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No. 48

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, March 17, 2023, at 11 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Our Father, in whose patient hands the mighty seasons move with quiet beauty, we acknowledge today our great need for Your guidance. Lord, we are challenged by complexities that require more than human wisdom. We sometimes feel like children, grasping in the darkness, lost without light.

Bless this government of the people, for the people, and by the people. Guide its leaders to strive to possess that righteousness that exalts a nation. Enlighten our Senators with Your wisdom, lest the darkness of our times hide the paths of Your providence.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The 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 Brent Neiman, of Illinois, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

RAIL SAFETY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this morning, I sent a letter to the National Transportation Safety Board Chair, Jennifer Homendy, urging her to expand NTSB's investigation of Norfolk Southern into a comprehensive review of all seven class I freight railroad companies' safety practices.

Though the NTSB is currently investigating the toxic derailment in East Palestine and Norfolk Southern's questionable safety culture, I want to make something very clear: Norfolk Southern isn't the only rail company that has spent years lobbying to loosen regulations, neglect safety upgrades, and lay off workers.

Norfolk Southern is just one example of a dangerous, industry-wide trend

within the rail industry that puts profits over people's safety.

In the last 5 years alone, there have been over 26,500 accidents and incidents in the rail industry, but instead of prioritizing safety, the industry cut over 30,000 employees from the workforce—roughly 20 percent.

We need the NTSB to expand its investigation because the current data can only tell part of the story. The data tells us how many accidents have occurred, but we want to know if they occurred in populated areas and how many gallons of oil were spilled or which toxic chemicals were released.

We also need to know which of these accidents occurred because the tracks were severely degraded or poorly designed.

We also want to know which negligent company policies contributed to the 2,700 deaths in recent years and if any of those could have been prevented.

These are just some of the questions that my letter asks—ones that can only be answered by a complete, comprehensive, and rigorous investigation of the rail freight industry.

I hope NTSB expands its investigation to include the safety practices and culture of all class I freight railroads. It is a necessary step to assure Americans that freight rail safety will improve.

In the meantime, I again commend my colleagues Senators BROWN and VANCE of Ohio and FETTERMAN and CASEY of Pennsylvania for introducing bipartisan legislation to improve rail

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



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safety and provide a check on the railroad industry. I will continue working with them to move it forward.

H.R. 1

Mr. President, now, on the House Republicans' H.R. 1, today, House Republicans are rolling out a partisan, dead-on-arrival, and unserious proposal for addressing America's energy needs that they have laughingly labeled H.R. 1. It is a nonstarter in the Senate.

Republicans' so-called energy proposal is as bad and as partisan as it gets. H.R. 1 will lock America into the most expensive and volatile dirty sources of energy and will set America back a decade or more in our transition toward clean, affordable energy.

Even a brief glance at the House GOP proposal is enough to show it is not a serious package. The package is a wish list for Big Oil, gutting important environmental safeguards on fossil fuel projects, while doing none of the important permitting reforms that would help bring transmission and clean energy projects online faster.

Considering America's serious energy challenges—and not to mention the disruptions caused by the war in Ukraine—it is bewildering to see House Republicans waste time on a Big Oil wish list, instead of taking our energy needs seriously, and ignoring clean energy as they do.

Thankfully, many Democrats and Republicans understand that the only way we will pass a genuine energy package this Congress is through bipartisan cooperation. I am glad that there are good-faith talks underway right now between both parties in both Houses to figure out what sort of permitting deal is possible.

I strongly support these efforts because Americans should not have to go broke just to meet their daily energy needs. We should work on a comprehensive, bipartisan permitting package that can secure enough votes to pass the Congress and reach the President's desk.

Any serious permitting package must also focus on the needs of the future. As America transitions to clean energy, we need to take steps in Congress to ease that transition and ensure clean energy is reliable, accessible, and, most importantly, affordable. That includes efforts to expedite the onshoring and construction of industries critical to our economic and national security, like work we did in CHIPS and Science. Permitting reform is an essential step toward laying the foundation for a clean energy future, and Republicans must work with Democrats on a package that meets this challenge, if we are going to get anything done.

What House Republicans have come up with, in the meantime, is something that falls pathetically short.

RUSSIA

Mr. President, on Russia, on the same day Russian aircraft intercepted and forced down a U.S. surveillance drone in the Black Sea, it was trou-

bling to hear some on the hard right not condemn Putin so much as excuse him—the hard right, excusing Putin, not even daring to condemn him.

One Republican Governor, in particular, said yesterday that defending Ukraine and opposing Putin is not of vital national interest. He called Putin's illegal and unprovoked invasion of another sovereign democracy a "territorial dispute." He basically thinks the United States is wrong to support Ukraine as they fight and die to protect their democracy, and he is certainly not alone in thinking that on the hard right.

I have to wonder what he would have thought if he was around in the 1930s. We know what happened then, when many refused to stand up to aggression—a world war resulted.

Sadly, these remarks are not unique within the GOP. For years, an isolationist fever has been surging within the hard right, propagated night after night on networks like FOX News. The hard right's isolationism is dangerous. It is un-American, undemocratic, and it is woefully blind to the lessons of history.

It is ironic that many on the hard right, which historically opposed communism and authoritarianism, now openly flirt with autocrats like Putin.

These MAGA isolationists are making America less safe. They are making our troops less safe, and they are severely undermining American leadership on the world stage. This desire to excuse and validate Putin's goals is one of the many terrible legacies of Donald Trump, and it is as good a reason as any why he and those who think like him should never ever come near the Oval Office ever again.

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE

Mr. President, finally on AUMF, yesterday, we took a very important procedural step to set up a vote tomorrow on legislation officially—and finally—repealing the Iraq AUMF of 1991 and 2002.

I want to thank Senators KAINE and YOUNG for leading this bipartisan legislation and Chairman MENENDEZ and Ranking Member RISCH for moving it through the Foreign Relations Committee.

I have said it before and I will say it again: Every year we keep these AUMFs on the books is just another chance for future administrations to abuse or misuse them beyond their original intent.

War powers belong squarely in the hands of Congress. That is what the Constitution says. It means it is our responsibility to reassert our constitutional duty and prevent future Presidents from exploiting these AUMFs to bumble us into a new Middle East conflict. It is important.

The Iraq war ended over 10 years ago. The authorization passed in 2002, under entirely different circumstances and in a different world. It is no longer necessary nor relevant in 2023. Repealing the AUMF will in no way hinder our

national defense nor will it impact our relationship with the people of Iraq.

Americans are tired of endless wars in the Middle East. We owe it to them and we owe it to our veterans and their families to repeal the Iraq war AUMF and turn the page on this chapter of our history.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BUDGET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, inflation numbers for February came out yesterday morning, and they confirmed what every American knows: We are still squarely in the middle of Democrats' inflation crisis, with no end in sight.

Overall, inflation was up 6 percent in February compared to a year ago and a staggering 15 percent since President Biden took office—15 percent. Grocery prices were up 10.2 percent in February compared to a year ago and 20 percent since President Biden took office. Electricity prices were up 12.9 percent. Utility gas service was up 14.3 percent. Rent prices were up 8.8 percent. And the list goes on. Overall, energy prices have increased by 37.2 percent since President Biden took office—37.2 percent.

Again, there is no end in sight to this crisis. Digging out of an inflation crisis like this isn't easy, but there are things we can and should be doing to help, like restraining government spending, unleashing American energy production to help drive down energy prices, and growing the economy. These are the things President Biden should be pursuing. But, as the President's budget last week made clear, the President hasn't learned anything from the last 2 years. President Biden and congressional Democrats helped create our current inflation crisis with their \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan spending spree. And what does President Biden have planned in his budget? More reckless government spending—a lot more reckless government spending.

Our last Federal budget before the pandemic was in 2019. That year, total Federal spending was \$4.4 trillion. Over the last 3 years, COVID and then Democrats' profligate spending pushed up the size of the Federal budget to levels in excess of \$6 trillion. So \$4.4 trillion in 2019 before the pandemic, \$6 trillion at the conclusion of the pandemic, and two big reconciliation bills passed along party lines by Democrats. But the need for extra COVID dollars is long over.

Given the economic havoc Democrats' reckless spending has created, you would think Democrats would be looking to return the budget to somewhere approaching pre-COVID levels,

but you would be wrong. President Biden wants to take the inflated budgets of the past 3 years as his new baseline, and then the President is proposing \$6.88 trillion in spending next year—a 54-percent increase over 2019 levels. And then—and then—he is proposing increased spending every year until the Federal budget reaches an eye-popping \$10 trillion in 2033—\$10 trillion in 2033.

Again, let me just remind people that the entire Federal budget in 2019—just a few short years ago—was \$4.4 trillion. President Biden wants to more than double that—\$4.4 trillion to \$10 trillion.

This level of spending and the accompanying level of debt would present a serious danger to our financial stability going forward. The President's budget all but ensures that the size of our national debt would be larger than the size of our economy. In other words, we would owe more money than our entire economy produces. These levels of spending could easily prolong our inflation crisis for years to come.

But the economic dangers of the President's budget don't end there. At the same time the President is essentially ensuring an unsustainable level of debt going forward, he is also planning to load up the economy with \$4.7 trillion in tax hikes, and that is not counting some of the tax hikes that would result from allowing provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to expire. He plans to undo much of the good work done by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which helped grow our economy and improve opportunities for American workers.

Under the Biden tax plan, American businesses would become less competitive in the global economy, investment would be discouraged, and Main Street job creators and family-owned businesses would face a higher tax burden, which would make it more difficult for them to grow, expand, and create jobs.

I said earlier that one of the things we could do to ease our inflation crisis and drive down prices is increase American energy production. Well, President Biden's tax plan would discourage American energy production by hiking taxes on oil and gas companies, and not for the first time during his Presidency. Instead of lowering energy prices, the President's plan would likely drive them up even further with all the new taxes.

The problems with the President's budget go on and on. While the President has no problem driving up spending to a staggering \$10 trillion per year by 2033, somehow very little of that money gets put toward priorities like securing the border and defending our Nation.

For next year, the President is proposing an increase in defense spending that fails to keep pace with current levels of inflation, meaning that his supposed defense spending increase would actually be a defense spending cut.

The Department of Homeland Security would see an outright spending cut

next year. Despite the security and humanitarian crisis wreaking havoc at our southern border, the President is proposing barely any additional funding for U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement next year, but somehow—somehow—the President managed to find a 15-percent increase in funding for the IRS. Think about that. That is from the 2023 enacted budget for the IRS, over and above the \$80 billion funding increase the IRS got just last August. Think about that. Last August, the IRS got \$80 billion and 87,000 new employees. Yet, this year, under this President's budget, they are not only going to get all that funding and a massive influx of new employees but a 15-percent year-over-year increase in spending on the IRS at a time when defense spending is going to be 3.2 percent below the rate of inflation. You can't make it up.

It doesn't stop there. The President's budget would also provide an additional \$29 billion to the IRS to "continue [Inflation Reduction Act]-funded enforcement and compliance initiatives."

I guess maybe what the President is thinking with respect to all of this is that he will need more IRS agents to administer all the new tax hikes that are included in his budget proposal. It is extremely disturbing that the President's tax-and-spend agenda is taking precedence over the national security imperative of securing our border.

President Biden's budget is the wrong prescription for our country. It would shrink our economy, prolong our inflation crisis, and essentially guarantee unsustainable levels of debt.

The American people had a rough couple of years under the Biden administration, and the President's budget would be almost guaranteed to prolong their economic pain well into the future. I hope Democrats, as well as Republicans, will recognize this and quickly consign the President's budget to where it belongs, and that is to the dustbin.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. KAINÉ pertaining to the submission of S. 801 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. KAINÉ. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 30 minutes prior to the scheduled roll-call vote. I do not think I will have an issue, but out of an abundance of cau-

tion, I ask unanimous consent for that, please.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I do appreciate Senator KAINÉ's remarks. He has highlighted a serious problem for many Americans. We don't completely understand it. I have every confidence in our medical community and our research and development community that we will figure it out, but in the meantime, there are a lot of Americans suffering, some silently, and I appreciate Senator KAINÉ highlighting this issue.

BANK FAILURES

Mr. President, I want to talk for a few minutes about President Biden's bailout of the three banks that went under.

When I ran for this office in 2016, I observed at that time that one of the problems in America was that we had too many undeserving—I emphasize "undeserving" because I don't want to paint too broad of a brush—we had too many undeserving people at the top in America getting bailouts, and we had too many undeserving people at the bottom getting handouts, and the rest of America—most of America in the middle—was getting the bill, and I didn't think that was fair. Apparently, it is still the case today, and I still don't think it is fair.

Now, President Biden chose to bail out three of our banks. It was a bailout. You can pretty it up any way you want to, and you can put perfume on a pig, but it still smells like a pig. This was a bailout. It was a bailout for two reasons. No. 1, except for the people who own the stock in the banks and their unsecured creditors, President Biden and his regulators guaranteed that nobody affiliated with these banks would have any losses. And he said that is not a bailout because money is not being provided by the American people; it is being provided by all the other banks in America.

