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## House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, November 16, 2015, at 2 p.m.

## Senate

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2015

The Senate met at 3 p.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.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were formed or the Earth received its frame, You are and have been without beginning or ending.

Thank You for the heartbeats we borrow each day. May Your life-sustaining power inspire our lawmakers to trust Your sovereignty and to lean on Your love. Supply their needs from the bounty of Your transcendent goodness, never forsaking them during turbulent times. Rule and reign in Your world in spite of the prevalence of pathology and sin. May Your peace guard and guide our hearts and minds.

We pray in Your merciful 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 (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

WELCOMING PRIME MINISTER BENJAMIN NETANYAHU TO WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I would like to welcome Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Washington.

Today's visit between President Obama and the Prime Minister was the first time the leaders of our two countries have met in over a year. It was also their first time meeting since President Obama concluded his deal with Iran.

We know that deal is likely to entrench Iran's nuclear threshold capabilities while helping subsidize terrorist groups, such as Hezbollah and Hamas, that are dedicated to Israel's destruction. We know that the President's deal does not even require Iran to recognize Israel's right to exist.

So I am sure these leaders had much to discuss. I am sure they engaged in a frank discussion. But a relationship based on frank exchanges of views—a relationship centered on substance rather than just personalities—is important for both of our countries. It is, in fact, healthy.

That is certainly true when we hear Iran's Supreme Leader reiterating calls for Israel's destruction. That is certainly true when we hear him saying that change will never happen as he continues to rail against our own country.

So it is good that Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama had a chance to meet today. It is good that the Prime Minister will have an opportunity to visit the Capitol again tomorrow as well.

We appreciated his last visit very much. It was important to hear the perspective of a leader for whom threats from countries like Iran and terrorist groups like ISIL and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad are hardly theoretical.

That was made clear when I led a congressional delegation to the Middle East last month that included Congressman BARR and Senators from Arkansas, South Dakota, and Iowa. We met with leaders in Jordan, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and in Israel we had a chance to visit with the Prime Minister. It was productive, it was eye-opening, and it underlined a key point.

Israel's Prime Minister is a great friend of the United States. The bonds between our nations are strong. And I hope we can all find ways to strengthen them further because the threats facing both our countries are real, and they are certainly worrying.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

### MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

Mr. REID. Madam President, I look forward to meeting with the Prime Minister of Israel tomorrow, and I will have more to say about that in the morning.

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



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# MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. REID. Madam President, today the Senate continues its consideration of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. This appropriations bill is a modest step in the right direction. It provides resources and will address the veteran care backlog, including 770 new claims processors and 200 new appeals adjudicators. It expands medical treatment for veterans, and it provides State grants for extended care homes in rural areas, which is extremely important.

I want to make sure one thing is understood and is very clear. If it had been up to Republicans, this legislation would have shortchanged America's veterans. Let's remember that Republicans' original appropriations bill for the VA was a far cry from this funding measure today. They ranted and raved, but in the process, would have cost the veterans \$2 billion. The Republicans' bill included devastating sequester caps that would have underfunded the Veterans' Administration by billions of dollars. If Republicans had passed their bill, 70,000 vets would not receive the care they deserve—70,000.

The reason the Senate is considering this much improved appropriations legislation is because Democrats refused to go along with Republican efforts to underfund veterans and our middle class. Instead, Democrats held firm to stop devastating sequester cuts from hitting America's domestic priorities. Because we refused to let Republicans undermine care for our veterans, funding for the Veterans' Administration is more than \$2 billion over what it would have been.

Democrats refused to let congressional Republicans do what they always do: disregard the needs of the middle class—in this case middle class veterans—those people at home we so try to protect. In the aftermath of President Bush's two unpaid-for wars, Republicans have made little effort to meet the Nation's obligations to its veterans. The work that has been done in recent years to do a better job for our veterans, including wounded warriors legislation and on and on, are things that we on this side of the aisle proposed and passed.

This is symptomatic of today's Republicans. They want to start and fund wars overseas, but when the bill comes—when the time comes to make good on the promises to our servicemembers, many Republicans are nowhere to be found.

Taking care of our veterans is one of the prices of war. It is one of the costs of a robust defense that keeps America safe. To neglect that responsibility is callous, and some say immoral.

We can do better by our Nation's veterans. This appropriations bill is a start. We still have a long way to go in meeting our commitments to the brave men and women who defend our country and have defended our country.

# FOREIGN SERVICE NOMINATIONS

Mr. REID. Madam President, for more than 3 months, the senior Senator from Iowa has been blocking the confirmation, the promotion of more than 20 career Foreign Service officers.

These Foreign Service officers are career diplomats. They are some of the finest people in our government. They are brave. They work in some of the most remote, difficult, and crime-ridden war zones in the world. Many of these Foreign Service officers are always ready to serve at a moment's notice in hotspots throughout the world—hot spots like Iraq and Afghanistan.

These diplomats are not partisan; they are diplomats. They are not political appointments. That is why it is troubling to see the senior Senator from Iowa politicize their promotions. He admits that he is blocking the promotion of these Foreign Service officers until he gets answers about Secretary Hillary Clinton's emails and her aide, a woman by the name of Huma Abedin.

I have told Senator GRASSLEY he is making a mistake by targeting these fine public servants. They have worked all over the world. With rare exception, they know multiple languages. But instead of changing course and doing what is right by these diplomats, Senator GRASSLEY seems to be doubling down on his obstruction.

As the Senator from Iowa digs in on this failed policy, more innocent people—these diplomats—are being caught in the resulting backlog. Last month, the Senate received several letters containing more than 600 Foreign Service promotions. In years past, it didn't matter if Democrats controlled the Senate or Republicans, they would have passed that list quickly in a matter of a day or two, with no opposition, of course.

Times have changed, and these lists of 600 career Foreign Service officers sit unpassed before this body. Among the 600 individuals on this promotion list are two people from Iowa. These Iowans—that is right, two of the constituents of the senior Senator from Iowa are being denied a promotion.

Why are nonpartisan public servants being used as political pawns, especially if they are being blocked just because Senator GRASSLEY doesn't want Hillary Clinton to be the next President of the United States. I haven't heard who he is supporting—Trump, Carson, CRUZ, RUBIO, Bush, Christie, or a long list of others. But, obviously, he doesn't want Hillary Clinton to be elected.

So I ask the senior Senator from Iowa: Is he blocking two of his own constituents? Why? Should Senator GRASSLEY allow all of the Foreign Service lists to be confirmed by the Senate without further delay? Of course he should. We could confirm them right now.

It is time for my friend from Iowa to end these foolish campaigns to undermine Secretary Clinton. Under Senator

GRASSLEY's leadership, the Judiciary Committee continues to hound the State Department for information about Secretary Clinton and her staffers. He and his fellow Republicans want emails. He wants to see timesheets for State Department employees, as do some other Republicans. Committee staff wants transcribed interviews with email vendors, and they want maternity leave records for one of Secretary Clinton's closest aides, Huma Abedin.

Think about that: Republicans want to know how long a member of Secretary Clinton's staff took for her maternity leave. Is that ludicrous? Of course it is.

Those who know Ms. Abedin best can vouch for her integrity and her work ethic as a close aide to Senator Clinton for decades. When her reputation was attacked in the past—that is Ms. Abedin's—Republicans, including Senator JOHN MCCAIN, defended her.

Here is what Senator MCCAIN said: “an intelligent, upstanding, hard-working, loyal servant of our country . . . the daughter of immigrants who has risen to the highest levels of our government on her substantial personal merit.”

Can my colleagues imagine wanting to know if she took off too much time to have a baby?

Let's remember that she is a staff member, not a principal. It is one thing to level charges at an elected Member of Congress or the administration. It is a completely different matter to target a staff member, especially someone who Senator MCCAIN says “represents the best about America.”

How much money would a Republican Congress waste to try to bring down Hillary Clinton? We don't know by the numbers. We have already seen that the so-called House Select Committee on Benghazi has wasted 18 months and more than \$5 million. Numerous other committees have conducted similar investigations. We don't know how much they have cost, but it is millions.

How much taxpayer money is Senator GRASSLEY and the Judiciary Committee wasting on its anti-Clinton campaign? We know how much money and staff are being devoted to investigating Secretary Clinton in the House—\$8,000 to \$10,000 a day, and that is low-balling. How many millions of dollars are the American people paying for the Judiciary Committee to duplicate the House's wasteful political attacks?

The senior Senator from Iowa is always talking on the floor about the proper use of taxpayer resources. He should walk into his bathroom, look into the mirror, and find out what he is doing about the proper use of taxpayer resources. He should be willing to tell us about the resources his committee has used to investigate Secretary Clinton.

The American people deserve to know how much money is being spent on these investigations, especially if

600 honorable Foreign Service officers are going to be used as political pawns in a crusade to keep Hillary Clinton from being elected President. I hope he will drop his opposition to career diplomats and other important nominations so we can give these good people the promotions they have earned.

As I travel the world through these many years, Madam President, I always go to the embassies, and I always ask them to see as many of the staff there as possible. I tell them there is no finer group of people representing America today than our Foreign Service corps, and I stand by that. It is a shame that I have to come to the floor and talk about this. We should pass these nominations tonight with no further delay.

Would the Chair tell us the schedule of today's business in the Senate.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2029, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

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

Pending:

Kirk/Tester amendment No. 2763, in the nature of a substitute.

Kirk amendment No. 2764 (to amendment No. 2763), to clarify the term "congressional defense committees."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I will defer my remarks until the chairman of the VA-MILCON appropriations subcommittee comes, and after he speaks, I will.

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

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

Mr. TESTER. Thank you, Madam President.

It will be some time before Senator KIRK arrives, so I do want to give my remarks for the purpose of other folks who would like to talk about this bill.

I rise today along with Senator KIRK to usher the legislation through this

Chamber, the VA-MILCON appropriations bill, as quickly as possible. I want to thank Senator KIRK for his work on this bill. As I said last week when we began debating the VA-MILCON appropriations bill, this legislation has huge significance. It marks a good-faith effort on behalf of this body to move forward with an appropriations bill that responsibly invests in our national security, our economy, and our country.

I also think that, among all the appropriations bills to move forward, it is right and just that a bill to honor our commitment to our Nation's veterans be the first one to break the gridlock.

I recognize that the VA-MILCON appropriations bill that came out of the committee last spring fell far short of what the VA needs to provide the care our veterans have earned. But now that Congress has passed the budget agreement, we have crafted a substitute amendment that will bring this bill closer to where it has to be to meet the needs of the brave men and women who have served this country. This amendment will provide an additional \$1.9 billion for VA medical services. This amendment fixes a flawed bill.

The bill passed out of the committee in May grossly shortchanged our veterans and undermined the ability of the VA employees to do their jobs, and that is one of the reasons I voted against it. Now, 6 months later, we are about to right the committee's wrong and make investments that we have known all along the VA needs. The money will help allow the VA to address an increased demand for hepatitis C treatments, bolster health care for rural veterans, and will ensure that we can better recruit and retain VA doctors and nurses in every State of the Union. It also provides better care for Vietnam veterans who are reaching retirement age and treats the physical and mental ailments of veterans returning home after 15 years of war in the Middle East. These are investments the VA desperately needs to do its job.

Now, I know the VA has been under a microscope, and it should be. It is responsible for honoring a promise, and when that promise is broken, we need to do more than to say "I am sorry." We need to fix it. This substitute amendment before the Senate will begin to right these wrongs, and you have my word that I and others will be scrutinizing how every dollar is spent because we can't afford to make these investments without knowing they are producing real results for the courageous servicemembers who have earned it.

Colleagues are encouraged to provide amendments in a timely manner because we all would like to pass this bill before Veterans Day. Once we pass the bill, it will prove we are serious about living up to promises that we make to our Nation's veterans. It will empower VA employees to do their jobs and provide veterans with the care they have earned.

It is not just health care. This bill will improve consideration of com-

pensation claims for injuries suffered during their service. It gives the VA the tools to maintain our national cemetery system. It supports the Office of the Inspector General, which we need in order to ensure that the VA is living up to the demands that we have placed upon it.

It adds \$170 million for military construction. These funds will go toward additional projects to enhance our military readiness, particularly for the Air Force and its Reserve elements, and it will set the stage for future appropriations bills that responsibly invest in education, energy, infrastructure, and in our public lands.

I am very happy that we are considering this bill today. Hopefully, we can finish this bill tomorrow, as we should. It will take some cooperation, but I think the Senate is finally ready for some cooperation. I look forward to 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. COATS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I am back on the floor once again for my "Waste of the Week." I have been doing this for well over 20 weeks—highlighting waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayers' money. It is said we cannot afford to cut another dime, that programs are too important.

I question that since the Government Accountability Office, the Office of Management and Budget, and the congressional accounting office have all looked at various Federal programs and said: Why in the world are you doing this in the first place? It is no longer relevant. It is a waste of money. The function has already been taken care of.

Today we are going to highlight yet another situation where this money ought to be going into either higher priority uses—such as Department of Defense or funding soldiers or veterans or something such as that—or not take it from the taxpayer in the first place. And as we document each week, our account keeps growing in terms of money that falls clearly into the category of waste, fraud, and abuse.

Today's situation is a little bit different because the money is not being spent. Then the question is, OK, it is reserved for something, right? It was, but that action has been fulfilled. So why is that money still sitting there and who is using it or if it is not being used, why isn't it redirected and returned to the taxpayer?

Let me talk about this program.

Throughout our Nation's history, the United States has pursued various paths of energy development in order

to power our communities. One of the ways we have pursued energy production is through uranium enrichment and nuclear reactors. Today, that is not a popular way of providing power.

By the way, it is totally environmentally pure. There is no carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, or any other emission issue here that is harmful to our environment. Yet we have suspended all this for various reasons—mostly the concern about a situation where it gets out of hand, even though today's technology can essentially provide safety for that.

Nevertheless, when Congress passed the Energy Policy Act of 1992, the United States Enrichment Corporation, USEC, was authorized and stood up to provide more privatized uranium enrichment services for the U.S. Government and utilities that operate these nuclear powerplants. And there are several dozen operating in the United States. Previously, this service was provided by the Department of Energy and its predecessor agencies, but now this law appropriated taxpayer dollars to a newly established USEC Fund, which is a revolving fund in the Treasury to carry out the purposes of this new organization, the United States Enrichment Corporation.

