate every drop of oil on the water after 1 of the worst oil spills in history;

Whereas, on June 24, 2005, Lieutenant Junior Grade Jeanine McIntosh-Menze was designated as Coast Guard aviator number 3775, becoming the first African-American woman Coast Guard aviator;

Whereas in the weeks following Hurricane Katrina, 1 of the worst natural disasters in United States history, the heroic efforts of Coast Guard flight crews contributed to—

(1) the rescue of more than 33,000 people; and

(2) the delivery of nearly 2,000,000 pounds of relief supplies;

Whereas, on October 29, 2012, during Hurricane Sandy, the heroic efforts of Coast Guard flight crews contributed to the rescue of 14 sailors aboard the *HMS Bounty*, during which the Coast Guard flight crews located the shipwrecked sailors and performed, at great personal risk, a helicopter-borne night rescue in 18-foot seas and gale-force winds; and

Whereas, since 1916, 4,493 Coast Guard aviators have been trained at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida—

(1) in preparation for assignment to operational Coast Guard air stations; and

(2) in support of the national defense, law enforcement, and maritime safety, security, and stewardship missions of the Coast Guard around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes 100 years of Coast Guard aviation; and

(2) honors past and present Coast Guard aviators who have served in support of the safety and security of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 446—DESIGNATING APRIL 2016 AS “NATIONAL 9-1-1 EDUCATION MONTH”

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. BARR) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 446

Whereas 9-1-1 is recognized throughout the United States as the number to call in an emergency to receive immediate help from police, fire, emergency medical services, or other appropriate emergency response entities;

Whereas, in 1967, the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommended that a “single number should be established” nationwide for reporting emergency situations, and various Federal Government agencies and governmental officials supported and encouraged the recommendation;

Whereas, in 1968, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (commonly known as “AT&T”) announced that it would establish the digits 9-1-1 as the emergency code throughout the United States;

Whereas Congress designated 9-1-1 as the national emergency call number in the Wire-

less Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999 (Public Law 106–81; 113 Stat. 1286);

Whereas section 102 of the ENHANCE 911 Act of 2004 (47 U.S.C. 942 note) declared an enhanced 9-1-1 system to be “a high national priority” and part of “our Nation’s homeland security and public safety”;

Whereas it is important that policy makers at all levels of government understand the importance of 9-1-1, how the 9-1-1 system works, and the steps that are needed to modernize the 9-1-1 system;

Whereas the 9-1-1 system is the connection between the eyes and ears of the public and the emergency response system in the United States and is often the first place emergencies of all magnitudes are reported, making 9-1-1 a significant homeland security asset;

Whereas more than 6,000 9-1-1 public safety answering points serve more than 3,000 counties and parishes throughout the United States;

Whereas telecommunicators at public safety answering points answer more than 200,000,000 9-1-1 calls each year in the United States;

Whereas a growing number of 9-1-1 calls are made using wireless and Internet Protocol-based communications services;

Whereas a growing segment of the population of the United States, including individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, or who have speech disabilities, is increasingly communicating with nontraditional text, video, and instant messaging communications services and expects those services to be able to connect directly to 9-1-1;

Whereas the growth and variety of means of communication, including mobile and Internet Protocol-based systems, impose challenges for accessing 9-1-1 and implementing an enhanced 9-1-1 system and require increased education and awareness about the capabilities of different means of communication;

Whereas numerous other “N-1-1” and 800 number services exist for nonemergency situations, including 2-1-1, 3-1-1, 5-1-1, 7-1-1, 8-1-1, poison control centers, and mental health hotlines, and the public needs to be educated on when to use those services in addition to or instead of 9-1-1;

Whereas international visitors and immigrants make up an increasing percentage of the population of the United States each year, and visitors and immigrants may have limited knowledge of the emergency calling system in the United States;

Whereas people of all ages use 9-1-1 and it is critical to educate people on the proper use of 9-1-1;