Well, Mr. President, you know as well as I do there is no money fairy. There isn't anything free. Anything free, somebody had to work for.

By taking the hit—all the banks in America, now, I am referring to—banks are taxpayers. That is point one. But point two, those banks—all the banks in America that are going to have to pay for the President's bailout—they are just going to pass on those costs, including but not limited to their depositors. And, the last time I checked, most depositors and banks in America were taxpayers as well.

The second reason President Biden's bailout is a bailout—and this is in the fine print—is that he has set up, I think it is, a \$25 billion fund that other banks that are in trouble can borrow from. And this fund, he says, does not come from the American people. It came from the banks. Once again, the costs of it will be passed on by the banks to the depositors, to the taxpayers.

But this \$25 billion fund that banks that are in trouble can borrow from is set up as follows. The banks can borrow money as they need it, and as collateral they put up their securities.

So the President says that is a safe bet. Except, when you read the fine print, you find out that the securities that the banks put up as collateral to borrow money from the American people are not what is called “mark to market.” The securities are not put up at their real value. They are put up at the value at the time they were purchased.

So if you bought a security that was—let’s say, to make it simple—\$20, and it is owned by a bank and it is now worth \$5, you give that \$5 to the \$25 billion fund, and you get credit for \$10. But it is really worth only \$5. I mean, it is a bailout, and I am not going to bubble-wrap it, and I don’t think we ought to try to bubble-wrap it to the American people.

Now, let me say a word about Silicon Valley Bank. All the bank failures were an abomination, but I think Silicon Valley Bank is symptomatic of the problem among all three.

SVB we call it, or Silicon Valley Bank. First of all, Silicon Valley Bank was not broke. It was not an insolvency problem. It wasn’t insolvent. Silicon Valley Bank had a liquidity problem.

I mean, here is what happened. Silicon Valley Bank took in a whole bunch of deposits on which they were paying an interest rate. And then Silicon Valley Bank took that money and went out and bought a bunch of securities, paying a higher interest rate than Silicon Valley Bank was paying the depositors.

You say: That is pretty smart.

There is just one problem. The securities that Silicon Valley Bank bought were very sensitive to interest rates, and, as interest rates went up—and they have—the value of those securities went down if Silicon Valley Bank had to sell them.

And, sure enough, Silicon Valley Bank got itself in the position of having to sell them, because a lot of its depositors got scared about the bank’s position, and other reasons, and said: We want our money back.

And Silicon Valley Bank didn’t have the money because it had to go sell these securities at a loss, and that put it at risk. That is why it had a liquidity problem that could have been fixed. It wasn’t broke.

President Biden’s bailout could have been easily avoided if we had done—let me put that another way—if three things had happened, not all three but any one of the three things I am about to explain.

Let me say that again. President Biden’s bailout could have been avoided if one or more of three things had happened: No. 1, if the management of Silicon Valley Bank had known the difference between a banking textbook and an L.L. Bean catalog, Silicon Valley Bank would have never bought se-

curities that are so sensitive to interest rates without hedging that risk. And it is a very easy thing to do.

Honestly, it is banking 101. If you buy securities to back your deposits that are very sensitive to interest rates, there are other securities you can buy to hedge that risk so you don’t take the risk.

I am appalled. The bankers at Silicon Valley Bank didn’t do it. I mean, it was bone-deep, down-to-the-marrow stupid.

No. 2, OK, Silicon Valley Bank management did it. It was like a rock, only dumber, but they did it. The regulators didn’t catch it. There has been a lot of talk that Silicon Valley Bank wasn’t being regulated because of a bill passed back in 2018 and 2019. That is not true. Silicon Valley Bank was heavily regulated. It had to file regular reports with the Federal banking regulators. It was subject to stress testing. It was subject to liquidity stress testing. All the regulators had to do was read the reports that Silicon Valley Bank was submitting, and they would have seen the problem.

Do you know who solved the problem? Way back in November and October, stock analysts in the private sector that were covering Silicon Valley Bank warned—way back last fall—they said: Do you know what? This bank is setting itself up for a potential liquidity problem.

The private sector knew it. Where were the regulators? Where were they? You couldn’t have found them with a search party. I guess they were asleep. But this whole debacle could have been avoided if the regulators had just done their job and stepped in and said: Silicon Valley Bank, what you are doing is dumb, and you can’t do it anymore. That would have avoided it.

The third thing that could have avoided President Biden’s bailout—I think the bank went under on a Friday, as I recall. The Federal Reserve, the Secretary of the Treasury, the head of the FDIC, and all of the other regulators allowed the bank to go under, instead—instead—of getting on the telephone and calling other banks and saying: I have got a situation here with Silicon Valley Bank. It is not insolvent. It is just illiquid. We want you to buy it.

That is what normally happens, and that is all the regulators had to do.

Now, why didn’t they do that? There has been a lot of talk about, well, they had an auction for the bank and nobody wanted it. That is not true. There were buyers. But the problem was that the people at the FDIC do not like bank mergers.

Some bank mergers make sense. Some bank mergers don’t make sense. In this case, it would have made extraordinary sense.

And so the folks at the FDIC stalled and restalled, and then we had mass panic. Think back to the bailouts in 2008 and 2009. If you are a banker and you get a call from the Secretary of the Treasury, the head of the Federal

Reserve, and the head of the FDIC saying: Can we sit down and talk with you and structure the terms by which you would buy this illiquid but still solvent bank, you are going to take that phone call.

The regulators didn’t do that, and all of this could have been avoided. If we had done any one of those three things—any one of those three things—this mess could have been avoided.

With that, I yield—well, let me make just one last comment. I am going to say it again. In 2016, in America, we had too many undeserving people at the time getting bailouts, and we still do today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VOTE ON NEIMAN NOMINATION

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

Mr. KENNEDY. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL).

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 54 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Collins	Menendez	Tester
Coons	Merkley	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Crapo	Murphy	Warner
Duckworth	Murray	Warnock
Durbin	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Welch
Grassley	Peters	Whitehouse
Hassan	Reed	Wyden
Heinrich	Risch	Young

NAYS—40

Blackburn	Cornyn	Hagerty
Boozman	Cotton	Hawley
Braun	Cramer	Hooven
Britt	Daines	Hyde-Smith
Budd	Ernst	Johnson
Capito	Fischer	Kennedy
Cassidy	Graham	Lankford

Lee	Ricketts	Sullivan
Lummis	Romney	Thune
Manchin	Rounds	Tuberville
Marshall	Rubio	Vance
Moran	Schmitt	Wicker
Mullin	Scott (FL)	
Paul	Scott (SC)	

NOT VOTING—6

Barrasso	Cruz	Fetterman
Booker	Feinstein	McConnell

The nomination was confirmed.

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

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 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 Executive Calendar No. 65, Eric M. Garcetti, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of India.

Charles E. Schumer, Robert Menendez, Christopher Murphy, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jack Reed, Jeanne Shaheen, Christopher A. Coons, Richard J. Durbin, Tim Kaine, Mark R. Warner, Cory A. Booker, Richard Blumenthal, Chris Van Hollen, Amy Klobuchar, Peter Welch, Alex Padilla.

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 Eric M. Garcetti, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of India, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 55 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Coons	Heinrich
Bennet	Cortez Masto	Hickenlooper
Blumenthal	Daines	Kaine
Cantwell	Duckworth	King
Cardin	Durbin	Klobuchar
Carper	Gillibrand	Lujan
Casey	Graham	Manchin
Cassidy	Hagerty	Markey
Collins	Hassan	Marshall

Menendez	Sanders	Warner
Merkley	Schatz	Warnock
Murphy	Schumer	Warren
Murray	Shaheen	Welch
Ossoff	Sinema	Whitehouse
Padilla	Smith	Wyden
Peters	Stabenow	Young
Reed	Tester	
Rosen	Van Hollen	

NAYS—42

Blackburn	Hawley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hirono	Risch
Braun	Hoeven	Romney
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Brown	Johnson	Rubio
Budd	Kelly	Schmitt
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Cramer	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	Moran	Tillis
Ernst	Mullin	Tuberville
Fischer	Murkowski	Vance
Grassley	Paul	Wicker

NOT VOTING—6

Barrasso	Cruz	Fetterman
Booker	Feinstein	McConnell

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 42.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Eric M. Garcetti, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of India.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks prior to the scheduled recess.

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

NOMINATION OF ERIC M. GARCETTI

Mr. SCHUMER. My remarks are very simple. The United States-India relationship is extremely important, and it is a very good thing that we now have an Ambassador.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:21 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. ROSEN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON GARCETTI NOMINATION

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

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), and the Senator from Pennsyl-

vania (Mr. FETTERMAN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 56 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Heinrich	Sanders
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Cassidy	Markey	Tester
Collins	Marshall	Van Hollen
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warnock
Daines	Murphy	Warren
Duckworth	Murray	Welch
Durbin	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Graham	Peters	Young
Hagerty	Reed	
Hassan	Rosen	

NAYS—42

Blackburn	Hawley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hirono	Risch
Braun	Hoeven	Romney
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Brown	Johnson	Rubio
Budd	Kelly	Schmitt
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Cramer	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	Moran	Tillis
Ernst	Mullin	Tuberville
Fischer	Murkowski	Vance
Grassley	Paul	Wicker

NOT VOTING—6

Barrasso	Cruz	Fetterman
Booker	Feinstein	McConnell

The nomination was confirmed.

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

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 Executive Calendar No. 2, Ravi Chaudhary, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force.

Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin, Ben Ray Lujan, Tammy Duckworth, John W. Hickenlooper, Amy Klobuchar, Jeanne Shaheen, Brian Schatz, Benjamin L. Cardin, Edward J. Markey, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan, Catherine Cortez Masto.

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 Ravi Chaudhary, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

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

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 64, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 57 Ex.]

YEAS—64

Baldwin	Hirono	Rounds
Bennet	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Boozman	Kelly	Schumer
Brown	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Sinema
Capito	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Lujan	Stabenow
Carper	Manchin	Sullivan
Casey	Markey	Tester
Collins	Menendez	Thune
Coons	Merkley	Tillis
Cornyn	Moran	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Graham	Padilla	Whitehouse
Grassley	Peters	Wicker
Hassan	Reed	Wyden
Heinrich	Romney	
Hickenlooper	Rosen	

NAYS—29

Blackburn	Fischer	Paul
Braun	Hagerty	Ricketts
Britt	Hawley	Risch
Budd	Hoeven	Rubio
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Lee	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lummis	Tuberville
Daines	Marshall	Vance
Ernst	Mullin	

NOT VOTING—7

Barrasso	Feinstein	Young
Booker	Fetterman	
Cruz	McConnell	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas are 64, the nays are 29.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Ravi Chaudhary, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today with great concern to talk about the bloated budget that President Biden has put forward and, really, what it says about his vision for the future of our country, because a budget is a vision.

As my Republican colleagues and I will highlight today, this budget is the latest edition in his tax-and-spend agenda. It also fits the standards my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have set by passing inflation-causing, deficit-raising legislation, like the Inflation Reduction Act and the American Rescue Plan.

Let me make one thing perfectly clear. This budget has no chance of becoming law. And that is the good news here and great news for our constituents back home because this misguided proposal would saddle American families with more taxes, more waste, more debt, and more government intrusion that our constituents just do not deserve. The bad news is—at least for this administration—that the unveiling of this budget shines a spotlight on the priorities of the President, his administration, and his party.

This should alarm all of us. Case in point, this \$6.8 trillion proposal has been released at a time when so many Americans are struggling to afford basic necessities, interest rates are soaring, our national debt is climbing at an alarming rate, and small businesses are struggling to make ends meet.

While the Biden administration and our Democrats on the other side of the aisle expect families to make concessions in their everyday lives—like spending less at the grocery store, putting off buying your first home, or purchasing an electric vehicle to avoid rising gas prices—they are attempting to spend nearly \$7 trillion, with a "t", of hard-earned taxpayers' dollars, pile on to our national debt, and massively expand the scope and authority of Federal Agencies, like the IRS, which they massively expanded just several months ago.

What exactly is President Biden's tax-and-spend proposal? Let's dig in just a little bit. President Biden makes his priorities clear with his proposed changes to base discretionary funding for Federal Agencies. That is the baseline.

The Environmental Protection Agency—I have a lot to do with this Agency because it comes right into my Committee on Environment and Public Works—gets a staggering—the most of any other Agency—19-percent increase in funding year to year. But the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Transportation—remember, Homeland Security is the one that deals with immigration and the crisis at the southern border and the flow of drugs and other things—and the Small Business Administration—where in my State, if you don't grow as a small business, you are not growing—they are all facing budget cuts.

The White House priorities could not be clearer. And when it comes to taxes under this budget proposed by the President, Main Street mom and pop businesses would feel strained like never before.