The law also appropriated taxpayer dollars to the fund revolving in the Treasury to carry out their purposes. Let me describe this fund in a little more detail.

Four years after the creation of the fund, Congress passed the USEC Privatization Act, which authorized the USEC's sale to the private sector—a pretty good move, I think. There are a lot of things the private sector can do more effectively and efficiently than the Federal Government. This was a privatization effort that was successful. It transitioned from a Federal to a private corporation, and today it operates as a private company, not a Federal company, separate from the Federal Government, under a new name; therefore, it is no longer under the control of the Federal Government.

What has become of the money that was funded? The USEC Fund was authorized to pay for the expenses of the USEC's privatization and for the environmental cleanup expense for "disposition of depleted uranium stored at government-owned enrichment plants operated by the USEC." That was a logical objective. We did not want this depleted uranium stored onsite. We needed to dispose of it. So we took the money in the fund and used that to take care of the uranium that was stored and that needed to be disposed of.

Earlier this year, the Government Accountability Office issued a report that said that the "purposes for which the USEC Fund was authorized after privatization have been fulfilled, and the Government Accountability Office has not identified any other purposes for which the USEC Fund is currently available"—in other words, mission ac-

complished. Mission complete. No other use of the fund has been authorized, and so the money is just sitting there. There is a pot of money sitting in the fund that has no federally authorized use. Whatever you want to call it—a zombie fund, a fund that simply has no purpose—its life is over, yet it lives on.

How much is in this fund? The GAO found that the USEC Fund's remaining balance is expected to be over \$1.6 billion in 2015—not exactly small change.

Predictably, the Department of Energy says: Ah, there is a pot of money. Why don't we use it for something else?

Well, it is not authorized for anything else. It was money contributed from the Treasury to this fund for a specific purpose, and that was to clean up the environment, to dispose of the uranium, and to privatize the program.

The GAO report further stated that "DOE's effort to utilize USEC fund moneys instead of general fund appropriations to support a research and development effort would diminish transparency in budgeting." In other words, the Department of Energy is saying: Oh, we have a slush fund over here. Let's use it for something.

Well, transparency and accountability are important when it comes to spending taxpayer dollars, and every one of us here in the Senate ought to be cognizant and recognize how critical and how important it is to spend hard-earned taxpayer dollars wisely, effectively, and efficiently and not request it from them if it doesn't have that purpose and achieve that purpose.

By the same token, if we have a pot of money—\$1.6 billion—sitting in a fund that has no authorized use, that ought to be returned. That ought to be returned to the taxpayer in one of two ways: one, directed to an absolutely essential need that only the Federal Government can provide, or two, it ought to go back to the taxpayer. It shouldn't be taken from the taxpayer. So since the authorized purposes of the USEC Fund have been fulfilled and Congress has given no new authority or appropriation, the money needs to be rescinded.

I am not the only one supporting this course of action. The GAO recommends that Congress rescind the entirety of the \$1.6 billion, and Congress has attempted to rescind this pot of money before. In fact, the House of Representatives included language in a 2014 appropriations bill to do so. But it is now time to actually return the money. There are attempts being made. If we can successfully achieve this, we can save the taxpayer—by rescinding this \$1.6 billion, if we do that, we will then add up to our ever-growing total of wasted, abused, and fraudulently used money. In this case, this appropriated money—money sitting there waiting to be returned and rescinded—will bring our total to almost \$119 billion of waste, fraud, and abuse.

That ends the narrative this week, and we look forward to next week and

bringing forward yet another waste of the week.

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

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for such time as I may consume.

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

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, we are having a lot of discussion, and people are lined up now talking about this event that is going to take place in the middle of December. It is going to be the 21st COP. It is a meeting that the United Nations puts on every year. It has been on for 21 years now. They are all saying: This is the time. This is what they say every time—for 21 years—that we are going to adopt something in this country.

Prior to now they had been using legislation to reduce the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and the devastation that will be on our economy. There is nothing different now—except everything. As time has gone by, it has not been their friend. We have the alarmists who really believe that the world is coming to an end because of global warming. Some of them actually believe that. For a lot of them, it is the thing to do. You have Tom Steyer with \$75 million trying to resurrect this as an issue. There are some who really do believe it. The problem is, time is not doing them a favor because every time a week or a month goes by, somebody else comes out with some new information.

A recent NASA study that was published in the Journal of Glaciology found that gains in the Antarctic ice sheets are much greater than the estimated losses. This runs counter to the IPCC 2013 report that suggests there was a net loss of ice on the continent.

Let's look for a minute at what the IPCC is. The IPCC is an arm of the United Nations. They have put together these studies of people, and this has been going on now for more than 15 years. The only qualifications you need, I guess, to be one of the scientists is you have to believe in this.

We have testimony from a lot of different members of the scientific community who have said that their position in opposition to the anthropogenic gases causing global warming, causing destruction of the Earth, has caused them not to be a part of this.

There is no better evidence of that than in 2009 when they came out and made it very clear that the science they are dependent on was the IPCC, and it was totally discredited with what they call climategate. We have

talked about this on the floor several times. I thought that would have ended it in 2009, but it didn't. I mentioned that background only because we have the Paris trip coming up, and there will be a lot of people going there to try to fortify their positions.

Since the 1970s, the IPCC climate model historically predicted a significant increase in global temperatures, and we haven't really seen this. The frequent statements held up by the media showing each month that passes is the "hottest month on record" willfully ignore the margin of error contained within these datasets. Simply put, the 15-year hiatus—the hiatus, as it is called—is showing that, yes, we went through a period of time when there was warming. Then all of a sudden, some 15 years ago—16 years ago, it leveled off and it hasn't warmed since that time. This has been a problem for the individuals who believe this.

Let me go back. This is from memory, but I am sure it is right because I have said it so many times. The first time they talked about global cooling was in 1895. In 1895, they came out and said that we are now worried about a new ice age. They coined that term. They said that it is going to be catastrophic. Then about 20 years later—it was in 2018—it changed. All of a sudden, there was global warming. There was a warming. This was the first time the term "global warming" had been used. At that stage, things were warming up from that point until 1945. In 1945, it was rather interesting because that was at the end of World War II, and another cold spell came in.

The interesting thing about this is if you look back historically, the greatest surge in emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> in America happened right after the Second World War in 1945. That precipitated not a warming but another cold spell. In fact, they used the term "ice age." In the 1970s, it started warming.

If you follow this, about every 30 years this changes. God is still up there. We are still going to have a change in climate. What disappointed them, on the other side, is that all the things they have been saying about global warming—it stopped 15 years ago, and it has leveled off.

Despite the clear evidence that the science of global warming is not settled, environmental alarmists are pushing ahead with an economically devastating agenda that is more about ideological outcomes than combating global warming. These efforts will come to a head at the end of this year when the United Nations hosts the 21st Conference on Parties, COP, session in Paris. With this upcoming international spectacle, we should not only be questioning the science, but also the intentions and promises each country is making.

Just last week, China was exposed for underreporting the amount of coal it burns by about 1 billion tons a year for the last 15 years. As the New York Times stated:

Even for a country of China's size, the scale of correction is immense. . . . The increase alone is greater than the whole German economy emits annually from fossil fuels.

They are talking about just the increase of what China has agreed to. They are saying they are reducing some of their emissions. The increase that they admit is going to come will still be far greater than the whole German economy emits annually for fossil fuels.

Then there is India, a country whose climate pledge is based on the premise that developed countries, such as the United States, will pick up these costs to the tune of \$2.5 trillion over the next 15 years—just over \$160 billion a year. India stands to gain from American taxpayer dollars. Keep in mind that each year for the last 21 years, we have had about 192 countries come in, and their job—in order to come in and join the big party—is to say, yes, we are going to do something about reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

I have a lot of activity in Africa, and there is someone I know very well who lives in a little country called Benin, West Africa. His name is Luke. He was an official in Benin, West Africa.

I went up to him and I said: How come you are at this thing? You know better than to believe in this whole idea of global warming.

He said: Well, look. We have an opportunity to share in something like \$100 billion because we are a minority country. Besides that, this is the biggest party of all every year.

So we have these things that are the motivations for people coming in. Even the United Nations bureaucrats have been very candid about what they hope to achieve through the international climate negotiations, which has nothing to do with saving the environment.

The former French President, Jacques Chirac, when addressing the Kyoto Protocol, described it as the "first component of an authentic global governance."

Margot Wallstrom—I remember this because I was there at the time she said it—former EU minister, stated that international agreements are about the economy and "leveling the playing field for big business worldwide." That has nothing to do with the environment.

Most recently, Christiana Figueres, the U.N.'s top climate official when talking about the Paris climate conference said—she was running this thing for the United Nations—"This is probably the most difficult task we have ever given ourselves, which is to intentionally transform the economic development model, for the first time in human history." She is the person who is supposed to be making the case.

Even the United States' global warming commitment to the international community is questionable. President Obama is committing the United States to cut its emissions by 26 to 28 percent by 2025. This promise is also

just as questionable and hollow as what we are hearing from the countries I mentioned.

The chart itself is self-explanatory. This is the gap that is in there. Not only does the President not have the backing of the Senate and the American people, but outside groups are finding that the President's method to achieve these reductions through climate regulations—primarily the Clean Power Plan—is faulty.

According to a recent analysis by the U.S. Chamber, the President's intended national determination contributions, the INDC—that is what they used to say what commitments are being made—are about 33 percent short of meeting stated targets. On July 8, a former Sierra Club chief climate counsel testified before my committee—I chair the Environment and Public Works Committee—about his own analysis that has found an even greater gap.

Right now, the Clean Power Plan is a regulation that is promoted by the President. Starting in 2002, they tried to pass legislation. After we analyzed this legislation, we discovered that it would have cost the American people somewhere between \$300 and \$400 billion a year.

Whenever I hear a big number like that, what I always do is go back and get the latest figures from my State of Oklahoma as to how much this means to each family that files Federal income tax, and this legislation would cost each family about \$3,000. That is a lot of money for the people in my State of Oklahoma. Yet, by their own admission, it is not going to accomplish anything.

My colleagues might remember Lisa Jackson. Lisa Jackson was chosen by Barack Obama to be the first director of the EPA. I asked her a question right before the Copenhagen party in 2009. I said: Now, you are going to come out with an endangerment finding, and if you have this endangerment finding, who is going to be the scientist?

She said: Well, the IPCC.

I said: Well, assuming that you pass this legislation—they were trying to pass the cap-and-trade legislation that I just described, which would have cost between \$300 and \$400 billion at that time—will that reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions worldwide? Keep in mind, Obama chose her to be the director of the EPA.

She said: No, it wouldn't do that because this isn't where the problem is. The problem is in China, India, and Mexico.

In fact, you can carry it one step further. If you are going to have a reduction in it and then that chases our manufacturing base to other countries where they don't have restrictions, then those countries will be countries like China and India that don't have any controls on emissions, so it will end up costing even more.

I mentioned that the President is going there in spite of where the American people are. This is very interesting because back in 2001 and 2002, major polling showed that the No. 1 concern at that time was global warming. And now that same poll—this is the Gallup poll that came out in March—said it is No. 15, and that is dead last as far as Americans are concerned. The American people have caught on.

The President is setting up the American economy to suffer great pain for no gain. The rising cost of energy will not only restrict access to affordable and reliable energy, but it will also undermine our businesses' ability to compete on a global scale and will ultimately ship jobs overseas to these other countries that will be increasing emissions for the next decade.

The outcome sounds a lot like the United Nations bureaucrats' hope for "leveling the playing field for big business worldwide." It was Margot Wallstrom who made that statement, and I quoted her a minute ago.

It is no wonder the President is working so hard to circumvent Congress's role in committing the United States to an international agreement on climate change. He is playing to the wishes of the international community to include French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius who, when talking about the forthcoming international climate summit, said that an agreement needed to be reached that would allow the President to make a commitment "without going to Congress." That is the whole idea.

It is not just this one; there are other areas as well. Last week we were discussing the big water bill for a long period of time. Historically—always in this country—the control of water has been under State jurisdiction, and if it is under State jurisdiction, the only exception was navigable waters. About 5 years ago, there was an effort by a Senator from Wisconsin and a Representative Oberstar from Minnesota to try to pass legislation that would take the word "navigable" out, and that would have meant that everything would go from the States back to the Federal Government. Not only did we defeat those bills, but both the Senator and House Member were defeated at the next election in 2010.

The American people have caught on, and the summit is going to go forward, and I can assure my colleagues that we will have a big delegation from the United States of America at the summit and will talk about what America is going to do. Again, they are trying to do it through regulation. They tried to do the water rule legislatively, but they couldn't do it. So now the President is trying to do it with a rule. We have gone through this with ozone and other things. We will be faced with this, and clearly the President's agreement is about his legacy more than promoting a policy that is in the best interest of the American people. Amer-

icans need to not only question a science that is not settled, but a policy that is being used to appease internationalists at the cost of America's future prosperity.

We have gone through this now for quite a while—I would say for the last 18 years or so. The problem we are having—and I see a lot of the young people here—is that so many of the young people actually believe this stuff. One of the reasons they believe it is that they are taught it.

This is a terrible confession for me to make. I have 20 kids and grandkids, and one of them—I won't say which one—when she was in sixth or seventh grade came to me and said: Pop—I—the "I" is for INHOPE—why is it that you don't understand global warming?

I said: Honey, show me why you are asking. She showed me the propaganda coming from the EPA and going through our school system. It is incredible.

In spite of that, the facts are there, and it is not going to work any more this time than it did during the 21 last visits.

With that, I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

#### DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, Veterans Day is approaching on Wednesday, and as the Presiding Officer knows, this is a very important day across the country. It is certainly an important day in my State of Alaska. Alaska has a statistic—I certainly like to talk about it a lot in hearings and on the Senate floor—of having the highest number of veterans per capita than any other State in the United States. It is truly an honor to be serving a State that has so many veterans who have served our country, and we look at Veterans Day as a very important and very somber day.

We are also home to thousands of active duty military members and reservists—in large part because of our strategic location in Alaska.

I was home, like a lot of Members of the Senate, this past weekend, and in Alaska we are already beginning to celebrate Veterans Day in churches, community halls, private homes, and parades. This weekend I had the honor of attending a few of these events. I went to a parade in Anchorage and a wonderful church service yesterday. It is so moving to see and hear from all of our veterans. Again, I had the opportunity to do that this weekend. I met with World War II veterans—the "greatest generation"—Korean War, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Cold War veterans.