Whereas senior citizens are highly likely to need to access 9-1-1 and many senior citizens are learning to use new technology;

Whereas thousands of 9-1-1 calls are made every year by children properly trained in the use of 9-1-1, which saves lives and underscores the critical importance of training children early in life about 9-1-1;

Whereas the 9-1-1 system is often misused, including by the placement of prank and nonemergency calls;

Whereas misuse of the 9-1-1 system results in costly and inefficient use of 9-1-1 and emergency response resources and needs to be reduced;

Whereas parents, teachers, and all other caregivers need to play an active role in 9-1-1 education for children, but can do so only after first being educated themselves;

Whereas there are many avenues for 9-1-1 public education, including safety fairs, school presentations, libraries, churches, businesses, public safety answering point tours or open houses, civic organizations, and senior citizen centers;

Whereas children, parents, teachers, and the National Parent Teacher Association make vital contributions to the education of children about the importance of 9-1-1 through targeted outreach efforts to public and private school systems;

Whereas the United States should strive to host at least 1 educational event regarding the proper use of 9-1-1 in every school in the country every year;

Whereas programs to promote proper use of 9-1-1 during National 9-1-1 Education Month could include—

(1) public awareness events, including conferences, media outreach, and training activities for parents, teachers, school administrators, other caregivers, and businesses;

(2) educational events in schools and other appropriate venues; and

(3) production and distribution of information about the 9-1-1 system designed to educate people of all ages on the importance and proper use of 9-1-1; and

Whereas the people of the United States deserve the best education regarding the use of 9-1-1: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 2016 as “National 9-1-1 Education Month”; and

(2) urges governmental officials, parents, teachers, school administrators, caregivers, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the people of the United States to observe the month with appropriate ceremonies, training events, and activities.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3878. Mr. COTTON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2028, making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3879. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3804 proposed by Mr. ALEXANDER to the amendment SA 3801 proposed by Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) to the bill H.R. 2028, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3880. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3804 proposed by Mr. ALEXANDER to the amendment SA 3801 proposed by Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) to the bill H.R. 2028, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3881. Mr. COTTON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2028, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3882. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. PERDUE) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 383, recognizing the importance of the United States-Israel economic relationship and encouraging new areas of cooperation.

SA 3883. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. PERDUE) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 383, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3878. Mr. COTTON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2028, making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC_. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be obligated or expended to purchase heavy water produced in Iran.

SA 3879. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3804 proposed by Mr. ALEXANDER to the amendment SA 3801 proposed by Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) to the bill H.R. 2028, making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 2, line 2, insert “and related facilities” after “technologies”.

SA 3880. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3804 proposed by Mr. ALEXANDER to the amendment SA 3801 proposed by Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) to the bill H.R. 2028, making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following: “*Provided further*, That revenues from licensing fees, inspection services, and other services and collections estimated at \$823,114,000 in fiscal year 2017 shall be retained and used for necessary salaries and expenses in this account, notwithstanding section 3302 of title 31, United States Code, and shall remain available until expended: *Provided further*, That of the amounts appropriated under this heading, \$5,000,000 shall be available for activities related to the development of regulatory infrastructure for advanced nuclear reactor technologies and related facilities, and \$5,000,000 of that amount shall not be available for fee revenues, notwithstanding section 6101 of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 2214): *Provided further*, That the sum herein appropriated shall be reduced by the amount of revenues received during fiscal year 2017 so as to result in a final fiscal year 2017 appropriation estimated at not more than \$115,886,000.”.

SA 3881. Mr. COTTON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2028, making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike all after the first word and insert the following:

SEC_. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be obligated or expended to purchase heavy water produced in Iran.

SA 3882. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. PERDUE) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 383, recognizing the importance of the United States-Israel economic relationship and encouraging new areas of cooperation; as follows:

On page 6, line 12, insert “and investment, and remove barriers to, and to provide incentives for, private sector market entry” before “; and”.

