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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Rabbi Seth H. Frisch, senior rabbi of Historic Congregation Keshet Israel, from Philadelphia, PA.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Dearest God, we look to You today, You who remembers all that we have forgotten and You who is the eternal source of blessing.

We stand before You on the eve of the Biblical Festival of Purim, a joyous time in which we read from the ancient and sacred scroll of the Book of Esther. It is in the scroll we read at first of a certain darkness, a darkness which would come to envelope the entire nation over which Esther would soon reign as Queen.

It was Queen Esther who became frightened when the plan revealing a plot to erase the sacred remnants of her people, along with the fundamental teachings of her faith, came to light; and yet it was Esther, who, when confronted by the impending darkness, was able to bring the plot to an end, allowing her people to emerge from the shadow of darkness—of this horror—and live freely, without fear, celebrating life itself in the light of their newfound freedom.

And now, standing here today, before You, on the eve of this festival, we, too, ask that You remember us for life, instilling within us a greater love of freedom, seeking both peace and prosperity for all the inhabitants of this great Nation.

And yet, Dear Lord, we would be remiss if we were not to remember those who have sacrificed much, suffered, and paid dearly with their lives, allowing all of us—to this day—a life of freedom

without fear, worshiping as we choose, and continuing to bask in that greater love which You shed and allow us to live within.

Teach us now and forever to celebrate our differences. Unify us to preserve and admire those differences among us—all of us—with respect and dignity for all the inhabitants of this Nation.

Lord, we ask You to bestow Your blessings today upon this assembly and upon the Nation which it serves. Bless all the inhabitants of this land with both prosperity and lasting joy, love, and freedom.

Yevarechecha Adonai,
V'Yishmerecha.

May God bless you and keep you. May God bless the United States of America, and may God bless us all. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 27, 2018.

To the Senate:

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

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Elizabeth L. Branch, of Georgia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

GUN SAFETY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, after Columbine, Sandy Hook, Charleston, Orlando, Las Vegas, and too many more to name, the Nation convulsed, and we talked about reforming our gun safety laws to prevent more names and places from being added to the list. Each time, we talked, but the Senate, the House—this government—did nothing.

Now, in the wake of the tragic shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School that took the lives of another 17 Americans, we must try again to pass meaningful changes to our laws to keep our children safe. That is our duty, and there are many things we could and should pursue.

Yesterday, I suggested that comprehensive background checks would

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



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be an excellent and necessary place to start. It doesn't make sense that we allow anyone, regardless of his criminal history—felons—or a history of mental illness, to walk into a gun show or to go online and buy a gun with no questions asked. There is no sense in that. When I wrote the Brady Law back in 1993, gun shows were not popular, and we didn't have internet sales to worry about at the time because there was no internet. These loopholes grew and grew and grew over time. Now, it is hard to know the exact number because we don't record the number of guns that are sold at gun shows or online, but about one-fifth of all gun sales happen without there being background checks.

It is likely that criminals and others who are up to no good have a higher percentage because they do not want to be detected and go through background checks. It is outrageous that so many guns are sold with there being no background checks whatsoever—whether you are a felon, one who is adjudicated mentally ill, or a spousal abuser. It is outrageous. We should close those loopholes and close them now. We should have comprehensive background checks, not just a little something here and a little something there. Comprehensive background checks are supported overwhelmingly by the American people.

Later this morning, just in about 15, 20 minutes, I will be meeting with several of the students—the brave, courageous students—from Stoneman Douglas High School. I want to hear what they have to say. These brave students, whether at the Florida statehouse or on national television, have spoken out with passion, with eloquence, with grace. I believe they are changing the way our country thinks about this issue. I hope—I pray—they compel us to do something significant because we cannot settle for half measures, not after what happened in Florida, not after so many tragedies.

The fix NICS bill is an idea that has wide support in this Chamber, but it is tiny. It is a grant program that addresses one specific issue. Now, we have a whole host of issues to address, not just one. Fix NICS was aimed by the Senator from Texas at a particular tragedy in Texas by which a member of the Air Force had a record that would have disqualified him from getting a gun, but the Air Force failed to send the statement to NICS. It is a good thing to make sure that doesn't happen, but we should not be aiming our gun legislation simply at one past tragedy. We must look to the future and what will prevent future tragedies. Comprehensive background checks will; the Fix NICS bill will not.

So let's not set our sights too narrow and squander this moment. Let's try for significant, bipartisan legislation that will make a real difference in keeping our children safe. Even as our caucus discusses what legislation is best—and in our leadership meeting,

we had an outstanding discussion this morning—I look forward to working with our Republican colleagues to see if we can get something real done.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. President, on another matter, today Senate Democrats will be introducing our legislation to reverse the FCC's repeal of net neutrality. It has the support of every single Democrat and one Senate Republican, Senator COLLINS from the State of Maine.

I say to all my Republican colleagues: This CRA is the best way to undo the terrible decision to repeal net neutrality. It is an important debate. At stake are two opposing visions of the future of the internet.

For its entire history, the internet has been free and open, accessible to all Americans. It has been a true public good, just as our highways have. Whether you are on Main Street or Wall Street, you have the same internet. Whether you are a consumer or big corporation, you have the same internet. Whether you are a teacher in a wealthy school or an underresourced school, you have the same internet. Equality of access has driven innovation and entrepreneurship and so much of what we value in the American spirit and the American economy. It is the American way.

Net neutrality rules were put in place to ensure that the internet remains that way—open and equal access to all, no matter who you are, how much money you have, how much power you have. But the repeal by the Republican-led FCC has opened us to an entirely new universe where internet service providers—the big boys—will have the authority to sell quality internet to the highest bidder. That means they could restrict customers' access to their favorite websites by forcing them to buy internet packages or pay more for premium services.

Big companies could pay to get faster internet service, while startups and small businesses and average Americans are left in the slow lane.

Everything from Netflix, to Amazon Prime, to Spotify, streaming television, sports, and movies could be slower if you don't pay up.

Public schools that don't pay for premium service could be put at a significant disadvantage.

Startups that are looking to get their businesses off the ground but aren't large enough to negotiate faster internet delivery with ISPs might never take off. Our startups in New York are scared to death of the elimination of net neutrality, and they have created hundreds of thousands of jobs in my city and millions throughout the country.

The internet without net neutrality is a tale of two internets, where the best internet goes to the highest bidder and everyone else loses.

We have an opportunity to save the internet with our CRA, which would reinstitute net neutrality rules that keep the internet just the way it is now.

Democrats believe that the future of the internet must be as free and open as in the past; that the startup founder living in her parents' basement should be able to compete with the world's largest corporations; that the young student in an underserved school district should be able to find all the information he needs online; that every American should be able to afford easily accessible internet. If we start grating the internet, it could dramatically hurt our economy and hurt equality in America—something we are all striving for.

Right now, unfortunately, only one Republican has signed up for the fair, open vision of an internet that we need and want to keep. All we need is one more. On this net neutrality day of action, I urge all Americans to contact their Senators and demand they sign up with us to save the internet.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. President, finally, a word on the Republican tax bill. When President Trump and congressional Republicans were trying to sell their tax bill, all we heard about was how it is going to be a boon to workers, stimulate investments in new factories, raise wages, and create jobs. It is a few months after the tax bill, and the promises have not been backed up by the evidence.

Now the evidence is flowing in that corporations are spending the lion's share of the benefits they reap on the tax bill not on workers but on goosing their own stock.

A headline from Monday's New York Times states "Trump's Tax Cuts in Hand, Companies Spend More on Themselves Than on Wages." The article goes on to document how the Republican tax bill has unleashed a wave of share buybacks and stock repurchasing programs, things which help out rich executives and shareholders but don't accomplish much for everyday American workers. If you are a CEO of a company, you are judged by whether your stock is going up. The quickest hit on that is to buy back your shares, reduce the number. It doesn't help your workers, it doesn't help American productivity, but it helps your bottom line, Mr. CEO.

That is so wrong, that we passed a huge tax bill and put ourselves in deep debt so that much of the money can go to corporate executives—not improving the actual performance of their companies but just raising the value of their stock by buybacks. That is so wrong.

The article in the New York Times documents how the Republican tax bill has unleashed this wave of share buybacks and stock repurchasing programs, which, as I said, helps out rich executives and shareholders but doesn't accomplish much for everyday workers.

Rather than investing in new equipment and research, raising wages, providing better benefits, and raising productivity, which we are so short of here

in America right now, corporate America is using the Trump tax cut to give itself a raise.

At Morgan Stanley—hardly a left-wing company—the analysts surveyed a bunch of companies, and the companies surveyed said that they would pass only 13 percent of the Trump tax cut savings on to workers, compared to the 43 percent that go to share buybacks. For manufacturers—we all care about manufacturing—it is even worse. They expect 9 percent to go to workers and 47 percent to go to share buybacks.

Republicans made a conscious decision to give corporations and the wealthiest Americans the lion's share of the tax cuts and promised it would trickle down to everybody else. Unfortunately, trickle-down never works. Corporate America is doing what is best for corporate America, and working America is getting left behind.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant Democratic leader.

GUN SAFETY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, a few years ago, an author named Malcolm Gladwell wrote a book titled "The Tipping Point." He spelled out that in the course of history, when something occurs that changes people's thinking and actions, it is a precipitous moment where what has been done for so long stops, is reevaluated, and a different course is followed. The clear question we have in America today is whether we have reached a tipping point when it comes to gun violence.

It has only been 13 days since the tragedy in Parkland, FL. Look at what has happened since. Of course there is outrage, sadness, and mourning for the families who lost these wonderful students, teachers, and administrators, but beyond that, these high school students—17, 18 years old, some even younger—have become a national voice, a powerful voice on the issue of gun safety in schools.

I often wondered when this moment might occur or whether it would occur. There has been such a long litany and string of mass shootings and massacres. It is sad to say that there was a numbness setting in. When terrible things occurred in places like Las Vegas, Texas, and other States, you wondered, is that the event? Will the killing of those innocent children in Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut be the tipping point? Will America finally say "enough"? It appears that on this day, 13 days after the tragedy in Florida, we are near or at a tipping point when it comes to gun safety.

Some of it is very personal. Two weeks ago, after this occurred, my 6-year-old granddaughter said to her mother that she had been warned in her first grade classroom that if a shooter should turn up at school firing a gun, first, she should stay away from the windows, and second, she should lie down on the floor. I can't tell you what a profound impact that had on me as a

grandfather to think that my little first grader, this beautiful little girl, was worried about the moment when somebody would walk in her classroom and wantonly try to kill the students and teachers who are there.

I cannot believe that any sane person believes that the Second Amendment to the Constitution—the right to bear arms—envisioned that possibility. I am sure it didn't. I am sure our Founding Fathers—and we can debate for the rest of the day what their words actually meant—never envisioned that an American citizen's right to bear arms could somehow translate into violence against so many innocent people, as it has over and over again.

Last week, I was in Chicago. I was joined at a press conference by gun safety advocates at the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center on the South Side. We stood together, victims of gun violence and I, at a press conference. With me were advocates from Hadiya's Promise and the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence, who have been working together for years to combat the scourge gun violence in Illinois. I also stood with Patrick Korellis, who was wounded on February 14 10 years ago at a mass school shooting at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL.

A new voice came to join us, a graduate from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, named Francyn Brown. She graduated from Stoneman Douglas in 2009. She is currently a law student at the Chicago-Kent College of Law. She is one of dozens of Stoneman Douglas graduates in the Chicago area—which include, incidentally, the first baseman for the Chicago Cubs, Anthony Rizzo—and hundreds, if not thousands, nationwide who joined together in the aftermath of the February 14 mass shooting that killed 14 Stoneman Douglas students and 3 staff. These young men and women have come together to speak up and urge their lawmakers to do something about the Nation's epidemic of gun violence. The message is starting to resonate.

When Francyn Brown was speaking last Wednesday, students at schools across the Chicagoland area were walking out of class in solidarity with Stoneman Douglas students. They are all calling for commonsense gun reform. These students don't have time or patience for political games in Washington or Springfield. They have seen their friends, kids just like themselves, get shot in their classrooms and neighborhoods. They have had enough.

Francyn Brown said:

It's not supposed to matter what side of the aisle a politician sits. We are supposed to all protect the future of our children.

I couldn't agree more.

These students and young people across the country are changing the debate about gun violence. They are making it clear how absurd it is for lawmakers in this Chamber, across the rotunda, or in State capitals to do

nothing when Americans get shot every day in their homes, their neighborhoods, their churches, nightclubs, concerts, and schools. They are fed up with politicians in Washington who ignore the overwhelming majority of Americans who want commonsense gun safety and listen instead to paranoid, bullying gun sales lobbyists.

Remember, the National Rifle Association and its allies oppose virtually anything that hurts gun sales. They fight against proposals that might reduce gun sales, and they try to roll back laws on the books that limit them. That is their agenda. But it is not America's agenda. Corporate America is starting to walk away from the NRA. It is no longer a source of pride that they are doing business with the National Rifle Association—just the opposite. We are seeing company after company end relationships with the NRA because of its increasingly unhinged and hysterical rhetoric on the issue of gun safety. Corporate America—some of the biggest corporations in our Nation—realize that the NRA no longer speaks for responsible gun owners. When will Congress realize this?

We know we need to act to keep our children safe. There is no single reform that can stop every shooting, but we know there are gaps in our gun laws that make it easy for criminals, abusers, troubled children, and mentally unstable people to get guns, even military assault weapons with bump stocks and high-capacity magazines.

We need to close these gaps, and that requires the Republicans who control Congress to stand up to the NRA and do something that the NRA might not like. For starters, my Republican colleagues could take up legislation that the leader of their party, President Trump, proposed last Thursday. Here is one of the President's infamous tweets:

I will be strongly pushing Comprehensive Background Checks with an emphasis on Mental Health. Raise age to 21 and end sale of Bump Stocks! Congress is in a mood to finally do something on this issue—I hope!

And I hope as well.

There are proposals that Americans broadly support. Let's do something. Of course, the NRA is opposed to most of these. We expected that. These proposals might have some negative impact on gun sales, but is the gun sales lobby now in charge of writing bills for the Senate and the House? Deferring to the NRA is the reason we have reached this moment in history.

Remember, the Senate has held one gun vote since President Trump came to office, and it was a vote to prevent mental health records from the Social Security Administration from going into the FBI's gun background check system. That is the only vote since the Trump administration took office. It is the only thing we have done here—roll back a law on the books on mental health and background checks. That was a giveaway to the gun lobby, which claims to support enforcing the laws on the books but actually tries to roll

back those laws if it means helping to lift their sales.

Let's show the students at Stoneman Douglas and across the country that we hear them. I hope we show that reducing gun violence is a priority.

I call on my Republican colleagues to join the Democrats in a bipartisan effort to treat the issue of gun safety with the sense of urgency that the American people believe is necessary. If Republicans gave a fraction of the effort to gun safety that they have to other issues, we could get this done—and done quickly. There are plenty of reforms we could pass that are completely consistent with the Second Amendment and would save lives. Even President Trump, for the time being, has said that he supports them.

So let's get started. Not on a give-away to the gun lobby—let's work on closing loopholes. Let's have universal background checks. Over 90 percent of the American people believe we should keep guns out of the hands of convicted felons and mentally unstable people. I also believe that those who are subject to protective orders for domestic violence should be disqualified from buying a gun. I would say that those who are on the terrorist watch list, whom we do not allow to fly on airplanes because of fear that they could do harm to others, shouldn't be allowed to buy guns in the United States. I want to add a provision that straw purchasers—the girlfriends with no criminal record who buy the weapons to give to the boyfriends with a long criminal record—ought to have the book thrown at them. Let's get to work.

I want to thank the victims and advocates who have worked for many years to help reduce the epidemic of gun violence. I want them to know we stand with them, and I hope we can all stand with them on a bipartisan basis. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

FIX NICS BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I heard the remarks of my colleague from Illinois, and I, too, hope that we can get past the rhetoric and the talking points of the past and actually do something meaningful when it comes to public safety and address the terrible tragedies like the one that occurred at Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida just 2 weeks ago. But we are not going to do it by trotting out our laundry lists of requests and saying that it has to be all of this or nothing because when you say here in Washington—and particularly in Congress—"I want everything on my list or I want nothing," one thing is for sure. You will end up with nothing, and that simply is an unacceptable outcome, particularly when it comes to the public safety crisis manifested here most recently at Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida.

We know that there were many, many failures; you might even call this a systemic failure when it comes to the

children at Stoneman Douglas High School. First and foremost, why didn't Federal and local law enforcement follow up on threats and warnings? This young man, the shooter who took the lives of 17 people, telegraphed in very clear, unmistakable language what he intended to do, but the very people whom we trust and entrust with public safety at the Federal and State levels did not respond.

We know that the alleged shooter was expelled from school for disciplinary reasons. We know that deputies in Broward County received at least 18 calls warning them over the course of several years—18 calls. We know about the disturbing YouTube posts, where the shooter basically said what he intended to do and did, in fact, do later. We know that the FBI received many disturbing tips from citizens about the imminent danger posed by the shooter.

Another question is whether mental health officials could have done more. We know that this young man had a long history of violent outbursts. We are told that in 2016 he reportedly attempted suicide by drinking gasoline. He had been accused of verbal slurs against racial and religious minorities.

We know that Florida has a State law, as some have advocated at the Federal level, that permits forced hospitalization of people in mental health crises, but it seems that in this particular case, mental health workers concluded that this individual was stable at the time they examined him. Why and how was that determination made, and why does that stand in such stark contrast to the picture that we have been able to draw as a result of all the information that we received since this terrible shooting? If law enforcement, public health workers, and school officials were communicating and coordinating effectively, would they have made the same decisions in this case? Could they have made a difference in the outcome? Well, I think we need the answers to those questions.

There are two other questions we need to answer as well. One is why and how did the shooter have access to firearms in the first place? Another is why didn't the school's armed resource officer intervene once the shooting began?

All of us are angry at the fact that this shooting happened, but that shouldn't tempt us into easy solutions that at the end of the day wouldn't make any difference in the outcome and wouldn't do any good. That is what we tend to get here in Congress when we have hard issues like this—easy solution talking points that lead to no effective action. We can't let that happen here. As one columnist put it last week, we can't fall victim to "the politics of false hope."

The most frequent refrain I hear in Washington after some tragedy like this occurs is "We need to do something." Well, we need to do something effective, something that would change the likely outcome. We may not be

able to protect every citizen against terrible tragedies like this, but there are things we can do that will make things better and that will be effective in changing the outcome and, I believe, in saving lives.

Real solutions require us to look at why the FBI and local law enforcement failed to respond to multiple warnings. I asked one police officer about this, and he said: Well, in America we can't arrest somebody for precrimes. In other words, we can't arrest somebody for an offense that they haven't committed yet. It is perhaps a flaw that is exposed in our system when, unfortunately, we can't anticipate who might commit these terrible offenses and stop them before they commit the act. That is a feature of our law enforcement system, but this isn't just another job for law enforcement. There are a lot more people who could contribute to a solution here and prevent these incidents from happening beyond law enforcement, who are, by our very Constitution, structured to investigate and prosecute crimes that have already occurred, not to stop them in the first place.

I think a fair question to ask is, What is the role of social media in preventing mass violence? When you have people basically telling us what they are getting ready to do and posting those on social media and nothing seems to happen as a consequence, it strikes me that something is terribly wrong there. What is the responsibility of these platforms? Well, we know that Congress has said, for example, that you have a responsibility to police your platform for things like child pornography. In other words, they can't be totally oblivious to the things that are being posted on these social media platforms. They have a responsibility to intervene in some cases, and maybe it ought to be in more cases.

What options currently exist to reporting disturbing content online? I believe in the YouTube video case, it was someone who actually saw it, was disturbed by it, and then reported it to the FBI. It was not even YouTube itself that identified it. Of course, they would be in the best position to identify it immediately. It was some third party who happened to see it, was disturbed by it, and contacted the FBI. Tragically, it was never followed up on. How often are these popular platforms reporting to police or Federal authorities when people actually threaten to commit acts of violence? If there are holes in the reporting protocol, we should close them.

That is why I think this is a systemic failure. When you look at mental health providers, when you look at law enforcement officials, when you look at the schools, when you look at the social media platforms, when you look at all of this together, I think it begins to give us some ideas about things we can do that may end up saving lives, and we should do them.

Members are discussing many ideas, which always happens after a tragedy

like this, and I am open to a conversation with anyone who shares my desire to take effective action to prevent another one of these tragedies. There is one proposal that has already been introduced that has won bipartisan support and has brought together advocates from all sides. It is really a unique piece of legislation because there are not many times that I can think of where people who are strong Second Amendment advocates and people who believe there ought to be more controls imposed on guns can come together to find consensus, to find common ground, but we have on a bill called the Fix NICS Act, which I introduced to strengthen the background check system.