I went to a number of these events and an issue came up—an issue that I think is important for this body to know about since our constituents are asking about it: What the heck is going on in Washington, DC, where Senators are filibustering the funding of our troops? What is going on? It is a good question. It confirms something that I

think a lot of us sometimes forget. We look at the procedural maneuvers here on the Senate floor—filibusters, blocking funding for our troops—and sometimes we think that the American people aren't watching. Well, they are watching, and our troops are watching. Not only are our troops at home watching, but importantly, our troops overseas who are literally risking their lives during this Veterans Day week, protecting our Nation, protecting us, and protecting our security. They are watching and so are their families.

When Members of this body decide to block funding for our troops, known as the Defense appropriations bill, the people know it. They especially know it when it has happened on this floor not once, not twice, but three times. The minority leader on the other side of the aisle has decided to filibuster our troops three times in terms of their funding. What is really amazing about that is that bill came out of the Appropriations Committee with a huge bipartisan majority. The legislation to support our troops is very bipartisan. So, why? I was asked this back home. I truly could not provide a coherent answer for the veterans, for their families or for our troops.

I have heard a number of reasons on the Senate floor as this was being debated. I believe the minority leader said it was a waste of time. I guarantee my colleagues that the vast majority of Americans don't agree with him on that. I heard something about Republican tricks with regard to the budget deal.

I just don't know why we would filibuster the Defense appropriations bill that funds our troops three times, including one time last week. I wish the minority leader would come to the floor and give a simple answer for why he insists on continually filibustering funding for our troops during the week of Veterans Day and, more importantly, when thousands—thousands—of young American men and women are risking their lives right now—right now—defending this Nation overseas.

Some people are starting to fear that Members of this body are not making our troops the highest priority. They are starting to fear that we are not concerned about the welfare of our troops and our Nation's security. Now, I don't believe that is the case. I have the honor of sitting on the Veterans Affairs Committee. I also serve on the Armed Services Committee, and I believe that is a very bipartisan committee, where everybody is focused on our national security and our troops. As a matter of fact, I talked to a reporter last week and told her how on the Armed Services Committee so many Members on both sides of the aisle come together and focus.

We have veterans in this country who still carry scars of their military service who were not supported by the public, who were not supported by the Congress. In particular, many of our veterans who served in Vietnam came

home and were ridiculed. They were not treated well. They were spit on. We can never ever go back to that shameful period of American history—never.

This week we have important work to do on these issues. We have a Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill we will be voting on in the next few days. Again, that bill was previously filibustered. I don't know why, but it looks as though we are going to move forward on that. We have a defense authorization bill, which is hugely important for the men and women of our military. It was vetoed by the President. Again, it is not clear why the President vetoed it. We are going to take that up again.

The bottom line is this: enough playing politics with our troops, their families, and our national security. It is time to come together during this week, of all weeks—the week of Veterans Day—to come together in a bipartisan way on these important bills that we are taking up this week to support our troops, to support our veterans, to support our national defense in the finest tradition of this body, in the finest tradition of the U.S. Senate. Filibustering the Defense appropriations bill three times is not in the finest tradition of this body. We need to move beyond that. Doing so this week—the week of Veterans Day—will send an important message to the American people that we know what the highest responsibility of the Congress is. It is to defend this Nation and to take care of the troops and the veterans who have sacrificed and whom we honor this week.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator have Illinois.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I come to the floor to urge support by the Senate for the 2016 MILCON-VA appropriations bill.

Last year this bill's funding for our veterans was \$65 billion and it is now \$71.2 billion. That is a \$6.2 billion increase over last year. The President requested \$70.1 billion for fiscal year 2016. This bill provides \$1.1 billion more than the President's request for this upcoming legislation.

Last week we agreed to debate this bill by an overwhelming vote of 93 to 0. We have record-level funding to fix the disability claims backlog at the VA in this bill. There are new protections for whistleblowers, doctors, and nurses at the VA who are protected when they report patient abuse. This bill protects the protectors of our veterans.

With that, 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. ROBERTS. 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. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

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

The Senator from Kansas is recognized for up to 5 minutes.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I truly appreciate that from the Presiding Officer.

#### 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN

Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the American Agri-Women who are celebrating their 40th anniversary this year. The American Agri-Women officially began in November of 1971, with the Kansas Agri-Women one of the earliest State groups. Forty years later, the American Agri-Women have grown to represent tens of thousands of women involved in all aspects of agriculture in all 50 States.

It is rather amazing that membership includes women of all ages from many different professions within the agriculture industry. These talented women are farmers, ranchers, and consumers; they are students, accountants, educators, marketers, managers, researchers, and even elected officials, among many others.

It is impossible to list all of the accomplishments these hard-working women have achieved for the agriculture industry over the last four decades, but perhaps their biggest success has been initiating the national Agriculture in the Classroom Initiative—a program that continues to be widely implemented in schools all over the country to educate children on modern agriculture.

Throughout the year, the Agri-Women have been engaging in their "Drive across America" tour—a road trip across the country to spread the word of the vital role women play in agriculture. Their drive ended last week in Maine, where they hold their annual convention.

During this tour, they also educated consumers on all the challenges that farmers and ranchers face and highlighted the role the United States plays in the global food system.

I have had the opportunity to meet with many of these women and discuss the work of the agriculture committee during their stop in their trip to Washington. They met with many members of the committee and many others interested in agriculture. I hope all of my colleagues will join me in celebrating the last 40 years of American Agri-Women and the hard work of all of the women in our agriculture community, without whom the United States would be unable to provide the highest quality food, fuel, and fiber domestically and around a very troubled and hungry world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, the MILCON-VA Subcommittee bill that we will be taking up over the next day or so is critically important not only for our military from a readiness standpoint but also for our veterans. We are approaching Veterans Day this Wednesday.

I hope we are able to put politics aside on this bill and do what is right not only for the military but for the men and women who have served this country in the military. If there are amendments that folks have, I would ask that they bring them to the managers as quickly as possible so we can go to work on them and clear them, if possible, and if not, push them off for another day.

This is really an important piece of legislation. We continually talk about conflicts around the world and we continually send our men and women there, with no argument from them. They do a job we are all very proud of: protecting the freedoms of this country. The second half of that story is making sure we do right by them when they come back home. That is what this bill is about—doing right for our veterans when they come back into civilian society again.

With that, I encourage the Members of this body to break from what we traditionally do; that is, play politics with a lot of things, and do what is right for our men and women who serve, our veterans, and for our military from a readiness standpoint in the bill within the MILCON component.

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

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

#### AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, we are in the beginning stages of open enrollment for the Affordable Care Act, which extends through January 31, 2016. I wanted to briefly come to the floor today to make sure the body knows that over the course of the next 2½ months their constituents will have an opportunity to save hundreds if not thousands of dollars by shopping around and finding the most affordable plan available to them but to also make everyone aware that despite the overwhelming success of the Affordable Care Act—the uninsured rate in this country has dropped by 30 percent since its inception only a few years ago—there are still some who have not gone onto the exchanges and found a plan that can bring them into the ranks of those who now have affordable insurance for the first time.

This is an important period for people across this country, but it is also a moment for us to reflect on what has happened over the course of the last 2 years, especially given all of those who were naysayers, all those who predicted the country would fall apart or at the very least the health care economy would fall apart after the passage of the Affordable Care Act. Of course, the exact opposite has happened.

We have seen a dramatic reduction in the number of people who don't have



insurance. We have seen people be able to gain enormous savings on the amount of money they spend on health care.

We have seen the amount of money the Federal Government spends on health care dramatically reduced—a \$1.2 trillion savings over the baseline when the ACA was passed, the amount of money the Federal Government is projecting to save over a 10-year period of time.

We have seen quality get better. Indicators—from hospital readmissions to infection rates—are all going in positive trendlines because, of course, the Affordable Care Act isn't just about getting people access to affordable care, it is also about transforming our payment system away from one that just bases our reimbursement system on the amount of medicine practiced to one that is actually rewarding the quality and outcomes that are gleaned as a part of our health care system.

It is a triple whammy. More people have access to affordable care; we are spending less money than we had planned to spend, by dramatic numbers, from the Federal perspective; and we are getting better quality outcomes.

Lots of us have ideas about how we can improve the Affordable Care Act, and we hope that with the legislative fights behind us and with the judicial fights largely behind us, we can now focus on ways to perfect this law. But there is no question that it is returning enormous benefits to people across this country.

Here is just another quick way to look at it. As shown here, this is the percentage of uninsured by county across the country. Here is 2013. You can see that in almost every county, we have north of 16 percent uninsured. But look how quickly these numbers change. Look how quickly almost every county, at least in the sort of vast swath of territory from the Northwest across to the Northeast, moves down to 2015, where we have majority sections of the country with close to 10 percent uninsured—a 30-percent national reduction in the number of people without insurance. We still have these big gaps where people are in the coverage gap, people who are making so little money that they don't qualify for Medicaid but also can't get into the subsidies, but this is enormous progress all across the country. We can make more progress, and a lot of that comes through consumers being educated during this open enrollment period as to the choices in front of them.

Here are some stunning numbers. Eighty-six percent of current enrollees—people who are on Affordable Care Act plans today—can find a lower premium plan at the same level before tax credits by returning to the marketplace to shop for coverage. If every consumer in the country went back and shopped for the lowest cost premium plan at the same level, the total savings across the country would be

\$4.5 billion. The average consumer—let's say you bought a silver plan last year and you decided to shop for a better deal this year—can save about \$52 a month. That results in a savings of about \$625 a year. So shopping can save you money.

You might be satisfied with your plan—and the satisfaction numbers are pretty remarkable. Seventy-five percent of people who are on the exchange today report being wholly satisfied with their plan, which is, frankly, a higher satisfaction level than for those who are on private insurance outside of the exchanges. But even if you are satisfied, go back and look at the plans that are available to you. You can find a plan that will get you the same coverage for lower costs. Let's make sure people are getting that return on their investment.

The good news is that there is more choice out there than ever before. Every year since the inception of the Affordable Care Act, plans have been added to these State-based and Federal exchanges. The average number of issuers on an exchange was 8 in 2013 and then 9 in 2014 and then 10 in 2015. So choice for the average consumer is increasing. Now, there are certain areas in which choices maybe stayed the same or maybe in some areas choices have been reduced, but on average across the country, you have more choices today than you did before, so there is no excuse not to go back out and try to find a plan that saves you some money.

In Connecticut, we are probably the poster child for effective implementation of the Affordable Care Act. We are a small State. We have a congressional delegation of only five in the House of Representatives. Yet we have had 700,000 Connecticut residents who have obtained health insurance through the Affordable Care Act, either on the exchange or on Medicaid. We have gone from an 8-percent uninsured rate—so we were already on the low end—down to a 3.8-percent uninsured rate. That is a remarkable number over the course of just a few years. We only have so much progress we can make when we have under 4 percent uninsured, but we have a goal of putting 10 to 20,000 people on the Affordable Care Act over the course of this open enrollment period.

Nationally, because we have made so much progress, the goals are going to be modest compared to years past as well, but the point of coming down to the floor today is to say that at this point in the implementation, when we have made such great progress, we want to continue to try to kick down the uninsured rate. But the real benefit in open enrollment is going to come not simply by reducing the number of people without insurance but by making sure that everybody is on the plan that best represents their financial and medical needs. Again, that number—across the country, \$4.5 billion could be saved between now and the end of January—is pretty remarkable.

This Senator has been on the floor a number of times, along with my colleagues, to talk about the simple premise that despite all of those who have been rooting for the Affordable Care Act to fail, it has worked. It has worked from an empirical basis and an anecdotal basis. The statistics don't lie. There are dramatic reductions in the number of people without insurance, dramatic reductions in the pace of health care inflation, and dramatic improvement in the quality of medicine being practiced across the country.

We all have stories of individuals from our State whose lives have been transformed by this act. There are parents who no longer have to worry about their children being locked into a future dictated by their illness, cancer patients who now know they are going to be able to have access to an affordable product and will never be denied access to health care just because of their illness, and taxpayers who see a trajectory of health care spending that is not going to bankrupt this country as fast as it would have had we not put changes inside this act.

So open enrollment is open until January 31, 2016. I encourage all my Republican and Democratic colleagues to get the word out about this. Everyone has constituents who can benefit. Whether or not you support the Affordable Care Act, it is the law of the land and your constituents can benefit from it. We should all be out there talking about the potential for our constituents collectively to save almost \$5 billion if they shop on Affordable Care Act exchanges between now and the end of January.

Thank you.

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

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

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Scott Allen, of Maryland, to be United States Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Allen nomination?

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?



There is a sufficient second.  
The clerk will call the roll.  
The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. McCASKILL), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 83, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 300 Ex.]

#### YEAS—83

Alexander	Feinstein	Murray
Ayotte	Fischer	Nelson
Baldwin	Franken	Perdue
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Graham	Portman
Blumenthal	Grassley	Reed
Booker	Hatch	Reid
Boozman	Heinrich	Risch
Boxer	Heitkamp	Roberts
Brown	Hirono	Rounds
Burr	Hoeven	Sasse
Cantwell	Inhofe	Schatz
Capito	Isakson	Schumer
Cardin	Johnson	Scott
Carper	Kaine	Sessions
Casey	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Shelby
Collins	Lankford	Sullivan
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Corker	Lee	Thune
Cornyn	Manchin	Tillis
Cotton	Markey	Toomey
Crapo	McCain	Udall
Daines	McConnell	Warner
Donnelly	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Enzi	Moran	Wyden
Ernst	Murphy	

#### NOT VOTING—17

Blunt	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Klobuchar	Sanders
Cochran	McCaskill	Stabenow
Crux	Mikulski	Vitter
Flake	Murkowski	Wicker
Gardner	Paul	

The nomination was confirmed.

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

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

#### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 2772 AND 2766 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2763

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, the ranking member and I have a small package of amendments that have been cleared by both sides.

I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be called up, reported by number, and the Senate vote on the amendments en bloc: Shaheen No. 2772 and Heller No. 2766.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the amendments by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Montana [Mr. TESTER], for Mrs. SHAHEEN, proposes an amendment numbered 2772 to amendment No. 2763.