SA 3883. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. PERDUE) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 383, recognizing the importance of the United States-Israel economic relationship and encouraging new areas of cooperation; as follows:

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the deep bond between the United States and Israel is exemplified by its many facets, including the robust economic and commercial relationship;

Whereas, on April 22, 2015, the United States celebrated the 30th anniversary of its free trade agreement with Israel, which was the first free trade agreement entered into by the United States;

Whereas the United States-Israel Free Trade Agreement established the Joint Committee to facilitate the agreement and collaborate on efforts to increase bilateral cooperation and investment;

Whereas, since the signing of this agreement, two-way trade has multiplied tenfold to over \$40,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas Israel is the third largest importer of United States goods in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, despite representing only 2 percent of the region's population;

Whereas nearly half of all investment in the United States from the MENA region comes from Israel;

Whereas Israel has more companies listed on the NASDAQ Stock Exchange than any other country except for the United States and China;

Whereas, in 1956, the United States-Israel Education Foundation was established to administer the Fulbright Program in Israel, and has facilitated the exchange of nearly 3,300 students between the United States and Israel since its inception;

Whereas the United States-Israel Innovation Index (USI3), which was developed by USISTF to track and benchmark innovation relationships, ranks the United States-Israel innovation relationship as top-tier;

Whereas, since 2011, the United States Department of Energy and the Israeli Ministry of National Infrastructures, Energy and Water Resources have led an annual United States-Israel Energy Meeting with participants across government agencies to facilitate bilateral cooperation in that sector;

Whereas, in 2012, Congress passed and President Barack Obama signed into law the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-150), which set United States policy to expand bilateral cooperation across the spectrum of civilian sectors, including high technology, agriculture, medicine, health, pharmaceuticals, and energy;

Whereas, in 2013, President Obama said in reference to Israel's contribution to the global economy, “That innovation is just as important to the relationship between the United States and Israel as our security cooperation.”;

Whereas, in 2014, Secretary of the Treasury Jacob Lew said, “As one of the most technologically-advanced and innovative economies in the world, Israel is an important economic partner to the United States.”;

Whereas the 2014 Global Venture Capital Confidence Survey ranked the United States and Israel as the two countries with the highest levels of investor confidence in the world;

Whereas, in 2014, Congress passed and President Obama signed into law the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-296), which deepened cooperation on energy, water, agriculture,

trade, and defense, and expressed the sense of Congress that Israel is a major strategic partner of the United States; and

Whereas economic cooperation between the United States and Israel has also thrived at the State and local levels through both formal agreements and bilateral organizations in over 30 States that have encouraged new forms of cooperation in fields such as water conservation, cybersecurity, and alternative energy and farming technologies: Now, therefore, be it

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 27, 2016, at 11:30 a.m., in room SR-253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 27, 2016, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "U.S.-China Relations: Strategic Challenges and Opportunities."

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 27, 2016, at 11 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "Government Reform: Ending Duplication and Holding Washington Accountable."

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 27, 2016, in room SD-628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:15 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 27, 2016, in room SD-628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:15 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "The GAO Report on Telecommunications: Additional Coordination and Performance Measurement Needed for High-Speed Internet Access Programs on Tribal Lands."

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Com-

mittee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 27, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Counterfeits and Their Impact on Consumer Health and Safety."

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

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 27, 2016, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 27, 2016, at 10 a.m., in room SR-428A of the Russell Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Drowning in Regulations: The Waters of the U.S. Rule and the Case for Reforming the RFA."

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 27, 2016, at 3:30 p.m., in room SH-216 of the Hart Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Valeant Pharmaceuticals' Business Model: the Repercussions for Patients and the Health Care System."

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Kelsey Avery, Leigh Stuckhardt, Matthew Fuentes, and Luke Alo, fellows for the Senate Finance Committee, and Julia Bradley-Cook, Ryan Matheny, and Katherine Tsantiris, fellows in my personal office, be granted floor privileges for the duration of the 114th Congress.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask that my intern, Jonathan Lin, be granted floor privileges for the balance of the day.