It may take a long time to answer all the questions raised by the tragedy in Parkland, but one step we can take right now is to pass the Fix NICS bill. This bill has the unique quality of causing the junior Senator from Connecticut and me to reintroduce this bill. We couldn't be more ideologically different. He is a Democrat and I am a Republican, but we have come together on a bill that does enjoy broad bipartisan support and that, I believe, will save lives.

This bill was introduced in the wake of the shooting last fall in the small community near San Antonio called Sutherland Springs, TX. As we will recall, a deranged gunman with a criminal record and a history of violence and mental illness opened fire during a Sunday morning church service, killing 26 people and wounding 20 more. To add to the tragedy that had already occurred, this murderer's criminal conviction records were never uploaded to the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System. When he went to purchase firearms, he lied about his record, and there was nothing in the criminal background check system to show that he lied and thus deny him the opportunity to purchase weapons. This failure to enforce our background check law allowed this shooter to walk into a gun store, pass a background check, and illegally purchase a firearm.

This bipartisan legislation would tighten the National Instant Background Check System. It is supported by people all across the political spectrum. It is even cosponsored by the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, and is supported by Everytown for Gun Safety. It has brought together all sides in the gun debate—leaders on the Republican side and Democratic side alike.

Under current law, mentally ill individuals and persons convicted of violent crimes are prohibited by current law from purchasing or possessing firearms. This is to make sure that these laws are enforced and that criminal history information is uploaded into the NICS Federal database by State and Federal authorities.

For years, our colleagues across the aisle have said that they want reform

that would help stem the tide of gun violence perpetrated by dangerous criminals. Well, this is their chance. This is our chance. It is our chance to show the Nation that we refuse to accept shootings in schools and churches as the new normal, and we can do that. We can start doing that by passing Fix NICS this week.

Senator SCHUMER, the minority leader, said yesterday that he wants to wait, even though he is a cosponsor of the Fix NICS bill. He is a cosponsor of the bill, but he says that he wants to wait. He wants to wait and debate other ideas he knows are controversial and can't pass. Of course, that is his right as a Senator, but as I said earlier, if our attitude is "I want everything on my list or nothing," we are going to end up with nothing.

I, for one, am not willing to go home and look my constituents in the face and say that we had an opportunity to pass legislation, the Fix NICS bill, which will save lives in the future and will make sure that existing laws are enforced. I will not be able to go home and tell them, in good faith, that we have done everything we can in our power to help save lives. We can do that by passing bipartisan legislation that could pass today if it were put on the floor and voted on by a supermajority of the Senate.

I implore our Democratic colleagues to change course. Let's do the art of the possible. That is what politics is, the art of the possible. Let's do what we can immediately to pass Fix NICS and build from there. I am willing to work with them. The President is willing to work with them on things like bump stocks and the mental health failure, trying to make sure that our schools are safer and to make sure that social media platforms report threats of violence to law enforcement officials so they can be followed up on.

There are a lot of other things we can do, but the one thing we can do this week before we go home is to pass the Fix NICS bill and to send it to the House and have the President sign it into law. It will save lives.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate will soon vote to confirm another fine candidate to serve on the Federal bench.

Yesterday afternoon, we voted to advance the nomination of Judge Elizabeth Branch for the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Branch has sat on the Georgia Court of Appeals since 2012. This follows a fine career that spanned both private practice and public service.

Judge Branch has previously answered the call to serve at the Department of Homeland Security, where she worked as associate general counsel, and then at the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. Her record and qualifications are well known.

Our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee reported her nomination favorably by an overwhelming vote. Confirming this worthy nominee will be a further credit to the outstanding work of Chairman GRASSLEY and the members of the committee.

I encourage all my colleagues to join me in voting to confirm Elizabeth Branch today. Let's continue to fulfill our constitutional responsibility and confirm the President's outstanding judicial nominees.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 387.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of William Northey, of Iowa, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Northey nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Utah.

REMEMBERING FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, 200 years ago this month, a man was born into slavery in a cabin not far from here in

Maryland. The child knew his mother only briefly; they were cruelly separated when he was young. He knew his father only by the rumors. He didn't even know the exact day of his birth. Yes, even his birthday—for many of us, that foundational aspect of identity—was denied him by the cruel master of slavery.

This slave was whipped and beaten. His days were filled with toil. His nights were filled with restless turning on a packed dirt floor. But that is not where the story ends—no, it is only the beginning of the incredible life of Frederick Douglass, the great abolitionist, orator, and one of the greatest Americans ever to live. As Douglass would later write in his memoirs, “You have seen how a man was made a slave. You shall see how a slave was made a man.”

For all its terrible might—its bloodhounds and its implements of torture—slavery was not built to withstand Frederick Douglass, just as it was not built to withstand the universal desire for freedom that lies within the heart of man.

Douglass knew that the first step to freedom was education, so he taught himself to read in secrecy because slaves were punished for learning to read. Around the time he was 12, he got hold of an old textbook called “The Columbian Orator.” Little did Douglass know that around that same time, the same textbook was being studied on the Illinois prairie by a young man named Abraham Lincoln. In that textbook, Douglass found speeches by George Washington and Benjamin Franklin—men who revolted against tyranny to claim their liberty. In that book, he also found a fictional dialogue between a slave and his master where the master brought forward “the whole argument in behalf of slavery . . . all of which was disposed of by the slave.” Douglass wrote: This exchange “gave tongue to interesting thoughts of [his] soul.” It kindled his burning conviction that slavery was wrong and he must escape it. From that moment on, Douglass was a grave threat to the very institution of slavery itself. He was free in his own mind.

Douglass’ journey “from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom” would go through many dramatic twists and turns before its conclusion. When a notorious slave breaker tried to beat him for disobeying orders, Douglass wrestled him into submission. He insisted on being treated as a man, and from that day forward, he was never whipped again.

Douglass’ first attempt at escape was a failure, thwarted at the last minute by a betrayal of confidence. He did not fail a second time. In 1838, traveling in disguise under an assumed identity, Douglass took a steamboat north to the blessedness of freedom. At this point in the story, you might expect Douglass to fade from history, to enjoy a modest and tranquil life with his wife and his children. But no—the former slave, who taught himself to read

through the words of Cicero and Washington, went on to be history’s most eloquent witness against slavery. He denounced the bloody institution in 1,000 speeches and from the pages of his own abolitionist newspaper, *The North Star*, and he denounced slavery firmly from inside the American tradition.

Like many radical abolitionists, at times Frederick Douglass was profoundly ambivalent about his own country. Indeed, there was a time in his early adulthood when he affirmatively hated the United States, preferring disunion to union with slaveholders. But Frederick Douglass later came to a different conclusion about America. When he read the Nation’s founding documents, he did not find codified defenses of slavery; to the contrary, he found that the compromises the Founders had made to slavery were meant to undermine that institution over time, not to sustain it. What Douglass found in the Founders was quite different from what he had expected to find. He later said: Their message “is ‘We the people’; not we the white people, not even we the citizens, not we the privileged class, not we the high, not we the low, but we the people.”

Douglass was an activist, yes, a militant, yes, who led recruiting drives for Black soldiers during the Civil War. But for all of his righteous anger, he did not want to cast aside the principles of his country. Douglass knew that the most powerful antidote to injustice was found within the American tradition, with its insistence on natural rights for all men.

Douglass wrote:

From the first, I saw no chance of bettering the condition of the freedman until he should cease to be merely a freedman and should become a citizen. . . . The liberties of the American people [are] dependent upon the ballot-box, the jury-box, and the cartridge-box; that without these no class of people could live and flourish in this country.

Frederick Douglass has many lessons to teach us if we are willing to listen. I would like to highlight just one more, which I think is especially relevant to us today.

At the end of his famous autobiography, Frederick Douglass contrasted two societies: the slaveholder society he was born into and the northern society where he was reborn in freedom.

The slave society he described was built on force and fraud. Its religion had been perverted to serve earthly idols. Its families were torn apart at the auction block. Its workers toiled to no reward. This society had been poisoned by its rejection of the American creed, by its insistence that all men are not created equal. Indeed, it had become an authoritarian society that policed movement, association, even intimacy. And for what? To protect a hideous falsehood.

The free society Douglass described was different. Here, a man could hold an honest job, and he worked because his work was rewarded, not because he

feared punishment. Here, a runaway slave could make a name for himself, rising to a position of esteem in his community through his service. Here, a family could put down roots and flourish.

Those are two very different societies, guided by very different beliefs. One is a weak community hiding behind a show of strength. The other is a strong and free community with absolutely nothing to hide.

Today we are blessedly free from the institution of slavery, but our communities have their own problems. The American family is in crisis. Our prisons are full, and our pews are empty. Heroin and opioids enslave millions. Many more are killed before they even get the chance to live.

Yes, we have our own battles to fight. In too many ways, we have fallen short of the high principles upon which our Nation was built. That ultimately is why the legacy of Frederick Douglass is so very important. He implored his generation to heal itself of its greatest disease. He calls upon us to do the same.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, all postcloture time on the Branch nomination expire at 4 p.m. today and the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate. Finally, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

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

RECESS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess as under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:18 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Ohio.

HONORING OFFICERS ANTHONY MORELLI AND ERIC JOERING

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I would like to talk today about two

brave Ohioans who were tragically killed while serving their community and all of us.

On Saturday, February 10, Ohio lost two of its finest when Westerville Police Officers Anthony Morelli and Eric Joering were fatally shot responding to a 9-1-1 call. They rushed to the scene. When they arrived, they were under fire. Officer Joering was killed at the scene. Officer Morelli died in surgery later that day.

Officer Morelli was a 29-year veteran of the Westerville Police Department. He leaves behind his wife Linda, their daughter Beth, and son Chris. Officer Joering was a 16-year veteran of the Westerville Police Department, where he was a K-9 officer partnered with his dog Sam.

Eric loved working with Sam, but what he really loved were his kids and his wife. His most important job, he said, was being a husband and a father. He is survived by his wife Jami and his beautiful daughters Eva, Elena, and Ella.

Both men were loved and respected members of the Westerville community, and both will be sorely missed. I had a chance to talk to a number of their fellow officers, their colleagues, over the weekend and heard many stories about them, their bravery, and their commitment to service.

I also had the great honor to meet with the families of both of these fallen officers over this past weekend in Columbus, OH. Linda Morelli and Jami Joering are incredibly strong women and incredibly strong mothers. I expressed my thanks from all Ohioans for their husbands' service. I also had a chance to talk to four of the five children about their fathers' exemplary service; that they had fallen in service to all of us and how much we appreciated them.

The U.S. Capitol has flags that are flown for special occasions, and two flags were flown in honor of the sacrifices these two good men made protecting the people of Ohio.

Throughout this tragic situation, I will say the people of Central Ohio and, frankly, across the Nation have stepped up in big ways to support and assist these two families. I am encouraged by the kindness and generosity we have seen.

I want to take a moment to just say that these two brave officers, Tony Morelli and Eric Joering, were the best. They made the ultimate sacrifice for all of us. Today, we hold their families up in prayer.

(The remarks of Mr. PORTMAN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2456 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. PORTMAN. I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

TAX REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, tax reform is working. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has been the law of the land

for just 2 months, but it is already helping American workers.

When it came time to draft tax reform legislation, we had one objective, and that was to make hard-working Americans' lives better. To accomplish that, we focused on two important priorities.

First, we focused on immediately increasing Americans' take-home pay. We lowered tax rates across the board, we nearly doubled the standard deduction, and we doubled the child tax credit. All of those provisions went into effect on January 1, and by the end of this month, according to the IRS, 90 percent of the American people should see lower paychecks.

While immediate relief for hard-working Americans was crucial, we wanted more than that. We wanted to give the American people access to the kinds of jobs and the kinds of wages and opportunities that would set them up for long-term security. We wanted to give them the kinds of jobs and wages where they wouldn't be forced to choose between sending their kids to college and saving for a secure retirement or between paying the mortgage or medical bills. So in addition to lowering the tax burden on Americans directly, we set about improving the playing field for American businesses so that we could make things better for American workers.

Needless to say, in order for American workers to thrive, the American economy has to thrive, and that means that American businesses have to thrive. It is pretty hard for a small business to hire a new worker or to raise wages if the owner can barely pay the tax bill. It is unlikely that an American company is going to have a lot of spare cash for investing in its workforce if it is struggling to compete with foreign companies that are paying far less in taxes. It is unlikely that America's global companies are going to focus on reinvesting in the United States if they face a tax penalty for bringing foreign earnings back home. So we lowered our Nation's massive corporate tax rate, which, up until January 1, was the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. We lowered tax rates across the board for owners of small- and medium-sized businesses, farms, and ranches. We expanded business owners' ability to recover investments they make in their businesses, which will free up cash that they can reinvest into their operations and their workers. We brought the U.S. international tax system into the 21st century by replacing our outdated worldwide system with a modernized territorial tax system so that American businesses are not operating at a disadvantage next to their foreign competitors.

The goal in all of this was to free up businesses to increase their investments in the American economy and in American workers, and that is exactly what businesses are doing. The list of tax reform good news keeps growing—

wage increases, new jobs, increased investment, bonuses, benefit increases, and the list goes on and on.

Take utility bills. Lower utility bills might not be the first result we think of from tax reform, but tax reform is saving utility companies money, and they are passing those savings on to consumers.

Washington, DC, radio station WTOP reports:

In a flip-flop related to tax reform, [utility company] Pepco now says it wants to cut rates instead of raise them.

In December and January, the utility announced plans to raise rates in D.C. and Maryland respectively. . . . But the sweeping Federal tax bill signed into law late last year meant a significant tax savings for the utility. As a result, Pepco is now asking the Maryland Public Service Commission to approve a rate cut.

That is right—they were talking about a rate increase, but now they are talking about a rate cut in their utility rates.

Take this story from the Daily Energy Insider titled "Federal Tax Cut More Than Reverses Eversource Rate Increase in Massachusetts."

The Daily Energy Insider:

Many Eversource Energy electricity customers in Massachusetts who were expecting to see a rate increase this year instead will see a rate reduction because of the recent Federal corporate tax cut.

"What was expected to be about a \$36 million annual rate increase has turned into a \$20 million annual decrease," said the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities.

In my home State of South Dakota, Black Hills Energy in Rapid City is working with regulators to pass tax savings on to South Dakotans. So far, utility companies in at least 39 States are passing tax savings on to consumers, and that can be a real help to family budgets. Everybody knows how much gets spent out of every family's budget on utilities, on energy, and certainly in my part of the country in South Dakota, with the cold winters, that is even amplified. It can be a real help to family budgets, particularly families who are living paycheck to paycheck.

In Florida, Florida Power and Light Company announced that thanks to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, it will no longer require its customers to pay a surcharge for Hurricane Irma restoration. Instead, the company reports:

Florida Power and Light plans to apply federal tax savings toward the \$1.3 billion cost of Hurricane Irma restoration, which will save each of Florida Power and Light's 4.9 million customers an average of approximately \$250.

Thanks to tax reform, good news for American workers seems to just pour in daily, whether it is lower utility bills, new jobs, bonuses, or, as Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina announced last week, lower rate increases on health insurance.

I am proud that tax reform is accomplishing our goal of making life better for hard-working Americans, and I look forward to seeing even more benefits for American workers in the weeks and months to come.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATIONS OF RYAN NELSON AND SUSAN COMBS

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Western Caucus and as a Montanan, I am here to urge the swift confirmation of two outstanding nominations to serve in the Department of the Interior. The first is Ryan Nelson, a native of Idaho Falls, ID, as Solicitor of the Department of the Interior. The second is Susan Combs, a rancher from Big Bend, TX. She is nominated to be Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget.

Both of these positions are critical to managing our public lands and wildlife. Yet these two well-qualified individuals have been waiting in a bureaucratic limbo. Mr. Nelson was first nominated over 209 days ago, and Ms. Combs received her first nomination over 231 days ago.

Mr. Nelson is a great choice to serve as Solicitor. He is a westerner, and he spends time fishing and hunting with his family in Idaho. He understands our western way of life, and he has the work experience to make sure our public lands are managed and protected in the right way.

His service includes serving as clerk on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, serving as special counsel for the Senate Committee on the Judiciary and as Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice.

At the Department of Justice, he worked to defend vital Federal programs and oversaw many complex cases involving our natural resources, wildlife, and environment. He also compelled polluters to limit harmful emissions into the air and worked with then-Solicitor of the Department of the Interior David Bernhardt on the listing decision for the polar bear. Like Mr. Bernhardt, Ryan is capable of upholding the law and the science, even when it is not easy.

If you want someone who values conservation, who knows the appropriate use of laws, like the Antiquities Act and the Endangered Species Act, then Ryan is your guy. The Department of the Interior needs Ryan's expertise to help make the best decisions possible for the benefit of our natural resources and the people and wildlife living around them. His confirmation must be prioritized.

Ms. Combs is also exactly the right person for the job to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Manage-

ment and Budget. Ms. Combs has had a long and successful career both in business and in public service, including as a member of the Texas House of Representatives, as Texas's agriculture commissioner, and as Texas's comptroller of public accounts. Her proven management track record in public service and in business is crucial to making the Department of the Interior more efficient and effective to help ensure the responsible stewardship of western lands.

Both Mr. Nelson's and Ms. Combs's nominations have been pending longer than any of their predecessors—now listen to this—over the past 25 years. This is not just bad governance; it is a complete lack of governance. Here is the problem. When you have qualified individuals like Mr. Nelson and like Ms. Combs who wait in this bureaucratic limbo for this long, it then puts them in a position to, maybe, find other employment. We need to find the best people who are willing to serve in these positions, and we need to give them the respect of moving them through quickly so that we can keep them with the thought of entering public service.

Colleagues, it is time to get the job done and move these critical nominations across the finish line.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

GUN SAFETY

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, this morning, I had the opportunity to meet with some extraordinary young people. These were students from Parkland, FL, who attend the school where the mass shooting took place 2 weeks ago. What was amazingly impressive about these young people is that in the midst of their grief, in the midst of the unbelievably traumatic experience that they went through in seeing their best friends being shot and wounded in cold blood and their teachers killed, they resolved not just to mourn and grieve for their friends and neighbors; they resolved to stand up and fight back and come to Washington, go to Tallahassee, FL, and go around the country to do everything they can to make certain that no more children—no more young people—are mowed down and slaughtered in schools.

Nobody thinks that the issue of gun safety is going to be an easy issue to solve. There are literally hundreds of millions of guns throughout this country, and there are 5 million assault weapons throughout this country today. Tragically, there are many thousands of people, I expect in every State in this country, who are walking our streets and are at their wits end emotionally, who are suicidal, who are homicidal. Many of those people have access to guns and guns of mass destruction. I think that in some respects, the slaughter at the high school in Parkland, FL, was kind of the straw that broke the camel's back.

Several months ago, the American people were stunned to see some very

sick person in Las Vegas break a window and start mowing down people. He killed some 58 Americans and wounded 500 people within a period of a few minutes. That was on top of Sandy Hook. It was on top of so many gun slaughters that, I think, what has finally happened—maybe because of the extraordinary efforts of these young people from Parkland—the American people are saying that enough is enough, that we have a difficult problem. We may not be able to solve it completely overnight, but we have a moral obligation to do everything we can to make certain that no more children—no more people in this country—are mowed down by some sick person with a weapon.

That is not just I who is talking, and it is not just the young people from the high school in Florida. It is pretty much what the American people want. Let me refer the Presiding Officer to a few polls that were conducted fairly recently.

A Quinnipiac poll was done on February 20, just a week ago. This is what that poll showed.

It showed that 97 percent of the American people support universal background checks, which is not a radical idea. What the American people are saying and what gun owners are saying is that we should keep guns out of the hands of people who are not responsible and should not own guns. Universal background checks are almost universally supported by the American people.

In that same Quinnipiac poll, 83 percent of the American people indicated support for a mandatory waiting period for all gun purchases. You don't want somebody who is angry, who is upset, or who had something terrible happen to go running to a gun store, buying a gun, and then going out and using it.

There are 75 percent who, basically, want the Congress to address the issue of gun violence and to start taking action.

There are 67 percent of the people polled by Quinnipiac who support a nationwide ban on the sale of assault weapons. They believe and I believe that assault weapons are designed as military weapons to kill human beings. That is what those weapons are designed to do. I believe and have believed for 30 years—and a majority of the American people believe—that we should end the sale and distribution of those weapons. That was in a Quinnipiac poll.

According to a CNN poll that was done more recently, just a few days ago on February 25, 70 percent of the American people want stricter gun laws. This is the highest number that CNN has registered since way back when the Brady Bill passed, in 1993.

According to CNN, 87 percent support laws to prevent convicted felons and the mentally ill from owning guns. There are 71 percent who support banning anyone under the age of 21 from buying a gun. There are 63 percent who

support a ban on the sale and possession of high-capacity magazines. There are 57 percent who support an assault weapons ban, and 56 percent say that stricter gun laws would reduce gun-related deaths.