The Senator from Illinois [Mr. KIRK], for Mr. HELLER, proposes an amendment numbered 2766 to amendment No. 2763.

The amendments are as follows:

#### AMENDMENT NO. 2772

(Purpose: To require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct audits relating to the timely access of veterans to hospital care, medical services, and other health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct random, periodic audits of medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Integrated Service Networks to assess whether such facilities and Networks are complying with all standards imposed by law or by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect to the timely access of veterans to hospital care, medical services, and other health care from the Department.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 2766

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds to transfer amounts from the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund to any other account in the Treasury of the United States)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 247. None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this title may be used to transfer any amount from the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund to any other account in the Treasury of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question occurs on agreeing to the amendments en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 2772 and 2766) were agreed to en bloc.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. KIRK. 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.

The Senator from Connecticut.

#### MILCON-VA APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I thank Senators KIRK and TESTER for their bipartisan leadership on a measure that is vastly improved since the vote we had on a similar measure recently. I know this topic is very close to the heart of the Presiding Officer, and I thank him for his leadership as chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. It is truly a tremendous challenge that we are working step by step to address.

About a month ago, I came to the floor to help raise serious concerns about the funding levels in the MILCON-VA appropriations bill that we are now addressing because it contained serious, egregious shortfalls. As a result, I could not support it. Veterans in Connecticut as recently as this weekend asked me how and why I could vote against a measure that provided funding for the VA. My answer is: It wasn't enough. It wasn't good enough. It failed to do the job.

This measure, fortunately, is a profoundly important step toward addressing the needs of our veterans and keeping faith with them, making sure that we leave no veteran behind. This new version provides what many of us have been fighting to achieve—real help for our veterans.

We are about to consider an amendment that would restore much needed funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Kirk-Tester amendment provides a much needed increase in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, bringing full funding to that agency—\$71.2 billion. That amount is \$2 billion more—to be precise, \$1.97 billion—over the previous reported bill, which will supplement the VA's medical services. This additional funding is not window dressing. It is not a convenience or a luxury. It will allow the VA to more appropriately account for treating hepatitis C, supporting the family caregiver program, and providing care in the community. Demand for care from the VA has continued to grow in recent months, and I will continue with my colleagues and with the Department to ensure that the VA is spending the funds in an appropriate manner, with integrity and responsiveness, to provide high quality, timely health care to our veterans.

This bill also fully funds the operation of the VA Benefits Administration. The VBA has been plagued by problems, some of them attributable to underfunding, and this amount at \$2.69 billion will facilitate the transformation from a paper-based claims process to a digital one. It will allow the VA to hire hundreds of new claims processors, speeding and streamlining the system so that veterans receive the benefits they have earned and are spared the rigamarole and redtape that has so often produced a backlog.

Recognizing increased demands, the bill also provides an increase of \$20

million for funding VA-State extended care facilities. It provides \$20 million in rural health care funding specifically for construction grants, meeting the needs of State extended care homes in rural areas. We are demonstrating here how the VA can partner with States to flexibly and efficiently deliver long-term care to an aging population—like other segments of our population, the VA beneficiaries are aging—sparing them the time and expense of constructing and operating new VA facilities.

I have also filed important amendments to improve the provision of health care and research at the VA, ensuring that the VA is providing gender-specific prostheses, for example—particularly important as we see more and more women serve in combat zones—as well as ensuring that VA research dollars are spent in areas of toxic exposures. These priorities ought to be at the top of the list for all. They are for me.

VA continues to have a significant need for resources and personnel. Secretary McDonald indicated just last Friday that the agency continues to need about 4,300 more physicians and 10,000 nurses. I am working with the VA on legislation to meet this need. I look forward to working with my colleague, the Presiding Officer, as well as the Appropriations Committee to address these priorities and others that are so critically important to final passage of this important bill.

#### CONDEMNING PALESTINIAN TERROR ATTACKS AGAINST ISRAEL

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, since the beginning of October, Palestinians armed with knives, meat cleavers, guns, and cars have carried out approximately 77 attacks, leaving 159 Israelis wounded and 12 dead. Two Americans have been killed in these gruesome attacks, including Richard Lakin, who was a Glastonbury, CT, elementary school principal and civil rights activist before he moved to Israel in 1984. Connecticut grieves for our dear friend and colleague to our educators there, who perished while seeking peace. That was his goal. That was his mission.

The Palestinian Authority must be held accountable for incitement, and it must work to stem this tide of visceral violence. Repeated, reprehensible attacks on innocent Israeli civilians follow President Abbas' dangerous disavowal of commitments made during the peace process. He has disavowed those commitments, and he has renounced them. These attacks must be stopped with leadership from the Palestinian Authority.

That is why I have introduced bipartisan legislation with Senator AYOTTE, and more than half the Senate has now joined with us to stand with Israel, to condemn these Palestinian terror attacks, and to reaffirm Israel's commitment to the continued maintenance of

the status quo on the Temple Mount. I look forward to returning to the floor to have this resolution passed. It is time the Senate spoke out over this violence that has engulfed Israel and threatens everyday Israelis trying to live their normal lives in peace. It is time for America to speak out, as it is doing now, day in and day out.

I have visited Jerusalem, Israel's capital, and seen how remarkable a place it is, both in terms of being home to three monotheistic faiths and in the remarkable way that Israel has maintained respect and proper access for all religions and for their practices.

Israel stands alone as a nation committed to tolerance and respect for all faiths. This resolution serves as an expression of our support and our solidarity with Israel in bringing this violence to an end and as our resolve to help stabilize security for both Palestinians and Israelis.

I have said before—and I feel more passionately and deeply now than ever before—that Palestinian political goals will never be achieved through violence. As efforts to deescalate this situation move forward—and I support them—this resolution calls on all parties to return to the negotiating table immediately and without preconditions. Israel is already committed to peace negotiations without preconditions. I continue to support a two-state solution that is acceptable to all parties, involving direct negotiations with the active and sustained support of the United States and the international community.

My hope also is that the United States will continue to support Israel by reaffirming our unshakeable commitment to Israel's security. Today, President Obama met with Prime Minister Netanyahu. I hope that meeting will serve to bolster the bonds between our two great countries. I understand it went well. I certainly hope it did.

I joined Senator BENNET, along with 14 other Senators, in writing to the President and urging him to prioritize discussing with Mr. Netanyahu the historic renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding on U.S. Military Assistance to help Israel prepare for, respond to, and defend against threats that are more pressing and dangerous than ever, and to ensure its qualitative military edge.

I note that my wonderful friend and colleague from Illinois is waiting to speak, so I will end here and say that the current MOU provides \$30 billion in assistance to Israel through fiscal year 2018.

As threats in the region continue to evolve, including Iran's potentially malign influence, the administration must engage at the highest level to continue to develop a shared understanding of threats confronting Israel by strengthening the MOU that serves as the foundation of our bilateral security efforts.

I will always fight to uphold Israel's security, and I am committed to oppos-

ing efforts to delegitimize Israel. We can stand together on a bipartisan basis, and this cause must always be bipartisan, must always be above politics. I will continue to work toward ensuring that the partnership in this body and the partnership between the United States and Israel is strengthened and enduring.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, first, let me thank my colleague from Connecticut, Senator BLUMENTHAL. I join him in condemning the violence that is taking place in the streets of the Middle East and Jerusalem and other places. I also join him in calling for a two-state solution so that we can have both the Palestinian people and the people of Israel living safely and securely without fear of any kind of military action from one against the other. That should be our ultimate goal, and we should renew that goal regularly. I join him in what he had to say.

#### IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on another topic, you can't serve in the Senate without some level of patience. It takes forever to get things done around here—that is, the big things.

Fifteen years ago, I introduced a bill called the DREAM Act. That was 15 years ago, the year 2000. What were we going to do with these young people who came to the United States—brought here as babies, infants, toddlers, children—when they finished high school and were looking to the future? The DREAM Act said that if they have no serious criminal issues, if they have finished school, we will give them a chance—a chance to work their way toward legal status and citizenship.

I introduced that bill 15 years ago. It has had its ups and downs. At times it has passed in the House; other times it has passed in the Senate. We have never been able to align those two bodies to pass the bill at the same time.

It was June 27, 2013—almost 2½ years ago—when it last passed in the Senate. It was part of comprehensive immigration reform. Sixty-eight Senators voted for that bill—14 Republicans and 54 Democrats. It was a bipartisan bill, comprehensive immigration reform.

We took the bill and sent it to the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, and they refused to call the bill or even debate it on the floor of the House of Representatives. It was frustrating. A group of us had worked for months to put that bill together. The House would not even consider it, wouldn't even debate it, didn't offer an alternative. They were silent. Virtually all of them were silent but not every one of them.

This was a historic meeting in the city of Chicago. These two gentlemen are my friends, one my colleague from Illinois, Congressman LUIS GUTIÉRREZ, and the other the new Speaker of the

House of Representatives, Congressman PAUL RYAN from Janesville, WI. They appeared at a famous setting in Chicago, the City Club, and talked about immigration. Let me read what Congressman PAUL RYAN said as a visitor joining Congressman GUTIÉRREZ in 2013:

We all must acknowledge that we have an immigration system that's broken. It is not serving our interest as a nation. Our broken immigration system does not serve our national security interests. Our broken immigration system does not serve our economic security interests. Our broken immigration system does not serve our family interests.

Congressman RYAN went on to say:

And so, when Republicans and Democrats look at this situation and see something that's broken, we need to fix it. We have to offer people a path to earned legalization. We have to invite people to come out of the shadows.

That was an extraordinary statement. It was heralded not just in Chicago but around the country as a statement that a leader would make trying to lead his party into a positive view toward immigration reform. It was a statement made by Congressman PAUL RYAN in the year 2013. I applauded it, praised it. Many of us did.

But now we have another statement by the new Speaker of the House, PAUL RYAN. He has basically said that the Republicans are going to do nothing—nothing on immigration. He says he can't trust the President, and as long as he can't trust the President, he is going to do nothing as the new Republican leader of the House. So he is going to consider absolutely no legislation to fix our broken immigration system.

Why did President Obama take the actions that he did, creating a program known as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA? It was the President's response to the failure of Republican leaders in the House to even consider the issue of immigration.

What is DACA? DACA is a program created by Executive order that gives to these young people who qualified as DREAMers temporary status in the United States so they cannot be deported. They have to come forward, submit themselves for a criminal background check, pay a fee, and be monitored. If they should get in trouble, commit a crime, they are gone, they are deported. So far, 700,000 of these young people have come forward as part of the DACA Program.

The House Republicans have tried to stop the program, eliminate the program. I assume that, like some candidates for President, they want to deport all these young people. That is unfortunate because many of these young people who now have at least temporary protection by DACA are doing some absolutely extraordinary things. I would like to talk about one of them this evening.

This young lady's name is Maricela Aguilar. She is from Speaker RYAN's home State of Wisconsin. In 1995, when Maricela was 3 years old, her mother

brought her to the United States to give her a better life. Maricela's family settled in Milwaukee, WI. She worked hard and excelled in school. During high school, Maricela was on the honor roll, was a member of the National Honor Society, and was captain of the cross-country team. At the same time, she was active in her community; she was a volunteer at a homeless shelter.

When it came time to apply for colleges, she wanted to stay close to her family. She wanted to stay in Speaker RYAN's home State of Wisconsin. She applied to a lot of schools. She was offered a full tuition scholarship to Marquette University in Milwaukee. That is an extraordinary school. My son went there, so I am partial, but it is an extraordinary school because it gave her a chance.

Keep in mind that this young lady, because she is undocumented, doesn't qualify for any government assistance—none. Sacrifices had to be made by her family and others to help her go to Marquette. She went there. She was on the dean's list, double major—political science and English literature. She worked part time as a waitress to make ends meet to pay for her college expenses. She became involved in advocating for immigration reform.

In 2010 Maricela was here in the Senate Gallery along with hundreds of other DREAMers when the Senate failed to pass the DREAM Act due to a Republican filibuster. We got a majority of votes; we couldn't get 60.

I met with Maricela in 2011 when she came to Washington to talk about her concerns about DREAMers just like herself who faced deportation.

In 2012 Maricela graduated with honors, in the top 10 percent of her graduating class at Marquette in Milwaukee, WI.

Later that year President Obama created the deferred action plan that gave her and hundreds of thousands of others a chance to stay and not be deported. She was able to apply and go to graduate school at Brandeis University in Boston. She continues to work on immigration reform and is a leader of the Student Immigration Movement of Massachusetts.

She is going to return to Milwaukee when she graduates, she promises. She wants to become a public school teacher so she can use her education to help young people in the city where she grew up. She is a loyal Wisconsinite, a loyal member of the Milwaukee community.

I would say to Speaker RYAN: She wants to be a part of your State for the rest of her life.

Maricela and other DREAMers have so much to give America. Can we use more public school teachers with her talent? Of course we can. But Speaker RYAN and other Republican leaders in Congress have made their agenda clear: They want to shut down this program and tell Maricela she can't stay to continue her education. They want to deport her to her country, which she

hasn't been to since she was 3 years old and has no memory of it. She would be deported to Mexico, a place she may have experienced as a toddler but can't even remember.

Will America be a stronger country, will Wisconsin be a better State, will Milwaukee be a better city if Maricela is now told to leave after she has obtained her bachelor's degree and is working on her graduate degree? I think the answer is clear: If she stays, we will all be better for it and she will be better for it.

Instead of deporting DREAMers like Maricela, Speaker PAUL RYAN should support DACA and work with the Democrats to pass comprehensive immigration reform to fix our broken immigration system.

#### VETERANS DAY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this Wednesday, Americans all across the country will gather to honor all those who have fought for freedom and thank them for a debt we can never fully repay. Whenever freedom is threatened, our brave men and women of America have answered the call.

In honor of Veterans Day on Wednesday, I will take a moment to recognize an amazing Illinois veteran, part of what we call the "greatest generation."

It was December 7, 1941—as FDR said just a few steps away from us in the House Chamber, a day which will live in infamy. The Imperial Japanese forces launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. That also happened to be the 22nd birthday of Tony Gargano, and it was the day he decided he would enlist in the U.S. Navy. Tony was assigned to a ship disguised as a merchant marine vessel. He and his shipmates didn't wear Navy uniforms or carry IDs, and their ship had no guns.