We just lowered the taxes in our State. It is the biggest tax cut ever in the State of West Virginia. Yet we are looking at taxes on small businesses and capital gains taxes. The corporate tax rate goes up. Taxes on American energy would increase. Retirement taxes go up. The Medicare tax would increase, and the personal income tax would go up to the highest level in decades.

What President Biden fails to realize is that the brunt of his tax hikes would be felt by those who own, invest in, or operate small- and medium-sized businesses. Maybe, that is why he doesn't put any extra money in the Small Business Administration.

This is a direct violation of his pledge to not raise taxes on small businesses.

The National Federation of Small Businesses issued a statement last week warning that the tax increase—and it is called the National Federation of Small Businesses. They are small businesses. They say that this "would further harm Main Street." It would "crush Main Street's ability to grow and create jobs."

The National Federation of Small Businesses believes that the Biden administration should increase focus on policies that will "provide certainty and promote economic growth to allow our small businesses to create jobs and raise wages."

My Republican colleagues and I could not agree more. It is my hope that the President and congressional Democrats will continue working on previously bipartisan tax issues that spur innovation and are pro-growth.

Just last week, as I said, our State passed historic tax cuts that signed into law by our Governor, Governor Justice, in the Mountain State. I wish our Federal Government was following this example. Instead, President Biden has chosen a different path that an analysis from the Tax Foundation found would create negative effects on savings, investments, and have economy-wide repercussions. The analysis continues that this brazen increase in taxes would ultimately harm our workers, international competitiveness, and domestic investment.

We talk about international competitiveness all the time. Why are we trying to move in a direction where our competitiveness would be less effective? In short, moving top tax rates in the United States beyond international norms reduces our economic growth.

You might ask yourself: Does the spending ever stop under President Biden and this budget?

Well, ironically, it does when you look at our own Department of Homeland Security, which secures the interior of our Nation. It is facing a budget cut under this proposal.

The President has consistently said that his budget is a reflection of his priorities. You see millions of people coming across our southern board with no deterrence. But nothing runs more true than that this is his priority—to continue that practice. And the refusal and inability to secure our border and stop the scourge of illicit drugs from entering our communities is not the priority of this administration.

The President's budget requests 350 new border agents, less than a 2-percent increase in our agents, while our border runs rampant with illegal crossings, and policies like title 42 move closer to sunset.

This budget proposes a contingency slush fund—there is nothing taxpayers like better than a slush fund—a slush fund for surge capacity at the border. In other words, give me the money now because I know we are going to have more people coming over, and I want to have the money to pay for it in advance because I don't want to come back to Congress to pay for it because Congress knows we have a problem and they won't give me the money to pay for it in an emergency. So I am going to get it up front.

It would be impossible for DHS to use this funding to mitigate our crisis at the border because, by the time they receive these dollars, these illegal crossings would have occurred.

We all have priorities, and President Biden made his clear. Securing our southern border is just not one of his priorities.

We see, clearly, President Biden's priorities yet again when it comes to military spending. We just had a drone shot down yesterday, I believe, by the Russians in the Black Sea. The President's budget shortchanges defense for more reckless spending. It is just a 3-percent increase—a 3.2-percent increase—in our military and national security. This comes at a time when inflation in the President's economy is high and our dollars are stretched thinner and thinner.

We hear about the supply chain. We hear about different materials we can't get, how much more expensive they are, and how much longer the wait is. So adversaries overseas increase their defense budgets. Now is not the time for us to delay that much needed modernization and reinforcement that we have put ourselves on a pathway for the last several years. Now is the time to invest in the advanced capabilities and the industrial base capacity that we expect and need for future generations and make our national security a priority.

According to the President's budget proposal, our addiction epidemic doesn't seem to be a top priority either. The President's proposed budget summary lacks a sense of urgency around this epidemic and the fentanyl crisis. This is a crisis in my State and in the Presiding Officer's State, as well, and in all States. My State has been disproportionately impacted by this. In the budget summary, fentanyl is only mentioned twice, opioids are

mentioned 4 times, and climate change is mentioned 42 times—42.

In 2022, West Virginia lost 1,135 West Virginians to fentanyl overdoses. What we lost to overdoses, many of those were fentanyl overdoses—a large majority.

President Biden, I implore you to put more emphasis on the communities facing our streets every day that deserve to be our national priorities.

This budget proposal from the Biden administration makes obvious the motivations and priorities of the White House and the Agencies. In Washington, clarity comes at a premium price. So I will give them credit for that.

But by touting this budget proposal and claiming that it cuts the deficit by raising taxes shows that, no matter what, the Democrats aren't interested in cutting spending.

I mean, put yourself in the country's shoes, as a family. What do you do when you see your credit cards maxing out and times are getting tough? What do you do? You pull back. You stop spending however you can do that in your own home.

My Republican colleagues and I stand in direct opposition to what the President is doing with his budget. So through my remarks on the floor today and the subsequent speeches by my fellow Republicans, we will continue to highlight the errors in the President's budget. We will also stress the need to strike balance, restraint, and regular order.

What does regular order mean to people who are watching this? That means we go through committees and we compromise, and we talk to Republicans and Democrats and get together.

The Presiding Officer and I are on the Appropriations Committee. She is a chair, and I am a ranking member. We do a lot of talking during this process. That is what we need to do.

I intend to fulfill my obligations on the Appropriations Committee and, hopefully, we can get this to regular order. Right now, we need to set priorities in a budget and spending plan that reflect the real needs we see every day on every street in this country.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I so agree with my colleague from West Virginia and her comments about this budget.

Here it is. I would encourage our citizens to pick it up and give it a read and look at some of the things that they are going to find in here. I think they are going to be aghast at what they find in here—\$477,000 to the IRS for equity training so that they can put an emphasis on equity. These are just some of the porked-up things that you are going to find in this left-leaning, radical, unrealistic wish list of a budget that this administration has brought forward. It really is a blueprint to socialism. Let's put the government in charge of everything, your life from daylight to dark every time you are out and about. Let's have control over your gas stove, over your

washing machine, over your showerhead, over your toilet flusher. That is what my colleagues on the left see. That is their goal—control over the people, governing by the elite for the elite. That is what they are all about. But I am going to drill down a little bit on this funding request for the Internal Revenue Service.

Now, President Biden is expecting the IRS to go to work, getting not just a few dollars but getting \$4.7 trillion in new taxes. Imagine that. Tennesseans do not want to pay the government more of their hard-earned paycheck. They don't want to give it up to a government that is wasting that money because they realize it is our children and our grandchildren, our precious ones, who are going to have to pay the cost for this. It is compromising their futures on programs they don't want, with money we don't have.

Why are you seeing all these tax increases? You are seeing them because the spending is out of control—a \$6.9 trillion budget; \$4.7 trillion in new taxes; a budget that in year 1—year 1—the deficit for year 1 is \$1.8 trillion. That is how far out of balance this budget is. That is why this thing is a wish list. It is a wish list of programs.

If you want to see how the left views the world, pick it up and give it a read. If you want to read in those words how little respect they have for the American people, for hard-working taxpayers, pick it up. They want your money.

Now, on the IRS, the IRS—in this fiscal year, 2024, they will increase their appropriations to \$14.1 billion. That is a \$1.8 billion increase from the 2023 enacted level. And we know that in the Inflation Reduction Act—what did the IRS get? Oh, \$80 billion. How about that? So the IRS now is going to have \$94.1 billion to spend.

Well, let's just ask the question: What do we think the IRS is going to use this money for? Do we think they are going to use it to make the Agency more user-friendly? Do we think they are going to use it to have people pick up the phone and say: Hi, I am your friendly IRS agent. How may I help you today?

We know that is pipe-dreaming. That is not what they are going to do.

Eighty billion dollars, plus a record \$14.1 billion in an appropriation. They are going to use this money for what? More audits. Because why? President Biden wants \$4.7 trillion—with a “t,” trillion—in new taxes.

Where do we think he is going to get this money? Oh, they like to say, it is going to come from corporations. It is going to come from extremely wealthy individuals and billionaires. But you know what, there is a problem with the math on that. The numbers just don't work. It doesn't add up.

Where are they going to get it? They are going to get it from small business manufacturers, from Main Street merchants, from the restaurants in your community. They are going to go get it

from the manufacturing plant in your community. How about the HVAC contractor? How about the plumbing company? This is where they are going. Sound familiar? Of course it does because it is the middle-income earner who gets hit every single time. Every single time without fail, they are the ones who get hit by the tax increases the Democrats are wanting to push forward.

Now, we know the IRS is not going to make that Agency more friendly. We know it is not going to be there to protect you, the hard-working taxpayer. But we do know that what they will do is wallop you upside the head and say: You owe this money. We are going to audit you.

It is going to happen time and again.

On top of all of this, inflation is soaring. Grocery prices are up about 20 percent; gasoline prices, 45 percent; natural gas prices, 43 percent. Electricity prices have increased 24 percent, and clothing prices are up 12 percent. But in this budget, there is nothing addressing inflation. There is nothing that is going to bring inflation down.

There is not a lot of attention paid to crime in the streets or gangs who are coming across the border or the fact that the chief of the Border Patrol said today that they do not have—the United States does not have operational control of the border. There is not a cent there to build that wall, but there is money in there to pay for attorney fees for illegal immigrants.

It is the wrong set of priorities, not what the American people are wanting, certainly not what Tennesseans are wanting to see, and not the accountability and transparency the American people expect from their government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, there is a sales tactic known as throwing spaghetti at the wall, where the salesperson suggests an outrageously high price to see if it sticks. More often than not, the price is dead on arrival. It is intended to be; that is part of the trick.

See, the element of shock allows the salesperson to create an illusion of a spectacular discount by slashing the initially artificially high price. The customer then leaves feeling like they stumbled onto an incredible deal, too good to pass up, even though they left with a product they either didn't want or couldn't afford or, at a minimum, a product for which they paid too high a price.

When I read President Biden's budget request, it felt more like I was trapped at a kiosk in the middle of the mall or being sold a used car by a predatory, unscrupulous salesman, not reading a serious budget proposal from the President of the United States. So I would suggest the President try again because the spaghetti didn't stick. We are not buying what the President is selling, and his budget is dead on arrival.

When the President reached the end of his sales pitch, he told us the price: a whopping \$6.9 trillion. It would create a \$1.8 trillion deficit in the first year alone. Then by 2027, we would break the record for the most debt held by the public as a percentage of U.S. GDP since World War II.

Utahns are already pinching pennies as a result of this approach to budget.

In August, I stood where I stand now, as this body was on the cusp of passing the \$1.7 trillion omnibus package, and read letters I received from Utah constituents. They explained how difficult life has become under Biden's record-breaking inflation. They described the daily choices they were forced to make because of how expensive life had become under this administration.

Jennie from Salt Lake City wrote:

My annual income is about \$30,000 a year. I'm panicking. The price of groceries and other goods has increased so much, I'm struggling financially. I understand my utility bills could double or even triple. I don't know how I can afford to live.

Since Democrats started their reckless spending 2 years ago, prices have risen more than 15 percent. Groceries are up nearly 20 percent.

Kevin from Murray, UT, wrote:

This morning, I filled up my work . . . truck. It cost \$149. I'm a small business [owner], and the price of fuel is a major challenge for our company of 5 vehicles traveling to our various projects.

President Biden's energy policies caused gas prices to reach \$5 and energy costs to skyrocket. Gas is up 45 percent, and Biden's budget will crush American energy with \$31 billion in new taxes.

I said during that speech that if the definition of "insanity" is doing the same thing and expecting different results, then spending more money and increasing taxes to reduce inflation certainly meets that definition.

This approach is insane, and the President is doubling and then tripling down. Rather than address the spending driving inflation, the Biden administration continues to blame inflation on everything from the pandemic to Putin. We know why. The President won't address inflation because he wants to spend even more. He wants to create the biggest government we have ever had and make it more and more expensive.

We have to get this monkey off our back, but that can't be done in darkness. That has to be done while acknowledging the problem that we have and addressing it head-on, not obscuring it.

I want to be clear that the Constitution tasks Congress with determining annual spending and revenue levels, not the President's annual budget proposal, and clearly this is for good reason. We have a constitutional duty here to protect our constituents from the snake oil salesman hell-bent on taking the American people for all they are worth, who will leave the American people with junk they don't need and a payment they can't afford.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I am here to join some of my colleagues to talk about President Biden's budget proposal. I have heard a lot of the floor speeches today, and I hear a lot of facts and figures that are all very important, but sometimes it is kind of hard to translate that down to what it means around a kitchen table.

I am actually speaking with a very vivid memory of the life I lived as a teenager back in the seventies when my mother and father, with six kids, were always on the economic bubble based on what happens in Washington.

The challenges of working families are significant, and the challenges this budget presents make them even more so.

I will start off with a couple of facts and figures because I think it is important. We have had inflation go up at about 15 percent since President Biden was in office. I am going to talk a little bit about that in a minute.