We have a difficult issue which is not going to be solved overnight, and nobody thinks that it will. Yet the American people are demanding that we have the courage to stand up to the NRA and finally take some action that will move us in the right direction. Let me just suggest some of the ways I believe we should go forward in a bipartisan way.

Once again, the American people believe and I believe in universal background checks. That means, among other things, ending the so-called gun show loophole, because background checks don't mean anything if somebody can go to a gun show or on the internet and buy weapons without undergoing any background check. Overwhelmingly, the American people say that before somebody is able to purchase a gun, we need to know: Is the person a killer? Is he a person who has engaged in domestic violence? Is he somebody who has a history of mental health problems? If that is the case, that person should not be buying a gun.

I think serious gun safety legislation must include addressing the so-called straw man purchases. This is a provision by which people can legally go to gun shops, buy the weapons that they want, but then they are going to sell those weapons or distribute those weapons to people who should not be owning those weapons and who could not have purchased those weapons on their own. I have indicated it is my view that we should ban assault weapons in this country—weapons that are designed for no other purpose but to kill human beings.

Furthermore, I think it is clear that we are a nation that is facing a mental health crisis. I know that in my office—and I expect in the offices of other Senators—we get calls all of the time from people who say: I am worried about my husband. I am worried about my brother. He is at his wits end. I don't know what he is going to do to himself or what he is going to do to somebody else. We have been searching for mental health treatment, but we cannot find anything that is available now or that we can afford.

I believe we should be moving forward to pass legislation which says that Americans who suffer today from mental health crises should be able to get the mental healthcare they need now, not 2 months from now, because 2 months from now may be too late.

We also need to address the fact that, every year, women are being killed by their husbands or their boyfriends and that if somebody is a stalker, if somebody is convicted of domestic violence, if somebody is under a restraining order, we should be clear that that person should not be owning a gun. This is just some of what I think needs to be done.

We are at a moment when the American people have had it up to here. They do not want to turn on their TVs tomorrow or next week or next month and see the horrible, unspeakable things that we have seen in schools throughout this country.

At this particular moment in history, I hope that in a bipartisan way we can come together and do what the American people want us to do, which is to pass commonsense gun safety legislation that is supported by the overwhelming majority of the American people.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I would like to speak on behalf of my constituents and the tens of millions of Americans who rely on a free and open internet.

Make no mistake, we are locked in a historic battle to preserve the core principles of competition, innovation, and consumer choice that have made the internet the world's greatest platform for commerce and communications; a historic battle to restore the hallmark of American innovation and democratization; a historic battle to protect America's innovation incubator and job generator—a battle for net neutrality.

In December, the Trump FCC, the Federal Communications Commission, eliminated net neutrality. These rules prevented your internet service provider—Comcast, Verizon, AT&T, and Charter—from indiscriminately charging more for internet fast lanes or slowing down or even blocking certain websites entirely, the very rules that allow inventors, entrepreneurs, and small businesses, the lifeblood of the American economy, to connect to the internet.

The reason why is simple. The Trump administration sides with the rich and the powerful first and consistently puts everyday American lives last. We have seen them wage an all-out assault on healthcare, on climate change, and now on net neutrality, but today the internet is fighting back, and we have a powerful tool at our disposal that will allow the average consumer to have their voices heard right here on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

Today I am officially introducing a CRA—Congressional Review Act—resolution that will fully restore net neutrality. The entire Senate Democratic caucus is now standing with the millions of Americans who want to reverse the FCC's partisan actions and restore net neutrality.

Net neutrality is not and should not be a partisan issue. I thank Senator SUSAN COLLINS for supporting my CRA, and I encourage other Republican colleagues to stand with all of us who support net neutrality. We are just one vote away in the Senate from restoring net neutrality. There will be a vote right here on the floor of the Senate sometime this spring. The clock is ticking. We just need a simple majority for passage, and that is just one more vote.

When we take that vote, every one of my colleagues will have to answer the simple question: Whose side are you on? Do you stand with hard-working American families for whom the internet is essential or do you stand with the Big Money corporate interests and their army of lobbyists? We should all be on the right side of history.

Millennials are motivated. Momentum is building. Citizens are joining together demonstrating, writing letters, calling their Members of Congress, and taking this message to social media. They are joined by groups that include Fight for the Future, Demand Progress, Free Press, the Center for Digital Technology, the Center for Media Justice, Color of Change, Common Cause, Consumers Union, Engine, the National Hispanic Media Coalition, the Open Technology Institute, Public Knowledge, and many others out across the country that are organizing right now as part of an effort that is going to bring millions of voices into the offices of every Senator and every House Member in our country.

This fight is not limited to the Halls of Congress. We are seeing a historic groundswell of activity at the State and local level. The Governors in Hawaii, New Jersey, Vermont, Montana, and New York have issued executive orders promoting net neutrality.

State legislatures in more than half of the United States are currently considering net neutrality legislation. Just today, 76 mayors across the Nation signed a letter opposing net neutrality repeal, and 23 State attorneys general have filed suit to reinstate the rule, and we plan to stand by them throughout this entire battle, in the court and out here on the floor of Congress.

We cannot let net neutrality be another example of Congress disregarding public opinion and putting donor interests first. Net neutrality is our 21st century right, and we will fight to protect it. In fact, 83 percent of all Americans in polling say they want to protect net neutrality. By the way, that is pretty much every millennial, because for millennials, the internet is like oxygen. I will say that if you are 35 years old or younger, the poll is at pretty close to 100 percent.

I can see all the pages nodding their heads as I am speaking. They know no life without a device that they are carrying around. This is the world in which we are living, and they do not want to have any discrimination introduced into the relationship they

have between the internet and their ability to control their own lives. That is what the battle is all about, those nodding heads of the pages in the well of the Senate. Those are the people who are going to be making a difference, the millennials, the generation Z young people who want this to be open for entrepreneurial activity and for democracy.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. President, I also want to speak for a few moments about the epidemic of gun violence in our country. Almost 2 weeks ago, a 19-year-old armed with an AR-15 semiautomatic rifle entered Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, and killed 14 students and 3 teachers, and 14 others were injured. Time and again, we have seen this tragedy play out and time and again we are seeing Congress fail to act.

Each year we lose 33,000 American lives due to gun violence. In instances of disease, illness, natural disaster, this level of widespread death would be met with immediate and meaningful action by Congress. Yet we continually abdicate our moral responsibility when it comes to gun violence prevention. We don't have to accept this epidemic of gun violence in our country. It is not preordained. It is preventable.

So what should Congress do?

First, we should allow public health researchers to study the causes of gun violence so they can find solutions to this public health crisis. Right now, zero dollars are spent at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on gun violence prevention research. That is because since 1996, an appropriations rider has prohibited the Centers for Disease Control from advocating or promoting gun control.

Just last week, Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar said he would not let the rider impede the CDC's research into the causes of gun violence. So there is no reason now not to fully fund this critical research agenda.

I have introduced legislation to fund research into the causes and prevention of gun violence. My bill now has 32 cosponsors in the Senate. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to cosponsor this commonsense bill. It is long past time that we treat gun violence like the public health emergency it is, but we must also keep guns out of the hands of those who should not have them.

Currently, anyone can use a handgun in America—whether it is the gun's owner, a thief, or, tragically, a young child, but it doesn't have to be this way. Technology exists now that can authorize handgun use only by its owner. In the 21st century, we have to use advances in technology to our advantage, and we can save lives by using it.

That is why I used the opportunity to introduce smart gun legislation that will require all handguns manufactured in the United States to be personalized

for operation only by the authorized user. That means, unless you are authorized by fingerprint or other technology, you will not be able to fire that handgun. If we can do it for an iPhone, we should be able to do it for a handgun so that if a child gets ahold of a gun, if it is not their thumb, they cannot fire it. If someone steals a gun from a home, it will not work because it will not be their thumb that is on the barrel of that gun. That is ultimately a way to reduce dramatically the amount of harm we see in our country.

We must also ban these military-style assault weapons like the AR-15, which are the guns of choice for those who seek to inflict mass casualties on civilians. These are weapons that belong in combat, not in our communities.

We must also pass legislation to ensure that all gun purchases include a background check. In fact, 97 percent of all Americans now support expanded background checks—97 percent of all Americans. No one should be able to purchase a gun through Facebook or Instagram without a background check. Instagram should not mean "Instagun," with no background check. That is crazy. That is crazy. You can go on Instagram and buy a gun without a background check. That is crazy in America in 2018.

We have the capacity to quickly do background checks to be able to find out whether somebody should be able to purchase a gun. It is crazy not to have that kind of a system put in place.

If you can buy a gun on Instagram, we should be able to check online whether or not that person, in fact, should be allowed legally to purchase the gun.

Let's close the gun show loophole, as well as the one that allows someone on the terrorist watch list to purchase a weapon. Let's close the loophole that allows domestic abusers to buy guns. Let's close the loophole that allows straw purchasers to buy guns and flood our streets with them. Let's ban bump stocks. Let's repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, or PLCAA, and take away the gun manufacturers' immunity from civil liability. These are sensible steps.

What is not sensible is hoping that thoughts and prayers will prevent the next shooting. This generation of young people recognize this truth, and that is why they are leading this children's crusade. They are picking up microphones and raising their voices. They are saying enough is enough. It is my hope that this might just be the movement that pushes Republican leaders, once and for all, to take action on gun violence and make the NRA stand for "not relevant anymore" in American politics. This is the time for that to take place on the Senate floor.

This generation of young people is rising up, and they are demanding that we protect this country from the

scourge of gun violence. Like generations past, this one is making the change they want to see in our society.

So, to them, let me say: I hear you. I am with you, and I will fight with you to ensure that not one more student has to endure what you did, not one more person has to be damaged because we did not put the laws on the books that should have been there to prevent this harm from occurring. I will fight with you to ensure that this does not happen in one more school in our country.

That is our challenge. That is the goal we should set. That is what should be the agenda here on the floor of the Senate in 2018.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

NO-FLY LIST GUN LEGISLATION

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise today in support of bipartisan legislation aimed at ensuring that those individuals who are on the Department of Homeland Security's no-fly list are likewise not able to have access to guns. I just met with several of the students from the shooting at the school in Florida and heard the very compelling case they have made to take this issue seriously and do what we can on a commonsense basis to make it more difficult for those who shouldn't have guns to have guns.

Regardless of what happened in Florida these past couple of weeks, this is a measure we should have taken before. It has been brought to the floor of the Senate, and it has received majority support here. I think it is simply common sense that someone who is not permitted to fly in this country and is considered by the Federal Government to be a potential threat to national security should not be allowed to purchase a firearm.

The no-fly list and the selectee list that we are talking about is composed of those who are not allowed to fly. With the selectee list, it is those who require additional screening. These are both narrowly tailored, defined, targeted lists.

This restriction would affect just a small number of people, all of whom would be afforded due process under the Constitution. Those who find themselves on either of these lists would have the authority to challenge that designation, and the onus would be on the government, not the individual; the onus would be on the government to justify the classification and to prove that they should not be allowed to purchase a firearm. These are strong, robust, due process protections that would make sure that these restrictions are constitutionally sound.

This bill also adds another layer of safety for citizens from those who would do us harm, ensuring that anyone who has been denied the right to fly cannot purchase a weapon without at least undergoing additional scrutiny. It simply stands to reason that if we fear that someone may use our commercial airlines as a weapon or to

harm those on board, we should not allow that same person to purchase a weapon without additional scrutiny.

I encourage my colleagues to review this bipartisan legislation and to join me, along with Senator COLLINS and a number of our colleagues here—a bipartisan group of Senators—in supporting this commonsense piece of legislation.

I hope we will have a debate on some of these measures. I will be talking in the coming days about some of the other measures that we ought to take to make sure that we don't put guns in the hands of those who shouldn't have them.

My heart goes out to those in Florida, and my vote will go here to measures that will make schools safer.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today the Senate is voting to confirm Judge Elizabeth Branch to serve as a U.S. circuit court judge for the Eleventh Circuit. Judge Branch was favorably reported out of the Judiciary Committee on a 19-2 bipartisan vote. She has broad bipartisan support from her home State of Georgia. The American Bar Association rated Judge Branch as unanimously well-qualified. If the Senate confirms Judge Branch, as I am confident it will, she will be the fourth woman confirmed by the Senate to the Federal courts of appeals in the 115th Congress, three more than the one woman confirmed at this point in President Obama's first term.

Judge Branch's judicial career and broad range of legal experiences have well prepared her to serve on the Eleventh Circuit. Judge Branch was appointed to the Georgia Court of Appeals in 2012. In her time on the appellate bench, she has participated in over 1,500 cases. Before joining the bench, Judge Branch spent several years in private practice. She also served in government, including her role as a top lawyer for the Department of Homeland Security. Judge Branch received her B.A. from Davidson College and her J.D. from Emory. After law school, Judge Branch clerked for Judge Owen Forrester on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

As I noted earlier, if confirmed, Judge Branch will become the fourth female circuit court judge confirmed under President Trump. Her confirmation puts her in good company, joining a class of first-rate female jurists and legal scholars. She will join a group that includes: Seventh Circuit Judge Amy Coney Barrett, a former professor at Notre Dame University Law School and law clerk to Justice Scalia; Tenth Circuit Judge Allison Eid, a former Colorado Supreme Court Justice and law clerk to Justice Thomas; and Sixth Circuit Judge Joan Larsen, another clerk of Justice Scalia and former Michigan Supreme Court justice. I am confident that Judge Branch will serve as an excellent addition to this outstanding class of female circuit court judges.

Judge Branch's impressive background and bipartisan support suggest

that she will be an excellent court of appeals judge. I am pleased to support her nomination today.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Branch nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SUL-LIVAN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 73, nays 23, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 38 Ex.]

YEAS—73

Alexander	Feinstein	Moran
Baldwin	Fischer	Murkowski
Barrasso	Flake	Nelson
Bennet	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Perdue
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hassan	Risch
Capito	Hatch	Roberts
Cardin	Heitkamp	Rubio
Carper	Heller	Sasse
Casey	Hirono	Scott
Cassidy	Hoeven	Shaheen
Cochran	Inhofe	Shelby
Collins	Isakson	Smith
Coons	Johnson	Tester
Corker	Kaine	Thune
Cornyn	Kennedy	Tillis
Cotton	King	Toomey
Crapo	Klobuchar	Van Hollen
Cruz	Lankford	Warner
Daines	Leahy	Whitehouse
Donnelly	Lee	Wicker
Durbin	Manchin	Young
Enzi	McCaskey	
Ernst	McConnell	

NAYS—23

Blumenthal	Heinrich	Sanders
Booker	Markey	Schatz
Brown	Menendez	Schumer
Cantwell	Merkley	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Udall
Duckworth	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Harris	Reed	

NOT VOTING—4

Jones	Rounds
McCain	Sullivan

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to re-

consider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Mitch McConnell, Pat Roberts, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Crapo, Orrin G. Hatch, John Barrasso, Johnny Isakson, Michael B. Enzi, John Boozman, Mike Rounds, James M. Inhofe, John Thune, Lindsey Graham.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 39 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rubio
Cassidy	Heller	Sasse
Cochran	Hoeven	Scott
Collins	Inhofe	Shelby
Corker	Isakson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Johnson	Thune
Cotton	Kennedy	Tillis
Crapo	Lankford	Toomey
Cruz	Lee	Wicker
Daines	McConnell	Young
Enzi	Moran	
Ernst	Murkowski	

NAYS—48

Baldwin	Carper	Feinstein
Bennet	Casey	Gillibrand
Blumenthal	Coons	Harris
Booker	Cortez Masto	Hassan
Brown	Donnelly	Heinrich
Cantwell	Duckworth	Heitkamp
Cardin	Durbin	Hirono

Kaine	Murphy	Smith
King	Murray	Stabenow
Klobuchar	Nelson	Tester
Leahy	Peters	Udall
Manchin	Reed	Van Hollen
Markey	Sanders	Warner
McCaskill	Schatz	Warren
Menendez	Schumer	Whitehouse
Merkley	Shaheen	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Jones	McCain	Rounds
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 48.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS and Mr. HEINRICH pertaining to the introduction of S. 2458 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

REMEMBERING URSULA K. LE GUIN

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life and work of one of Oregon's finest, Ursula K. Le Guin, who, after a long life, passed away in my hometown of Portland on January 22 at the age of 88.

You would have a tough time overstating Mrs. Le Guin's impact on American literature, particularly on the genres of fantasy and science fiction. She didn't invent science fiction or fantasy literature, but what she did, in true Oregon fashion, is redefine them.

Millions of school children in Oregon and around the world know her best as the author of the unforgettable Earthsea series. She also wrote essays, poetry, and short stories throughout her life. To the end, she fiercely resisted the constant attempts to pigeonhole her as a sci-fi author.

Over five decades, she upended conventions, shattered ceilings, and inspired generations of readers and authors. She is going to be missed, even as her legacy lives on.

Ursula Le Guin was born Ursula Kroeber on October 21, 1921, in Berkeley, CA. Her parents were both successful anthropologists who encouraged their kids to think and to question. Exposed to mythology and science fiction at an early age, she soon grew tired of what she would later describe as White men and soldiers going forth and conquering the universe.

A shy young woman, she escaped the anxieties of adolescence by reading authors like Austen, Shelley, and Tolstoy in her local public library. She went on to Radcliffe College, graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1951. She earned a master's degree from Columbia University the following year and won a prestigious Fulbright scholarship to continue her studies in Paris.

She met fellow Fulbright scholar Charles Le Guin on her way there, and they were married shortly thereafter.

The pair returned to the United States and ultimately settled in Oregon in the late 1950s, when her husband took a job at Portland State University. She focused on the couple's three children and on her writing, returning to science fiction with "Rocannon's World" in 1966. Two years later, she published "A Wizard of Earthsea," the first in a series of highly acclaimed fantasy novels that have remained in print to the delight of millions.

I can't imagine it is an easy feat for any author to create an entire universe that sticks in the minds of readers for generations. In building Earthsea, Mrs. Le Guin joined that elite group of fiction writers, like Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, who have done just that.

More impressively, she used her writing to push back against social injustices and social constraints. She wrote about environmental destruction, about feminism and gender inequality, about racism, about war and peace. She wrote about women protagonists and about non-White heroes when they were even less commonly highlighted than they are today. She wrote about multidimensional characters and others who sought to better themselves and their societies rather than bend others to their will.

The more Mrs. Le Guin wrote, the more people would read, and the more the awards started to pile up. She racked up awards in the course of her career like few authors have—multiple Hugo, Nebula, and Locus Awards, a National Book Award, a Newbery Medal, and a Pushcart Prize. In 1977, she was shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize.

She twice won the Hugo and Nebula Awards in the same year, for 1969's "The Left Hand of Darkness" and in 1974 for "The Dispossessed."

I would be here until next week if I tried to list all of her achievements, but because we have a rule in the Wyden household against filibustering friends, let me just say that in 2000, the Library of Congress made official what all of Oregon had long known. It declared that Ursula Le Guin was a "Living Legend" for her contributions to American literature.

The fact is, we love our bookstores, and I very often kid Michael Powell and my wife Nancy that they are the LeBron James and Damian Lillard of bookstores. The fact is, Mrs. Le Guin has been in demand in bookstores and libraries for decades, and she has always been sharing that wisdom in her books with visitors near and far. Thanks to her example and her influence, generations of women writers have blazed new trails and defied old dogmas.

As a dad who knows full well the importance of reading in a child's life, this is really a special honor today to be able to stand before this distinguished body and remember Ursula K.

Le Guin, her life and her legacy. Her pioneering writing is going to continue to make readers challenge their conceptions and contemplate their role in this enormously vast universe for decades to come. Her long career's worth of great works will be treasured far into the future. I especially appreciate the opportunity to recognize the extraordinary work of a woman who did so much to promote writing and attract young readers at home in Oregon and the chance to have been able to recognize Ursula Le Guin today before the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here for my 198th "Time to Wake Up" speech with my increasingly dog-eared and beaten chart.

My last two speeches focused on, shall we say, the peculiar role two of this country's largest trade associations play on climate change. They have dozens and dozens of member companies that support action on climate change. Renewable energy now provides more jobs than fossil fuels and lots of American manufacturing. Yet the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers spend millions and millions of dollars lobbying Congress against climate action, against renewables, and in favor of the fossil fuel industry. Go figure.

In 2016, Senator WARREN and I surveyed the 108 companies on the chamber of commerce's board, and we couldn't find a single one that would endorse the chamber's anti-climate lobbying—not one. Many of these companies had very public pro-climate positions. None said they had even been consulted by the chamber about the chamber's anti-climate crusade.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's war on climate action isn't just in lobbying Congress. It also spends tens of millions of dollars in elections, using political attack ads to sink pro-climate candidates. So I asked in my last speeches: Why? Why does the chamber and NAM advance the special interests of the fossil fuel industry, opposing climate action, ignoring their own pro-climate members, and turning their backs on the whole renewable energy and green technology economy? Why, indeed.