In November of 1942, a German ship—also disguised as a merchant vessel—sank the ship Tony was on. Tony survived and was taken as a prisoner aboard the German ship. Then he was turned over to the Japanese, where he spent the next 3 years as a prisoner working in a coal mine. Every day he would come out of the mine covered head to toe with coal dust. In those 3 years, Tony never had a chance to take a shower, never could wash his hands—3 years. He worked more than 10 hours a day on less than 8 ounces of water and 6 ounces of spoiled rice.

Here is how he described his experience:

They torture you. They beat the hell out of us. You'd try to get up and they'd beat you back to the ground. You prayed to God they would kill you.

By the time the war was over and the Red Cross arrived, Tony couldn't believe he was still alive. After he arrived in the United States, they quarantined him for weeks. He couldn't even call his family to tell them he was alive. But he made it, and he came home.

Now fast-forward 70 years. Tony is 95 years old. He marvels at his good fortune. After the war, he came home and

married Julia Elliot, the love of his life. They worked 6 days a week. He was maitre d' at Elliot's Pine Log Restaurant in Skokie, IL. He watched his son and daughter grow up and enjoyed the arrival of five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. What a life.

Last month Tony Gargano came to Washington with the Honor Flight. He visited the White House and the World War II Memorial. He shared his story with the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress. They asked him: "What do you think of when you look back on your life?"

Here is what Tony said:

Everything turned out pretty good. I met a nice, young lady. We got married, and spent 60 beautiful years together. I have no complaints.

Isn't that an amazing statement for a man who served 3 years as a prisoner of war and was nearly killed in the effort. The joys of Tony's life have outshined the horrors of that war. If you ask Tony if he is a hero, he says:

There were others who had it much worse. The people we should honor are the ones where the white crosses are. Those are your heroes.

Tony is right, but Tony is a hero too. Tony Gargano faced an unspeakable evil with grace, courage, and determination. He lived his life with love in his heart, and that makes him, even to this day, a true American hero.

It is the service and sacrifice of people like Tony we will continue to honor not just on Veterans Day this Wednesday, but we should honor them every day. Too often servicemembers return home only to find themselves facing a myriad of challenges, from the physical and mental wounds of war to struggling to find work, an education or a home. We can't simply commemorate their service by waving our flags, marching in their parade, and then forgetting them. We have to ensure that veterans and their families have access to the best health care, education, jobs, and housing.

I have been committed to this effort, and I have one program I am particularly proud to have been a part of. It is called the VA Caregivers Program. It provides the families of severely disabled Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans the support they need to keep the veterans home with their families. Thousands of veterans and their caregivers in Illinois and nationwide participate. It is a big, successful program. I recently introduced legislation to expand it so it covers all veterans.

We know veterans face unnecessary delays and claims, processing and reimbursement, and I have worked hard to cut down on that backlog. I have also tried to make our VA hospitals and medical centers in Illinois and across the country the best. It is the new method of medical service being provided to our veterans, and it has to be the best.

I have been proud to sponsor bills to strengthen post-traumatic stress disorder for veterans and their families as

well as improve orthotics and prosthetics research and education. I have been proud to help veterans get homes and jobs. For example, just this year the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs awarded more than \$674,000 in grants to assist homeless veterans in my State through a tenant-based voucher program.

Let me say a word about a program I visited just this last week in Chicago, which is an extraordinary program. The program is called Rags of Honor. It was created by my friend Mark Doyle. He wanted to do something to create good-paying jobs for homeless veterans, and so he decided to print T-shirts and hired homeless veterans to do it. It is on its third year now, and my friend has basically underwritten it, but the fact is, it is a success.

These men and women who were living in their cars or living on the streets now have good-paying jobs making T-shirts. These T-shirts are all made by veterans, some of whom were homeless. These are all American products, all American made, and they are selling them and people are buying them. Northwestern University decided they would turn to them and have them print T-shirts for some of their needs at the university. I have used Rags of Honor T-shirts in my campaign. It is an example of what can be done to help our veterans—just by one man who was willing to dedicate a big part of his life to do it, and there are so many more like him.

I wish to thank all of those who have risked and given of themselves—even the families of those who have given their lives for this Nation—and for the wounds they suffered, the sacrifices they made, and the freedoms we enjoy which they secured. We remember and honor the service of every American veteran, not only at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month but every day of the year, because even though servicemembers and veterans like Tony Gargano may shy away from being labeled as heroes, they are truly of the most deserving of that honor.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### TRIBUTE TO CAROLYN LUCILE McDONALD SHIPP

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I wish to honor a native Utahn and dear friend on the occasion of her 80th birthday.

Carolyn Lucile McDonald Shipp was born on December 5, 1935, in the L.D.S. hospital in Salt Lake City, UT. She is the first living child born to Andrew

Melvin and Lucile McDonald. She is the sister to three brothers, two deceased, and two sisters, one deceased. She was born in the midst of the Great Depression and lived through the rationing in World War II. The Utah she grew up in was very rural. The only thing between the house she was raised in and the mountains was a great gully.

Carolyn's family home had no TV until she was a teenager, but she loved listening to the radio on Sunday afternoons. Raised with a strong work ethic, daily and weekly chores were a must do before any recreation. Her home had only one bathroom for a family of seven and shared a party line telephone with four neighbors.

Carolyn was an accomplished pianist and in the a capella choir, but it was dancing that gave her the greatest joy growing up. She took ballet and excelled at tap dancing. Carolyn was popular in high school and recalls those carefree times very fondly.

A classic beauty—many have compared to the movie star Kim Novak—Carolyn was a natural at modeling and was asked to represent East High in a number of fashion shows during her senior year in high school.

Carolyn treasured her time at East High in Salt Lake City and maintains strong friendships to this very day with many of her friends from that time. Her grandchildren are very impressed that their grandmother went to the now famous East High School of the High School Musical movie fame.

From high school, Carolyn went to the University of Utah, where she pledged the Alpha Chi Omega sorority, where she was the exchange chairman responsible for planning parties. She dated athletes and majored in elementary education. She recalls that, as soon as she began taking classes in elementary education, she knew she was born to teach children.

After college, Carolyn spent a summer working and playing in Hawaii and then settled in as a young teacher back in Utah. During her second year of teaching, she was introduced to Royal Shipp, who became her husband and the great love of her life. They were married in the Salt Lake City Temple.

Carolyn has loved being married and has described it as "having a slumber party every night with your best friend." During their early married life, Carolyn continued teaching while Royal continued his education.

A few years after their marriage, Carolyn and Royal, along with their two small daughters, Becky and Kristy, moved to Virginia, so Royal could work in Washington, DC.

The family stayed in the DC Metro area and added another girl, Julie, and finally a boy, Philip, to the family. The family grew up during a turbulent time in our country: the Vietnam war, Watergate, and the integration of the public schools all contributed to an uneasy climate. But no matter what was going on outside the home, Carolyn and

Royal made sure their home was a safe and loving place.

Carolyn was a stay-at-home mother until her youngest started first grade. At that time, she began to prepare for her second career, a tutor for children with learning disabilities. Carolyn worked for many years at the Potomac School in McLean, VA.

As she raised her family, Carolyn held a number of stake and ward leadership positions in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including Relief Society president and Young Women's president. Her faith has always been an integral part of Carolyn's life. For many years, Carolyn and Royal have served in the Bella Vista Spanish Ward, where they are dearly loved. Carolyn also served with Royal as area humanitarian missionaries in Colombia and Venezuela. Carolyn continues her service as a worker in the Washington, DC, temple.

As a mother and a grandmother, Carolyn has worked to create family memories and traditions. She decorates her home for all the holidays and takes great pride in having fresh flowers, candles, lovely dishes, and table arrangements. Every Christmas, her grandchildren put on a Christmas program. Every Easter features an egg hunt at her home. Birthdays and other milestones are always celebrated with a special family dinner.

Most years, Carolyn and Royal host the entire family for a weekly trip to the Outer Banks, NC. The family cherishes this time as it has contributed to lasting memories and close ties between siblings and cousins alike.

People are the treasures of Carolyn's life. She relishes the company of her friends in her book club and her social group, "The Times Club." She travels to Utah regularly to reconnect with her high school and college friends.

Her 12 grandchildren are the lights of her life. She regularly attends school and church function featuring her grandchildren. She never misses a single one of her grandchildren's plays or concerts, and she travels regularly to Kansas to see her grandchildren participate in student government activities, cheerleading, and playing sports. Carolyn helps her grandchildren as they make the transition into adulthood by supporting them on their LDS missions, foreign travel, career development, and assisting with wedding preparations.

Carolyn Lucile McDonald Shipp is the embodiment of service, love, and compassion. It is a privilege to help her celebrate her 80th birthday.

#### WORLD WAR II HEROES AND HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on Tuesday, November 11, Americans across the country will gather to honor those who have fought for our freedom and thank them for a debt we can never fully repay.

This year marks the 97th anniversary of the end of World War I. Our victory

in that "war to end all wars" showed us that we could not ignore the rest of the world. And as President Clinton said, "while that war proved our strength, it did not prove our wisdom. . . . We turned our backs on the rest of the world. We ignored the signs of danger. Soon we had a Great Depression, and soon that depression led to aggression and then to another world war—one that would claim a half million American lives."

Whenever freedom is threatened, our brave men and women have answered the call to serve. Today, I would like to highlight our debt to the heroes and survivors of World War II. Earlier this year, we commemorated International Holocaust Remembrance Day and paid tribute to the nearly 6 million Jews murdered by the Nazi regime. This year marks the 70th anniversary that Allied Forces entered concentration camps—like Auschwitz-Birkenau—and liberated thousands of prisoners.

On the eve of this Veterans Day, nine American heroes and Holocaust survivors are being honored in my home State of Illinois. Today, I want to share their remarkable stories. As the memory of the Holocaust passes from those who were there to the generations that weren't we can't forget the importance of remembrance.

GEN DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, the supreme commander of Allied Forces in Europe, understood this and documented what he saw. After visiting a liberated Nazi camp, he urged Washington to send congressional delegations to witness Nazi crimes firsthand so that in the future there could be no attempt to dismiss these allegations as "propaganda."

With the remaining eyewitnesses in their twilight years, the responsibility to ensure that future generations never forget these atrocities falls to us. I want to commend these men and women for their brave actions and quiet courage. Today, we honor their sacrifice by remembering the horrors they witnessed and proclaiming in one unified voice: "Never again." I am privileged to honor them and remember their stories. They are true heroes.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. George Brent, Edith Stern, Margie Oppenheimer, Hannah Messinger, Walter Reed, Joseph Dobryman, Lewis Pazoless, Harry Nichols, and Anthony Gargano. But behind every name is a story. I ask unanimous consent to have their stories printed in the RECORD.

Our hearts break for these men and women who mourn their families. But while their stories agonize, they also inspire. Their lives are not just stories of survival; they are stories of triumph and grace in the face of unspeakable evil. I want to thank each of them for the courage to share their stories.

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

DR. GEORGE BRENT

When George was 14 years old, he and his entire family were transported by cattle car

to Auschwitz-Birkenau with thousands of other Hungarian Jews. When they arrived at the camp, those who were still alive were dragged off the cars and forced into one of two lines. An SS soldier decided whether they would go left or right. George and his father were sent one direction—to live; his mother and ten year-old brother were sent the other direction—to die.

As the Allied Forces advanced, George was sent on a death march from Auschwitz and then on a coal train to Mauthausen-Ebensee Concentration Camp in Austria. On May 6, 1945, General Patton's 3rd Army Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron liberated the camp. Here's how one of General Patton's tank commanders described what he saw: "thousands of skeleton-like figures who were skin and bones. The living laying side by side, often times indistinguishable, from the dead." George was one of the prisoners that survived. He was moved to a displaced persons camp and learned how to be a dental technician. In 1949, George came to America. He learned a new language and started a new life.

In 1950, he joined the United States Air Force and served as a dental assistant during the Korean War. Following his service, he attended dental school at the University of Illinois—and has practiced dentistry until 2011—when he retired at the age of 81. Dr. Brent not only survived these horrors, he thrived. George Brent may not have been born in America, but he is an American hero.

EDITH STERN

In February 1942, when Edith, 21 years old, and her parents were deported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto. She met and married her husband, Otto Rebenwurz, at Theresienstadt. In 1944, not long after the wedding, Edith and her mother were sent to Auschwitz where a sign mockingly read, "Work makes you free." At Auschwitz, Josef Mengele stood before them to decide their fate. Left meant survival, for a few weeks at least. Right meant death in the gas chamber. Edith's mother was sent to her right. She was 55 years old when she died. Edith was sent to a forced labor camp.

In 1944, while Edith was in the Theresienstadt Ghetto with her husband, she became pregnant. By early 1945, her pregnancy began to show and she was transferred to the Grossschœnau labor camp. Edith was liberated from Grossschœnau when she was nine months pregnant. Still dressed in her striped blue prison uniform, she immediately went into labor. Three days after giving birth, the baby she named Peter, died.

Edith moved to the United States in 1964 and became an administrator at the Self Help Home on the South Side of Chicago. After living through the horrors of war, Edith's belief in the goodness of mankind was unshakable. She devoted her life to helping others rebuild their lives. What an inspiration.

MARGIE OPPENHEIMER

Seventy-seven years ago, Margie awoke to a Nazi soldier pointing a rifle at her face—she was 14 years old. It was November 9, 1938, Kristallnacht—the night of broken glass—when Nazi soldiers coordinated attacks all over Jewish communities in Germany and Austria. Windows were smashed. Synagogues burned. Homes and Jewish-owned stores ransacked and looted. Margie's family apartment and small department store were destroyed. This night began seven years of terror for Margie and her family. She was sent to five concentration camps: Sloka, Riga-Kaiserwald, Brüss-Sophienwalde, Stutthof and Goddantow. As a prisoner of these camps, she hauled backbreaking cement bags, was beaten with clubs, broke concrete, laid bricks, fought hunger . . . fear . . . and

typhus. Through it all, she repeated the words: "I WILL be strong. I want to live."

One day at the Stutthof concentration camp, Margie was emaciated and unable to work. She was placed into new barracks and had the Roman numeral II scrawled on her forearm—it was a death sentence. That night, two of her friends did the unimaginable. Without saying a word, they pulled a helpless Margie under an electric fence to another side of the camp and they scrubbed off the number on her arm. She was no longer marked for death.