If you go on Bloomberg or you read the Wall Street Journal, they use words like "CPI" and "PCE" and all these things. That won't necessarily make a lot of sense to folks who haven't studied it, but it does matter that grocery prices are up by 20 percent since President Biden took office.

That is a 40-year high. And it also matters that rent prices—something that my family in the seventies, depending upon what Congress did to us, very seldom for us, we would either be in a house that my parents owned or a house or a trailer that my parents rented. And when rents go up like that, the choices get fewer and fewer.

These interest rates—these numbers are hurting the American people, but I want to go back to the interest rate discussion.

The fact of the matter is, we found ourselves in a once-in-a-century challenge with the global pandemic in COVID. And in this body, I joined the vast majority of Democrats and Republicans to do everything we had to do to make things meet. That is why we did the Paycheck Protection Plan, which saved hundreds, if not millions, of jobs. We did a number of things on a bipartisan basis.

So I think that we have to look at that overall inflation number and see how much of that was just necessary so that, in our judgment, we could weather a storm that could have created a global economic disaster. There are some of my Members who say we shouldn't focus on that, but I think we need to be honest with the American people.

However, what we have seen since President Biden came into office was something that really disappointed me, as somebody who has worked across the aisle a number of different times, and that was two partisan bills: one that was \$1.9 trillion shortly after President Biden took office; another

one, the so-called—I call it the “Inflation Production Act” because it has very little to do with reduction. Its official title is the Inflation Reduction Act.

So we are talking about \$3 trillion in spending, after we had all decided that the money that we put out there to weather the storm for the global pandemic needed to be spent. We even raised questions about whether or not that money should be spent for what we originally intended. The point to that is the government had spent enough, and then these partisan bills took place, and these partisan bills are absolutely one of the root causes and primary reasons why we are seeing inflation today.

As a matter of fact, the rising inflation is one of the root causes behind what we are seeing, and with that interest rates, because when inflation goes up and the Federal Reserve wants to get inflation back down to 2 percent—we are at 6 percent now. There are some people high-fiving over that. I don’t know why. Yes, it is down from 7 percent or so, but we are nowhere near where we need to be.

And inflation happens when government spends too much. That is what we are seeing happen, and, in fact, because of inflation and the need to raise interest rates, now we have banks that have failed, largely based on the inflation rate exposure and what they are having to do when their debts come due.

So we have a budget that even the additional spending—I think the top-line number is \$6.8 trillion. Now, to be fair, in the COVID timeframe, it was a little over 4 trillion—I think maybe even a little bit north of that but certainly not at this level. We are spending too much. And the American families, and working families, in particular, people on that economic bubble, are the ones who are going to suffer the most if we don’t figure out how to get it right.

So we have got a deficit, a deficit in this budget. We have got new debt in this budget. We have got new taxes in this budget. And we have invalid assumptions about where we are today.

How on Earth can we be making an optimistic assumption about inflation that is somewhere near 2 percent? Does anybody here honestly believe that we are going to be high-fiving and being at 2 percent inflation over the next year and a half or 2 years? I don’t believe that that is true. But how can you make that an underlying assumption in the budget—because the President is smart, his advisers are smart; they know that that is a false premise for a budget.

So it is even worse than it may seem. And what makes me sad about this is it is really worse for the people who are already getting 80 cents on the dollar for groceries, for the people who are only getting 90 cents on the dollar for rent today. It all comes back to the people who are struggling the most.

We should talk about some of the other taxes that are in this legislation.

Energy. Generally speaking, most people have to buy gas; they have got to heat their homes. Energy taxes are going up. I think the estimate that we have right now is about \$20 billion in additional energy taxes.

I don’t know about you all, but virtually every time I see a tax increase, if you wait long enough, you will see how that translates into a tax burden on working families. It is inevitable. Corporations ultimately don’t pay taxes.

When you are going to increase a corporate tax by 30 percent, who ultimately pays for that? Yes, they may be able to work around the edges and absorb some of that, but what they are going to do is find a way to get the consumer—working families—to pay for that. That is how this works.

That, incidentally, is how the bailout of Silicon Valley Bank is going to work. It is fair, and it would pass a fact check, that the plan that was agreed to over the weekend to resolve Silicon Valley Bank isn’t a tax in the way that we describe a tax. It is that tax you get from the IRS, for example. It is that tax you get—sales tax at a register.

Why is this also a hidden tax? Because do you honestly believe that some community bank that is struggling to keep a branch open in an underserved area in rural North Carolina—they are going to make one of two choices. They are either going to make that banking service more expensive or they are simply going to leave that bank. And now we get to unbanked and underbanked areas that are most hard hit, the ones that actually have working families who need banks to serve them.

The other thing—I am not going to get into details, but I am also very concerned with the signal that President Biden has sent on defense.

There is a plus-up in defense spending, but the President’s proposed budget—in the worst possible time with all the conflicts that we are dealing with—the Ukraine conflict, the threat from China, the continuing threat in the Middle East. Is this really a time to send the signal that we are going to spend less on national defense?

We have been trying to get to a 355-ship Navy for almost a decade—at least 8 years, as many years as I have been here. I have been on the Senate Armed Services Committee for those 8 years, and we were always talking about how are we going to get to 355? We are just under 300 now.

This budget is suggesting that we may even have a smaller Navy than we have today, when China has one of the largest navies that has ever existed—actually, probably the largest navy that has ever existed in the history of the world.

So we are prioritizing domestic spending; we are turning our back on national security; and all the net increase in spending is based on assumptions that they are making that will ultimately—if they don’t believe it,

they need to believe it—it is going to hurt working families the most.

Well, the good news about President Biden’s budget is that it gives us a real, I think, understanding of what his priorities are.

The better news is that that budget is not going to pass through Congress because we are going to have to work on something that is more responsible, that is not inflationary, that tries to get taxes in line so that people can afford the bill that you will ultimately have to pay.

And I hope that over the next—in the coming months that we can have a discussion about let’s start with the people who are hurt most. Let’s look at the policies that channel directly into making that burden greater, and let’s do something good for the United States and the hard-working families across this country.

And for that reason, I will do everything I can, Mr. President. You are somebody I have worked with on a bipartisan basis. I hope that we can get the Senate and the House to recognize that it is time for us to stand up and produce something that puts working families at the forefront.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I would like to join the good Senator from North Carolina as well as my colleagues in bringing Senate attention to the President’s fiscal year 2024 budget.

At the outset, I want to say I support a balanced budget amendment and have done so since I first came to the Senate. I think that is something that we need to pass. We need a balanced budget amendment.

But with that, I do want to comment on the Biden administration’s budget released last week, which goes in the wrong direction.

President Biden’s \$6.9 trillion proposal is full of the same tax-and-spend policies that do not balance a budget, do not help reduce inflation, and instead they levy taxes on hard-working Americans and spend money that we don’t have.

In total, the budget proposes \$4.7 trillion—let me repeat that, \$4.7 trillion—in new taxes on the American people.

We need to get our fiscal house in order, and we do that by controlling spending, not again raising taxes on hard-working Americans. It is time that we come together to reduce our debt and deficit and enact responsible policies that will reduce inflation and lift the burden that our American taxpayers currently face.

The President’s budget calls for increasing the corporate tax rate to 28 percent. This is higher than the average corporate tax rate in Europe, which is currently 21.7 percent, and it is even higher than the tax rate in China, if you can believe that, which is 25 percent.

This policy neglects the fact that tax increases like these are ultimately passed through to consumers in terms

of higher prices for goods and services. That is just the reality.

We know this because in 2021, the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation scored a similar corporate tax increase proposal and very clearly came back and demonstrated that that tax increase would be borne by hard-working taxpayers and certainly taxpayers making less than the \$400,000 per year that President Biden has talked about.

Because of this administration's past tax-and-spend policies, just yesterday, the updated CPI—Consumer Price Index—indicated that prices for goods and services in this country continue to rise.

We have seen historic levels of inflation, and a big part of controlling and reducing that inflation is controlling and reducing overall spending.

With the latest numbers, unless you have gotten at least a 15-percent raise since the Biden administration took office, you have effectively suffered a pay cut because the rate of inflation has gone up faster than your rate of pay.

During the previous administration, we took a different approach, cutting the top corporate rate from 35 percent to 21 percent. This approach led to economic growth and businesses coming back to America, and it also led to higher wages for American workers.

Of particular concern in my State of North Dakota are the proposed tax increases on energy production, including oil, gas, and coal. In fact, the Biden budget proposes to increase taxes by \$31 billion on fossil fuel companies.

What the budget fails to recognize is that these taxes are borne by consumers in higher prices at the pump—when they pull up to the gas station, higher prices at the pump, higher electric bills, and higher costs when they go to the grocery stores. That is where they are ultimately paid.

We need to produce more energy. We need to create incentives to produce more energy in this country to bring down the cost of energy. There is an energy component in almost every product that you can think of, and we need to find ways to produce more energy to help increase supply and reduce the cost of energy. That will help with inflation across the board.

Furthermore, taxes like these only help oil-producing countries like Russia, Iran, and Venezuela—countries that have far inferior environmental standards to those here in the United States. That makes no sense—no sense at all.

My colleagues and I worked with the last administration to put in place policies that made our country not only energy independent but energy dominant—energy dominant. More energy, more supply helped reduce the cost of energy. That benefited consumers in their pocketbook. It also created more jobs and increased the wages in the jobs we have. That benefited the American worker.

Energy security is also a national security issue, making us less dependent

on our adversaries and helping our allies—helping our allies so that they don't have to depend on energy from our adversaries. Look at what is going on in Europe right now, with our support and Western Europe's support for Ukraine at the same time Europe is looking to get energy from Russia, a country which has invaded Ukraine. Yeah, that makes no sense.

We need to return to policies that incentivize energy production in this country, not tax the very energy producers that produce more energy in this country with better environmental stewardship than anywhere else in the world.

Also, on defense, the budget falls short on defense. While on paper the budget proposes increased defense spending in 2024, it fails to take into account the incredible inflation costs which have been generated by this administration's tax-and-spend policies.

Our current threat, obviously, not only with what we see in Europe but globally, we can only respond to with a position of strength—strength. This budget would result in just the opposite—a smaller Army, fewer Navy ships, fewer Air Force aircraft. We need to support our men and women in uniform by providing them with the resources they need to address the global threats posed by our adversaries.

In conclusion, the President's budget is the wrong proposal at the wrong time. Congress must work to find savings, reduce our debt and deficit, and responsibly fund our priorities without increasing taxes on hard-working American taxpayers.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the ranking member of the Ag Appropriations Subcommittee, I look forward to working on the fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills and enacting commonsense legislation that meets our country's needs while facing our fiscal realities and working to get our debt and deficit under control.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to also express my disappointment in the fiscal year 2024 budget submitted to Congress by President Biden. As a fiscal conservative, I have serious concerns about the direction this budget proposes to take our country. It fails to address the real needs of our Nation and instead doubles down on failed policies.

Americans continue to suffer from the worst inflation since the Carter administration—inflation set off by President Biden's reckless tax-and-spend agenda. Consumer prices have risen 15 percent since Biden took office. These are real numbers. People in my home State of Mississippi and across this country continue to see their hard-earned savings dwindle and their paychecks stretched thin by higher prices for everything from groceries to gasoline and basic utilities.

After 2 years of trudging through this economy, Americans truly need help. However, President Biden's budget will do anything but help. The President's \$7 trillion budget for 2024 will result in massive spending increases that will further exacerbate our already significant debt and deficit problems. Remember, reckless spending is the major reason prices took off in the first place.

We simply cannot afford to spend at this level and continue passing on the burden of our current and growing debt to future generations.

What is more, this proposal includes \$4.7 trillion in new or increased taxes—the largest tax hike since the 1960s. These tax hikes would stifle economic growth, discourage investment, and ultimately harm the very people the President's budget is supposed to help.

The President is asking Congress to hike the individual Federal income tax rate up from 37 percent to 39.6 percent, not including the surtaxes with that. This proposal would push tax increases on even more hard-working Americans. Make no mistake, this proposal does not “tax the rich,” as my colleagues across the aisle love to say; it raises taxes on middle-class Americans.

The President's proposed tax increases may raise revenue in the short term to support his big spending, Big Government schemes, but they amount to distraction and to only gimmicks.

There is little chance these massive tax increases will see the light of day, but even if they did, the Biden tax hikes would not address the underlying issues of our ballooning national debt.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projects that the Federal Government will spend over \$10 trillion on interest alone in the next 10 years. Think about that for a moment—\$10 trillion on interest payments alone. Unbelievable. As we pay more and more on debt interest payments, there will be less available to use on critical and important priorities like Senator HOEVEN mentioned: national defense, infrastructure, healthcare, or education.

I recently reintroduced a constitutional balanced-budget amendment because I am very concerned about the future of this great Nation. In contrast, President Biden's 2024 budget plan sends a clear signal that he and his administration are not serious about controlling the national debt or even reducing annual deficit spending. He may talk about it, but this budget says otherwise.