Well, today I would like to talk about a fossil fuel trade association—the American Petroleum Institute,

API. API is a slightly different beast than the chamber and NAM. It represents the oil and gas industry. You wouldn't expect it to care about renewable energy or green technology. API's policy positions should align with the big oil companies it represents, but it gets complicated. It gets complicated because the big oil companies all claim to support action on climate change. Here is what ExxonMobil claims: "The risk of climate change is clear and the risk warrants action."

In 2009, then-Exxon CEO Rex Tillerson said the company supported a price on carbon. That is supposedly ExxonMobil's position today.

Here is Shell on carbon pricing: "The transition to low-carbon solutions is best underpinned by meaningful government-led carbon 'pricing' mechanisms."

On the Paris Agreement, Exxon publicly supported the Paris Agreement, as did Chevron, as did Shell, as did BP. In addition, BP and Shell signed on to an initiative to eliminate methane flaring.

So summing up, all of the major oil companies supported the Paris Agreement. Three out of four, including ExxonMobil—the big kahuna—publicly support putting a price on carbon emissions, and two of them even support eliminating methane flaring.

So where is the American Petroleum Institute on these policies? Let's start with the Paris Agreement. API funds a group called the American Council on Capital Formation, which, along with the Chamber of Commerce, funded the debunked study claiming that the Paris Agreement would cause massive job losses and huge costs. This debunked report was cited by President Trump as justification for withdrawing from the Paris accord. So API funded the report used as a basis for withdrawal—but wait. It gets better. The authors of this API-funded study are the same two characters API hired way back in 1997 and 1998 to write similar reports critical of the Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol, of course, was violently opposed in the Senate by the fossil fuel industry and API.

So here we are 20 years after Kyoto, and API used almost exactly the same playbook—even the same personnel—against the Paris Agreement that they had used against the Kyoto accord, except that this time API paid for the report through a front group to hide API's hand in torpedoing the Paris Agreement. How do you relate that to the stated position of the four oil majors for the Paris Agreement? You would have to ask API to explain.

So now let's look at API's position on carbon pricing, which three out of those four oil majors say they support. API's President has claimed that his organization doesn't have an official position on carbon pricing, but if you take a look at API's website, it is loaded with comments critical of putting a price on carbon, and API also funded yet another study claiming that a price

on carbon emissions would be bad for the economy.

On the issue of methane flaring, API out front led the charge against Department of the Interior and Environmental Protection Agency rules. Its lobbying campaign has paid off, as two of Trump's fossil fuel stooges, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, are busily trying to dismantle these rules. Luckily, they are not very bright about it, and courts keep upending their schemes.

Let's look at the lobbying. Big Oil money provides much of API's power in the Halls of Congress. API has spent over \$100 million lobbying the Federal Government, and apparently its lobbying goes against the wishes as stated by its biggest clients, the four oil majors. If you look, there is a big bump up in 2009 and here through 2016—the Obama years—when they wanted to go in and stop all kinds of progress on climate change.

In this building, we all know perfectly well that API is not here lobbying for a price on carbon. We know perfectly well that if a Republican were to say, "I am for a price on carbon," or sign on to a bill, they would probably get a visit from API saying, "Whoa, not so fast there, partner." We know perfectly well that they are not in this building lobbying for the Paris accord.

So why the discrepancy? Is it possible that all of this money—\$100 million—is being thrown around without the approval of the big oil companies? Has the American Petroleum Institute sort of gone off on its own, off the leash, free range, running away from the oil companies? It is a puzzlement, this vast gulf between the pro-climate policies the oil majors say they support and the anti-climate policies the API lobbyists support.

I said one possibility is, Big Oil doesn't know how its lobbying money is being spent. Maybe those CEOs have lost control of their own trade association and don't even know it. I mean, after all, around here, who pays attention to their own lobbying operation, anyway? Maybe the \$100 million is such chump change to the big oil companies that they have just lost track of it, like we might lose change in our couch cushions.

Maybe—cover your ears, young pages, because I may say something shocking here—maybe it is a scam. It is totally shocking that a big corporation will say one thing and do another. What a concept, but it is a concept that works out great for Big Oil. The Big Oil CEOs get to go to cocktail parties in Davos or on Fifth Avenue. They get to go to international conferences, and with all their sophisticated friends, they get to say: Hey, we are not a bunch of science-hating, heads-in-the-sand climate deniers. We have sensible climate policies.

At the same time, they can send their lobbying goons out to make sure no one in Congress takes that "sensible climate policies" nonsense seriously. It

is great. Have your front group do your dirty work for you, fill your websites with happy assurances, while you let API loose on Washington to crush any pro-climate policies that might actually reduce carbon emissions and threaten your bottom line.

Hypocrisy? Yes, but then hypocrisy is famously the tribute vice pays to virtue. I suppose it is at least a start. It is a sign that we have reached the point where Big Oil recognizes the need to try to at least look virtuous. That is a start, but it still leaves us with this huge disconnect between the pro-climate policies the big oil companies claim to support and their American Petroleum Institute's relentless anti-climate lobbying.

Remember, throughout the oil industry's decades-long campaign against climate action, they knew all along. Exxon knew decades ago about the effects of carbon pollution, but they worked through an elaborate web of front groups to propagate doubt and denial about the science they knew.

Shell knew too. In 1991, Shell even produced a documentary warning about the serious threat climate change posed to the future of civilization. Despite acknowledging this threat, Shell, like Exxon, continued to fund API and other front groups that sought to mislead the public about climate change and opposed climate action here in Congress.

Exxon's trade group—this American Petroleum Institute—also knew. They knew of the reality of climate change. They knew it was caused by carbon emissions from fossil fuels, and they knew of the danger it poses. Way back in 1959—almost 60 years ago—API was warned by an eminent scientist that if we kept burning fossil fuels, we would increase the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Back in 1959, they were warned. The prediction they received was that it would warm the atmosphere, melt the icecaps, and submerge coastal cities and towns, as we are beginning to see along the Florida coastline right now. That was the prediction in 1959.

In 1959, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was 316 parts per million. Then, in 1968, a group of scientists API had itself commissioned warned API that significant temperature changes could occur by the year 2000 and that, ultimately, potential damage to the environment could be severe. By 1968, the atmosphere concentration of CO₂ was up to 323 parts per million.

In 1980, scientists hired by API again warned API that carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels were likely to have catastrophic effects. By 1980, the atmospheric concentration of CO₂ was 339. In 1983, API disbanded the scientific working group it had created to study global warming. Apparently, API didn't like what it was hearing so, in 1983, they shut it off. There is a legal term for when you are on notice but

then just turn away; it is called “willful ignorance.” By 1983, the atmospheric concentration of CO₂ was 343 parts per million.

Then came 1999, when James Hansen’s famous Senate testimony threatened API’s willful ignorance scheme. So API and its Big Oil members founded a front group with the misleading name Global Climate Coalition. What is it with these front groups and these people, anyway? Why is it always these front groups? Global Climate Coalition began to spread falsehoods and disinformation about climate science, even though in 1989 they knew. In 1989, they had known for 30 years, since that first report in 1959, and by 1989 the atmospheric concentration was 353 parts per million.

In 1993, API hired one of the same men who wrote those phony Kyoto and Paris reports that I mentioned to write a report attacking President Clinton’s so-called Btu tax on fuel sources. In 1993, the CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere was up to 357 parts per million. In 1998, API did that report attacking the Kyoto Protocol. It also commissioned what it called its Global Climate Science Communications Plan, a plan designed to mislead Americans about climate science. By 1998, the atmospheric concentration of CO₂ was 367 parts per million.

In 2009, API fought and killed the Waxman-Markey cap-and-trade legislation that would have controlled carbon emissions. By 2009, the atmospheric concentration of CO₂ was 387 parts per million.

Now here we are in 2018. API is still fighting climate action. The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is now 407 parts per million, almost 30 percent higher than it was when API probably first learned what climate science meant. As we have kept dumping carbon pollution into the atmosphere, temperatures and sea levels have indeed steadily risen—just as API was told they would. They knew, but they lied.

For decades, they lied on a massive industrial scale. They lied through phony science. They lied through phony front groups and bogus studies. They lied through talk shows. They lied through rightwing media. They lied through AstroTurf, and well-paid PR firms. They lied for decades, and now the American people have to pay the price of climate change to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars.

So, from their point of view, what the heck? After decades of lying about climate change, what is a little discrepancy now between what Big Oil CEOs say and what Big Oil lobbyists do? The industry’s sophisticated and expensive disinformation and lobbying campaign has blockaded climate action in this country for more than half a century. When you have been lying that long, maybe it is a hard habit to break.

Looking back at this whole scam, I guess API and its members actually see

it as a win—nearly 60 years of industry profits they protected behind the barricade of lies, but at what price to our country? At what price to Americans whose lives have already, in many cases, been upended by climate change? At what price to people around the world who will suffer the effects of climate change and one day want an answer about why America, through all this period, let this take place—why America let them down.

The time for deception, the time for front groups, for misinformation, for inaction is over. API and its fossil fuel allies over at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers have blocked climate action in Congress long enough. Look at the price we paid to allow the fossil fuel lobby to dictate climate policy in this great body. Four hundred seven parts per million is a measurement, and it is a measurement unprecedented in the full span of human history on this planet.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to call on President Trump to nominate a Director for the Indian Health Service.

There are many critical issues facing Indian Country—economic development, infrastructure, protection of Native lands, respect for Tribal governments—and after years and years of broken promises, discrimination, and neglect, Washington owes Tribes a fighting chance to build stronger communities and a brighter future.

The Federal Indian trust responsibility means that Washington has a basic legal obligation to the Tribes. Washington also has a fundamental moral obligation, and that starts with basic healthcare.

American Indians have treaty rights to healthcare from the Federal Government, but the U.S. Government cannot fulfill our treaty obligations if key posts, such as the Director of IHS, lay vacant for years.

The IHS is a big deal. It is the primary Federal healthcare provider for American Indians and Alaska Natives. It serves 2.2 million people spread across 36 States. It has a budget of nearly \$5 billion annually. The IHS provides care through more than 660 clinics, hospitals, and health stations on or near reservations, many of them in remote and rural locations located hours away from other health facilities. It serves more than 13 million outpatient visitors a year.

The doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers at IHS hospitals

and clinics do everything from delivering babies, to providing dental services, to fighting the opioid crisis.

Right now, more than a year into President Trump’s term, there is still no permanent leader at the Indian Health Service. Two weeks ago, the nomination for IHS Director was withdrawn, and there hasn’t been a Senate-confirmed Director for years. This leadership vacuum creates a serious problem. The IHS cannot engage in long-term planning without a permanent Director at the helm. It cannot officially fix problems at hospitals that failed inspections and where Medicare and Medicaid funding is in jeopardy. It cannot move as decisively to ensure that IHS facilities stay open. It cannot implement agency-wide standards for quality of care, as the Government Accountability Office has recommended. The IHS cannot prioritize competing issues, solve serious and longstanding problems, or work through how to meet multiple goals more effectively.

Its relationship with other Federal agencies is weakened without a stable leader—critical relationships with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Office of Management and Budget, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the rest of the Department of Health and Human Services. It cannot ensure that programs like the Special Diabetes Program for Indians, which has created real, positive outcomes, is implemented as well as possible. The IHS cannot work out a direction for the Service and hold a single stable leader accountable for doing a good job.

The IHS faces serious challenges that require the attention of a permanent, dedicated Director. The agency is underfunded and has been underfunded for a long time. As a result, its facilities often lack medical equipment that many Americans take for granted when they visit a clinic or a hospital, like an MRI machine or a functioning operating room. A 2016 report by the inspector general of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that IHS hospital administrators have had difficulty recruiting and retaining critical staff. Aging hospital buildings and outdated equipment also raise concerns about patient safety. The inspector general cites concerns about corroded pipes leaking sewage into the OR and not being able to find replacement parts to fix old equipment the hospitals are relying on. Doctors and nurses should be able to focus on helping their patients get well, not on whether the building is habitable and basic facilities are available.

There are also serious staffing shortages. At its Great Plains facilities, for example, IHS vacancy rates have reached 37 percent. Compare that to my home State of Massachusetts, where only 6 percent of nursing jobs were vacant in 2015.

Tribal leaders are understandably concerned about the direction of an

agency that plays such a vital role in their communities. Here is what I heard from Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head—the Aquinnah—in Massachusetts: “This vacancy has created significant instability and negatively affects the already burdened IHS system.” She added: “Not only is it a failure on the part of the Federal Government to not adequately fund healthcare for Indians; the failure to appoint someone to lead this critical service area is considered by many Tribes as gross negligence.” The chairwoman says that the United States is failing to keep its word and failing to fulfill its “solemn responsibility” to the Tribes. I agree with the chairwoman.

Healthcare is a basic human right, and everyone in this country deserves access to quality, affordable healthcare. But the stakes are particularly high for Native people.

An American Indian or Alaska Native baby born today has a life expectancy that is almost 4½ years shorter than the U.S. average. These little babies are also more likely to die before they ever reach their first birthday. Native infant mortality is about 25 percent higher than for the U.S. as a whole.

Chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease hit Native Americans harder too. For instance, American Indians and Alaska Natives die from diabetes at a rate that is three times higher than that of the entire American population.

Mental health and addiction issues are also a very big concern. The opioid epidemic has devastated communities all over our country, but it is a particularly virulent problem for Native Americans, who have the highest per capita rates of opioid overdoses in the country.

Similarly, the alcohol-related death rate for Native Americans is about 500 percent higher than for the rest of the population.

Suicide rates are about 70 percent higher.

Everyone struggling with addiction deserves access to high-quality treatment, no matter who they are or where they live. That is the only way we are going to make progress in tackling this crisis. But right now, in a place where the need is great, the Federal Government is failing to provide adequate care.

With so much need, investing in improving the IHS should be a top priority for Washington. I am glad that the Trump administration's latest budget for the IHS includes a funding increase. Still, this government needs to do more—much more. A Senate-confirmed Director can serve as the advocate the IHS needs in order to get the resources it deserves. In fact, Federal law explicitly says that advocating good Indian health policy is one of the Director's job responsibilities. We should be doing that job.

We need a good person in this job, which means the nominee must be thoroughly vetted. But that is not an excuse for more delay or for the White House to drag its feet. It needs to work with the Tribes to find the right person for the job and then submit the nomination quickly.

The person who heads up the IHS should be knowledgeable and should have a vision for how to deliver better healthcare to Native Americans. The person should have the determination and commitment to push Congress to meet its treaty obligations in providing healthcare to Native communities.

The Trump administration doesn't have a stellar record when it comes to nominating the right people for important jobs. I often strongly disagree with the President's picks. But leaving hundreds of critical posts across our government vacant, including the IHS Director, has a devastating effect all its own.

It wasn't until just 2 weeks ago that President Trump finally named a nominee to be Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans.

Several offices in the Federal bureaucracy have an important role in running important programs for Tribes, and the President hasn't nominated heads for some of those offices—for instance, the Director of the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women, which administers key grant programs for Tribal programs to combat domestic violence and sexual assault, and the Assistant Secretary of the Employment and Training Administration in the Department of Labor, which provides workforce innovation and opportunity grants to Tribes and Tribal organizations. These vacancies hit Native communities hard, and they represent one more broken promise to Native people.

There is no excuse for delay. I urge President Trump to move quickly to consult with Tribes and to submit a nomination for IHS Director. The Native community should not have to wait any longer.

I yield the floor.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for 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.

ILLINOIS FLOODING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week, rainstorms and melting snow caused flooding across Illinois, with more than 20 counties throughout the State placed under a flood warning. As

the water level of rivers continued to rise, several communities had to evacuate their homes for their own safety. Sadly, these storms were so severe that flooded roadways claimed the life of an Illinois resident after her car rolled into a rain-filled ditch. Multiple communities were evacuated, and in some areas, residents had to be rescued by boat.

Some of the worst impacted areas were in Iroquois, Kankakee, and Vermilion Counties. The Governor declared a State disaster for these counties, and the American Red Cross established shelters for evacuated residents.

These floods were not just limited to communities in east central Illinois. Counties in western and downstate Illinois were also among the most impacted. In Ford Heights, a suburb of Chicago, at least 100 homes were impacted and seven residents were rescued by boat. In north central Illinois, a nursing home in LaSalle County had to be evacuated, and the next day, parts of the county were placed under mandatory evacuation order.

Downstate, rain continued through the weekend, and crews from the Department of Corrections worked to install flood gates in Hardin County, and the Department of Transportation delivered pumps, hoses, and sandbags to aid in recovery. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources also provided boats to aid with flood patrols.

Some of the areas that experienced heavy rains and flooding throughout last week, like Freeport in northwestern Illinois, were also impacted by flooding just last year. Freeport was flooded in July 2017, and on Friday night, the Red Cross once again opened an emergency shelter there. Situations like this are the reason that communities that often experience flooding need more assistance, both to plan for emergencies and to quickly mitigate the aftermath.

With extreme weather conditions like these becoming more frequent and more severe, I have heard from many Illinois constituents who are concerned about their ability to recover from repeated flood events like these. I stand ready to assist at the Federal level to help these communities rebuild and recover in a way that will allow them to be more resilient when the next flood occurs.

As is often the case when a disaster like this occurs, I was so impressed with the residents, first responders, and local officials who worked tirelessly to protect their communities. I want to thank our local law enforcement—firefighters and police—who always do the best job to keep our communities safe and work long hours because of it.

I also want to recognize the hard work of the State and Federal employees that have pitched in at every level, including the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency.

Our thoughts are with the family and friends of the Illinois resident who lost her life and with all those who have experienced damage to their homes and other property. We will rebuild—as the people of Illinois always do—and will once again be stronger for it.

HONORING COMMANDER PAUL BAUER

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to Commander Paul Bauer, a 31-year veteran of the police force who was fatally shot on Tuesday February 13, 2018, while in the line of duty. Commander Bauer had a remarkable career with the Chicago Police Department and will be remembered by his colleagues as a model police officer. Commander Bauer made the ultimate sacrifice while protecting our city and its people, and I am thankful for all of his years of service. He leaves behind his wife, Erin, of 16 years and his 13-year-old daughter, Grace. May his service, sacrifice, and kind spirit serve as an inspiration to us all.

TRIBUTE TO HEIDEH SHAHMORADI

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today I wish to express my gratitude to Heideh Shahmoradi, who since 2011 has served as clerk for the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, or THUD, for her many years of distinguished public service.

Heideh's 24 years of public service have included time on both the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Environment and Public Works Committee, as well as the Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, where she first started as a part-time employee at the age of 16.

In her 7 years with THUD, Heideh has played an instrumental role on a host of issues. Her programmatic knowledge and technical expertise have been critical in policy-making decisions that ensured air traffic controllers were able to get back to safely managing our Nation's air traffic control system following the across-the-board spending cuts in 2013. Heideh has also worked to make groundbreaking transformations in how we address youth homelessness, which afflicts far too many young people each year. Thanks to Heideh's dedicated efforts, we have successfully created targeted programs that are designed to meet the unique needs of teenagers through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, in ways that our traditional approach to homelessness was unsuccessful in addressing.

Heideh is truly a consummate professional, a brilliant expert, and most importantly, one of the kindest and friendliest people in the Senate. She is known by her colleagues as being an honest broker who is able to work in a truly bipartisan fashion in order to help us advance important legislation.

As Heideh leaves the Senate after years of hard work and dedicated public service, she leaves behind an impressive list of accomplishments and colleagues whose lives she touched because she was such an exceptional role model and mentor. I wish her continued success and much happiness in the years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DAVID COUSENS

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize David Cousens of South Thomaston, ME, who will soon retire from being the president of the Maine Lobstermen's Association after a tenure spanning three decades. Dave's skills as a leader and savvy as a lobsterman have steered the organization and members of the industry it represents with a strong and steady hand through a period of increased landings, innovative conservation, and improved regulatory structure. Dave's hallmark over his entire career was an ability to listen to and foster respect between a diverse crowd of harvesters, regulators, scientists, and other members of the industry.

When Dave became president of the Maine Lobstermen's Association in 1991, great change was afoot. Then, with annual landings in the range of 30 million pounds, lobstermen were not limited in the number of traps they fished, draggers were permitted to land large quantities of lobster, and, despite a vast majority of it taking place in State waters, the fishery was managed federally. Furthermore, many of the conservation measures that we now identify as integral to the fishery were, at the time, only practiced voluntarily by Maine lobstermen.