On March 10, 1945, Margie was liberated. She was 21 years old. In 1953, Margie and her husband came to the United States. She became a nurse. And just as her friends helped her at the Stutthof camp on that fateful night, she devoted her life to helping those who couldn't help themselves.

#### HANNAH MESSINGER

In 1938, Hannah and her family were forced to abandon their home and business. A few months before her twentieth birthday, Hannah married Karl Kohorn. In 1941, Carl was deported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Two weeks later, so was Hannah. Hannah worked as a hairdresser—an occupation in high demand—because the Germans wouldn't allow women to have long hair. In 1942, Hannah's parents and sister arrived at Theresienstadt, but stayed only three days before being deported to Auschwitz.

Hannah is one of the last living witnesses to the International Red Cross visit to Theresienstadt on June 23, 1944. The Nazis created an elaborate hoax to show how well Jews were being treated under the "benevolent" Third Reich. It was lie. More than 33,000 inmates died as a result of malnutrition, disease, or the sadistic treatment by the Nazis at Theresienstadt.

On May 8, 1945, Allied Forces liberated the Merzdorf labor camp—where Hannah was moved to. But when she returned to Prague she learned that all her family members were murdered.

After the war, Hannah began corresponding with an Aunt in Budapest—her last surviving relative in Europe. In the letters, Hannah poured her heart out sharing Holocaust experiences and losses and recounting the suffering she and her loved ones endured. When her aunt read the letters out loud, a friend of the family, Imre, was listening and fell in love with her writings. Imre began to correspond with Hannah directly. Through those letters, they fell in love. Hannah moved to the United States in 1946. Eventually, Imre joined her. They married the following year and moved to Chicago. Hannah has created pencil drawings based on her experiences as a prisoner in several concentration and labor camps from 1941–1945. A number of her pieces can be seen at the United States Holocaust Museum in 2010 and in the Smithsonian. Hannah's work allows future generations to better understand her experience and see it through her own eyes.

#### WALTER REED

On Kristallnacht, Walter was jailed by Nazi soldiers for 3 days—he was 14 years old. In 1939, his parents put him on a Kindertransport (children's transport) to Belgium. This decision saved his life. Walter lived in a boys home near Brussels until the Germans invaded in 1940. Walter and more than 90 other children escaped to southern France, where they lived in a barn and later in an abandoned chateau—they became known as the "Children of La Hille."

In 1941, Walter was able to leave France for New York. He became a U.S. citizen in 1943 and returned to Europe in 1944 as a soldier in the United States Army. Walter served in the 95th Infantry Division under General George Patton. His team was charged with

interrogating German prisoners and civilians near the front lines. Walter first arrived in the United States as a survivor of the war and he returned as an American hero.

#### JOSEPH DOBRYMAN

In 1941, Joseph was 18 years old and forced into the Bialystock Ghetto with his parents and two brothers. The Ghetto was liquidated in 1943 and everyone was sent to camps. Joseph and his brother Henry were separated from the rest of their family. In 1943, they sent to the Lomza Ghetto and then to the Danzig, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Bergen Belsen concentration camps for the rest of the war. Joseph and Henry were liberated from Bergen Belsen by Allied Forces in 1945. They were the only members of their family that survived.

In 1949, Joseph married Nettie Goldberg and they made their way to the United States. They had no family waiting for them, but Joseph found work as a plumber and went to school at night to learn English. Joseph and Nettie settled and raised their family in Skokie, Illinois, where he still lives today.

#### LEWIS PAZOLES

Lewis was born in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, the son of Greek immigrants. Immediately after graduating high school, Lewis was drafted into the U.S. Army. On April 6, 1944, Lewis joined a medical battalion attached to the 83rd infantry and shipped out in a convoy to England to prepare for the Normandy invasion. Corporal Lewis Pazoles and his unit, followed General Patton's Army to Omaha Beach on June 11, 1944—five days after D-day. His unit proceeded to fight in the Battle of the Bulge—and moved through the Ardennes, Rhineland and Central Europe toward Germany.

On April 11, 2045, the 83rd liberated Langenstein—a sub camp of Buchenwald—where they found about 1,100 malnourished and emaciated prisoners. The prisoners were forced to work 16 hour days in nearby mines and were shot if they were too weak to work. Corporal Pazoles' unit reported that the death rate at the camp was about 500 a month. The 83rd Infantry also recovered Nazi documents later used by war crime investigators.

In 1946, Corporal Pazoles was honorably discharged—he was 20 years old. He returned to the United States and became a partner in his family's grocery store business in Chicago. Today, Lewis and his wife reside in Palos Hills, Illinois.

Here are some of the honors that Corporal Pazoles received during his service: The Victory Medal, The European African Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon with 1 Silver Battle Star, 3 Overseas Service Bars, the Good Conduct Medal, the Purple Heart, and a Bronze Star. Lewis Pazoles is an American hero.

#### HARRY NICHOLS

Harry was born in Alliance, Ohio, and was drafted in the U.S. Army in 1942. On June 6, 1944, Harry was in the third wave of U.S. forces who stormed Omaha Beach in Normandy, France. Known as Operation Neptune, it was the largest amphibious operation ever attempted. More than 160,000 Allied troops landed along the 50-mile stretch of heavily fortified French coastline to fight the Nazis. Afterward, Harry fought in the battle of St.-Lô and the Battle of the Bulge. He helped liberate the French cities of Laval, LeMans, Orleans and Nance. Harry also fought through Luxemburg and Holland, crossed the Rhine River into Germany and up the Elbe River before May 7, 1945—V-E Day.

In 1945, while training with his unit to fight in the invasion of Japan—the Japanese surrendered. Harry returned home to Ohio

and began working in a bakery. In the late 1940s, he made his way to Chicago where he worked as a waiter, a grocer and florist. Harry Nichols is an American hero.

#### ANTHONY GARGANO

On December 7, 1941, Tony's 22nd birthday, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Less than six weeks later, Tony enlisted in the U.S. Navy and was assigned to one of three ships masquerading as merchant vessels. In 1942, he and his shipmates were captured by the Japanese and taken to Hakodate prison camp on an island just north of mainland Japan. Tony remained a POW for three years and was set free the day the Japanese surrendered and abandoned the camp. He returned to America, married the love of his life—Julia—and worked six days a week as a maitre'd at Elliot's Pine Log Restaurant.

For nearly 70 years, Tony has kept the details of war and the horrors of his imprisonment to himself, but has recently begun to share his story. Tony will tell you, he is not a hero, his brothers lost in battle are the heroes. What an inspiration.

### JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, after finally scheduling a few confirmation votes on Federal judges last month, Senate Republicans have reverted back to holding up the confirmation process for no good reason. The American people and the entire Federal justice system depend on the Members of this body to fulfill our constitutional duty of providing advice and consent on judicial nominees. This senatorial duty is one we cannot neglect. However, that is exactly what has happened since Senate Republicans took over the majority this year.

I had hoped that last month's judicial confirmation votes were an indication that Senate Republicans were finally ready to make progress on the backlog of well-qualified and uncontroversial nominees awaiting their confirmation vote. But again, this week, there is no sign of when the next judicial nominee will receive a vote. This is no way to lead the Senate. When Senate Democrats were in the majority during the last 2 years of the Bush Presidency, we had already confirmed 34 judges by this same time. I have heard Republicans trying to justify their slowdown on judicial nominations by claiming they should somehow receive credit for 11 judges confirmed at the end of the last Congress. That excuse holds no water. It is well-established Senate precedent that all pending consensus nominees should be confirmed before the end of a year. And even if we added those 11 judges to the 9 confirmed this year, that would still bring us to only 20—which is a far cry from the 34 Democrats confirmed in the last 2 years of the Bush administration.

The process of confirming judges is about ensuring that the American people have a fully functioning judiciary. Instead, because of Republican obstruction, judicial vacancies have increased by more than 50 percent since they took over the majority, and caseloads are piling up in courts throughout the



country. Equally alarming is the fact that the number of judicial emergency vacancies since Senate Republicans took the majority has risen by 158 percent. These vacancies impact communities across America, and it is doing the most harm to States represented by at least one Republican Senator. Of the 66 current vacancies that exist, 48 of them—or more than 70 percent—are in States with at least one Republican Senator.

We should take action right now and hold confirmation votes on the 21 judicial nominees pending on the floor. The next pending district and circuit court nominees—who will both fill judicial emergency vacancies—were nominated 1 year ago, yet both are still awaiting the majority leader's action to simply schedule their confirmation votes. The next district court nominee on the Executive Calendar is LaShann Hall, an outstanding African-American woman who has been nominated to serve in the Eastern District of New York. And directly following that nomination is Judge Luis Felipe Restrepo who, when confirmed, will be the first ever Hispanic judge from Pennsylvania on the third circuit and only the second Hispanic judge to serve on the third circuit. Judge Restrepo has strong bipartisan support from his home State Senators, Senator TOOMEY and Senator CASEY. At Judge Restrepo's hearing, Senator TOOMEY stated that "there is no question [Judge Restrepo] is a very well qualified candidate to serve on the Third Circuit" and underscored the fact that he recommended that the President nominate Judge Restrepo. Although there is an urgent need to fill the emergency vacancy on the third circuit, the Republican leadership has refused to hold a confirmation vote. All Democrats support this nominee. I hope Senator TOOMEY will seek a firm commitment from his Republican leadership to schedule a vote this week for Judge Restrepo.

In addition to Judge Restrepo, a number of these pending nominees have the support of their Republican home State Senators. Just last week, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted out two Iowa nominees recommended to the President by the chairman of the Judiciary Committee. However, if Republican obstruction continues and if home State Senators cannot persuade the majority leader to schedule a vote for their nominees soon, then it is unlikely that even highly qualified nominees with Republican support will be confirmed by the end of the year.

No Senator has raised a single objection to any of the 21 judicial nominees pending on the floor. Each one was reported out of the Judiciary Committee by unanimous voice vote, and each has the backing of their home State Senators, including Republican Senators. Senate Republicans have no excuses left.

I hope the Republican Senator from Pennsylvania and the other Republican Senators will implore their leadership

to schedule votes on the judicial nominees pending on the floor without further delay.

#### DETENTION OF HOSSAM BAHGAT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, there is no right that is more fundamental to a democracy than freedom of expression. When this right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is threatened or curtailed, dictatorship is the predictable result. Regrettably, that is what we see happening in Egypt today.

Like others here, I received word this morning that Hossam Bahgat, an Egyptian journalist and one of that country's prominent human rights defenders, has been detained and may be charged in military court. He is apparently accused of publishing false news related to an article about an allegedly foiled military coup.

According to information I have received, an October 13 article by Mr. Bahgat described the military prosecution of 26 officers and 2 Muslim Brotherhood members for allegedly planning to overthrow the government. The next day, the same publication printed the article in English under the title, "A coup busted?" For this, Mr. Bahgat is being investigated by military prosecutors and could face 1 or more years behind bars.

According to Mr. Bahgat's article, which was based on the indictment in that case, authorities had summoned or arrested most of the defendants in April. Some of the detained officers alleged that they were tortured during interrogations inside military intelligence headquarters. Eight of the officers and the two Muslim Brotherhood leaders who were prosecuted in absentia were sentenced to life in prison, Mr. Bahgat reported. The rest were sentenced to between 10 and 15 years.

Lawyers for Mr. Bahgat have reported that military prosecutors are investigating him for allegedly violating articles 102 and 188 of the penal code, both of which are minor, vaguely worded offenses that concern the publication of false news.

Article 102 allows the prosecution of anyone who "intentionally broadcasts false or tendentious news, data, or rumors, or propagates subversive propaganda, if this is liable to disturb the public security, spread terror among the people, or harm the public interest." It provides for an undefined period of detention and a fine of up to 200 Egyptian pounds, US\$25.

Article 188 allows prosecution of anyone who "with ill intent publishes false news, data, or rumors, or forged or fabricated papers, or falsely attributed to others, if this is liable to disturb the general peace or provoke panic among the people or harm the public interest." It provides for detention of up to 1 year and a fine of up to 20,000 Egyptian pounds, US\$2,490.

According to Human Rights Watch, Mr. Bahgat was not the first journalist

to report on the alleged military coup. In a statement, Mr. Bahgat's lawyers stated that he had no criminal intent and that other media outlets had previously reported the verdict.

It is well established that civilians should not be prosecuted in military courts, yet that is what is happening to Mr. Bahgat. In October 2014, President al-Sisi greatly expanded military court jurisdiction for a period of 2 years, allowing the military prosecution of civilians for crimes that occur on "public" or "vital" property. Since then, Egyptian media outlets and human rights groups have reported that thousands of civilians have been charged in military courts, many of them for acts related to protesting and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Egypt's military courts operate under the authority of the Ministry of Defense, not civilian judicial authorities. According to human rights groups, they typically deny defendants the rights accorded by civilian courts, including to be informed of the charges against them, the right to a lawyer, and to be brought promptly before a judge following arrest. This is particularly concerning given the pattern of abuse of detainees in Egypt.

As a former prosecutor who has served as both chairman and ranking member of our Judiciary Committee, I have spoken many times about the importance of an independent judiciary. Nowhere is this needed more today than in Egypt, where sham trials, some lasting only a few minutes, followed by sentences of death or life in prison, are common.

I hope the Egyptian Government will see the wisdom of proceeding no further in its attempt to silence reputable journalists like Mr. Bahgat. Sometimes the news is favorable; sometimes it is unfavorable. That is the way life is, and it is not for government officials—whether elected or unelected—to decide what their citizens should read.

#### TRIBUTE TO RALPH BAGNESKI

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize and honor Ralph Bagneski, Milwaukee County's 2016 Veteran of the Year. Mr. Bagneski has served our Nation for 35 years with distinction. As we observe Veterans Day, I am proud to pay tribute to him and to his fellow Wisconsin veterans who have served our Nation to protect and defend the American freedoms we hold dear.

A native of Milwaukee, Mr. Bagneski enlisted in the United States Marine Corps after his graduation from Washington High School. He served on Active Duty during the Vietnam war from 1967 through 1971, leaving full-time service having achieved the post of rifleman squad leader, 96th Rifle Company. From 1973 to 1987, Mr. Bagneski also served in the Wisconsin National Guard, attaining the rank of first sergeant. In addition, Mr. Bagneski served for more than 15 years in the United



States Army Reserve, where he achieved the rank of command sergeant major.