It is our responsibility as elected officials of the American people to strengthen our Nation, not to leave it saddled with unsustainable debt that puts everything at risk, including entitlement programs that hard-working Americans have paid into their entire lives.

President Biden's budget is a disappointment and falls short in addressing serious challenges, such as getting our fiscal house in order, securing the border, unleashing American energy, and so much more.

We all know the President's budget was received dead on arrival, but it signals the starting point to the annual budget process. It is my hope that wiser minds on both sides of the aisle will prevail as Congress embarks on the 2024 budget and appropriations process.

Americans are already pinching pennies, taking on debt, and struggling to pay their bills, and they deserve much, much more. They deserve relief, and our Nation needs relief in the form of tried-and-true just pure fiscal responsibility.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

REMEMBERING JUDITH HEUMANN

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I come to the floor today with a heavy yet full heart to pay tribute to someone I owe so much to, someone who millions of Americans living with disabilities owe so much to, Judy Heumann.

To honor her, I want to start by describing the environment we are in for those who may be listening in who may be visually impaired. We are in the United States Senate Chambers. I am sitting in the top row of chairs. I am sitting in my wheelchair. I am an Asian-American woman with brown hair, and I am wearing my signature red lipstick, just as Judy used to wear.

Judy was more than a friend; she was a personal hero to me. She was a person who devoted her life to expanding disability rights, to making sure that accessibility in this country is not an afterthought but, in fact, is the norm.

She worked so hard because she recognized a simple truth: that everyone, whether they know it or not, is just 1 day, 1 split-second away from acquiring a disability and needing the protections and rights that too many take for granted, rights that every American deserves.

You know, when I earned my disability in 2004, I actually considered myself pretty lucky. I say "lucky" because when I got home from Iraq, the Rehabilitation Act had been the law of the land for more than 30 years, and the Americans with Disabilities Act had been in place for more than a decade, both of which Judy had fought tirelessly to implement and, in fact, was the author of, and both of which empowered people like me to lead full lives. So, yes, pretty darn lucky because I wouldn't be able to roll my wheelchair through the maze of the Capitol Building and onto the Senate floor today to give this speech without those laws or without the unwavering advocacy and leadership of Judy Heumann.

You see, Judy passed her exams to earn a teaching license before people with disabilities had equal protections under the law, but she was denied that license by the school board even though she passed the exams—denied it just because of so-called concerns about legal liability in the workplace because she had a disability.

They said that because Judy used a wheelchair, she represented a fire hazard and couldn't safely teach in a classroom. Judy, rightfully so, wasn't going to take that for an answer, so she got to work. She worked and she worked and she worked. She fought and she fought some more. She made a fuss. She caused what civil rights giant John Lewis called "good trouble."

It is in large part because of her never giving up that the Rehabilitation Act exists, that the ADA exists, and that my full, wonderful, beautifully chaotic life is possible. For that and for so much more, I will be forever grateful for Judy Heumann.

Judy passed away earlier this month, but what she lived for will live on forever. I will never forget the hard-earned lessons she taught me about what it means to truly fight for our civil rights, to keep up that work day after day after day, and to make sure we empower those who come next to continue reaching toward a more just and more accessible future.

In her name, I will forever keep striving to bring about that better tomorrow when people with disabilities won't have to work so hard just to live our daily lives.

Rest in power, Judy. We miss you already.

190TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. PARTNERSHIP WITH THAILAND

Mr. President, "sawadee ka." I come to the floor today to commemorate a special moment, the 190th anniversary of the U.S. partnership with the Kingdom of Thailand.

I am an American, but my Thai heritage makes me a living example of the unshakeable bond between our two nations.

Our nations have a long, long history of friendship. For centuries, our countries have learned from and leaned on each other militarily, diplomatically, economically, culturally—you name it. From the environment to our economies, national security to cyber security, we have helped one another grow and evolve, adapting to a world that is evermore connected, adapting to an era in which technology allows allies half a world away to be there for each other in half an instant.

There is a reason Thailand is often called Washington's oldest ally in Asia. Ever since an American ship landed on Thailand's shores more than 200 years ago, ever since President Andrew Jackson and Thai King Rama III signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation formalizing peaceful relations between our countries, ever since King Mongkut offered to send elephants to President Abraham Lincoln an ocean away, our nations have proven that there is no greater asset than a partner you can count on in times of both peace and conflict. Time after time, we have worked side by side to catch the bad actors running international criminal networks, to give humanitarian relief to those who need it, to keep the peace far beyond our own borders.

We have seen our shared interests and values manifest time after time over the past 190 years. To name just a few examples, more than 300,000 people of Thai descent—myself included—live in the United States today, and thousands more come to study every semester.

The jointly run Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences has been at the forefront of research on infectious diseases since the 1960s, developing treatment for a host of diseases that have saved millions of lives in both our countries and around the world.

Under a 2002 framework, hundreds of U.S. companies have invested in Thailand, fueling bilateral trade of over \$74 billion in 2020 alone.

And, during World War II, the United States worked with Thai students in the United States and dissidents inside Thailand to create the Free Thai Movement. Then, our security alliance was eventually formalized under the Manila Pact of 1954 and the Thanat-Rusk communique in 1962. And, now, the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group in Thailand helps organize more than 400 joint exercises per year, including Cobra Gold, the largest multilateral exercise in the Indo-Pacific region.

In 2023, with more and more geopolitical threats rising by the day, the strength of our bond is as important as ever. Our alliance provides some sense of stability amidst that chaos and some sense of security amidst the unpredictability. It helps to make a tenuous situation a little bit more tenable.

In just a few months, Thailand will hold national elections for the second time since the military coup of 2014. As in other countries, Thailand's path to democracy has had its challenges. There have been setbacks as well as advances. But in this moment, I know I speak for my colleagues in this Chamber when I say we look forward to an election that is free and fair, an election that cements Thailand on the road to a stable democratic system based on the rule of law, civilian authority, and respect for internationally recognized human rights.

Let me just close by saying: For the progress that Thailand has made toward that more democratic future, for the friendship our two nations have shared, as well as for all the years that I was lucky enough to call Thailand my home as a child, I am endlessly grateful, and I am forever proud to call myself an American of Thai descent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF ATLANTA SPA SHOOTINGS

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I rise today to reflect on a dark day in Georgia. It was 2 years ago today that a hateful act of violence shook metropolitan Atlanta and reverberated across our State, our Nation, and the world.

In the span of a few hours, our sense of safety and sanctuary was ripped apart by bullets born out of hate and fear—an issue, Mr. President, you know very well and have engaged on many sad occasions.

Two years ago, in Georgia, eight people lost their lives—eight people loved by their families, their friends, by their children. They should never become numbers or statistics—eight souls, eight people, with their own successes and struggles, their hopes and dreams. We speak their names: Soon Chung Park, Hyun Jung Grant, Suncha Kim, Yong Ae Yue, Delaina Ashley Yaun Gonzalez, Paul Andre Michels, Xiaojie Tan, and Daoyou Feng.

My heart aches for these Georgians and for their families, for whom these wounds still fester. The comfort provided by a family is still not enough to fill the empty seat at the dinner table or those times when a family member, out of routine, picks up the phone to dial and remembers in the moment that there is nobody on the other end of that call.

As a pastor, I believe in the sacred worth of every human being. I believe that we are a mixture of dust and divinity, of sod and sky, beauty and possibility. That is why I ask now that everyone who is here will join me in a moment of silence. Let us remember these eight Georgians and pray for their families.

(Moment of silence.)

God, in Your mercy remember them and strengthen us to do the work. Amen.

Importantly, I must mention, this attack was meant to harm Georgia's Asian-American community, and especially women of Asian descent. Unfortunately, this awful act that happened in Georgia is not isolated but, rather, part of the same trend of growing hate and violence which has caused pain to so many of us, especially members of the AAPI community.

In recent years, anti-Asian hate crimes have increased significantly—more than 300 percent, according to media reports. And, at the same time, we have seen acts of hate rise against our Jewish brothers and sisters; against our Muslim friends and neighbors; yes, against the LGBTQ-plus community and our trans brothers and sisters; and against the sense of safety our students have felt at our historically Black colleges and universities.

So I think back to how Georgians charted a path forward for our Nation 2 years ago. Two years ago, we came together and reminded each other that the only way to face the future is to love one another, to be respectful of our different histories, while focused on our shared future.

Georgia's greatest son, that great American, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said it best. He said:

We are tied in a single garment of destiny, caught up in an inescapable network of mutuality. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.

That terrible act of violence we witnessed on March 16, 2021, ought to remind us that we all have a stake in each other's well-being, that it is our duty to stay committed to a peace that recognizes that we are in this together.

So I want to say to my AAPI sisters and brothers, I want to say to all of my neighbors that I see you, and I will continue to stand with you against hate and against violence.

So let us continue working together to stop Asian hate, to stop the scapegoating that often emerges, sadly, in political speech, and to create what Dr. King called the beloved community. It is a community where everybody, no matter their skin color, their ethnicity, their sexual orientation, their religious background, or if they claim no religious tradition at all, can live a life of fulfillment and joy without the fear of facing hate and unspeakable violence.

Let's keep doing the work.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

JUDICIAL CONFIRMATIONS

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise today to celebrate the confirmation of four qualified, exemplary public servants who will now serve as district court judges in California.

One month ago, we celebrated a landmark achievement of the Biden Presidency: 100 Federal judges confirmed by the Senate. That is worthy of being celebrated by all Americans because, from the moment President Biden entered office, he set out to nominate candidates with a diverse range of legal and life experience. We sought to work together to build a Federal bench that looks like the America that it serves.

With the confirmations of Judge Daniel Calabretta, Ms. Araceli Martinez-Olguin, Judge James Simmons, Jr., and Judge Andrew Schopler, we are once again fulfilling that commitment and putting forth the best of the great State of California and the best that our country has to offer.

Now, earlier this year, we confirmed Judge Daniel Calabretta to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California. Judge Calabretta is an exceptional nominee with the qualifications to serve in the Eastern District with distinction. He earned his B.A. from Princeton University and his J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School.

Since then, his nearly two-decade legal career has been defined by a commitment to serving the public's interests. Before he was appointed to the California Superior Court in 2019, his career spanned from the California Department of Justice to the U.S. Court

of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and from Sacramento, CA, to the Supreme Court. In each and every role, he has demonstrated a keen legal mind and a clear commitment to justice.

But beyond his exceptional legal credentials, he brings a valuable diversity of life experience to the Eastern District, a court with one of the highest average per-judge workloads in the country.

Judge Calabretta's confirmation makes him the first openly gay man to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California, bringing a voice and experience not yet represented in such a role. But I am confident, with his experience, his acumen, and his judgments, that he will be a tremendous asset for the millions of people that he will now serve.

Now, 2 weeks ago, this body confirmed Araceli Martinez-Olguin to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. Born in Mexico City but raised in Northern California, Ms. Martinez-Olguin received her bachelor's degree from Princeton University. She then returned home to California to work as a kindergarten teacher before attending the UC Berkeley School of Law.

She spent her career representing those who all too often are overlooked by the legal system: immigrants, low-income women, and women of color. Ms. Martinez-Olguin has experience at community legal service organizations, as well as the Department of Education and the National Immigration Law Center.

She has litigated at every level of our Federal courts in States across the country and has established herself as a respected leader and expert in the legal community. Her commitment to fighting for the greater good, her decency, and her experience will serve the Northern District well, and I thank my colleagues for supporting her nomination.

Now, just last week, we confirmed Judge James Simmons, Jr., to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California. Born in Inglewood, CA, Judge Simmons was raised by a single mother in the proud working-class and very diverse community of South Los Angeles.

Judge Simmons was the first person in his family to graduate from college when he earned his undergraduate degree from UC Berkeley and then, later, his J.D. from Golden Gate University School of Law.

Soon after, he became a deputy city attorney in San Diego before working his way up to serve as a deputy district attorney for San Diego County for over a decade. In 2017, Judge Simmons was appointed to the Superior Court of California for San Diego County.

Looking back, in my conversation with him, I had the opportunity to ask him a specific question: why he wanted to become a prosecutor as opposed to working with defendants. And Judge Simmons very articulately said, well,

it is because that is where he could do the most good. And he explained why. He felt it was important for people like him to bring their experiences and backgrounds to the role of prosecutor, someone with an understanding for defendants with backgrounds similar to his own. Now Judge Simmons will bring his good work to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California.

Finally, just last week, we also confirmed Judge Andrew Schopler to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California. Judge Schopler earned his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College and his J.D. from Harvard Law School. He then briefly worked as a public defender before joining a criminal defense law firm.

In 2004, he earned his spot as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of California, where he served until 2016, eventually rising to the position of deputy section chief of the Major Frauds and Special Prosecutions Unit. Given his exemplary work ethic, he was then selected to serve as magistrate judge in the Southern District.