Over the past 27 years, while running one of the most prominent industry groups in the State, Dave has not backed off his primary occupation, that of a lobsterman. The time he has spent behind the wheel of his truck getting to meetings up and down the coast of Maine, in meetings from Washington, DC, to Nova Scotia and everywhere in between, and on the phone with anyone and everyone has not stopped him from continuing to fish a full complement of traps—800 these days. This commitment, personal and communal, to an iconic Maine way of life is a significant reason why the fishery, which recently landed a record annual catch of 130 million pounds, is today both a crown jewel of Maine's coastal economy and a shining example of sustainability envied around the world.

For generations, Maine lobstermen like Dave have known that to ensure their future livelihood and that of their children—(his three sons are also lobstermen)—they must responsibly shepherd the resource. Under Dave's leadership, the Maine Lobstermen's Association successfully helped transi-

tion management of lobster fishery from the Federal New England Fishery Management Council to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and, as a result, expanded the Maine practice of marking egg-bearing females and returning them to the water so they may continue to breed to other States and Canadian provinces. He also oversaw successful efforts to significantly reduce the large amount of lobster that was being caught in the Gulf of Maine as bycatch in draggers' trawls, limit the total number of traps that lobstermen fish and increase the size of escape vents that allow juvenile lobsters to escape a trap. Most recently, as the fishery moves further offshore amidst warming ocean temperatures and concerns about its implications on whale population have arisen—Dave's trademark leadership style has set the stage for meaningful exchange and beneficial compromise on an issue that will likely get a lot of attention in the coming years.

As Dave looks forward to spending a little more time with his family and friends, I wish to commend him on the exemplary leadership over the years—listening, learning, and always keeping a clear, insightful, and good-humored eye on the horizon. •

RECOGNIZING ADVANCED WELDING AND STEEL

• Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, setting out to start a small business in America is not for the faint of heart. In many cases, it takes a great deal of self-sufficiency and perseverance, and, for most, success does not come easily. Success is often built through years of hard work, sacrifice, and dedication.

Today, I would like to recognize a small business from my home State of Idaho that exemplifies these very traits. As chairman of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am proud to recognize a Grangeville, ID, small business, Advanced Welding and Steel, as the Small Business of the Month for February 2018. This small business demonstrates a dedication to producing quality goods while providing a unique service. Their story reminds us that, with hard work and dedication, Americans can accomplish almost anything to which they set their minds. With over 20 years in business, Advanced Welding and Steel has served as a great example of the determined entrepreneurial spirit found all across Idaho.

Advanced Welding and Steel's story is the quintessential story of American entrepreneurship. Ryan Uhlenkott grew up in a hard-working entrepreneurial family. He learned valuable traits such as a strong work ethic, timeliness, and honesty while working on the family farm, splitting wood for the winter, and helping out at the family water well drilling business. While a college student, he worked part time sweeping floors in a welding shop, which led to a full-time welding job.

Before he set out on his own, Ryan gained experience in a variety of positions across the fabrication industry, including as a crane operator, planner, mapper, welder, erector, and fabricator. After receiving certifications in boiler and pipe welding, he decided to introduce his own approach to fabrication. He drew upon his knowledge, experience, and his innate entrepreneurial mindset in 1998, when he founded Advanced Welding and Steel. Ryan started out with one welder mounted on the back of a pickup truck. The company quickly grew in both employees and capacity, going from a 6,000-square-foot shop in 2003 to the current state-of-the-art 60,000-square-foot shop with paint booths, shot blasters, and a railings shop. A major motivating factor in starting his own business was Ryan's desire to spend more time with his family. To this day, he considers his family and his employees' families to be the center of his business model.

Today, Advanced Welding and Steel delivers its products across the western United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. The company's attention to detail in its processes of estimating, detailing, and project management has turned the small business into one of the most respected fabricators in the region. A team of 15 highly qualified professionals work at the company, and over the years, they estimate that they have delivered over 15 million pounds of steel to their customers. Their hard work resulted in Advanced Welding and Steel being recognized in the July 2017 edition of Modern Steel Construction for their outstanding work as the prime fabricator for the new student center at Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA. The company is committed to excellence in their craft and also to the sustainable use of their products, as over 90 percent of the steel they work with has been recycled, adding to the overwhelmingly positive impact they bring to local Idaho communities.

The hard-working team members of Advanced Welding and Steel have decades of experience in multiple fields within the steel industry. Through their commitment to their customers, Ryan's team provides an excellent product with exceptional service, and they make a sizable impact in the local and national fabricating industry. They ensure that their projects are well planned and seamlessly executed. The State of Idaho is proud to be a home for small businesses like them who go above and beyond in pursuit of the American dream.

I extend my sincerest congratulations to Ryan Uhlenkott, his family, and the entire team at Advanced Welding and Steel. I look forward to watching your continued growth and success.●

TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY STOKS

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize the hard work of my Com-

merce, Science, and Transportation Committee intern Anthony Stoks. Anthony hails from Adelaide, Australia, and is a law student at Flinders University.

While interning for the Commerce Committee, Anthony assisted the Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness. He is a dedicated worker who was committed to getting the most out of his internship. I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Anthony for all of the fine work he did for the committee and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 767. An act to establish the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training pilot program to address human trafficking in the health care system.

H.R. 880. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to facilitate assignment of military trauma care providers to civilian trauma centers in order to maintain military trauma readiness and to support such centers, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1222. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to coordinate Federal congenital heart disease research efforts and to improve public education and awareness of congenital heart disease, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2410. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a sickle cell disease prevention and treatment demonstration program and to provide for sickle cell disease research, surveillance, prevention, and treatment.

H.R. 2422. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve essential oral health care for low-income and other underserved individuals by breaking down barriers to care, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 772. An act to amend the PROTECT Act to make Indian tribes eligible for AMBER Alert grants.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH) announced that on today, Feb-

ruary 27, 2018, he has signed the following enrolled bills, which were previously signed by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MOONEY):

H.R. 1725. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit certain reports relating to medical evidence submitted in support of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary.

H.R. 3122. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include on the internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs a warning regarding dishonest, predatory, or otherwise unlawful practices targeting individuals who are eligible for increased pension on the basis of need for regular aid and attendance, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4533. An act to designate the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Lexington, Kentucky, as the "Lexington VA Health Care System" and to make certain other designations.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 767. An act to establish the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training pilot program to address human trafficking in the health care system; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 880. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to facilitate assignment of military trauma care providers to civilian trauma centers in order to maintain military trauma readiness and to support such centers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 1222. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to coordinate Federal congenital heart disease research efforts and to improve public education and awareness of congenital heart disease, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 2410. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a sickle cell disease prevention and treatment demonstration program and to provide for sickle cell disease research, surveillance, prevention, and treatment; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 2422. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve essential oral health care for low-income and other underserved individuals by breaking down barriers to care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2464. A bill to improve border security and to provide conditional provision residence to certain long-term residents who entered the United States as children.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

EC-4362. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting,

pursuant to law, a report entitled “OMB Report to the Congress on the Joint Committee Reductions for Fiscal Year 2019”; to the Special Committee on Aging; Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Appropriations; Armed Services; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; the Budget; Commerce, Science, and Transportation; Energy and Natural Resources; Environment and Public Works; Select Committee on Ethics; Finance; Foreign Relations; Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Indian Affairs; Select Committee on Intelligence; the Judiciary; Rules and Administration; Small Business and Entrepreneurship; and Veterans’ Affairs.

EC-4363. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “OMB Sequestration Preview Report to the President and Congress for Fiscal Year 2019”; to the Special Committee on Aging; Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Appropriations; Armed Services; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; the Budget; Commerce, Science, and Transportation; Energy and Natural Resources; Environment and Public Works; Select Committee on Ethics; Finance; Foreign Relations; Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Indian Affairs; Select Committee on Intelligence; the Judiciary; Rules and Administration; Small Business and Entrepreneurship; and Veterans’ Affairs.

EC-4364. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Distillates (petroleum), Solvent-Dewaxed Heavy Paraffinic; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance” (FRL No. 9974-14) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 22, 2018; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4365. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Quizalofop ethyl; Pesticide Tolerances” (FRL No. 9972-30) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 22, 2018; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4366. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Indaziflam; Pesticide Tolerances for Emergency Exemptions” (FRL No. 9973-10) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 16, 2018; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4367. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Methyl-alpha-D-mannopyranoside (Alpha Methyl Mannoside); Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance” (FRL No. 9972-04) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 16, 2018; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4368. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to violations of the Antideficiency Act that involved fiscal years 2011–2015 Operation and Maintenance, Army (OMA), funds and was assigned case number 17-01; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-4369. A communication from the Secretary of the Army, transmitting, pursuant

to law, a report relative to Military Helicopter Noise; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4370. A communication from the Counsel of the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Rules of Practice and Procedure; Rules of Practice and Procedure in Adjudicatory Proceedings; Civil Money Penalty Inflation Adjustments” (RIN1557-AE14) received in the office of the President of the Senate on February 15, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4371. A communication from the Senior Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Rules Concerning Prepaid Accounts Under the Electronic Fund Transfer Act (Regulation E) and the Truth in Lending Act (Regulation Z)” (12 CFR Part 1005 and 1026) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 15, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4372. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, four (4) reports relative to vacancies in the Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 15, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4373. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the continuation of the national emergency with respect to Cuba and of the emergency authority relating to the regulation of the anchorage and movement of vessels, as amended; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4374. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Quizalofop ethyl, Pesticide Tolerances” (FRL No. 9972-24) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 15, 2018; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4375. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Pendimethalin; Pesticide Tolerances” (FRL No. 9973-03) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 15, 2018; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4376. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Approval of Arizona Plan Revisions, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality” (FRL No. 9974-68-Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 15, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4377. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Virginia; Revisions to Implement the Revocation of the 1997 Ozone NAAQS” (FRL No. 9974-66-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 15, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4378. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division,

Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approval; Connecticut; Non-attainment New Source Review Permit Requirements for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard” (FRL No. 9973-18-Region 1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 15, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4379. A communication from the Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission’s Strategic Plan for fiscal year 2018 through fiscal year 2022; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4380. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approval; Illinois; Rule Part 225, Control of Emissions from Large Combustion Sources” (FRL No. 9974-87-Region 5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 22, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4381. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approval; Indiana; Indiana NSR/PSD; Indiana PM2.5 NSR; Correction” (FRL No. 9974-88-Region 5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 22, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4382. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting proposed legislation entitled “Washington Aqueduct Divestiture Act of 2018”; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4383. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting a legislative proposal “Inland Waterways Revenue Act of 2018”; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4384. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of the Treasury’s strategic plan for fiscal years 2018 - 2022; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4385. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Revenue Procedure 2018-17” (Rev. Proc. 2018-17) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 15, 2018; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4386. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Low-Income Housing Credit Disaster Relief for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico” (Notice 2018-17) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 21, 2018; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4387. A communication from the Deputy Inspector General for Audit Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Review of Medicare Administrative Contractor Information Security Program Evaluations for Fiscal Year 2016”; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4388. A communication from the Chief of the Border Security Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Technical Amendment to List of User Fee

Airports: Name Changes of Several Airports and the Addition of Five Airports” (CBP Dec. 18–01) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 16, 2018; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4389. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2018-0010 - 2018-0017); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4390. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Amendment to the International Traffic in Arms Regulations: Addition of South Sudan” (RIN1400-AE51) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 15, 2018; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4391. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data and defense services to Australia to support the manufacture, assembly, and support of Gimbal Weapon Mounts for Remotely Operated Weapon System for ultimate end-use by the government of Saudi Arabia in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 17-021); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4392. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data and defense services to Japan to support the integration, operation, maintenance, test, repair, and general support of the Microwave Power Module Based Transmitter for the Japanese Ministry of Defense F-15J aircraft in the amount of \$100,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 17-115); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4393. A communication from the Inspector General of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Inspector General’s Congressional Budget Justification for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4394. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation; China Basin, Mission Creek, San Francisco, CA” ((RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2017-1015)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4395. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-247, “National Community Reinvestment Coalition Real Property Tax Exemption Amendment Act of 2018”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4396. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-248, “Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Clarification Amendment Act of 2018”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4397. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report

on D.C. Act 22-249, “Electric Vehicle Public Infrastructure Expansion Amendment Act of 2018”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4398. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-250, “Africare Real Property Tax Relief Act of 2018”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4399. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-251, “General Obligation Bonds and Bond Anticipation Notes for Fiscal Years 2018-2023 Authorization Act of 2018”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4400. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-252, “East End Commercial Real Property Tax Rate Reduction Amendment Act of 2018”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4401. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-253, “Jackson School Lease Renewal Authorization Act of 2018”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4402. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-254, “East End Grocery and Retail Incentive Tax Exemption Act of 2018”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4403. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-255, “Washington Metrorail Safety Commission Board of Directors Appointment Amendment Act of 2018”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4404. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Financial Report of the United States Government for Fiscal Year 2017”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4405. A communication from the President and CEO, Inter-American Foundation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Foundation’s FY17 Annual Performance Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4406. A communication from the President and CEO, Inter-American Foundation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Foundation’s FY17 Annual Performance Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4407. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Pequonock River, Bridgeport, CT” ((RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2017-0161)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4408. A communication from the Inspector General of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Inspector General’s Congressional Budget Justification for fiscal year 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4409. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, De-

partment of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department’s 2017 Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and Agency Privacy Management Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4410. A communication from the Vice Chairman, Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board Annual Performance Report for FY 2017 and Annual Performance Plan for FY 2018 (Final) and FY 2019 (Proposed)” and the Board’s Strategic Plan for FY 2018-2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4411. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Under Secretary, National Protection and Programs Directorate, Department of Homeland Security, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 22, 2018; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4412. A communication from the Chief of External Affairs and Performance Branch, Office of Government Ethics, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Director, Office of Government Ethics, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2018; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4413. A communication from the Chief Financial Officer, National Labor Relations Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Performance and Accountability Report for Fiscal Year 2017”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4414. A communication from the Administrator, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Administration’s Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2018-2022; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EC-4415. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Economic Report of the President together with the 2018 Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers; to the Joint Economic Committee.

EC-4416. A communication from the Director, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “International Services Surveys: BE-120 Benchmark Survey of Transactions in Selected Services and Intellectual Property With Foreign Persons” (RIN0691-AA87) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 16, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4417. A communication from the Associate Bureau Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Connect America Fund; ETC Annual Reports and Certifications; Rural Broadband Experiments; and Connect America Fund Phase II Auction” ((WC Docket No. 10-90; WC Docket No. 14-58; WC Docket No. 14-259; and AU Docket No. 17-182) (FCC 18-5)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 16, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4418. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant

to law, the report of a rule entitled "Russian Sanctions: Addition of Certain Entities to the Entity List" (RIN0694-AH48) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 22, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4419. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Protected Resources, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Listing the Oceanic Whitetip Shark as Threatened Under the Endangered Species Act" (RIN0648-XE314) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 22, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4420. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Harmonization of Fire Protection Equipment Standards for Towing Vessels" ((RIN1625-AC43) (Docket No. USCG-2017-1060)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 22, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4421. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy for the position of Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 15, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4422. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Special Local Regulation; Pamlico River, Washington, NC" ((RIN1625-AA08) (Docket No. USCG-2017-1100)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4423. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Special Local Regulation; Gasparilla Marine Parade; Hillsborough Bay, Tampa, FL" ((RIN1625-AA08) (Docket No. USCG-2017-1102)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4424. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Canaveral Barge Canal; Canaveral, FL" ((RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2017-0161)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. INHOFE for Mr. McCain for the Committee on Armed Services.

Air Force nomination of Col. Lee H. Harvis, to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nominations beginning with Col. Michael L. Ahmann and ending with Col.

John P. York, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 18, 2018.

Air Force nominations beginning with Col. Christopher R. Alderdice and ending with Col. David J. Mounkes, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 18, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Col. Timothy L. Adams and ending with Col. Karl D. Pierson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 18, 2018.

Air Force nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. John J. DeGoes and ending with Brig. Gen. Lee E. Payne, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Jeffrey P. Kramer, to be Major General.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. (lh) Gordon D. Peters, to be Vice Admiral.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. Brian B. Brown, to be Vice Admiral.

Air Force nomination of Col. John J. Allen, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Todd M. Lazaroski, to be Brigadier General.

Mr. INHOFE for Mr. McCain. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Air Force nominations beginning with Paul Obi Amaliri and ending with Meoshia A. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 14, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Carl P. Bhend and ending with Christopher M. Wolbert, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 19, 2018.

Air Force nominations beginning with Steven J. Acevedo and ending with Heather C. Yun, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 19, 2018.

Air Force nominations beginning with Nataliya A. Ables and ending with Michelle L. Zielinski, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 19, 2018.

Air Force nominations beginning with George Z. Aberth and ending with Veranika Zakharyeva, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 19, 2018.

Air Force nominations beginning with Kevin D. Alford and ending with Winnifred M. Wong, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 19, 2018.

Air Force nominations beginning with Ann E. Alexander and ending with Patrick B. Parsons, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 19, 2018.

Air Force nomination of David J. Caswell, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Bruce P. Heseltine, Jr., to be Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Michael T. Cain and ending with Ilda Y. Isaza, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Air Force nominations beginning with Kerry L. Hirzel and ending with Joshua S. Trice, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Air Force nomination of Miguel J. Morales, to be Major.

Air Force nominations beginning with Julie A. Bowman and ending with Larrin S. Wampler, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Air Force nominations beginning with Marc M. Adair and ending with Jesse B. Zydallis, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 8, 2018.

Army nomination of Devry C. Anderson, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Andrew A. Arndt and ending with D013347, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 19, 2018.

Army nomination of Tyler M. Abercrombie, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Randolph S. Carpenter, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Angel Soto, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Matthew C. Dawson and ending with Lee C. Novy, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 19, 2018.

Army nomination of Thomas A. Summers, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Christina M. Buchner, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Marcia L. Lewis, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Jack E. Shields III, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Jerzy M. Matyszczyk, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Alecia D. Biddison and ending with Roger R. Wold, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Army nominations beginning with Joseph W. Bishop and ending with Robert T. Utlaut, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Army nomination of Jennifer L. White, to be Major.

Army nomination of Patrick E. Mather, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Luis G. Fuchu and ending with Dexter C. Nunnally, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Army nomination of Olivia H. Ivey, to be Major.

Army nomination of Han S. Kim, to be Major.

Army nomination of John E. Richardson, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Paul A. White, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Robert T. Carter, Jr. and ending with Charles A. Phillips, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Army nomination of Kyle R. Stiefel, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Adam C. Miller, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Mathew M. Condry, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with David A. Amamoo and ending with D013799, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 8, 2018.

Army nomination of Jason B. Yenrick, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of David R. Addams, to be Major.

Army nomination of Pankaj A. Ksheersagar, to be Major.

Army nomination of Michael P. Sargent, to be Major.

Army nomination of Nicholas E. Hurd, to be Major.

Army nomination of Michael C. Agbay, to be Major.

Army nomination of Jay A. Iannacito, to be Colonel.

Marine Corps nomination of Lonnie M. McGhee, Jr., to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Michael E. Feuquay and ending with Heath E. Ruppert, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Shawn P. Chabot and ending with Ricardo B. Rivera, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 8, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Enrique Luz, Jr. and ending with Jeremy J. Willoughby, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 8, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Jeffrey A. Bryant and ending with Joe A. Saenz, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 8, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Andrew E. Cheatum and ending with Joseph M. David, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 8, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Brian K. Evans and ending with Jeremy F. Ortiz, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 8, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Daniel H. Flick and ending with Jesse C. Tallman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 8, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Ezra H. Bardo and ending with Michael C. Medley, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 8, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Matthew C. Pampush and ending with Stephen T. Sutton, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 8, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Odin Pineda and ending with James M. Rod, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 8, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Natalie E. Moore and ending with Brooke J. Speers, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 13, 2018.

Navy nomination of Henry J. Kennedy, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of John A. Mills, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Eric C. Correll, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Jamal L. Headen, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nominations beginning with Patrick P. Arrigo and ending with Oliver C. Zufelt, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Navy nomination of Jessica M. Ferraro, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Vijay M. Ravindra, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Elisabeth S. Stephens, to be Captain.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. 2453. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require hospitals to provide the Secretary with information on the hospital's acquisition costs for 340B drugs and the total revenues received by the hospital for such drugs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 2454. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require disclosure of payments for settlements of disputes regarding sexual abuse and certain types of harassment and discrimination, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. TOOMEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 2455. A bill to encourage United States-Ukraine cybersecurity cooperation and require a report regarding such cooperation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CASSIDY, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 2456. A bill to reauthorize and expand the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2457. A bill to provide a work opportunity tax credit for military spouses and to provide for flexible spending arrangements for childcare services for military families; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. TOOMEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. KING, Mr. NELSON, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 2458. A bill to authorize the Attorney General to deny the transfer of firearms and explosives and Federal firearms and explosives licenses and permits to known or suspected terrorists; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE:

S. 2459. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for current year inclusion of net CFC tested income, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. HELLER, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 2460. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require e-prescribing for coverage under part D of the Medicare program of prescription drugs that are controlled substances; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. DONNELLY):

S. 2461. A bill to allow for judicial review of certain final rules relating to national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants

for brick and structural clay products or for clay ceramics manufacturing before requiring compliance with the rules by existing sources; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 2462. A bill to place restrictions on searches and seizures of electronic devices at the border; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CORKER (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. YOUNG, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 2463. A bill to establish the United States International Development Finance Corporation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 2464. A bill to improve border security and to provide conditional provision residence to certain long-term residents who entered the United States as children; read the first time.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PETERS, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. REED, Mr. KAINE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. HARRIS, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. UDALL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. SMITH, Mr. TESTER, Mr. KING, Mr. NELSON, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. CARPER, Mr. COONS, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. JONES):

S.J. Res. 52. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to "Restoring Internet Freedom"; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. BENNET, Mr. COONS, Mr. REED, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. Res. 414. A resolution condemning the continued undemocratic measures by the Government of Venezuela to undermine the independence of democratic institutions and calling for a free and fair electoral process; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COONS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 415. A resolution designating March 2, 2018, as "National Speech and Debate Education Day"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. DONNELLY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr.