During his military service, Mr. Bagneski received numerous decorations, two of which were the Legion of Merit and the Meritorious Service Medal. Both honors are given to members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements. Notably, he also received the National Infantry Association's Order of Saint Maurice, an award recognizing those who make significant contributions in support of the infantry and who represent the highest standards of integrity, moral character, professional competence, and dedication to duty.

Beyond his military service, Mr. Bagneski has demonstrated extraordinary service to his fellow servicemembers through his leadership in Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Chapter 1, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Stand Down. He has served his community as a firefighter and EMT, as a Little League baseball coach, and as an active leader in Brewery Workers Local 9.

Mr. Bagneski's lifetime of service to his country, his State, his community, and his fellow servicemembers is an example to us all. I am honored to congratulate him as Milwaukee County's 2016 Veteran of the Year and thank him for dedicating his life to the values we pay tribute to on Veterans Day—duty, honor, and service.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO TESS BRADY

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Tess Brady, a lifelong resident of Stanford, MT. Montanans pride themselves in their care and deep respect for all aspects of our communities, and Tess Brady's commitment to bettering Stanford is no exception.

Tess is the founder of Stanford Beautification, a nonprofit effort that continuously provides service to improve the appearance of Main Street in Stanford. Tess does an amazing job multitasking the various ongoing projects she directs. While her many loyal and generous helpers are critical to these efforts, she is the real fireball behind the projects.

One ongoing project Tess devotes herself to is the planting and upkeep of flower displays along Main Street and at the Stanford courthouse. She takes a water tank on the back of an ATV every day during the summer and waters the flowers—a loving gesture that takes her most of the day.

When fall comes around, you can find Tess working and delegating tasks for the Scarecrow Festival—a seasonal event that began as a competition among businesses and townspeople to

decorate Main Street. In winter, Tess devotes her time to maintaining Christmas decorations throughout the season, despite Montana's snowy winters.

It makes me incredibly proud to see a Montanan so devoted and loyal to her town. Tess truly represents the fundamental Montana values of hard work and service, and I am grateful for the work she does for the Stanford community.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE ON NOVEMBER 5, 2015

At 12:53 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 91. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives.

At 2:17 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 90. Concurrent resolution directing the Secretary of the Senate to make a technical correction in the enrollment of S. 1356.

H. Con. Res. 92. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives and a conditional recess or adjournment of the Senate.

The message also announced that the House has passed the bill (S. 1356) to clarify that certain provisions of the Border Patrol Agent Pay Reform Act of 2014 will not take effect until after the Director of the Office of Personnel Management promulgates and makes effective regulations relating to such provisions, with amendment, in which it requests the concurrence 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. HATCH:

S. 2258. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to reform the surface transportation project delivery program; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. THUNE, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2259. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the way beneficiaries are assigned under the Medicare shared savings program by also basing such assignment on primary care services furnished by nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and clinical nurse specialists; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 2260. A bill to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to require that the Congressional Budget Office prepare long-term scoring estimates for reported bills and joint resolutions that could have significant economic and fiscal effects outside of the normal scoring periods; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2261. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the way beneficiaries are assigned under the Medicare shared savings program by also basing such assignment on services furnished by Federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics; 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. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. AYOTTE, and Mr. KIRK):

S. Res. 310. A resolution condemning the ongoing sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, and other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants and urging the prosecution of the perpetrators and those complicit in these crimes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. Res. 311. A resolution honoring Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, as Rutgers celebrates its 250th anniversary; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 314

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 314, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of pharmacist services.

S. 804

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) 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. 885

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 885, a bill to direct the Architect of the Capitol to place in the United States Capitol a chair honoring American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action.

S. 928

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) were added as cosponsors of S. 928, a bill to reauthorize the World Trade Center Health Program and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001, and for other purposes.

S. 1082

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1082, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes.

S. 1110

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1110, a bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to publish in the Federal Register a strategy to significantly increase the role of volunteers and partners in National Forest System trail maintenance, and for other purposes.

S. 1424

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1424, a bill to prohibit the sale or distribution of cosmetics containing synthetic plastic microbeads.

S. 1426

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1426, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the participation of physical therapists in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1539

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1539, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a permanent, nationwide summer electronic benefits transfer for children program.

S. 1659

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1659, a bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria

for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1831

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1831, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 1856

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1856, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for suspension and removal of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs for performance or misconduct that is a threat to public health or safety and to improve accountability of employees of the Department, and for other purposes.

S. 1865

At the request of Mr. KIRK, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1865, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to eating disorders, and for other purposes.

S. 1919

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1919, a bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to protect rights of conscience with regard to requirements for coverage of specific items and services, to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit certain abortion-related discrimination in governmental activities, and for other purposes.

S. 1982

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1982, a bill to authorize a Wall of Remembrance as part of the Korean War Veterans Memorial and to allow certain private contributions to fund the Wall of Remembrance.

S. 2091

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2091, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to stimulate international tourism to the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 2110

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2110, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to provide for greater spousal protection under defined contribution plans, and for other purposes.

S. 2123

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) were added as cosponsors of S. 2123, a bill to reform sentencing laws and correctional institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 2145

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2145, a bill to make supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2016.

S. 2151

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2151, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide liability protections for volunteer practitioners at health centers under section 330 of such Act.

S. 2208

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2208, a bill to promote the economic security and safety of survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and for other purposes.

S. 2251

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2251, a bill to provide for a supplementary payment to Social Security beneficiaries, supplemental security income beneficiaries, and recipients of veterans benefits, and for other purposes.

S. 2253

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2253, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide veterans affected by closures of educational institutions certain relief and restoration of educational benefits, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 282

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 282, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of American Diabetes Month.

S. RES. 302

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 302, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate in support of Israel and in condemnation of Palestinian terror attacks.

AMENDMENT NO. 2766

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2766 proposed to H.R. 2029, a bill making appropriations for

military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 310—CONDEMNING THE ONGOING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM YEZIDI, CHRISTIAN, SHABAK, TURKMEN, AND OTHER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES BY ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA MILITANTS AND URGING THE PROSECUTION OF THE PERPETRATORS AND THOSE COMPLICIT IN THESE CRIMES

Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. AYOTTE, and Mr. KIRK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 310

Whereas the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has publicly and systematically targeted communities on the basis of their religious identities, including Yezidis, Christians, Shi'a Muslims, Shabaks, Turkmens, and Kaka'i, in a campaign of violence that includes summary executions, beheadings, torture, arbitrary detainment, forced displacement, rape and sexual violence, and enslavement;

Whereas enslavement and sexual violence against women is a widespread practice among ISIS militants, who have, according to the Yezidi Affairs Directory, captured and enslaved as many as 5,500 Yezidis, including as many as 3,000 women, since August 2014;

Whereas ISIS has established a formal slave trade in which women and girls as young as 5 years old are systematically abducted, transported, categorized according to physical traits and perceived value, and traded among ISIS militants or sold for as little as \$10;

Whereas the Research and Fatwa Department of ISIS has issued guidelines and directions for the enslavement of Yezidi women and children and has justified the actions on the basis of religious teachings;

Whereas the New York Times reported that "the Islamic State has developed a detailed bureaucracy of sex slavery, including sales contracts notarized by the ISIS-run Islamic courts";

Whereas, according to various reports, including testimony before Congress by Khidher Domle, a Yezidi activist and Director of the Media Department at the University of Dohuk, the enslavement and sexual violence used against Yezidi women and children by ISIS militants in their attack on Mount Sinjar was premeditated;

Whereas ISIS has initiated the mass killing of Yezidi men and boys, the sexual violence and enslavement of Yezidi women and children, and the forced displacement of Christians and other religious communities;

Whereas the threat and reach of ISIS extends beyond Iraq and Syria into the rest of the world, as demonstrated by ISIS-affiliated attacks and recruitment of foreign fighters from the United States, Europe, Central Asia, and Africa;

Whereas, according to testimony presented before the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives on September 29, 2015, it is possible that one of the ISIS militants involved in the sexual slavery of Yezidi women and children is a United States citizen; and

Whereas the United States Government should investigate and urge prosecution of American citizens who are perpetrators of or complicit in such crimes: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the ongoing sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, and other religious communities;

(2) calls on the Attorney General to commence the investigation and prosecution of any United States citizens alleged to be perpetrators of or complicit in these crimes and to report back to Congress what steps are being taken to investigate and urge the prosecution of those involved; and

(3) calls on the Government of Iraq and the governments of other countries to identify individual perpetrators and individuals involved in these crimes and take appropriate measures to arrest and urge the prosecution of those individuals.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 311—HONORING RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY, AS RUTGERS CELEBRATES ITS 250TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 311

Whereas on November 10, 1766, the Royal Governor of New Jersey, William Franklin, granted a charter in the name of King George III for the establishment of Queen's College;

Whereas in 1825, Queen's College was renamed Rutgers in honor of Colonel Henry Rutgers, a university trustee and Revolutionary War veteran;

Whereas in 1864, Rutgers was designated as a land-grant college, offering educational access to a wide range of students who would become the new workforce for expanding businesses, factories, and farms of the United States;

Whereas in 1869, Rutgers became the birthplace of college football by hosting a game against Princeton University and winning 6 to 4;

Whereas in 1946, the University of Newark became part of Rutgers, laying the foundation for Rutgers University-Newark;

Whereas in 1950, the College of South Jersey became part of Rutgers, giving rise to Rutgers University-Camden;

Whereas in 1945 and 1956, the New Jersey State legislature designated Rutgers as the State University of New Jersey;

Whereas in 1989, Rutgers became a member of the Association of American Universities, an association of the top research universities in the United States and Canada;

Whereas with the integration of most of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey into Rutgers School of Biomedical and Health Sciences in 2013, Rutgers undertook the largest merger in the history of higher education in the United States;

Whereas in 2014, Rutgers joined the Big Ten Conference, bringing the long history of collegiate athletics at Rutgers into the storied conference comprised of highly regarded, research-intensive flagship universities;

Whereas in 2014, Rutgers joined the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, the premier consortium of top-tier research institutions in the United States;

Whereas as of November 2015, Rutgers—

(1) educates more than 65,000 students at 31 schools;

(2) employs more than 22,000 faculty and staff;

(3) records more than 1,700,000,000 patient visits annually; and

(4) boasts more than 460,000 living alumni worldwide;

Whereas the 250th anniversary of the establishment of Rutgers is November 10, 2016;

Whereas the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the establishment of Rutgers begins on November 10, 2015, with Charter Day festivities on the lawn of Old Queens and will continue through November 10, 2016; and

Whereas Rutgers exemplifies all of the traditions of higher education in the United States because Rutgers is the only university in the United States that is—

(1) a colonial college;

(2) a land-grant college; and

(3) a comprehensive public research university: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate honors Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, as Rutgers celebrates 250 years of rich history as a colonial college, a land-grant institution, and a great State university that has been a source of pride for New Jersey and the people of the United States since 1766.

#### AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2770. Mr. MCCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2771. Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. TOOMEY, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2772. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra.

SA 2773. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2774. Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. CASEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2775. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2776. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2777. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2778. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2779. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI)

to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2780. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2781. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2782. Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2783. Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2784. Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. DAINES) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2785. Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. CASEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2786. Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2787. Mr. SULLIVAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2788. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2789. Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2790. Mr. DAINES submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

#### TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

**SA 2770.** Mr. MCCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_.** **PROTECTING THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL CHOICES OF NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS.**

None of the funds appropriated under this Act may be used to participate in or carry

out actions arising from the Department of Education's Interagency Task Force of For-Profit Institutions of Higher Education.

**SA 2771.** Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. TOOMEY, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

**SEC. 247.** None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this title may be used to carry out the Home Marketing Incentive Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to carry out the Appraisal Value Offer Program of the Department, or to pay for the transfer or relocation of an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs in a senior executive position (as defined in section 713(g) of title 38, United States Code).

**SA 2772.** Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_.** The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct random, periodic audits of medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Integrated Service Networks to assess whether such facilities and Networks are complying with all standards imposed by law or by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect to the timely access of veterans to hospital care, medical services, and other health care from the Department.

**SA 2773.** Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 71, between lines 14 and 15, insert the following:

**SEC. 411.** (a) **ADDITIONAL AMOUNT TO FACILITATE FURNISHING OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO VETERANS UNABLE TO AFFORD LEGAL REPRESENTATION.**—The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by title III under the heading “SALARIES AND EXPENSES” under the heading “UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS” is hereby increased by \$500,000.

(b) **AVAILABILITY.**—Of the amount appropriated or otherwise made available by title III under the heading “SALARIES AND EXPENSES” under the heading “UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS”, as increased by subsection (a), \$500,000 shall be available for the provision of financial assistance as described in and in accordance with the process and reporting procedures set forth in the Dire Emergency Supplemental Appropriations and Transfers for Relief From the Effects of Natural Disasters, for Other Urgent Needs, and for Incremental

Cost of “Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm” Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-229) under the heading “SALARIES AND EXPENSES” under the heading “COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS”. The amount available for financial assistance under this subsection is in addition to any other amounts available for such financial assistance under this Act.

(c) **OFFSET.**—The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by title II under the heading “GENERAL ADMINISTRATION” is hereby decreased by \$500,000.

**SA 2774.** Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. CASEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_.** None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by title II may be used to carry out the Home Marketing Incentive Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs or to carry out the Appraisal Value Offer Program of the Department with respect to an employee of the Department in a senior executive position (as defined in section 713(g) of title 38, United States Code).

**SA 2775.** Mr. MCCONNELL (for Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_.** (a) Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the congressional veterans committees a report evaluating the implementation by the Department of Veterans Affairs of section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note).

(b) The report required by subsection (a) shall include, with respect to the implementation of such section 101, an evaluation of the following:

(1) The effect of such implementation on the reduction in the use of purchased care by the Department, including delays or denials of care and interruptions in courses and continuity of care.

(2) The ability of health care providers to meet the demand for primary, specialty, and behavioral health care under such section 101 that cannot reasonably be provided in medical facilities of the Department.

(3) The efforts of the Department to recruit health care providers to provide health care under such section 101.

(4) The accuracy of the information provided to veterans through call centers regarding the receipt of health care under such section 101.

(5) The timeliness of referrals of veterans by the Department to health care providers under such section 101.

(6) Unique issues and difficulties in the implementation of section 101 with respect to veterans residing in rural areas, the States of Alaska and Hawaii and states lacking a full service VA Hospital.