But his service to our country extends beyond the bench. In 2014, at the age of 43, Judge Schopler chose to join the California National Guard as a judge advocate. He worked to obtain an age and medical waiver to serve. In 2018, he deployed to Afghanistan as part of Operation Freedom's Sentinel. He earned the Bronze Star for his service and was promoted to the rank of major.

He has committed his career to protecting our freedoms truly, at home and abroad, and I am proud this body came together to support his confirmation.

I am so grateful for all four of these newly confirmed judges' willingness to serve our country, and I know California and the country will be a stronger, more just place because of them and because of their service.

With that, I yield the floor.

VOTE ON CHAUDHARY NOMINATION

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

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

The result was announced—yeas 65, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 58 Ex.]

YEAS—65

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Rounds
Blumenthal	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Boozman	Kelly	Schumer
Brown	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Sinema
Capito	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Lujan	Stabenow
Carper	Manchin	Sullivan
Casey	Markey	Tester
Collins	Menendez	Thune
Coons	Merkley	Tillis
Cornyn	Moran	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Graham	Padilla	Whitehouse
Grassley	Peters	Wicker
Hassan	Reed	Wyden
Heinrich	Romney	

NAYS—29

Blackburn	Fischer	Paul
Braun	Hagerty	Ricketts
Britt	Hawley	Risch
Budd	Hoeven	Rubio
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Lee	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lummis	Tuberville
Daines	Marshall	Vance
Ernst	Mullin	

NOT VOTING—6

Barrasso	Feinstein	McConnell
Cruz	Fetterman	Young

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). 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.

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 Executive Calendar No. 18, Laura Taylor-Kale, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense (New Position).

Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin, Ben Ray Lujan, Tammy Duckworth, John W. Hickenlooper, Amy Klobuchar, Jeanne Shaheen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Edward J. Markey, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan, Catherine Cortez Masto.

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 Laura Taylor-Kale, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Pennsyl-

vania (Mr. FETTERMAN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 68, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 59 Ex.]

YEAS—68

Baldwin	Hassan	Ricketts
Bennet	Heinrich	Romney
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Booker	Hirono	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Kelly	Schumer
Capito	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Sinema
Carper	Klobuchar	Smith
Casey	Lujan	Stabenow
Collins	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Thune
Cornyn	Menendez	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cramer	Moran	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Ernst	Murray	Welch
Fischer	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wicker
Graham	Peters	Wyden
Grassley	Reed	

NAYS—26

Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Britt	Johnson	Schmitt
Budd	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Lee	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lummis	Sullivan
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	Mullin	Vance
Hagerty	Paul	

NOT VOTING—6

Barrasso	Feinstein	McConnell
Cruz	Fetterman	Young

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). On this vote, the yeas are 68, the nays are 26.

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 Laura Taylor-Kale, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. (New Position).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the confirmation vote on the Taylor-Kale nomination be at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader; further, that the cloture motions filed during yesterday's session ripen at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 16; that following the cloture vote on the Clarke nomination and notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate resume legislative session and vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to

proceed to Calendar No. 25, S. 316; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Clarke nomination, at 1:30 p.m., the Senate resume legislative session, all postcloture debate time be considered expired, and the Senate vote on the confirmation of the nomination; finally, if any nominations are confirmed during Thursday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

REMEMBERING JUDITH "JUDY" HEUMANN

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I wish to commemorate the life of Judy Heumann, a leader in the disability rights movement, who passed away on March 4.

Judy was an internationally recognized leader in the disability community. She was instrumental in the development and implementation of major disability rights legislation, including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—IDEA—the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

She was a true public servant having served as the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the Department of Education from 1993 to 2001 and as the first Special Advisor for International Disability Rights at the Department of State from 2010 to 2017. In 1974, she helped develop legislation that became the IDEA while working on the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare—now the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, which I am proud to chair.

Judy became known as the "mother of the disability rights movement" when she fought to implement the Rehabilitation Act. Her activism was a defining moment in the disability and civil rights movement paving the way for the future legislation.

Judy changed the world for the one in four Americans living with a disability and one in six individuals with disabilities around the world. I join the disability community in honoring her contributions to the disability and civil rights movement.

Judy was feisty in her many roles fighting for disability rights. And she

will be remembered for the impacts her advocacy made to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

May the memory of Judy Heumann be for a blessing.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING IDAHO'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

• Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, along with my colleagues Senator JIM RISCH, Representative MIKE SIMPSON and Representative RUSS FULCHER, we honor Idaho's community colleges in recognition of Community College Month and commend them for contributing to the success of Idahoans.

The designation of April as Community College Month by the American Association of Community Colleges and the Association of Community College Trustees provides an opportunity to acknowledge the important role Idaho's community colleges have in enhancing Idahoans' quality of life and contributing to Idaho's economic growth.

Idaho's community colleges prepare young people and adults throughout our great State for postsecondary education, successful careers, and productive lives. We are fortunate to have community colleges working hard to fuel the ingenuity and skill to advance students to Idaho's 4-year institutions and provide dual enrollment opportunities for students pursuing advanced learning while in high school. According to statistics from the Idaho State Board of Education, nearly 142,000 dual credits were earned at our 2-year institutions in fiscal year 2022, meaning community colleges are giving Idaho high school students considerable opportunities to kickstart their higher educations.

They also help keep pace with an ever-changing job market as they help grow the skills needed to prepare students to meet the requirements of progressing in Idaho's workforce. The Idaho State Board of Education found a notable 75 percent of graduates from 2-year institutions are employed in Idaho 1 year after graduation, and Idaho residents with an associate's degree earn \$41,197 more than those without a degree.

Our State is brimming with innovators and cutting-edge businesses. Community colleges are central partners in our communities fostering ideas and helping to meet the needs of area students and small businesses. Thank you to Idaho's community colleges for the important role they play in fueling Idaho achievement and growth.●

REMEMBERING J.E. JAKE FISHER

• Mr. SCHMITT. Madam President, I rise today to honor the life and memory of T.E. "Jake" Fisher, of Portageville, MO.

Jake Fisher was well known for his time as director of the University of Missouri's Delta Research Center, in Portageville, MO, which was renamed the "Fisher" Delta Research, Extension, and Education Center in Jake's honor after his retirement in 2011. Jake began his career at the Delta Research Center in 1961 and worked his way up from farm worker to director by 1989, until his retirement after more than 50 years with the University of Missouri. To commemorate Jake's service to the University of Missouri, the College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources created the T.E. Jake Fisher Scholarship Fund, to continue Jake's huge legacy of encouraging students from the Bootheel region to attend Mizzou.

Jake's devotion to his community and the State of Missouri will never be forgotten. He served on numerous boards over the years and maintained connections with folks across the State. One of his most passionate roles was president of the Pemiscot-Dunklin Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, a position he held until his retirement in September of 2022. He also held positions on the boards of the M&A Electric Power Cooperative and the Associated Electric Cooperative.

Jake was a fine man that will forever be remembered for possessing a heart of gold and an enormous friendly presence. I had the distinct honor of meeting Jake at the Annual Fisher Delta Research Center Field Days, an event where thousands of guests from across the State of Missouri gather to celebrate agriculture, Southeast Missouri, and life-long learning. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Mr. Jake Fisher, and I offer my sincerest condolences to his wife Shelly, daughter Stacey, and remaining family and friends during this difficult time of mourning.●

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-676. A communication from the Acting Chief of the Office of Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Factoring Criteria for Firearms with Attached 'Stabilizing Braces'" (RIN1140-AA55) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-677. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a legislative proposal entitled "Authority to Permit Continued Presence in the United States"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-678. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "General Schedule Locality Pay Areas" (RIN3206-AO40) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February

27, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-679. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prevailing Rate Systems; Definition of San Mateo County, California, to a Nonappropriated Fund Federal Wage System Wage Area" (RIN3206-A046) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-680. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Term and Temporary Employment" (RIN3206-AN92) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-681. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Enhancing Stability and Flexibility for the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP)-Abbreviated Underwriting, Applications for FLTCIP Coverage, and Technical Corrections" (RIN3206-A021) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-682. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Probation on Initial Appointment to a Competitive Position, Performance-Based Reduction in Grade and Removal Actions and Adverse Actions" (RIN3206-A023) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-683. 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 Assistant Secretary/Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Department of Homeland Security, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-684. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, the President's Pay Agent, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the extension of locality based comparability payments; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-685. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Inspector General's Semiannual Report and the Management Response for the period of April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-686. A communication from the Comptroller General of the United States, Government Accountability Office, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Office's audit of the United States government's fiscal years 2022 and 2021 consolidated financial statements; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-687. A communication from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and Privacy Management Report; to the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Commerce, Science, and Transportation; and Appropriations.

EC-688. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Native American Programs" (RIN0970-AC88) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2023; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC-689. A communication from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Change in Rates that VA Pays for Special Modes of Transportation" (RIN2900-AP89) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-690. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the continuation of the national emergency with respect to Cuba that was originally declared in Proclamation 6867 of March 1, 1996; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-691. A communication from the Attorney for Regulatory Affairs Division, Office of the General Counsel, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Standard for Operating Cords on Custom Window Coverings" (Docket No. CPSC-2013-0028) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-692. A communication from the Biologist Office of Protected Resources Directorate, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Regulations" (RIN0648-BM05) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-693. A communication from the Deputy Managing Director, Office of Managing Director, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of the Space Bureau and the Office of International Affairs and Reorganization of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and the Office of the Managing Director" (FCC 23-1) (MD Docket No. 23-12) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-694. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Normal and Transport Category Rotorcraft Certification" (RIN2120-AK80) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0990) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-695. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 4046" (RIN2120-AA65) (Docket No. 31470) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-696. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal

Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 4045" (RIN2120-AA65) (Docket No. 31469) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-697. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "IFR Altitudes; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 570" (RIN2120-AA63) (Docket No. 31471) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 19, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-698. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Multiple Missouri Towns" (RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1317) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-699. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Marshalltown, IA" (RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1224) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-700. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Class E Airspace; Union Springs, AL" (RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1262) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-701. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Class E Airspace; Fertile, MN" (RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0352) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-702. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Austin, MN" (RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1464) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-703. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Minocqua-Woodruff, WI" (RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1465) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-704. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class D and E Airspace and Revocation of Class E Airspace; Topeka, KS" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1557)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-705. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace and Revocation of Class E Airspace; Alton/St. Louis, IL" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1466)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-706. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Mesquite and Dallas-Fort Worth, TX" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1556)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-707. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Area Navigation (RNAV) Route T-465; Northcentral United States" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1260)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-708. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Area Navigation (RNAV) Routes; Eastern United States" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0932)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-709. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Restricted Areas-R2204 Oliktok Point High and R-2204 Oliktok Point Low; AK" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2023-0307)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-710. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Alaskan Federal Airway V-531 Near Point Hope, AK" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0540)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-711. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revocation of Alaskan Airway V-621 Near Atkasuk, AK" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0541)) received in the Office of the President

of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-712. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of V-181 and T-400, and Revocation of V-250 and the Yankton, SD, Low Altitude Reporting Point in the Vicinity of Yankton, SD" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1115)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-713. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22297" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1166)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-714. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22295" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1295)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-715. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters; Amendment 39-22298" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0987)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-716. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Learjet, Inc., Airplanes; Amendment 39-22299" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0991)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-717. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Continental Aerospace Technologies, Inc. Reciprocating Engines With a Certain Superior Air Parts, Intake Valve Installed; Amendment 39-22319" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2023-0027)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-718. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Continental Aerospace Technologies GmbH Reciprocating Engines; Amendment 39-22302" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1413)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-719. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of

Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes; Amendment 39-22241" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0513)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-720. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; GE Aviation Czech s.r.o. (Type Certificate Previously Held by WALTER Engines a.s., Walter a.s., and MOTORLET a.s.) Turboprop Engines; Amendment 39-22301" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1302)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-721. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39-22307" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0874)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-722. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; GE Aviation Czech s.r.o. (Type Certificate Previously Held by WALTER Engines a.s., Walter a.s., and MOTORLET a.s.) Turboprop Engines; Amendment 39-22303" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1414)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-723. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; De Havilland Aircraft of Canada Limited (Type Certificate Previously Held by Bombardier, Inc.) Airplanes; Amendment 39-22303" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1151)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-724. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22323" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0155)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-725. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) Helicopters; Amendment 39-22326" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2023-0159)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-726. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; General Electric Company

Turbofan Engines; Amendment 39-22312" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2019-0766)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-727. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes; Amendment 39-22308" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1251)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-728. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; BAE Systems (Operations) Limited Airplanes; Amendment 39-22313" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1298)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-729. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; ATR-GIE Avions de Transport Regional Airplanes; Amendment 39-22315" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0396)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-730. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22314" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1412)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-731. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes; Amendment 39-22208" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0812)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-732. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Schempp-Hirth Flugzeugbau GmbH Gliders; Amendment 39-22335" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2023-0162)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-733. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Dassault Aviation Airplanes; Amendment 39-22320" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1411)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-734. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal

Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes; Amendment 39-22287" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-0684)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-735. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; BAE Systems (Operations) Limited Airplanes; Amendment 39-22317" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1313)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-736. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes; Amendment 39-22316" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2022-1050)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-737. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Textron Aviation Inc. (Type Certificate Previously Held by Cessna Aircraft Company) Airplanes; Amendment 39-22324" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2020-1078)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-738. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Mooney International Corporation Airplanes; Amendment 39-22311" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2023-0024)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 27, 2023; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-739. A communication from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's proposed fiscal year 2024 Budget and Performance Plan received in the Office of the President pro tempore; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-740. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Zein; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 10641-01-OCSP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2023; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-741. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Various Fragrance Components in Pesticide Formulations; Tolerance Exemption" (FRL No. 10642-01-OCSP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2023; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-742. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Manage-

ment Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2-Propenoic acid, methyl-, polymer with butyl 2-propenoate and methyl 2-methyl-2-propenoate compd. with 2-amino-2-methyl-1-propanol; Tolerance Exemption" (FRL No. 10650-01-OCSP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2023; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-743. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Propanoic acid, 3-hydroxy-(hydroxymethyl)-2-methyl-, polymer with 2-amino-2-methyl-1-propanol, a-hydro-w-hydroxypoly[oxy(methyl-1, 2-ethanedyl)], 5-isocyanato-1-(isocyanato methyl)-1,3,3-trimethylcyclohexane and methyloxirane polymer with oxirane ether with 4,4'-(1-methylethylidene)bis[phenol] (2:1), polyethylen-polypropylene glycol 2-aminopropyl Me ether-blocked, compds. with 2-amino-2-methyl-1-propanol; Tolerance Exemption" (FRL No. 10656-01-OCSP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2023; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. PETERS for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*Cathy Ann Harris, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Merit Systems Protection Board.