ENZI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 416. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Career and Technical Education Month; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. COTTON):

S. Con. Res. 34. A concurrent resolution recognizing the rich history, heritage, and strategic importance of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Marshallese population residing in the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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

S. Con. Res. 35. A concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the members of the Office of Strategic Services; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 58

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. 58, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

S. 168

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 168, a bill to amend and enhance certain maritime programs of the Department of Transportation.

S. 397

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 397, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure fairness in Medicare hospital payments by establishing a floor for the area wage index applied with respect to certain hospitals.

S. 793

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 793, a bill to prohibit sale of shark fins, and for other purposes.

S. 811

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 811, a bill to ensure that organizations with religious or moral convictions are allowed to continue to provide services for children.

S. 834

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 834, a bill to authorize the appropriation of funds to the Centers for Dis-

ease Control and Prevention for conducting or supporting research on firearms safety or gun violence prevention.

S. 1091

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1091, a bill to establish a Federal Task Force to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

S. 1278

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the names of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1278, a bill to provide for the admission of the State of Washington, D.C. into the Union.

S. 1539

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1539, a bill to protect victims of stalking from gun violence.

S. 1589

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1589, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Small Business Act to expand the availability of employee stock ownership plans in S corporations, and for other purposes.

S. 1632

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1632, a bill to establish an additional fund in the Treasury to meet existing statutory obligations to reimburse costs reasonably incurred as a result of the reorganization of broadcast television spectrum, and for other purposes.

S. 1674

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1674, a bill to provide grants for the repair, renovation, and construction of public elementary schools and secondary schools, to establish a school infrastructure bond program, and for other purposes.

S. 1710

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1710, a bill to reduce the Federal budget deficit by closing big oil tax loopholes, and for other purposes.

S. 1879

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1879, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 1945

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor

of S. 1945, a bill to regulate large capacity ammunition feeding devices.

S. 2073

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2073, a bill to establish a vegetation management pilot program on National Forest System land to better protect utility infrastructure from passing wildfire, and for other purposes.

S. 2076

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2076, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the expansion of activities related to Alzheimer's disease, cognitive decline, and brain health under the Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2135

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 2135, a bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

S. 2208

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2208, a bill to provide for the issuance of an Alzheimer's Disease Research Semipostal Stamp.

S. 2278

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2278, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants to improve health care in rural areas.

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2278, *supra*.

S. 2324

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2324, a bill to amend the Investment Company Act of 1940 to change certain requirements relating to the capital structure of business development companies, to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to revise certain rules relating to business development companies, and for other purposes.

S. 2341

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2341, a bill to amend title 38, United

States Code, to improve the processing of veterans benefits by the Department of Veterans Affairs, to limit the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recover overpayments made by the Department and other amounts owed by veterans to the United States, to improve the due process accorded veterans with respect to such recovery, and for other purposes.

S. 2353

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2353, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to report on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other purposes.

S. 2360

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2360, a bill to provide for the minimum size of crews of freight trains, and for other purposes.

S. 2421

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2421, a bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to provide an exemption from certain notice requirements and penalties for releases of hazardous substances from animal waste at farms.

S. 2430

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2430, a bill to provide a permanent appropriation of funds for the payment of death gratuities and related benefits for survivors of deceased members of the uniformed services in event of any period of lapsed appropriations.

S. CON. RES. 7

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 7, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that tax-exempt fraternal benefit societies have historically provided and continue to provide critical benefits to the people and communities of the United States.

S. RES. 168

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 168, a resolution supporting respect for human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia.

S. RES. 377

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 377, a resolution recognizing the importance of paying tribute to those individuals who have faith-

fully served and retired from the Armed Forces of the United States, designating April 18, 2018, as "Military Retiree Appreciation Day", and encouraging the people of the United States to honor the past and continued service of military retirees to their local communities and the United States.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CASSIDY, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 2456. A bill to reauthorize and expand the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to address a critical issue today in Westerville, OH, and, frankly, every community I represent in my State and communities all over the country. Today, I want to talk about the opioid epidemic that is gripping our country.

Every State represented in this Chamber has had too many communities devastated, families broken apart, and lives taken by the opioid overdoses. The Centers for Disease Control now tells us more than 63,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2016, the last year for which they have records. It also looks like it was worse in 2017. More Americans are dying from drug overdoses than the total number of casualties during the Vietnam war. Every year, more Americans are dying from drug overdoses than the total number of casualties from the Vietnam war. Think about that. It is a staggering statistic.

On average, more than 174 Americans died every single day from a drug overdose in 2016. That is up from 143 Americans in 2015 and 105 Americans in 2010. In other words, it is getting worse, and 2016 was the deadliest year on record. Initial estimates for 2017 suggest it is going to be even deadlier, including in my home State of Ohio.

Opioids—prescription drugs, heroin, and synthetic forms of heroin—are increasingly the reason why. Opioids were involved in about two-thirds of all overdose deaths in 2016. Opioid overdose deaths were five times higher in 2016 than they were just back in 1999. In the past 17 years, we have seen a fivefold increase in these overdose deaths. It is a national epidemic.

It has unfolded in three different waves. It started with prescription drugs, overprescribing of prescription drugs—pain pills. The pill mills we saw in Southern Ohio and around our State exploded about 15 to 20 years ago. Next, there were the heroin deaths. Heroin moved in and spiked as people moved to less expensive and more accessible alternatives than prescription drugs. Now, I hate to tell you, there is a new danger and a threat, and it is deadlier

than ever. It is these synthetic opioids—fentanyl, carfentanil—that have moved into our States, overcoming our law enforcement, and the results have been deadly.

By the way, it is a crisis that does not discriminate. Opioid addiction affects everybody, regardless of age, area code, class, or color. In Ohio, drug addiction and acts committed to support it have now become the No. 1 cause of crime in our communities—probably the same in your community.

Employers, of course, are increasingly pointing to the inability to find workers who can pass a drug test. They can't fill vacant positions. There is new data out with regard to people who are not showing up on the unemployment rolls but have given up looking for work altogether. There are probably 9 million men between 25 and 55 who are considered to be able-bodied who aren't even looking for work. Some really troubling statistics out there indicate that maybe as many as half—one study says 48 percent—of those individuals are taking opioids on a daily basis.

This is affecting all of us. Every aspect of our communities is affected. Everybody has a role to play overcoming this epidemic. There is an urgency coming up with better strategies to turn the tide on addiction. Although I believe progress has been made recently—and it is starting to be made in my State and other States—much more needs to be done and done urgently.

Part of that starts with understanding that addiction is a disease, and it is treatable. Too often it is not treated like that. The appropriate response should include much more aggressive prevention and education, absolutely, and more aggressive law enforcement keeping deadly fentanyl out of our communities through the STOP Act and other means, of course, but we also have to get more effective treatment strategies. We have a couple hundred thousand people in Ohio who are addicted. We need to get them into treatment, including more effective detox, medication-assisted treatment, and longer term recovery. We know, coupled with the right kind of therapy, the right kind of support and help, people can get into recovery and get back to their families, get back to work, and get back to being productive citizens.

We also know recovery results are a lot better with that kind of continuous support. Closing the gaps that occur is key to overcoming addiction. There is a gap between the crisis response, which is often a first responder—like the two brave officers I talked about earlier—finding someone who has overdosed. Often it is firefighters as well providing Narcan, this miracle drug that reverses the effect of the overdose. That is incredibly important to saving lives.

Narcan alone is not sufficient. The key is to get those people into detox and into treatment and longer term recovery. The gaps we have out there between the crisis response and Narcan,

then going to detox, then going to treatment, and then going to recovery are creating a lot of the inability to solve this problem.

I have probably met a couple of thousand addicts or recovering addicts in the last few years. What they tell me is: I tried treatment, but it was for 6, 7, 8 weeks, and then there was nothing for me. It didn't work for me. Then there are people who overdosed, not once or twice but several times, and they had never been in detox and treatment.

One young man I spoke to last weekend has been an addict for 7 years. Finally, his brother convinced him to seek help. The last time he overdosed, he did go into detox. He did go into treatment, to a facility where those gaps were closed, where there was no waiting time, where he was able to get the help, rather than going back to his old community and his old friends and a situation that was going to lead him back into more use and more addiction.

The key, again, is to get those who have overdosed into the treatment they need. Overdose reversal provides a second chance at life. Let's face it. Some of these people who are overdosing come out of this after Narcan is administered. They have seen their life flash before their eyes, and they are ready for something. We have to be ready for them. Just as the overdose reversal provides a second chance at life, it is treatment and longer term recovery that provides that second chance to live addiction-free—again, to get back with your family, get back to work, and get back to a productive life. It takes a comprehensive solution because it is a comprehensive problem.

That is what led some of us in this body, including my colleague Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE and me, to introduce the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, or CARA, back in 2015. We developed that bill over time by relying on experts in the field and those most affected by addiction.

Beginning in 2014, when we were in the process of putting together the legislation, we hosted five national forums here in Washington, DC. We brought experts and practitioners in from around the country—prevention, treatment, law enforcement, and recovery communities. We wanted to get the best practices to find out what was working, what wasn't working, and how we could improve the response. What role could the Federal Government play in all of this? We had forums focused on the science of addiction to understand it better, evidence-based prevention strategies that actually work; treating pregnant women who are addicted and babies at risk of being born drug-dependent. There is nothing more heartbreaking than going into the neonatal units in the hospitals in my home State and seeing these babies who were born dependent and watching them go through the painful withdrawal process as infants. Every neonatal unit in our country has seen this. If you go to your own hospital, they

will tell you this is an increasing problem.

We had veterans come in, and we had experts come in to help veterans make that transition because, sadly, the use of opioids among veterans is also increasing. They sometimes use opioids for injuries, for accidents, for PTSD, and they become addicted. How do you build support around those veterans? We also had people come in and talk about longer term recovery and housing and how, over time, you can get better results if you provide those kinds of services. Our goal was to leverage the expertise and perspectives of everyone involved in this epidemic, to find best practices, and to create an evidence-based education, treatment, and recovery bill that works.

With strong bipartisan support, we moved from hearings, to a unanimous committee markup, to Senate passage of this legislation. By the way, it passed with a vote of 92 to 2. That is not typical around here, certainly not for something so comprehensive. Yet everybody has experienced this back home and is desperate to figure out strategies to help. In July of 2016, President Obama signed CARA into law. It was the first comprehensive addiction reform in more than 20 years. It was the first time Congress had ever provided any support or help for this longer term recovery piece.

The CARA law targets prevention and education resources to prevent abuse before it even starts—the most effective way. It helps first responders reverse overdoses to save lives. It devotes resources to evidence-based treatment and recovery programs. It expands prescription drug take-back programs to get addictive pain pills off the bathroom shelves. More than \$180 million was authorized to assist communities in these efforts to combat this epidemic. Frankly, because of this crisis, the appropriators decided: You know, we need this so badly, we are actually going to appropriate more than the \$180 million. Last year, as an example, they appropriated \$267 million—almost \$100 million beyond our authorization.

Again, I think it is beginning to make a difference. I see it back home in Ohio. I see some of these strategies beginning to work. It is going to take some time, and we need to do more. In Ohio, we received about \$4 million. When I say “we,” I mean groups, people who are in the trenches doing the hard work.

We have also made progress in this fight with separate opioid legislation that was part of the 21st Century Cures legislation. That legislation was for substance abuse and mental health. Many of us successfully fought to help secure a 2-year commitment there of \$500 million a year, totaling \$1 billion. It goes directly to the States. This money goes to States that are hardest hit, and States are allowed to decide how to spend that money. The first installment of funding from that legisla-

tion awarded my State of Ohio with \$26 million, and we are using every penny of it.

I was at a facility over the weekend that gave me hope. It is called the Maryhaven Addiction Stabilization Center, and it is in Columbus, OH. They talked about the gaps, where people who overdose are provided Narcan, and then they go back to their community, and what first responders will tell you is that sometimes in the same week or even on the same day on some occasions, there is another overdose. The revolving door continues without any treatment and without any solution. Maryhaven Stabilization Center is a response to that. They used the Cures money we talked about, they used some CARA funding from the county—the county is a part of the broader strategy of where the CARA money went—and they said: Let's put together an institution where there is an emergency room that focuses on overdoses.

I have been to other emergency rooms in Columbus, OH, and I have seen what they do with the people who overdose. They save lives, and that is fantastic, but frankly these emergency rooms are equipped for everything, and they have to be—for gunshot wounds, car accidents, trauma.

This emergency room would be focused specifically on overdoses, which makes it more cost-effective but also more effective for those recovering addicts, those addicts who are coming in. But most importantly, in that same facility, there is a detox center. In that same facility, there are 50 treatment beds. Whereas in the typical case when somebody overdoses, they go to the emergency room and end up going back to their community, back home, back to the gang, back to the family, in this case, 103 people who have gone through in the last month—it has only been open a month—80 percent of them have gone into treatment. I had the opportunity to meet someone who had been through that process, and we talked about the difference this makes. You literally walk through the door into treatment, there is strong encouragement to do it, and it is working.

These are the kinds of things that are going to make a difference in our communities. It seems to be common sense, but frankly it is not happening in other places. Programs like these are what are going to help us overcome addiction and are examples of how Federal funds can be used more effectively to leverage, in this case, a lot of private dollars, some State dollars.

Both of these landmark laws—the CARA Act that we talked about and the Cures Act—are providing increased resources to local communities, but this problem is not getting better, it is getting worse.

One of the problems is the availability and the low cost of these highly addictive, even more dangerous drugs coming in. There are synthetic opioids. Fentanyl is 50 times stronger than heroin on average. It is coming in through

the mail. We need to do more to stop it through law enforcement, but we also need to acknowledge that it has been sprinkled in other drugs and is creating a lot of these addiction overdoses and higher rates of death.

The degree of damage this is causing to our communities, our families, our local budgets, and our criminal justice system requires us to take a more aggressive stance, to do more to figure this out. We need to strengthen our resolve. We made progress recently with the bipartisan budget agreement President Trump signed into law just a few weeks ago. We included in there an additional amount of funding—\$6 billion over 2 years—to help combat the opioid epidemic. So instead of the \$500 million a year and the \$260 million a year that I talked about, it would be \$3 billion a year and then \$3 billion the year after.

I believe that the evidence-based programs we set out in the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act provide a good framework as to how to spend that money effectively. That is why I am pleased to stand here today as we introduce the next stage of this—CARA 2.0—to help provide a framework for how these funds to combat opioid addiction can be spent wisely. It is a roadmap for Congress to build on CARA's successes since becoming law.

The bipartisan CARA 2.0 act is being introduced by SHELDON WHITEHOUSE and me and also by six other colleagues—Senators SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, AMY KLOBUCHAR, DAN SULIVAN, MAGGIE HASSAN, BILL CASSIDY, and MARIA CANTWELL—a bipartisan group of four Republicans and four Democrats who are passionate about this issue. It authorizes \$1 billion a year for specific evidence-based drug prevention, education, treatment, and recovery programs.

It is very important to have this \$6 billion of funding over the next couple of years. We need it. But we have to be sure it is spent wisely. It is not a matter of just throwing money at a problem; it is a matter of being sure we are effectively addressing the real issues.

As I mentioned earlier, the longer term recovery programs are what really help those gripped by addiction to overcome this disease. That is evidence that we have. I have certainly seen a lot of evidence of that firsthand and countless examples of this, where this longer term recovery and the support networks are what get people back on track, back with their families, back to work. We need to expand access to them to those communities that are in need and give everyone a second chance of living up to their own God-given potential. That is why, in this new CARA 2.0, we increase funding for recovery.

In addition to expanding the reach of CARA's evidence-based programs, this bill puts in place new policy reforms to strengthen the government's response in so many ways. We take what some would consider a pretty dramatic step by limiting opioid prescriptions to 3 days for acute pain. Some will push

back against that, but this is based on good evidence and good research. When someone goes in for a simple procedure—say, a wisdom tooth extraction—and that young person is given a bottle of opioids when he or she leaves, too often, that leads to addiction. I don't want more parents coming up to me and saying: My kid, when he or she was a teenager, was given these opioids by a doctor or a dentist, so we thought they were safe. Our child then turned to heroin because the pills became too expensive and less accessible and then turned to fentanyl and overdosed and died.

I have had two such parents from Ohio come to me and tell me their story. You probably know others. We need to ensure that these prescriptions are limited. For those who have chronic pain and those who have cancer, it wouldn't apply. And after those 3 days, you can go back to that doctor and tell them why you need it and explain it.

Experts say that about 80 percent of those who overdose from heroin started on prescription drugs. I am sure the same is true with regard to fentanyl. Four out of five heroin addicts in my State of Ohio who overdosed started on prescription drugs. We do need to deal with this overprescription problem.

By the way, the evidence is that after that fourth day, fifth day, sixth day—that is when you get into the bigger risk of becoming addicted to prescription drugs.

As I mentioned, this epidemic started with an explosion of pain pill use 15 to 20 years ago. We need to stop the addiction at the source, and for most people that begins with prescription drugs. By ensuring that clinicians prescribe the appropriate strength and supply of pain pills for non-life-threatening injuries, we can keep so many more people from becoming addicted.

The bill also includes legislation very similar to that which passed the Senate in 2015 but was dropped out in the House-Senate conference. It is very simple. It requires doctors and pharmacists to use the prescription drug monitoring programs to ensure that we are not overprescribing opioids for certain individuals. That helps us identify where the problems are and to get people into treatment. It also requires States to share data with other States to prevent people from crossing State lines to get prescriptions. One of our big problems in Ohio is people can cross the State lines in West Virginia, Kentucky, or other States and get their prescription filled even though it has already been filled once in Ohio. Across State lines, we need to have prescription drug monitoring programs that work.

CARA 2.0 is going to help turn the tide of this epidemic. The bill increases Federal funds for specific evidence-based programs to better protect vulnerable groups—including infants, young adults, pregnant and postpartum women, and veterans—as well as resources for community programs,

medication-assisted treatment, and first responders.

As the title indicates, it is a comprehensive solution. Every aspect of our communities is affected, so every aspect of our communities needs assistance. The opioid epidemic is one of the most urgent challenges we face as a country.

By the way, ultimately, this crisis is not going to be solved here in Washington, DC. It is not going to be solved by legislation we pass here. We get that. It is going to be solved in our communities. It is going to be solved in our families. It is going to be solved in our hearts. But this is a national crisis, and the national government needs to be a much better partner with State government, local government, communities, and nonprofits—those who are out there doing the hard work.

The \$6 billion commitment over the next 2 years is a real opportunity to help turn the tide—not by just throwing more money at the problem but by being sure that money is well spent on an epidemic that is taking too many lives and devastating too many communities.

CARA 2.0 will build on our accomplishments and continue to give communities the resources they need to address this issue. Yes, we have made some progress around here, and that is good, but we need to do much more. CARA 2.0 gives us that opportunity. It represents the next step toward helping our communities address this epidemic and helping our communities heal.

Thank you.

By Mr. Kaine (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2457. A bill to provide a work opportunity tax credit for military spouses and to provide for flexible spending arrangements for childcare services for military families; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. Kaine, Mr. President. We rightfully honor the sacrifice of veterans and servicemembers and as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I am proud of the work we do to ensure that we have the best equipped and most successful fighting force in the world. Military families are critical to the success and readiness of our military, but are too often unrecognized for their support to our servicemembers and left without necessary programs and assistance to help them succeed. Military families frequently face financial insecurity due to spousal unemployment, which impacts the overall success of our military. Somewhere between 12% and 25% of military spouses are unemployed.

Today, I am pleased to introduce with my colleagues Senators BOOZMAN and TESTER the Jobs and Childcare for Military Families Act of 2018. This legislation encourages businesses to step up and play a bigger role in hiring military spouses who sacrifice so much by expanding the Work Opportunity Tax Credit to also include military spouses.