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

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, upon the recommendation of the Democratic leader, pursuant to Public Law 105-292, as amended by Public Law 106-55, Public Law 107-228, and Public Law 112-75, appoints the fol-

lowing individual to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom: Sandra Jolley of Nevada.

SUPPORTING EFFORTS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA TO PURSUE PEACE AND THE END OF THE COUNTRY'S ENDURING INTERNAL ARMED CONFLICT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 397, S. Res. 368.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 368) supporting efforts by the Government of Colombia to pursue peace and the end of the country's enduring internal armed conflict and recognizing United States support for Colombia at the 15th anniversary of Plan Colombia.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 368) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 9, 2016, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES-ISRAEL ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP AND ENCOURAGING NEW AREAS OF COOPERATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 400, S. Res. 383.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 383) recognizing the importance of the United States-Israel economic relationship and encouraging new areas of cooperation.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Perdue amendment to the resolution be agreed to; the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; the Perdue amendment to the preamble be agreed to; the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 3882) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To foster investment and private sector market entry)

On page 6, line 12, insert “and investment, and remove barriers to, and to provide incentives for, private sector market entry” before “; and”.

The resolution (S. Res. 383), as amended, was agreed to.

The amendment (No. 3883) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the preamble)

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the deep bond between the United States and Israel is exemplified by its many facets, including the robust economic and commercial relationship;

Whereas, on April 22, 2015, the United States celebrated the 30th anniversary of its free trade agreement with Israel, which was the first free trade agreement entered into by the United States;

Whereas the United States-Israel Free Trade Agreement established the Joint Committee to facilitate the agreement and collaborate on efforts to increase bilateral cooperation and investment;

Whereas, since the signing of this agreement, two-way trade has multiplied tenfold to over \$40,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas Israel is the third largest importer of United States goods in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, despite representing only 2 percent of the region's population;

Whereas nearly half of all investment in the United States from the MENA region comes from Israel;

Whereas Israel has more companies listed on the NASDAQ Stock Exchange than any other country except for the United States and China;

Whereas, in 1956, the United States-Israel Education Foundation was established to administer the Fulbright Program in Israel, and has facilitated the exchange of nearly 3,300 students between the United States and Israel since its inception;

Whereas the United States-Israel Innovation Index (USI3), which was developed by USISTF to track and benchmark innovation relationships, ranks the United States-Israel innovation relationship as top-tier;

Whereas, since 2011, the United States Department of Energy and the Israeli Ministry of National Infrastructures, Energy and Water Resources have led an annual United States-Israel Energy Meeting with participants across government agencies to facilitate bilateral cooperation in that sector;

Whereas, in 2012, Congress passed and President Barack Obama signed into law the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-150), which set United States policy to expand bilateral cooperation across the spectrum of civilian sectors, including high technology, agriculture, medicine, health, pharmaceuticals, and energy;

Whereas, in 2013, President Obama said in reference to Israel's contribution to the global economy, “That innovation is just as important to the relationship between the United States and Israel as our security cooperation.”;

Whereas, in 2014, Secretary of the Treasury Jacob Lew said, “As one of the most technologically-advanced and innovative economies in the world, Israel is an important economic partner to the United States.”;

Whereas the 2014 Global Venture Capital Confidence Survey ranked the United States and Israel as the two countries with the highest levels of investor confidence in the world;

Whereas, in 2014, Congress passed and President Obama signed into law the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-296), which deepened cooperation on energy, water, agriculture, trade, and defense, and expressed the sense of Congress that Israel is a major strategic partner of the United States; and

Whereas economic cooperation between the United States and Israel has also thrived at the State and local levels through both formal agreements and bilateral organizations in over 30 States that have encouraged new forms of cooperation in fields such as water conservation, cybersecurity, and alternative energy and farming technologies: Now, therefore, be it