*Colleen Joy Shogan, of Pennsylvania, to be Archivist of the United States.

*Adrienne Jennings Noti, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. SMITH, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. REED, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. KING):

S. 801. A bill to address research on, and improve access to, supportive services for individuals with Long COVID; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 802. A bill to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act to provide for a consistent definition for plant biostimulants; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 803. A bill to amend the title XVIII of the Social Security Act to preserve access to rural health care by ensuring fairness in Medicare hospital payments; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. ROMNEY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 804. A bill to provide for security in the Black Sea region, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 805. A bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to increase civil penalties for, and improve enforcement with respect to, customs fraud, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. SMITH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. KING):

S. 806. A bill to amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to establish a grant program to assist with the purchase, installation, and maintenance of point-of-entry and point-of-use drinking water quality improvement products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. WICKER:

S. 807. A bill to require the head of each agency to establish a plan to resume in-person operations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE:

S. 808. A bill to amend the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to require the Secretary of Agriculture to expedite hazardous fuel or insect and disease risk reduction projects on certain National Forest System land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. ROUNDS (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 809. A bill to transfer funds for Energy Efficiency Improvements and Renewable Energy Improvements at Public School Facilities to the Attorney General to award grants to States to promote safety and security in schools; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BRAUN:

S. 810. A bill to create requirements relating to memorials submitted pursuant to Article V of the Constitution of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. WARNOCK, and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO):

S. 811. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to further enhance anti-retaliation protections for whistleblowers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 812. A bill to strengthen employee cost savings suggestions programs within the Federal Government; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LUJÁN (for himself and Ms. ERNST):

S. 813. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to amend regulations to allow for certain packers to have an interest in market agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 814. A bill to allow the Secretary of Homeland Security to designate Romania as

a program country under the visa waiver program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Ms. HASSAN, and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

S. 815. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the female telephone operators of the Army Signal Corps, known as the "Hello Girls"; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. KELLY (for himself and Mr. BUDD):

S. 816. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to establish an Aviation Rulemaking Committee to make recommendations regarding continuous aircraft tracking and transmission of identity, altitude, and location data for high altitude balloons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CASEY, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. LUJÁN, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 817. A bill to repeal title IV of the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. FETTERMAN):

S. 818. A bill to promote affordable access to evidence-based opioid treatments under the Medicare program and require coverage of medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorders, opioid overdose reversal medications, and recovery support services by health plans without cost-sharing requirements; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO:

S. 819. A bill to protect immigrant families, combat fraud, promote citizenship, and build community trust, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. LUMMIS, and Mr. WELCH):

S. 820. A bill to add the Consumer Product Safety Commission to the list of agencies required to be represented on the PFAS inter-agency working group; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. KING, Mr. GRAHAM, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 821. A bill to establish an Ambassador-at-Large for the Arctic Region; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BUDD, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. LEE, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. VANCE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BRITT, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. THUNE, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. HAGERTY, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. MULLIN, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 822. A bill to terminate the Department of Defense memorandum relating to access to abortions, to prohibit the use of travel and transportation allowances, medical convalescent leave, and administrative absences to travel to obtain abortions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 823. A bill to hold social media companies liable for hosting or distributing child sexual abuse material; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself and Mr. ROMNEY):

S. 824. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a national risk management cycle, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HAWLEY (for himself and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 825. A bill to provide limitations of special assessments on community banks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. RISCH):

S. 826. A bill to facilitate the development of a whole-of-government strategy for nuclear cooperation and nuclear exports; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. MARSHALL):

S. 827. A bill to provide that no Federal funds may be used to implement, administer, or enforce the rule of the Department of Justice entitled "Factoring Criteria for Firearms with Attached 'Stabilizing Braces'"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 828. A bill to codify and authorize the Federal Communications Commission's establishment of a council to make recommendations on ways to increase the security, reliability, and interoperability of communications networks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself and Ms. LUMMIS):

S.J. Res. 19. A joint resolution proposing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. LEE, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. COTTON, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. DAINES, Mr. THUNE, Ms. ERNST, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. VANCE, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BOOZMAN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BUDD, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PAUL, Mr. ROMNEY, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. RICKETTS, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. RUBIO):

S.J. Res. 20. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Justice and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives relating to "Factoring Criteria for Firearms With Attached 'Stabilizing Braces'"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr.

YOUNG, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. GRAHAM, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. COONS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. Res. 106. A resolution condemning Beijing's destruction of Hong Kong's democracy and rule of law; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. COTTON, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. VANCE, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. LEE):

S. Res. 107. A resolution recognizing the expiration of the Equal Rights Amendment proposed by Congress in March 1972, and observing that Congress has no authority to modify a resolution proposing a constitutional amendment after the amendment has been submitted to the States or after the amendment has expired; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. Res. 108. A resolution recognizing the Kingdom of Bhutan as responsible for the oppression and forced eviction of more than 100,000 Bhutanese citizens during the late 1980s and 1990s; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. LEE, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. Res. 109. A resolution requesting information on Saudi Arabia's human rights practices pursuant to section 502(b)(3) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. ROUNDS (for himself, Mr. THUNE, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. MCCONNELL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BUDD, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HAGERTY, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KELLY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEE, Mr. LUJÁN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MULLIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROMNEY, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. VANCE, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. Res. 110. A resolution honoring the life and legacy of the late James George Abourezk; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. KING (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. Res. 111. A resolution recognizing the importance of maple syrup production to Maine and designating March 26, 2023, as "Maine Maple Sunday"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. Res. 112. A resolution designating the week of February 27 through March 3, 2023, as "Public Schools Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. LUMMIS, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 113. A resolution recognizing the need for greater access to rural and agricultural media programming; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 305

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) were added as cosponsors of S. 305, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps, and to support programs at the Marine Corps Heritage Center.

S. 316

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF), the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 316, a bill to repeal the authorizations for use of military force against Iraq.

S. 321

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 321, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to define intimate partner to include someone with whom there is or was a dating relationship, and for other purposes.

S. 344

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 344, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retired pay for disability retirees with fewer than 20 years of service and a combat-related disability, and for other purposes.

S. 378

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr.

MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 378, a bill to amend the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 to appropriately limit attorney's fees.

S. 489

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of Florida, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 489, a bill to prohibit any direct or indirect United States funding for the territory of Gaza unless certain conditions are met.

S. 546

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 546, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize law enforcement agencies to use COPS grants for recruitment activities, and for other purposes.

S. 547

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 547, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

S. 597

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 597, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

S. 629

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 629, a bill to provide the President with authority to enter into a comprehensive trade agreement with the United Kingdom, and for other purposes.

S. 641

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 641, a bill to terminate the requirement imposed by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for proof of COVID-19 vaccination for foreign travelers, and for other purposes.

S. 652

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) were added as cosponsors of S. 652, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to require a group health plan or health insurance coverage offered in connection with such a plan to provide an exceptions process for any medication step therapy protocol, and for other purposes.

S. 686

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 686, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to review and prohibit certain transactions

between persons in the United States and foreign adversaries, and for other purposes.

S. 691

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, a bill to deter foreign financial institutions from providing banking services for the benefit of foreign terrorist organizations and from facilitating or promoting payments for acts of terrorism.

S. 704

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 704, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for interest-free deferment on student loans for borrowers serving in a medical or dental internship or residency program.

S. 722

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 722, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit certain expenses associated with obtaining or maintaining recognized postsecondary credentials to be treated as qualified higher education expenses for purposes of 529 accounts.

S. 737

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 737, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to end the tax subsidy for employer efforts to influence their workers' exercise of their rights around labor organizations and engaging in collective action.

S. 740

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) were added as cosponsors of S. 740, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reinstate criminal penalties for persons charging veterans unauthorized fees relating to claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 747

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 747, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide grants to States, territories, and Indian Tribes to address contamination by perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances on farms, and for other purposes.

S. 793

At the request of Mr. LUJÁN, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 793, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to add physical therapists to the list of providers allowed to utilize locum tenens arrangements under Medicare.

S. 794

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 794, a bill to require a pilot program on the participation of non-asset-based third-party logistics providers in the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism.

S. CON. RES. 5

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 5, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

S. RES. 20

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 20, a resolution condemning the coup that took place on February 1, 2021, in Burma and the Burmese military's detention of civilian leaders, calling for an immediate and unconditional release of all those detained, promoting accountability and justice for those killed by the Burmese military, and calling for those elected to serve in parliament to resume their duties without impediment, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 81

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 81, a resolution relating to the establishment of a means for the Senate to provide advice and consent regarding the form of an international agreement relating to pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

S. RES. 97

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 97, a resolution expressing concern about economic and security conditions in Mexico and reaffirming the interest of the United States in mutually beneficial relations with Mexico based on shared interests on security, economic prosperity, and democratic values, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. SMITH, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. REED, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. KING):

S. 801. A bill to address research on, and improve access to, supportive services for individuals with Long COVID; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I rise today to talk about the importance of March 15, which for the first time has been designated "International Long COVID Awareness Day."

This is a topic of importance to millions of Americans who deal with long COVID every day and tens of millions

of people around the world who are dealing with long COVID, from mild symptoms to symptoms that are so debilitating that they are unable to work.

There is still an awful lot to learn about the condition, but what we do know is that long COVID is comprised of ongoing health problems that people experience after being infected with COVID-19. For some, long COVID can last weeks or months. For others, like me, long COVID has now lasted for 3 years.

Long COVID symptoms can vary. Some people experience general symptoms like fatigue, neurological symptoms like headache or difficulty concentrating, digestive problems, shortness of breath, heart palpitations, and other neurological conditions.

The prevalence of long COVID is a best estimate, but the recent survey by the Census Bureau, in partnership with the National Center for Health Statistics, shows that about 5.8 percent of Americans have long COVID, and that amounts to about 11 percent of Americans who have had COVID who continue to experience long COVID symptoms.

I am on my own long COVID journey. My symptoms are mild, but they have been continuous for 3 years. When we were working in the Capitol in March of 2020 at the very beginning of COVID, most of us had dispatched our staffs and sent them home. So I was working in my office together just with my chief of staff. It was kind of a lonely time, as those of us who were here remember, but we were working hard. We were working hard to pass the first COVID relief bill, the CARES Act, and we did good work, in a bipartisan way, to provide relief to individuals and our businesses and hospitals and universities and schools in those early days.

I noticed one day that my nerve endings turned on like a light switch was flicked, and all of them started to tingle like my skin had been dipped in an Alka-Seltzer—24/7, every nerve ending in my body. It has not gone away in 3 years.

I had a mild case of COVID. I never had respiratory problems. I never had fatigue. Within a few days after getting this, I was fine except for the nerve tingling, and I assumed because of the pollen on my car that it was hay fever gone wild. Other symptoms were more like allergic symptoms—pinkeye and skin rashes.

That all went away, but when I went home, I gave COVID to my wife—just one more thing for a husband to feel guilty about. She got the standard case of COVID, and that is what made us realize that that is what I had. We both had mild cases. Within a very few days, we were up and at 'em and feeling great, but this nerve tingling sensation has never gone away.