The bill also further addresses a real obstacle to professional success for many military families: access to quality, affordable childcare by establishing a flexible spending account for military families to use to reimburse themselves for out of pocket child care costs.

Addressing these issues will help military spouses advance in their careers despite frequent moves. Being a military family member will never be easy, but if we can do something to ease the burden in any way, we should. This legislation follows the introduction of another bipartisan bill earlier this month, the Military Spouse Employment Act of 2018, which provides direct employment opportunities and additional access to childcare, improves educational opportunities and extends transition and counseling services. I believe if we make it bipartisan priority to support military families, we will see an improvement in the readiness of our military and reap the economic benefits of supporting this underutilized and resilient workforce of military spouses. I hope to see many of the provisions of these two bills incorporated into this year's National Defense Authorization Act.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. TOOMEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. KING, Mr. NELSON, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 2458. A bill to authorize the Attorney General to deny the transfer of firearms and explosives and Federal firearms and explosives licenses and permits to known or suspected terrorists; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Terrorist Firearms Prevention Act, which would prohibit suspected or known terrorists from legally purchasing a firearm.

I thank my colleagues—Senators HEITKAMP, FLAKE, HEINRICH, TOOMEY, BALDWIN, KING, NELSON, MANCHIN, and KAINE—for their cosponsorship of this bipartisan bill. I particularly recognize the leadership of Senator HEINRICH, who has joined me on the floor this evening as we introduce the bill and explain it to our colleagues.

Often referred to as “no fly, no buy,” this bill represents one of the sensible steps that we can take to reform our Nation’s gun laws to better protect our people. Our bill is based on a simple principle: If you are considered to be too dangerous to board an airplane, then you are too dangerous to buy a firearm.

Our legislation would grant the Attorney General the authority to block the purchase of a gun by a person who is on either the no-fly or the selectee list. Remarkably, current law does not prohibit a person known or suspected of engaging in terrorism from walking into a gun shop and buying a firearm. The no-fly list and the selectee list are

the narrowest subsets of all of the government’s terrorist watch lists. These lists include the names of individuals who pose the greatest threat of committing an act of terrorism against aviation, against our homeland, or against U.S. interests abroad. This bill would also provide an immediate alert to the FBI and to local law enforcement if an individual who has been on the government’s terrorist watch list at any time during the past 5 years purchases a firearm.

Our hearts are all broken by the horrific shootings of the students in Florida. There was another horrendous shooting in Florida in 2016 that demonstrates why this look-back provision in this legislation is so important. The gunman, Omar Mateen, was on the selectee list for approximately 10 months, but he was no longer on the list when he purchased the 2 guns that he used to murder 49 people and injure scores more. If our bill had been enacted, the FBI would have been notified immediately when Omar Mateen purchased his first firearm in the weeks leading up to the shooting. Then the FBI would have been notified a second time that Mateen had sought to purchase additional firearms. Surely, that would have caused the FBI to reopen its investigation of Omar Mateen. If our proposal had been law at that time, perhaps that massacre might have been prevented.

I note that our bill would provide robust due process procedures to protect the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Americans. Any American who would be denied a purchase under this bill would have the opportunity to petition a Federal district court and receive a decision within 14 days. If the government, which would have the burden of proof, would fail to prove its case, it would have to pay attorneys’ fees for that individual, and, of course, the purchase of the firearm would go forward.

In 2016, when the Senate voted on our bill, it won majority and bipartisan support. Our bill was endorsed by a distinguished group of military and intelligence leaders. I note that during the 2016 Presidential debates, both candidates agreed with our principle of no fly, no buy. Surely, this is a sensible, reasonable policy around which we can build consensus.

Another step that we can take right now is to pass legislation I introduced with Senator LEAHY to explicitly outlaw straw purchasing. Straw purchasing is intended for one purpose only, and that is to put a gun into the hands of a criminal who cannot legally obtain one. Our bill, the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act, would provide law enforcement with an effective tool to fight the violence that too often goes hand in hand with drug trafficking and gang-related crimes.

Today, gun traffickers exploit weaknesses in our Federal laws by targeting individuals who can lawfully purchase firearms. Sadly, according to briefings

that I have had from Federal officials, in the State of Maine gang members from other States have targeted addicts to go buy firearms for them, and then they swap firearms for drugs. Right now a straw purchaser can be prosecuted only for lying on a Federal form, which is treated far too often as just a paperwork violation. Instead of a slap on the wrist, our bill would create new, specific criminal offenses for straw purchasing and trafficking, punishable by hefty prison terms, particularly for those who have reason to believe that the firearms will be used to commit violent crimes.

Our bill would also outlaw firearms and ammunition smuggling out of the United States to another country. That is vitally important for combating drug trafficking near and across our southern border, which is contributing to the heroin crisis here at home.

Let me again be clear that the bill I have introduced with Senator LEAHY protects the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens.

These are just two commonsense reforms that we can pass while fully protecting the constitutional rights of law-abiding Americans. We can make it as difficult for a terrorist to obtain a gun as it is for him to board an airplane. We can outlaw straw purchasing by increasing the penalties to make a real difference. I urge my colleagues to support both the bipartisan Terrorist Firearms Prevention Act and the straw purchasing bill, as well as other commonsense reforms.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking my colleague, Senator COLLINS of Maine, for her work in crafting this legislation and the language of this bill and, more generally, for her leadership, formerly on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and certainly for the time that I have been on the Intelligence Committee. Her contributions have not gone unnoticed, and she has been a pleasure to work with in trying to find reasonable places where we can make a material difference in the kinds of mass shootings we have seen.

I should start by speaking a little bit to the recent tragedy in Florida. As the father of two young boys, I can’t begin to imagine the nightmare that families are living through as they mourn the loss of their children in the wake of yet another horrific mass shooting.

Frankly, no parent should have to live in fear of their child not coming home from school. It is pretty unthinkable.

Just last week, one of my own sons went through an active shooter training at his school. Sadly, that is now the new norm in schools all across our country. In fact, 91 Americans are killed each day by gun violence, and we simply cannot accept the status quo as the new normal when there are real

and concrete steps we can take to reduce gun violence while respecting constitutional rights.

Once again, Americans are looking to Congress to finally enact commonsense reforms to our gun laws, to protect our schools, to protect our children, to protect our communities. Like so many Americans, I have been deeply moved by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School students and young people all across this country who have spoken out after losing classmates and friends to demand that we as lawmakers take action to prevent future tragedies.

It is no secret to my constituents or even my colleagues here that I am a passionate outdoorsman, hunter, and owner of firearms. I strongly believe that law-abiding Americans have a right to own guns for sport and self-defense. I am teaching my own sons how to safely and responsibly use those firearms. The vast majority of Americans, including gun owners like me, know that Congress must take action to close loopholes and reform our laws to keep those deadly weapons out of the hands of those who would turn them against our communities.

Today I am quite proud to join my colleagues from both sides of the aisle—Senators COLLINS, HEITKAMP, FLAKE, and others—to introduce one of those measures that should have broad bipartisan support. This is a poster child for the kind of policy that ought to get across the finish line even in these deeply divided, partisan times.

Our bipartisan legislation, the Terrorist Firearms Prevention Act, would deny firearms sales to individuals who appear on the Department of Justice's no-fly or selectee lists. These are the narrowest of databases, the kinds of lists one would have to work pretty hard to land on, and for good reason. Our legislation includes due process procedures for individuals to appeal their placement on those lists.

It seems pretty straightforward to most of my constituents that if the government and law enforcement have determined that an individual is so dangerous as to land on the terrorist watch list and is too dangerous to fly on a commercial airplane, that person should not be able to walk into a gun shop and purchase a gun. But unless we pass this legislation, this glaring loophole will continue to allow individuals identified as terror suspects to buy firearms.

It is time for those Members of Congress who oppose commonsense reforms like this to finally step up and tell us what they are doing to protect the public. It is time for all of us to listen to the student leaders across this country who are rejecting the unacceptable status quo of our Nation's gun violence epidemic.

Those of us in the Senate who know firearms well have a special duty to lead these efforts and to get the details right on any legislation to reshape our Nation's gun laws. Inaction simply

won't cut it anymore. We all need to listen to these students, parents, teachers, and to our own children who are calling on us to be part of the solution.

New Mexicans can count on me, despite the odds, to continue fighting for real solutions to keep our children safe, to reduce gun violence, and to keep our communities safe. That is what our communities and our constituents deserve.

Thank you.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 2462. A bill to place restrictions on searches and seizures of electronic devices at the border; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President. No American should have to relinquish all of their privacy rights in their cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices, simply because they are coming home from a trip abroad. Yet that is exactly how our Government views it: currently, if a Vermonter crosses the border into Canada for a day, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) can search through the Vermonter's emails, text messages, photos, and anything else contained in their electronic devices without any reason to suspect the person is in violation of anything. Let me repeat that: without any suspicion at all. That is unacceptable.

That is why I am joining with Senator DAINES to introduce legislation to require the Government to have reasonable suspicion or probable cause to search or seize Americans' electronic devices at the border. This legislation is a vital step toward protecting our Fourth Amendment rights, while also ensuring that officers protecting our homeland have the lawful authorities they need to do their jobs.

Last year, CBP searched the electronic devices of over 30,000 travelers, and this number continues to grow. These searches can take place at any international airport, or at any land border point such as U.S.-Canada border crossings in my home state of Vermont or Senator DAINES's home state of Montana.

Nothing in this legislation will prevent CBP officers from doing their jobs to protect the homeland, detect contraband, and enforce the law. Our legislation simply says that if an officer of the Government wants to search an American's electronic device at the border, at a minimum they should have reasonable suspicion. If they want to seize the device, they should have probable cause. And if they want to conduct a forensic examination of the device, they should get a warrant from a judge.

Our legislation also requires the Department of Homeland Security to collect statistics on such searches and seizures and report them to Congress. This will significantly increase transparency on the Government's use of

these invasive tools, providing Congress and the American people an opportunity to assess the balance between the needs of law enforcement and the imperative of protecting privacy and civil liberties.

I urge other Senators to join us in support of this legislation. It should not be controversial to be concerned at the Government's ability to search our electronic devices at the border without any suspicion at all. All of us—Republican and Democrat—can support the goal of protecting our borders while also protecting the Fourth Amendment.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 2464. A bill to improve border security and to provide conditional provision residence to certain long-term residents who entered the United States as children; read the first time.

S. 2464

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Three-Year Border and DACA Extension Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—BORDER SECURITY

Sec. 101. Authorization of appropriations.

Sec. 102. Operations and support.

TITLE II—DACA EXTENSION

Sec. 201. Provisional protected presence for young individuals.

TITLE I—BORDER SECURITY

SEC. 101. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated a total of \$7,639,000,000 to the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal years 2018 through 2020 for the purpose of improving border security.

SEC. 102. OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT.

(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to establish a Border Security Enforcement Fund (referred to in this section as the “Fund”), to be administered through the Department of Homeland Security and, in fiscal year 2018 only, through the Department of State, to provide for costs necessary to implement this Act and other Acts related to border security for activities, including—

(1) constructing, installing, deploying, operating, and maintaining tactical infrastructure and technology in the vicinity of the United States border—

(A) to achieve situational awareness and operational control of the border; and

(B) to deter, impede, and detect illegal activity in high traffic areas; and

(C) to implement other border security provisions under this section;

(2) implementing port of entry provisions under this section;

(3) purchasing new aircraft, vessels, spare parts, and equipment to operate and maintain such craft; and

(4) hiring and recruitment.

(b) FUNDING.—There are appropriated, to the Fund, out of any monies in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, a total of \$7,639,000,000, as follows:

(1) For fiscal year 2018, \$2,947,000,000, to remain available through fiscal year 2022.

(2) For fiscal year 2019, \$2,225,000,000, to remain available through fiscal year 2023.

(3) For fiscal year 2020, \$2,467,000,000, to remain available through fiscal year 2024.

(c) PHYSICAL BARRIERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In each of the following fiscal years, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall transfer, from the Fund to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection—Procurement, Construction and Improvements account, for the purpose of constructing, replacing, or planning physical barriers along the United States land border, a total of \$5,013,000,000, as follows:

(A) For fiscal year 2018, \$1,571,000,000.

(B) For fiscal year 2019, \$1,600,000,000.

(C) For fiscal year 2020, \$1,842,000,000.

(2) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Notwithstanding section 1552(a) of title 31, United States Code, any amounts obligated for the purposes described in paragraph (1) shall remain available for disbursement until expended.

(d) TRANSFER AUTHORITY.—Other than the amounts transferred by the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of State pursuant to subsections (b) and (c), the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives may provide for the transfer of amounts in the Fund for each fiscal year to eligible activities under this section, including—

(1) for the purpose of constructing, replacing, or planning for physical barriers along the United States land border; or

(2) for any of the activities described in subsection (a).

(e) USE OF FUND.—If the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives do not provide for the transfer of funds in a full-year appropriation in any fiscal year in accordance with subsection (d), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall transfer amounts in the Fund to accounts within the Department of Homeland Security for eligible activities under this section, including not less than the amounts specified in subsection (c) for the purpose of constructing, replacing, or planning for physical barriers along the United States land border.

(f) BUDGET REQUEST.—A request for the transfer of amounts in the Fund under this section—

(1) shall be included in each budget for a fiscal year submitted by the President under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code; and

(2) shall detail planned obligations by program, project, and activity in the receiving account at the same level of detail provided for in the request for other appropriations in that account.

(g) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—At the beginning of fiscal year 2019, and annually thereafter until the funding made available under this title has been expended, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit a report to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives that describes—

(1) the status of border security in the United States; and

(2) the amount planned to be expended on border security during the upcoming fiscal year, broken down by project and activity.

TITLE II—DACA EXTENSION

SEC. 201. PROVISIONAL PROTECTED PRESENCE FOR YOUNG INDIVIDUALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 4 of title II of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1221 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 244A. PROVISIONAL PROTECTED PRESENCE.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) DACA RECIPIENT.—The term ‘DACA recipient’ means an alien who is in deferred action status on the date of the enactment of this section pursuant to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (‘DACA’) Program announced on June 15, 2012.

“(2) FELONY.—The term ‘felony’ means a Federal, State, or local criminal offense (excluding a State or local offense for which an essential element was the alien’s immigration status) punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding 1 year.

“(3) MISDEMEANOR.—The term ‘misdemeanor’ means a Federal, State, or local criminal offense (excluding a State or local offense for which an essential element was the alien’s immigration status, a significant misdemeanor, and a minor traffic offense) for which—

“(A) the maximum term of imprisonment is greater than five days and not greater than 1 year; and

“(B) the individual was sentenced to time in custody of 90 days or less.

“(4) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary of Homeland Security.

“(5) SIGNIFICANT MISDEMEANOR.—The term ‘significant misdemeanor’ means a Federal, State, or local criminal offense (excluding a State or local offense for which an essential element was the alien’s immigration status) for which the maximum term of imprisonment is greater than 5 days and not greater than 1 year that—

“(A) regardless of the sentence imposed, is a crime of domestic violence (as defined in section 237(a)(2)(E)(i)) or an offense of sexual abuse or exploitation, burglary, unlawful possession or use of a firearm, drug distribution or trafficking, or driving under the influence if the State law requires, as an element of the offense, the operation of a motor vehicle and a finding of impairment or a blood alcohol content of .08 or higher; or

“(B) resulted in a sentence of time in custody of more than 90 days, excluding an offense for which the sentence was suspended.

“(6) THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY.—An alien is a ‘threat to national security’ if the alien is—

“(A) inadmissible under section 212(a)(3); or

“(B) deportable under section 237(a)(4).

“(7) THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY.—An alien is a ‘threat to public safety’ if the alien—

“(A) has been convicted of an offense for which an element was participation in a criminal street gang (as defined in section 521(a) of title 18, United States Code); or

“(B) has engaged in a continuing criminal enterprise (as defined in section 408(c) of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 (21 U.S.C. 848(c))).

“(b) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary—

“(1) shall grant provisional protected presence to an alien who—

“(A) files an application demonstrating that he or she meets the eligibility criteria under subsection (c); and

“(B) pays the appropriate application fee;

“(2) may not remove such alien from the United States during the period in which such provisional protected presence is in effect unless such status is rescinded pursuant to subsection (g); and

“(3) shall provide such alien with employment authorization.

“(c) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.—An alien is eligible for provisional protected presence and employment authorization under this section if the alien—

“(1) was born after June 15, 1981;

“(2) entered the United States before reaching 16 years of age;

“(3) continuously resided in the United States between June 15, 2007, and the date on which the alien files an application under this section;

“(4) was physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and on the date on which the alien files an application under this section;

“(5) was unlawfully present in the United States on June 15, 2012;

“(6) on the date on which the alien files an application for provisional protected presence—

“(A) is enrolled in school or in an education program assisting students in obtaining a regular high school diploma or its recognized equivalent under State law, or in passing a general educational development exam or other State-authorized exam;

“(B) has graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school;

“(C) has obtained a general educational development certificate; or

“(D) is an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States;

“(7) has not been convicted of—

“(A) a felony;

“(B) a significant misdemeanor; or

“(C) 3 or more misdemeanors not occurring on the same date and not arising out of the same act, omission, or scheme of misconduct; and

“(8) does not otherwise pose a threat to national security or a threat to public safety.

“(d) DURATION OF PROVISIONAL PROTECTED PRESENCE AND EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION.—Provisional protected presence and employment authorization provided under this section shall be effective until the date that is 3 years after the date of the enactment of the Three-Year Border and DACA Extension Act.

“(e) STATUS DURING PERIOD OF PROVISIONAL PROTECTED PRESENCE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—An alien granted provisional protected presence is not considered to be unlawfully present in the United States during the period beginning on the date such status is granted and ending on the date described in subsection (d).

“(2) STATUS OUTSIDE PERIOD.—The granting of provisional protected presence under this section does not excuse previous or subsequent periods of unlawful presence.

“(f) APPLICATION.—

“(1) AGE REQUIREMENT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—An alien who has never been in removal proceedings, or whose proceedings have been terminated before making a request for provisional protected presence, shall be at least 15 years old on the date on which the alien submits an application under this section.

“(B) EXCEPTION.—The age requirement set forth in subparagraph (A) shall not apply to an alien who, on the date on which the alien applies for provisional protected presence, is in removal proceedings, has a final removal order, or has a voluntary departure order.

“(2) APPLICATION FEE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may require aliens applying for provisional protected presence and employment authorization under this section to pay a reasonable fee that is commensurate with the cost of processing the application.

“(B) EXEMPTION.—An applicant may be exempted from paying the fee required under subparagraph (A) if the alien—

“(i)(I) is younger than 18 years of age;

“(II) received total income during the 12-month period immediately preceding the date on which the alien files an application under this section that is less than 150 percent of the United States poverty level; and

“(III) is in foster care or otherwise lacking any parental or other familial support;

“(ii) is younger than 18 years of age and is homeless;

“(iii)(I) cannot care for himself or herself because of a serious, chronic disability; and
“(II) received total income during the 12-month period immediately preceding the date on which the alien files an application under this section that is less than 150 percent of the United States poverty level; or
“(iv)(I) as of the date on which the alien files an application under this section, has accumulated \$10,000 or more in debt in the past 12 months as a result of unreimbursed medical expenses incurred by the alien or an immediate family member of the alien; and
“(II) received total income during the 12-month period immediately preceding the date on which the alien files an application under this section that is less than 150 percent of the United States poverty level.

“(3) REMOVAL STAYED WHILE APPLICATION PENDING.—The Secretary may not remove an alien from the United States who appears prima facie eligible for provisional protected presence while the alien's application for provisional protected presence is pending.
“(4) ALIENS NOT IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION.—An alien who is not in immigration detention, but who is in removal proceedings, is the subject of a final removal order, or is the subject of a voluntary departure order, may apply for provisional protected presence under this section if the alien appears prima facie eligible for provisional protected presence.
“(5) ALIENS IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION.—The Secretary shall provide any alien in immigration detention, including any alien who is in removal proceedings, is the subject of a final removal order, or is the subject of a voluntary departure order, who appears prima facie eligible for provisional protected presence, upon request, with a reasonable opportunity to apply for provisional protected presence under this section.

“(6) CONFIDENTIALITY.—
“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall protect information provided in applications for provisional protected presence under this section and in requests for consideration of DACA from disclosure to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection for the purpose of immigration enforcement proceedings.
“(B) REFERRALS PROHIBITED.—The Secretary may not refer individuals whose cases have been deferred pursuant to DACA or who have been granted provisional protected presence under this section to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.
“(C) LIMITED EXCEPTION.—The information submitted in applications for provisional protected presence under this section and in requests for consideration of DACA may be shared with national security and law enforcement agencies—
“(i) for assistance in the consideration of the application for provisional protected presence;
“(ii) to identify or prevent fraudulent claims;
“(iii) for national security purposes; and
“(iv) for the investigation or prosecution of any felony not related to immigration status.