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 383

Whereas the deep bond between the United States and Israel is exemplified by its many facets, including the robust economic and commercial relationship;

Whereas, on April 22, 2015, the United States celebrated the 30th anniversary of its free trade agreement with Israel, which was the first free trade agreement entered into by the United States;

Whereas the United States-Israel Free Trade Agreement established the Joint Committee to facilitate the agreement and collaborate on efforts to increase bilateral cooperation and investment;

Whereas since the signing of this agreement, two-way trade has multiplied tenfold to over \$40,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas Israel is the third largest importer of United States goods in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, despite representing only 2 percent of the region's population;

Whereas nearly half of all investment in the United States from the MENA region comes from Israel;

Whereas Israel has more companies listed on the NASDAQ Stock Exchange than any other country except for the United States and China;

Whereas, in 1956, the United States-Israel Education Foundation was established to administer the Fulbright Program in Israel, and has facilitated the exchange of nearly 3,300 students between the United States and Israel since its inception;

Whereas the United States-Israel Innovation Index (USI3), which was developed by USISTF to track and benchmark innovation relationships, ranks the United States-Israel innovation relationship as top-tier;

Whereas, since 2011, the United States Department of Energy and the Israeli Ministry of National Infrastructures, Energy and Water Resources have led an annual United States-Israel Energy Meeting with participants across government agencies to facilitate bilateral cooperation in that sector;

Whereas, in 2012, Congress passed and President Barack Obama signed into law the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-150), which set United States policy to expand bilateral cooperation across the spectrum of civilian sectors, including high technology, agriculture, medicine, health, pharmaceuticals, and energy;

Whereas, in 2013, President Obama said in reference to Israel's contribution to the global economy, “That innovation is just as important to the relationship between the United States and Israel as our security cooperation.”;

Whereas, in 2014, Secretary of the Treasury Jacob Lew said, “As one of the most techno-

logically-advanced and innovative economies in the world, Israel is an important economic partner to the United States.”;

Whereas the 2014 Global Venture Capital Confidence Survey ranked the United States and Israel as the two countries with the highest levels of investor confidence in the world;

Whereas, in 2014, Congress passed and President Obama signed into law the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-296), which deepened cooperation on energy, water, agriculture, trade, and defense, and expressed the sense of Congress that Israel is a major strategic partner of the United States; and

Whereas economic cooperation between the United States and Israel has also thrived at the State and local levels through both formal agreements and bilateral organizations in over 30 States that have encouraged new forms of cooperation in fields such as water conservation, cybersecurity, and alternative energy and farming technologies: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) affirms that the United States-Israel economic partnership has achieved great tangible and intangible benefits to both countries and is a foundational component of the strong alliance;

(2) recognizes that science and technology innovation present promising new frontiers for United States-Israel economic cooperation, particularly in light of widespread drought, cybersecurity attacks, and other major challenges impacting the United States;

(3) encourages the President to regularize and expand existing forums of economic dialogue with Israel and foster both public and private sector participation and investment, and remove barriers to, and to provide incentives for, private sector market entry; and

(4) expresses support for the President to explore new agreements with Israel, including in the fields of energy, water, agriculture, medicine, neurotechnology, and cybersecurity.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 444, S. Res. 445, and S. Res. 446.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 444) honoring the life and achievements of Prince.

A resolution (S. Res. 445) recognizing the 100th anniversary of Coast Guard aviation and the contribution of Coast Guard aviators to naval aviation and the safety and security of the United States.

A resolution (S. Res. 446) designating April 2016 as “National 9-1-1 Education Month.”

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

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

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 2016

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, April 28; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; further, that following morning business, the Senate then resume consideration

of H.R. 2028; finally, that the cloture motion with respect to the motion to proceed to H.R. 2577 be withdrawn.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:39 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 28, 2016, at 10 a.m.