(7) With respect to rural areas: (A) an identification of the average wait times for veterans in rural areas to receive health care under such section 101, measured from when the veteran first calls the Department or contracted call center to request an appointment; (B) an assessment of utilization rates for health care provided under such section 101 in rural areas (C) an assessment of the accessibility of veterans in rural areas to primary and specialty care at medical centers of the Department and from non-Department health care providers under such section 101; (D) an assessment of the status of any pilot programs created by the Department to provide care under such section 101; (E) an identification of the number of health care providers providing health care under such section 101 to veterans in rural areas, broken out by primary care providers, specialty and subspecialty providers, and behavioral health providers in each Veterans Integrated Service Network.

(8) Recommendations for such improvements to the provision of health care under such section 101 as the Comptroller General considers appropriate.

(c) In this section, the term “congressional veterans committees” means the Veterans Affairs Committees of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives and the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies of the Committees on Appropriations of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives.

**SA 2776.** Mr. MCCONNELL (for Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. Not later than February 1, 2016, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report that supplements the report required under section 4002(c) of the Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-41) and that contains the following:

(1) A description of the changes in access, if any, of veterans in Alaska to purchased care from the Department of Veterans Affairs that have resulted from implementation of section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146), including denials of care and interruptions in the course and continuity of care.

(2) An assessment of the performance of the Department in providing health care under such section 101 in Alaska, including—

(A) the performance of call center service provided to veterans;

(B) the accuracy of call center information provided to veterans and health care providers;

(C) whether health care providers are agreeing to provide health care under such section 101 in each of the major communities in Alaska;

(D) gaps in the availability of health care providers, disaggregated by primary, specialty, subspecialty, and behavioral health care;

(E) impediments to the provision of health care under such section 101; and

(F) plans to mitigate those impediments.

(3) An assessment of the status of health care provider vacancies at the VA Alaska Healthcare System as of the date of submittal of the report under this section, including impediments to filling those vacancies and plans to mitigate those impediments.

(4) A description of the manner in which the Department plans to serve the primary, specialty, and behavioral health care needs of veterans in Alaska if the plan and recommendations set forth in the report submitted under such section 4002(c) are implemented, including a description of specific strategies to be employed by the Department to address gaps in the provision of health care to veterans and the supply and demand of health care providers for veterans, including the roles of tribal health providers and community providers in addressing those gaps.

**SA 2777.** Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. COMPENSATION FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY A LAPSE IN APPROPRIATIONS.**

Section 1341 of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “An officer” and inserting “Except as specified in this subchapter or any other provision of law, an officer”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(c)(1) In this subsection—

“(A) the term ‘covered lapse in appropriations’ means a lapse in appropriations that begins on or after October 1, 2015; and

“(B) the term ‘excepted employee’ means an excepted employee or an employee performing emergency work, as such terms are defined by the Office of Personnel Management.

“(2) Each Federal employee furloughed as a result of a covered lapse in appropriations shall be paid for the period of the lapse in appropriations, and each excepted employee who is required to perform work during a covered lapse in appropriations shall be paid for such work, at the employee's standard rate of pay at the earliest date possible after the lapse in appropriations ends, regardless of scheduled pay dates.

“(3) During a covered lapse in appropriations, each excepted employee who is required to perform work shall be entitled to use leave under chapter 63 of title 5, or any other applicable law governing the use of leave by the excepted employee, for which compensation shall be paid at the earliest date possible after the lapse in appropriations ends, regardless of scheduled pay dates.”.

**SA 2778.** Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for

military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 31, line 23, strike the period and insert “: *Provided*, That such sums are allocated to conduct research related to toxic exposure.”

**SA 2779.** Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 31, line 23, strike the period and insert “: *Provided*, That such sums are allocated to ensure the provision of gender appropriate prosthetics and to conduct research related to toxic exposure.”

**SA 2780.** Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 31, line 23, strike the period and insert “: *Provided*, That such sums are allocated to ensure the provision of gender appropriate prosthetics.”

**SA 2781.** Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 30, line 6, strike the period and insert “: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for medical supplies and equipment are allocated to ensure the provision of gender appropriate prosthetics.”

**SA 2782.** Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 39, line 14, insert after “established above:” the following: “*Provided further*, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives, not later than 30 days after the last day of each fiscal quarter, a report on the super construction projects, as defined in section 8103(e)(3) of title 38, United States Code, carried out by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which shall include the status of each such project as of the last day of the quarter covered by the report, the actual cost and schedule variances of each such project as of such day compared to the planned cost and schedules for the project, and a dispute resolution matrix depicting internal and external disputes regarding technical, fiscal, schedule, or other issues, along with action plans and timelines for resolution."

**SA 2783.** Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. (a) Congress finds the following:

(1) The Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016 that was reported by the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate on May 21, 2015, includes the following amounts to be appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs:

(A) \$35,000,000 to make seismic corrections to Building 208 at the West Los Angeles Medical Center of the Department in Los Angeles, California, which, according to the Department, is a building that is designated as having an exceptionally high risk of sustaining substantial damage or collapsing during an earthquake.

(B) \$158,000,000 to provide for the construction of a new research building, site work, and demolition at the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

(C) \$161,000,000 to replace Building 133 with a new community living center at the Long Beach Veterans Affairs Medical Center, which, according to the Department, is a building that is designated as having an extremely high risk of sustaining major damage during an earthquake.

(D) \$468,800,000 for construction projects that are critical to the Department for ensuring health care access and safety at medical facilities in Louisville, Kentucky, Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, Missouri, Perry Point, Maryland, American Lake, Washington, Alameda, California, and Livermore, California.

(2) The Department is unable to obligate or expend the amounts described in paragraph (1), other than for construction design, because the Department lacks an explicit authorization by an Act of Congress pursuant to section 8104(a)(2) of title 38, United States Code, to carry out the major medical facility projects described in such paragraph.

(3) Among the major medical facility projects described in paragraph (1), three are critical seismic safety projects in California.

(4) Every day that the critical seismic safety projects described in paragraph (3) are delayed increases the risk of a life-threatening building failure in the case of a major seismic event.

(5) According to the United States Geological Survey—

(A) California has more than a 99 percent chance of experiencing an earthquake of magnitude 6.7 or greater in the next 30 years;

(B) even earthquakes of less severity than magnitude 6.7 can cause life threatening damage to seismically unsafe buildings; and

(C) in California, earthquakes of magnitude 6.0 or greater occur on average once every 1.2 years.

(b) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility projects, with each project to be carried out in an amount not to exceed the amount specified for that project:

(1) Seismic corrections to buildings, including retrofitting and replacement of high-risk buildings, in San Francisco, California, in an amount not to exceed \$180,480,000.

(2) Seismic corrections to facilities, including facilities to support homeless veterans, at the medical center in West Los Angeles, California, in an amount not to exceed \$105,500,000.

(3) Seismic corrections to the mental health and community living center in Long Beach, California, in an amount not to exceed \$287,100,000.

(4) Construction of an outpatient clinic, administrative space, cemetery, and columbarium in Alameda, California, in an amount not to exceed \$87,332,000.

(5) Realignment of medical facilities in Livermore, California, in an amount not to exceed \$194,430,000.

(6) Construction of a medical center in Louisville, Kentucky, in an amount not to exceed \$150,000,000.

(7) Construction of a replacement community living center in Perry Point, Maryland, in an amount not to exceed \$92,700,000.

(8) Seismic corrections and other renovations to several buildings and construction of a specialty care building in American Lake, Washington, in an amount not to exceed \$16,260,000.

(c) There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2016 or the year in which funds are appropriated for the Construction, Major Projects, account, \$1,113,802,000 for the projects authorized in subsection (b).

(d) The projects authorized in subsection (b) may only be carried out using—

(1) funds appropriated for fiscal year 2016 pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (c);

(2) funds available for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2016 that remain available for obligation;

(3) funds available for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year after fiscal year 2016 that remain available for obligation;

(4) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for fiscal year 2016 for a category of activity not specific to a project;

(5) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year before fiscal year 2016 for a category of activity not specific to a project; and

(6) funds appropriated for Construction, Major Projects, for a fiscal year after fiscal year 2016 for a category of activity not specific to a project.

**SA 2784.** Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. DAINES) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

**SEC. 247. CLARIFICATION OF PRESUMPTIONS OF EXPOSURE FOR VETERANS WHO SERVED IN VICINITY OF REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.**

(a) COMPENSATION.—Subsections (a)(1) and (f) of section 1116 of title 38, United States Code, are amended by inserting "(including the territorial seas of such Republic)" after "served in the Republic of Vietnam" each place it appears.

(b) HEALTH CARE.—Section 1710(e)(4) of such title is amended by inserting "(including the territorial seas of such Republic)" after "served on active duty in the Republic of Vietnam".

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall take effect as of September 25, 1985.

**SA 2785.** Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. CASEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 247. None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this title may be used—

(1) to carry out the memorandum of the Veterans Benefits Administration known as "Fast Letter 13-10", issued on May 20, 2013; or

(2) to create or maintain any patient record-keeping system other than those currently approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office in Washington, District of Columbia.

**SA 2786.** Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. (a) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the recruitment and retention of health care providers by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An identification of the ratio of veterans to health care providers of the Department, disaggregated by State.

(2) An analysis of the workload of primary and specialty care providers of the Department, disaggregated by State.

(3) An assessment of initiatives carried out by the Veterans Health Administration to recruit and retain health care providers of the Department.

(4) An assessment of the extent to which the Veterans Health Administration oversees health care providers of the Department.

(5) Such recommendations for improving the recruitment and retention of health care providers of the Department as the Comptroller General considers appropriate.



**SA 2787.** Mr. SULLIVAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. (a) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation by the Department of Veterans Affairs of section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) in rural areas.

(b) The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An identification of average wait times for veterans in rural areas to receive health care under such section 101, measured from when the veteran first calls the Department to schedule an appointment.

(2) An assessment of utilization rates for health care provided under such section 101 in rural areas.

(3) An assessment of the accessibility of veterans in rural areas to primary and specialty care at medical centers of the Department and from non-Department health care providers under such section 101.

(4) An identification of the number of health care providers providing health care under such section 101 in each Veterans Integrated Service Network.

(5) An assessment of the status of any pilot programs created by the Department to provide care under such section 101 in rural areas.

**SA 2788.** Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

**SEC. 247. REPORT ON USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

(a) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the use of social security numbers by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the plans of the Secretary to discontinue the unnecessary use.

(b) **CONTENTS.**—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A list of documents and records of the Department of Veterans Affairs that contain social security numbers.

(2) A list of all government and non-government entities and the numbers of their employees that have access to the social security numbers of veterans that are stored by the Department.

(3) A description of how the Department, other governmental entities, and persons use social security numbers they obtain from the Department, including a description of any information sharing arrangements that the Secretary may have with the heads of other governmental entities.

(4) The number of data breaches of Department of Veterans Affairs information systems that involved social security numbers that occurred during the five-year period ending on the date of the enactment of this Act that the Secretary discovered or that were reported to the Secretary, a description and status of the investigations conducted by the Secretary regarding such breaches, and a description of the plans of the Secretary to remediate such breaches.

(5) The plans of the Secretary, including a timeline, to discontinue the unnecessary use by the Department of social security numbers.

(c) **APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(1) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

**SA 2789.** Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. (a) Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that includes, with respect to the South Texas Veterans Health Care System of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the following:

(1) A description of the nature and scope of any foreseeable increase in wait times for medical appointments.

(2) An assessment of whether a shortage of health care providers is the primary cause of any such increase in wait times.

(3) An identification of any other causes of any such increase in wait times.

(4) A description of any action taken by the Department to correct any such increase in wait times.

(5) An assessment of any issues relating to access to care.

(6) A plan for how the Secretary will remedy any such increase in wait times, including a detailed description of steps to be taken and a timeline for completion.

(b) In this section, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(1) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives.

**SA 2790.** Mr. DAINES submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2763 proposed by Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MIKULSKI) to the bill H.R. 2029, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 2 \_\_\_\_\_. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that all health care pro-

viders of the Department of Veterans Affairs are trained to treat and address health issues unique to women veterans.

**VETERANS DAY MOMENT OF SILENCE ACT**

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 1004 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1004) to amend title 36, United States Code, to encourage the nationwide observance of two minutes of silence each Veterans Day.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (S. 1004) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1004

*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 “Veterans Day Moment of Silence Act”.

**SEC. 2. OBSERVANCE OF VETERANS DAY.**

(a) **TWO MINUTES OF SILENCE.**—Chapter 1 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

**“§ 145. Veterans Day**

“The President shall issue each year a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe two minutes of silence on Veterans Day in honor of the service and sacrifice of veterans throughout the history of the Nation, beginning at—

“(1) 3:11 p.m. Atlantic standard time;

“(2) 2:11 p.m. eastern standard time;

“(3) 1:11 p.m. central standard time;

“(4) 12:11 p.m. mountain standard time;

“(5) 11:11 a.m. Pacific standard time;

“(6) 10:11 a.m. Alaska standard time; and

“(7) 9:11 a.m. Hawaii-Aleutian standard time.”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections for chapter 1 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“145. Veterans Day.”.

**ORDERS FOR TUESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 10, 2015**

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, November 10; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following



leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 2029, with the time until 11 a.m. equally divided in the usual form; further, that at 11 a.m., the Senate proceed to the consideration of the House message to accompany S. 1356, with all other provisions under the previous order remaining in effect; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings.

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 7 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, November 10, 2015, at 10 a.m.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

##### UNITED STATES TAX COURT

VIK EDWIN STOLL, OF MISSOURI, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES TAX COURT FOR A TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE JAMES S. HALPERN, RETIRED.

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ROBERT ANNAN RILEY III, OF FLORIDA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA.

KAREN BREVARD STEWART, OF FLORIDA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS.

##### IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS THE CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY AND SURGEON GENERAL AND FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 601 AND 5137:

##### *To be vice admiral*

REAR ADM. CLINTON F. FAISON III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

*To be rear admiral (lower half)*

CAPT. MICHELLE C. SKUBIC

#### CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate November 9, 2015:

EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

SCOTT ALLEN, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNITED STATES DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT.

#### WITHDRAWAL

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on November 9, 2015 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

KENNETH J. KOPOCIS, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE PETER SILVA SILVA, RESIGNED, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JUNE 24, 2015.