“(7) ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATIONS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of the Three-Year Border and DACA Extension Act, the Secretary shall begin accepting applications for provisional protected presence and employment authorization.

“(g) RESCISSION OF PROVISIONAL PROTECTED PRESENCE.—The Secretary may not rescind an alien's provisional protected presence or employment authorization granted under this section unless the Secretary determines that the alien—

“(1) has been convicted of—

“(A) a felony;

“(B) a significant misdemeanor; or

“(C) 3 or more misdemeanors not occurring on the same date and not arising out of the same act, omission, or scheme of misconduct;

“(2) poses a threat to national security or a threat to public safety;

“(3) has traveled outside of the United States without authorization from the Secretary; or

“(4) has ceased to continuously reside in the United States.

“(h) TREATMENT OF BRIEF, CASUAL, AND INNOCENT DEPARTURES AND CERTAIN OTHER ABSENCES.—For purposes of subsections (c)(3) and (g)(4), an alien shall not be considered to have failed to continuously reside in the United States due to—

“(1) brief, casual, and innocent absences from the United States during the period beginning on June 15, 2007, and ending on August 14, 2012; or
“(2) travel outside of the United States on or after August 15, 2012, if such travel was authorized by the Secretary.

“(i) TREATMENT OF EXPUNGED CONVICTIONS.—For purposes of subsections (c)(7) and (g)(1), an expunged conviction shall not automatically be treated as a disqualifying felony, significant misdemeanor, or misdemeanor, but shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis according to the nature and severity of the offense to determine whether, under the particular circumstances, the alien should be eligible for provisional protected presence under this section.

“(j) EFFECT OF DEFERRED ACTION UNDER DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS PROGRAM.—

“(1) PROVISIONAL PROTECTED PRESENCE.—A DACA recipient is deemed to have provisional protected presence under this section through the expiration date of the alien's deferred action status, as specified by the Secretary in conjunction with the approval of the alien's DACA application.
“(2) EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION.—If a DACA recipient has been granted employment authorization by the Secretary in addition to deferred action, the employment authorization shall continue through the expiration date of the alien's deferred action status, as specified by the Secretary in conjunction with the approval of the alien's DACA application.

“(3) EFFECT OF APPLICATION.—If a DACA recipient files an application for provisional protected presence under this section not later than the expiration date of the alien's deferred action status, as specified by the Secretary in conjunction with the approval of the alien's DACA application, the alien's provisional protected presence, and any employment authorization, shall remain in effect pending the adjudication of such application.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 244 the following:

“Sec. 244A. Provisional protected presence.”.

“Sec. 244A. Provisional protected presence.”.

“Sec. 244A. Provisional protected presence.”.

“Sec. 244A. Provisional protected presence.”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 414—CON-DEMNING THE CONTINUED UN-DEMOCRATIC MEASURES BY THE GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA TO UNDERMINE THE INDEPENDENCE OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND CALLING FOR A FREE AND FAIR ELECTORAL PROCESS

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. BENNET, Mr. COONS, Mr. REED, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. SANDERS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 414

Whereas Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro continues to take measures to consolidate an authoritarian government and undermine the independence of democratic institutions in the country;

Whereas the Government of Peru, as host of the upcoming Summit of the Americas, has indicated that President Nicolás Maduro is not welcome to attend because of his failure to uphold the region's shared commitment to strengthening democracy and improving citizens' well-being;

Whereas Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE) unilaterally called for a presidential election on April 22, 2018, despite the absence of an agreement between the Government of Venezuela and the political opposition on the conditions necessary for the electoral process;

Whereas, on February 13, 2018, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Saint Lucia, rejected the decision of the Government of Venezuela to hold elections on April 22;

Whereas these 14 Foreign Ministers stated that elections would not be considered legitimate if the elections do not—

(1) permit the participation of all Venezuelan citizens and political parties;

(2) include observation by credible international organizations; and

(3) meet recognized international standards;

Whereas despite these denunciations, on February 21, 2018, President Maduro stated that he wanted to hold elections for the National Assembly, state legislative councils, and municipal councils in conjunction with the presidential election scheduled for April 22;

Whereas, in January 2018, Venezuelan authorities banned the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD), the principal coalition of opposition parties, and leading opposition political parties Voluntad Popular and Primero Justicia, from participating in the presidential election;

Whereas Venezuela's December 2017 municipal elections and October 2017 gubernatorial elections failed to meet recognized international standards;

Whereas, in July 2017, Venezuela held fraudulent elections to install a National Constituent Assembly, a parallel legislature that undemocratically usurped the constitutional authorities vested in the country's democratically-elected National Assembly;

Whereas Smartmatic, the company that manufactured the electronic voting technology, confirmed that—

(1) the result of the July 2017 National Constituent Assembly election was manipulated; and

(2) a change of more than 1,000,000 votes occurred in the final tabulation;

Whereas a global coalition of more than 40 countries have rejected the installation of Venezuela's National Constituent Assembly and refused to recognize it as a legitimate institution;

Whereas the collapse of democratic governance and the proliferation of political corruption, criminal violence, failed economic policies, and hyperinflation have created a devastating humanitarian crisis in Venezuela;

Whereas the majority of Venezuela's citizens lack access to essential medicines and basic food supplies;

Whereas the precarious humanitarian conditions in Venezuela have prompted hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan citizens to emigrate, which is fueling a migration and refugee crisis in neighboring countries;

Whereas, the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has stated that the Office of the Prosecutor will open a preliminary examination of the Venezuelan Government's use of torture and excessive force against demonstrators and the arbitrary detention of thousands of anti-government protesters;

Whereas, despite the presence of international mediators, the Government of Venezuela failed to credibly participate in negotiations with the country's political opposition in order to reach an agreement that would—

- (1) restore democracy;
- (2) free political prisoners;
- (3) facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid; and
- (4) establish conditions for legitimate democratic elections;

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) calls on the Government of Venezuela to postpone the presidential election and any concurrent National Assembly, state legislative council, or municipal council elections scheduled for April 22, 2018, until—

(A) international and local election observers from credible organizations are allowed to observe the electoral process, including the pre-election period, and determine a legitimate process;

(B) the National Electoral Council is led and staffed by nonpartisan members that have the confidence of contesting parties;

(C) opposition parties and candidates are free to peacefully compete in the election without threat of arrest, harassment, or retribution, including access to government controlled media;

(D) arrangements are made for all Venezuelan voters, including those residing outside of Venezuela, to be able to participate in the election; and

(E) there is no implied or direct link between an individual's vote and the government food rations to which the individual is eligible and no record is retained of a voter's choice for any reason related to government benefits, including retaliation;

(2) denounces as illegitimate any presidential election in Venezuela that fails to meet the standards described in paragraph (1);

(3) condemns the steps taken by President Maduro—

(A) to consolidate an authoritarian government in Venezuela; and

(B) to undermine the independence of democratic institutions such as the National Assembly of Venezuela, the Supreme Tribunal of Justice of Venezuela, and the National Electoral Council of Venezuela;

(4) rejects the Venezuelan Government's efforts to blame the country's economic, humanitarian, and political crisis on other actors instead of recognizing that the crisis was caused by its own malfeasance and criminality;

(5) urges the Government of Venezuela—

(A) to permit the unobstructed delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela; and

(B) to stop using food as a tool of political coercion;

(6) condemns the Government of Venezuela for failing to credibly participate in internationally mediated negotiations—

(A) to restore democracy;

(B) to free political prisoners; and

(C) to permit the delivery of humanitarian assistance;

(7) supports the decision of the Government of Peru, as host of the Eighth Summit of the Americas, to not invite President Maduro; and

(8) supports the efforts of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to examine the Venezuelan Government's use of torture, excessive force, and arbitrary detentions against Venezuelan citizens.

SENATE RESOLUTION 415—DESIGNATING MARCH 2, 2018, AS “NATIONAL SPEECH AND DEBATE EDUCATION DAY”

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COONS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 415

Whereas it is essential for youth to learn and practice the art of communicating with and without technology;

Whereas speech and debate education offers students myriad forms of public speaking through which students may develop talent and exercise unique voice and character;

Whereas speech and debate education gives students the 21st-century skills of communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration;

Whereas critical analysis and effective communication allow important ideas, texts, and philosophies the opportunity to flourish;

Whereas personal, professional, and civic interactions are enhanced by the ability of the participants in those interactions to listen, concur, question, and dissent with reason and compassion;

Whereas students who participate in speech and debate have chosen a challenging activity that requires regular practice, dedication, and hard work;

Whereas teachers and coaches of speech and debate devote in-school, afterschool, and weekend hours to equip students with life-changing skills and opportunities;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day emphasizes the lifelong impact of providing people of the United States with the confidence and preparation to both discern and share views;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day acknowledges that most achievements, celebrations, commemorations, and pivotal moments in modern history begin, end, or are crystallized with public address;

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day recognizes that learning to research, construct, and present an argument is integral to personal advocacy, social movements, and the making of public policy;

Whereas the National Speech & Debate Association, in conjunction with national and local partners, honors and celebrates the im-

portance of speech and debate through National Speech and Debate Education Day; and

Whereas National Speech and Debate Education Day emphasizes the importance of speech and debate education and the integration of speech and debate education across grade levels and disciplines: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 2, 2018, as “National Speech and Debate Education Day”;:

(2) strongly affirms the purposes of National Speech and Debate Education Day; and

(3) encourages educational institutions, businesses, community and civic associations, and all people of the United States to celebrate and promote National Speech and Debate Education Day.

SENATE RESOLUTION 416—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. DONNELLY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 416

Whereas a competitive global economy requires workers who are prepared for skilled professions;

Whereas, according to Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute, 84 percent of executives agree that there is a talent shortage in manufacturing in the United States, including talent for front-line worker jobs such as machinists, operators, craft workers, distributors, and technicians;

Whereas career and technical education (referred to in this preamble as “CTE”) ensures that competitive and skilled workers are ready, willing, and capable of holding jobs in high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand career fields such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics, nursing, allied health, construction, information technology, energy sustainability, and many other career fields that are vital in keeping the United States competitive in the global economy;

Whereas CTE helps the United States meet the very real and immediate challenges of economic development, student achievement, and global competitiveness;

Whereas the United States has 30,000,000 jobs with an average income of \$55,000 per year that do not require a bachelor's degree yet increasingly require some level of post-secondary education;

Whereas nearly 12,000,000 students are enrolled in CTE across the country with CTE programs in thousands of CTE centers, comprehensive high schools, career academies, and CTE high schools, and nearly 1,600 2-year colleges;

Whereas CTE matches employability skills with workforce demand and provides relevant academic and technical coursework leading to industry-recognized credentials for secondary, postsecondary, and adult learners;

Whereas CTE affords students the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills, and credentials needed to secure careers in growing, high-demand fields;

Whereas secondary CTE is associated with a lower probability of dropping out of high school and a higher likelihood of graduating on-time;

Whereas CTE students were significantly more likely than non-CTE students to report having developed problem-solving, project completion, research, math, college application, work-related, communication, time management, and critical thinking skills during high school;

Whereas, according to an American Federation of Teachers poll, 94 percent of parents approve of expanding access to CTE and other programs that prepare students for jobs;

Whereas students at schools with highly integrated rigorous academic and CTE programs have significantly higher achievement in reading, mathematics, and science than students at schools with less integrated programs; and

Whereas February 23, 2018, marks the 101st anniversary of the signing of the Act of February 23, 1917 (commonly known as the “Smith-Hughes Vocational Education Act of 1917”) (39 Stat. 929, chapter 114), which was the first major Federal investment in secondary CTE and laid the foundation for the bipartisan, bicameral support for CTE that continues as of February 2018: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates February 2018 as “Career and Technical Education Month” to celebrate career and technical education across the United States;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of Career and Technical Education month;

(3) recognizes the importance of career and technical education in preparing a well-educated and skilled workforce in the United States; and

(4) encourages educators, guidance and career development professionals, administrators, and parents to promote career and technical education as a respected option for students.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 34—RECOGNIZING THE RICH HISTORY, HERITAGE, AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS AND THE MARSHALLESE POPULATION RESIDING IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. COTTON) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

S. CON. RES. 34

Whereas the Republic of the Marshall Islands—

(1) is a sovereign country in free association with the United States under the Compact of Free Association between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (referred to in this preamble as the “Compact”), approved in the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-188; 117 Stat. 2720), which—

(A) is set to expire in 2023; and

(B) authorizes economic assistance, through Federal grants and programs, to persons in the Republic of the Marshall Islands; and

(2) has full authority and responsibility over security and defense matters relating to the Republic of the Marshall Islands;

Whereas, under the Compact, eligible citizens of the Republic of the Marshall Islands may reside, work, and study in the United States without a visa and may serve in the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas an estimated $\frac{1}{3}$ of the population of the Republic of the Marshall Islands has relocated to the United States; and

Whereas Marshallese individuals who live in the United States—

(1) offer positive economic and cultural benefits to the communities in which those individuals live;

(2) pay Federal and State taxes but are not eligible for benefits under—

(A) the Medicare program established under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.); or

(B) the Medicaid program established under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.); and

(3) were undercounted in the 2010 census and, as a result, areas where those individuals live are underserved by the Federal Government: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) commends—

(A) the rich history and heritage of the Republic of the Marshall Islands; and

(B) citizens of the Republic of the Marshall Islands who live in the United States for the contributions of those individuals to—

(i) the communities in which those individuals live; and

(ii) the national defense of the United States through their service in the Armed Forces of the United States;

(2) recognizes—

(A) the strategic importance of the Republic of the Marshall Islands; and

(B) the importance of the upcoming renegotiation of the Compact of Free Association between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands; and

(3) encourages a continued commitment to improve census data to better serve citizens of the Republic of the Marshall Islands who live in the United States.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 35—AUTHORIZING THE USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL IN THE CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER FOR A CEREMONY TO PRESENT THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL COLLECTIVELY TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. BLUNT) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 35

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL FOR CEREMONY TO PRESENT THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center is authorized to be used on March 21, 2018, for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the members of the Office of Stra-

tegic Services (OSS), in recognition of their superior service and major contributions during World War II.

(b) PREPARATIONS.—Physical preparations for the conduct of the ceremony described in subsection (a) shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as may be prescribed by the Architect of the Capitol.

Mr. KAIN. Mr. President, our Nation's ongoing success and economic mobility depends on the skills and education of the American workforce and its preparedness to meet and adjust to the demands of today's economy. Career and technical education (CTE) programs are an essential component to each student's education, giving students the opportunity to gain knowledge, skills, and credentials needed to secure careers in growing, high-demand fields. Today, approximately 12 million students are enrolled in CTE across the country with CTE programs in thousands of CTE centers, comprehensive high schools, career academies, CTE high schools, and community colleges. Through applied learning, these students obtain technical and employability skills that parallel workforce demand.

According to the American Federation of Teachers, 94 percent of parents approve of expanding access to CTE and other programs that prepare students for jobs. CTE ensures that competitive and skilled workers are ready, willing, and capable of holding jobs in high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand career fields. Throughout Virginia, I've heard manufacturers express discontent with shortage of qualified skilled production employees—roles that require the instruction and training offered in CTE classrooms. It is vital that we heighten awareness of CTE's role in helping the United States to meet the very real and immediate challenges of economic development, student achievement, and global competitiveness.

This is why today, with my Senate CTE Caucus co-chairs Senator PORTMAN, SENATOR BALDWIN, and Senator YOUNG and 41 colleagues in the Senate, I am proud to introduce a bipartisan resolution to designate February as Career and Technical Education (CTE) month. CTE Month offers an opportunity for students, parents, counselors, educators and school leaders to become more informed about the educational opportunities attainable in their communities, and acknowledge the importance of CTE in cultivating a skilled and well-educated workforce in our nation.

Through formal recognition of CTE Month through this resolution, it is our hope that we can foster greater support for the importance of improving access to high-quality CTE for millions of America's students and our country's continued economic competitiveness.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I have 5 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February, 27, 2018, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February, 27, 2018, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "The Opioid Crisis: The Role of Technology and Data in Preventing and Treating Addiction."

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February, 27, 2018, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Kevin Edward Moley, of Arizona, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Organization Affairs), Josephine Olsen, of Maryland, to be Director of the Peace Corps, Erik Bethel, of Florida, to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and Sean Cairncross, of Minnesota, to be Chief Executive Officer, Millennium Challenge Corporation.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February, 27, 2018, at 2 p.m., to conduct a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February, 27, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a closed hearing.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand appointments were made during the adjournment of the Senate. I ask they be stated for the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the majority and minority leaders of the Senate, pursuant to section 30442 of Public Law 115-123, appoints the following as Members of the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform: the Honorable ROY D. BLUNT of Missouri, the Honorable DAVID A. PERDUE, JR. of Georgia, the Honorable JAMES P. LANKFORD of Oklahoma, the

Honorable JONI ERNST of Iowa, the Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island, the Honorable MICHAEL BENNET of Colorado, the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ of Hawaii, and the Honorable MAIZE K. HIRONO of Hawaii.

The Chair, on behalf of the majority and minority leaders of the Senate, pursuant to section 30422 of Public Law 115-123, appoints the following as Members of the Joint Select Committee on Solvency of Multiemployer Pension Plans: the Honorable ORRIN G. HATCH of Utah (Co-Chair), the Honorable LAMAR ALEXANDER of Tennessee, the Honorable ROB J. PORTMAN of Ohio, the Honorable MIKE D. CRAPO of Idaho, the Honorable SHERROD BROWN of Ohio (Co-Chair), the Honorable JOE MANCHIN III of West Virginia, the Honorable HEIDI HEITKAMP of North Dakota, and the Honorable TINA SMITH of Minnesota.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the majority leader, pursuant to Public Law 106-567, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Public Interest Declassification Board: Alissa M. Starzak of the District of Columbia.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2464

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2464) to improve border security and to provide conditional provision residence to certain long-term residents who entered the United States as children.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

NATIONAL SPEECH AND DEBATE EDUCATION DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 415, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 415) designating March 2, 2018, as "National Speech and Debate Education Day."

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 415) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 416, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 416) supporting the goals and ideals of Career and Technical Education Month.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 416) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

AUTHORIZING USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 35, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 35) authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the members of the Office of Strategic Services.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 35) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, all postcloture time on the Vought nomination expire at 4:30 p.m. tomorrow, February 28, and the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination with no intervening action or debate; finally, that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2018

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12:45 p.m., Wednesday, February 28; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed. I further ask that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Vought nomination; finally, that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Vought nomination.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 12:45 P.M. TOMORROW

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous con-

sent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:26 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, February 28, 2018, at 12:45 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

CHARLES P. VERDON, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR DEFENSE PROGRAMS, NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, VICE DONALD L. COOK, RESIGNED.

THEODORE J. GARRISH, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF ENERGY (INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS), VICE JONATHAN ELKIND.

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

AMY KARPEL, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 16, 2020, VICE F. SCOTT KIEFF, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

JOHN CARY BITTICK, OF GEORGIA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE WILLIE LEE RICHARDSON, JR., RETIRED.

THOMAS T. CULLEN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE JOHN P. FISHWICK, JR., RESIGNED.

TIMOTHY A. GARRISON, OF MISSOURI, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE ANGELA TAMMY DICKINSON, RESIGNED.

STEVEN L. GLADDEN, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE WILLIE RANSOME STAFFORD III, TERM EXPIRED.

NICOLA T. HANNA, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE EILEEN M. DECKER, RESIGNED.

DAVID C. JOSEPH, OF LOUISIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE STEPHANIE A. FINELY, RESIGNED.

DAVID L. LYONS, OF GEORGIA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE STEPHEN JAMES SMITH, TERM EXPIRED.

RODNEY D. OSTERMILLER, OF MONTANA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF MONTANA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE DARRELL JAMES BELL, RESIGNED.

KENJI M. PRICE, OF HAWAII, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF HAWAII FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE FLORENCE T. NAKAKUNI, RETIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

PAUL R. LAWRENCE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR BENEFITS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, VICE ALLISON A. HICKEY, RESIGNED.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be general

LT. GEN. TIMOTHY M. RAY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. DAVID D. THOMPSON

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be admiral

VICE ADM. CHRISTOPHER W. GRADY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

VICE ADM. CHARLES A. RICHARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. MICHAEL T. MORAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. TIMOTHY J. WHITE

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. DAVID A. WELCH

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate February 27, 2018:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WILLIAM NORTHEY, OF IOWA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR FARM AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICES.

THE JUDICIARY

ELIZABETH L. BRANCH, OF GEORGIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT.

WITHDRAWAL

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on February 27, 2018 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

ROBERT M. WEAVER, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE YVETTE ROUBIDEAUX, TERM EXPIRED, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON OCTOBER 24, 2017.