I kept waiting, thinking next week it will go away or next month it will go away, but after 6 months, I finally decided I should see a neurologist. I went

to George Washington and did fine on neurological tests, but the neurologist told me: Look, viruses can have a neurological aftereffect. The good news is, it is probably not going to get worse. The bad news is, it may not get better.

The doctor was perfectly right on both counts. It has never gotten worse, and it has never gotten better. It is not painful. It is not debilitating. I can work. I can exercise. I can focus. It is harder to sleep—that would be the only area where it is affecting my life. But it is eerie that, after 3 years, it hasn't changed.

My wife said: Well, but then doesn't that mean you just get used to it and you don't notice it?

No. It is just a little too intense. I notice it all the time, everywhere.

Well, the good news is, my symptoms are mild and I can continue to work, but as I have shared my story, what I have found is many come and share their stories with me, including people here around the Capitol. They share their own long COVID stories, and many are very, very troubling: The marathon runner who can't walk around the block. I have a dear friend who—I am godfather to her oldest child—has a very physically demanding job as a dialysis nurse, which involves a lot of helping patients around. She got COVID, and both fatigue and balance issues are so challenging that she is not able to do the work.

I had a State employee who worked in my department of transportation who saw me on a bike ride by his house one day in Richmond, where I live, and he flagged me down and stopped me. He said: Hey, look, I was your employee when you were Governor working with the department of transportation. I am a young dad. I have two boys under age 10. I want to be a great father for them, but I got COVID, and now my long COVID symptoms are so significant, I can't play baseball with them.

He can't do the kinds of things that a dad wants to do with his children. This individual is now on long-term disability, unable to work at all.

These are very, very serious stories.

The public health emergency around COVID is likely to come to an end on May 11, but we can't forget millions of people who are dealing with this issue.

Now, let me just share some statistics. Across the United States, adult women are more likely than men to experience long COVID. Individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino experience long COVID more than any other racial or ethnic group. People with disabilities are more likely to experience long COVID than those without disabilities.

Long COVID is not limited to people like me. I just turned 65. A lot of young people are dealing with long COVID symptoms. Their initial COVID presented differently than it did with most adults, but some of the long COVID symptoms are those I have described. Twenty-five percent of people who have long COVID say that their

symptoms significantly limit their activity.

The economic cost of long COVID disability is upward of \$200 billion a year. Up to 4 million people are out of the American workforce right now because of long COVID, at a time when I know all of us are hearing from our employers: I can't hire people. It is so hard to hire people now.

The unemployment rate is the lowest it has been since 1969. If there are things we could do that could help those 4 million come back into the workforce, it would be good not only for them, for their happiness, for their pocketbooks; it would be great for our economy.

To better understand the impact of long COVID, in January, I worked together with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to gather patients and providers from Virginia and State and Federal officials from everywhere to come to a summit in Richmond to talk about long COVID. The conversations that day allowed us to, nearly 3 years in, dig into long COVID and what are its impacts and, most importantly, what can we do. We were able to discuss experiences, share best practices and research.

I was honored to have four Virginians with long COVID who joined me in discussing their own journeys.

Cynthia talked about having unusual symptoms and not being believed initially that she even had COVID and then not being believed that she had long COVID. Her symptoms were more in the allergic reaction space, similar to mine. In fact, she went multiple times to emergency rooms because her symptoms were so intense and found that, without telling her, she was often being drug-tested because they assumed that she was there and maybe she was suffering from some kind of a drug overdose. So they were testing her for that and not believing her long COVID story.

She has since found healthcare professionals who believe her and are offering her treatments that have not ended her long COVID symptoms but are enabling her to more effectively negotiate her schedule.

Mattie from Southwest Virginia was kind of your quintessential do-everything, 35-year-old mom of three, who also worked, who also went to school. She could juggle everything and make it seem easy. When she got COVID, she got hit with fatigue so intense she couldn't do any of those things, and then that spiraled into depression. She was a healthcare provider herself, working with seniors, and really started to question, What kind of purpose do I have if I can't be the mom I want to be, if I can't be the healthcare provider I want to be? It caused tremendous anxiety and depression.

Now, Mattie's was a story of hope because she eventually found a physician who realized COVID had exacerbated an underlying medical condition called Hashimoto's disease that she had had

probably since birth but had never really been serious enough to notice. COVID exacerbated it. She is being treated for Hashimoto's, and many of those symptoms have abated. So hers is a story of hope. This is not a hopelessness story. You can find paths forward. She is doing better.

ZZ and Katy. ZZ is a middle schooler who had serious long COVID experiences, and Katy talked about trying to help her son and not being believed until they finally found their way to the Children's National Hospital, just up the hill from where we are.

Finally, Rachel—a longtime human resources professional at a community college in Virginia—used to working with people, including people with disabilities, to help them either get jobs or do coursework at the local community college. Her long COVID experience was so debilitating in fatigue and migraine headaches and other problems with respect to focus that she eventually had to leave her job and apply for long-term disability and her Social Security.

She was told when she applied that there were more than half a million applications before hers, and after a year, she was turned down with little explanation. She described the challenges of trying to negotiate the system and fill out forms when she is suffering from such fatigue and headaches and other symptoms that make even filling out a form difficult.

So these four stories were a mixture of young people and adults, some stories that didn't yet have happy endings and at least one that did have a positive ending, and it was important that we understand them.

Congress has taken some steps. I have colleagues in the room, and I just want to thank them for this. We provided \$1.15 billion in Federal funding to the National Institutes of Health to advance understanding, prevention, and treatment. In December, Congress passed a budget that included \$10 million for this Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to do critical research. These efforts are a step in the right direction, but more must be done.

Just last week, the President introduced the fiscal year 2024 budget. He requested additional funding for AHRQ and additional funding for the HSRA to do long COVID.

Today, I am reintroducing a bill, the CARE for Long COVID Act, with Senators Markey and Duckworth and eight other Senators. It is also being introduced in a bipartisan way on the House side. The bill will expand research to increase understanding of treatment efficacy and disparities and provide more recommendations, educate long COVID patients and health providers, facilitate interagency cooperation, and develop partnerships between community-based organizations, social services, and others.

But there is more work to be done, so as I conclude—I see my colleague from Louisiana on the floor waiting to

speak—we just have to keep focused on this to try to address this challenge. When the public health emergency ends, we can't forget those who are dealing with long COVID, and we can't forget those who are dealing with the significant amount of mental anxiety and stress that has been present in the lives of all for the last 3 years. We have to improve our outreach and education, we have to accelerate our research to come up with treatments and cures that work, and we have to do it with a sense of urgency. I am committed to working with you all to do that.

By Mr. THUNE:

S. 808. A bill to amend the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to require the Secretary of Agriculture to expedite hazardous fuel or insect and disease risk reduction projects on certain National Forest System land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

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

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

S. 808

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Expediting Forest Restoration and Recovery Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. APPLICATION BY FOREST SERVICE OF AUTHORITIES TO EXPEDITE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSES IN CARRYING OUT HAZARDOUS FUEL AND INSECT AND DISEASE RISK REDUCTION PROJECTS.

Section 104 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6514) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(i) APPLICATION BY FOREST SERVICE OF AUTHORITIES TO EXPEDITE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSES IN CARRYING OUT HAZARDOUS FUEL AND INSECT AND DISEASE RISK REDUCTION PROJECTS.—

“(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) INSECT AND DISEASE TREATMENT AREA.—The term ‘insect and disease treatment area’ means an area that—

“(i) is designated by the Secretary as an insect and disease treatment area under this title; or

“(ii) is designated as at risk or a hazard on the most recent National Insect and Disease Risk Map published by the Forest Service.

“(B) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ has the meaning given the term in section 101(14)(A).

“(2) USE OF AUTHORITIES.—In carrying out a hazardous fuel or insect and disease risk reduction project in an insect and disease treatment area authorized under this Act, the Secretary shall—

“(A) apply the categorical exclusion established by section 603 in the case of a hazardous fuel or insect and disease risk reduction project carried out in an area—

“(i) designated as suitable for timber production within the applicable forest plan; or

“(ii) where timber harvest activities are not prohibited;

“(B) conduct applicable environmental assessments and environmental impact statements in accordance with this section in the case of a hazardous fuel or insect and disease risk reduction project—

“(i) carried out in an area—

“(I) outside of an area described in subparagraph (A); or

“(II) where other significant resource concerns exist, as determined exclusively by the Secretary; or

“(ii) that is carried out in an area equivalent to not less than a hydrologic unit code 5 watershed, as defined by the United States Geological Survey; and

“(C) notwithstanding subsection (d), in the case of any other hazardous fuel or insect and disease risk reduction project, in the environmental assessment or environmental impact statement prepared under subsection (b), study, develop, and describe—

“(i) the proposed agency action; and

“(ii) the alternative of no action.

“(3) PRIORITY FOR REDUCING RISKS OF INSECT INFESTATION AND WILDFIRE.—Except where established as a mandatory standard that constrains project and activity decision making in a resource management plan (as defined in section 101(13)(A)) in effect on the date of enactment of this Act, in the case of an insect and disease treatment area, the Secretary shall prioritize reducing the risks of insect and disease infestation and wildfire over other planning objectives.

“(4) INCLUSION OF FIRE REGIME GROUP IV.—Notwithstanding section 603(c)(2)(B), the Secretary shall apply the categorical exclusion described in paragraph (2)(A) to areas in Fire Regime Group IV.

“(5) EXCLUDED AREAS.—This subsection shall not apply to—

“(A) a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System; or

“(B) an inventoried roadless area, except in the case of an activity that is permitted under—

“(i) the final rule of the Secretary entitled ‘Special Areas; Roadless Area Conservation’ (66 Fed. Reg. 3244 (January 12, 2001)); or

“(ii) a State-specific roadless area conservation rule.

“(6) REPORTS.—The Secretary shall annually make publicly available data describing the acreage treated under hazardous fuel or insect and disease risk reduction projects in insect and disease treatment areas during the previous year.”.

SEC. 3. GOOD NEIGHBOR AUTHORITY.

Section 8206(b)(2) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a(b)(2)) is amended by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following:

“(C) TREATMENT OF REVENUE.—Funds received from the sale of timber by a Governor of a State under a good neighbor agreement shall be retained and used by the Governor—

“(i) to carry out authorized restoration services under that good neighbor agreement; and

“(ii) if funds remain after carrying out authorized restoration services under clause (i), to carry out authorized restoration services within the State under other good neighbor agreements.”.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 814. A bill to allow the Secretary of Homeland Security to designate Romania as a program country under the visa waiver program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

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

S. 814

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Romania Visa Waiver Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that the Government of Romania should—

(1) undertake all steps necessary to prepare Romania for participation in the visa waiver program under section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1187) by developing a strategy to meet all criteria for the program; and

(2) continue to advance robust efforts to eliminate trafficking in persons, including by prioritizing the recommendations outlined in the report of the Department of State entitled “Trafficking in Persons Report” issued in July 2022.

SEC. 3. ELIGIBILITY OF ROMANIA FOR VISA WAIVER PROGRAM.

Notwithstanding any provision of section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1187), the Secretary of Homeland Security may designate Romania as a program country under the visa waiver program established by that section.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 106—CONDEMNING BEIJING'S DESTRUCTION OF HONG KONG'S DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW

Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. GRAHAM, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. COONS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 106

Whereas, in 1997, Great Britain handed Hong Kong over to Chinese rule under guarantees that Hong Kong would become a Special Administrative Region under the “one country, two systems” principle, pursuant to which Hong Kong's Basic Law would apply and would enshrine “fundamental rights” of Hong Kong residents and a political structure, including an independent judiciary, the right to vote, and freedoms of assembly and speech, among others;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) has repeatedly undermined Hong Kong's autonomy since the 1997 handover, including actions which resulted in political protests in Hong Kong, including the Umbrella Movement in 2014, a protest against Beijing's attempt to reform Hong Kong's electoral system, and the 2019–2020 protests, which opposed the Hong Kong government's attempt to implement an extradition law that would have subjected Hong Kongers to prosecution in mainland China;

Whereas the Hong Kong Police Force used excessive force to try to quell the 2019–2020 protestors, many of whom were under the age of 30;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China responded to these protests by passing and implementing the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (commonly referred to as the "Hong Kong national security law") a vaguely defined criminal statute that includes overly broad charges and extraterritorial reach to punish people for exercising their fundamental rights and freedoms;

Whereas, since its enactment in June 2020, this law has been used by the Government of the People's Republic of China as a pretext to crack down on legitimate and peaceful expression, including the exercise of freedoms of assembly, speech, and religious belief provided for under the Basic Law, to replace the Hong Kong legislature with individuals loyal to the Chinese Communist Party, and to pass new immigration laws that subject Hong Kong citizens and residents, as well as PRC nationals and foreign nationals, to exit bans in Hong Kong similar to those implemented in mainland China;

Whereas more than 200 people have been arrested under the Hong Kong national security law since its enactment in June 2020;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China is using the Hong Kong national security law to harass, target, and threaten non-Hong Kong citizens and those outside of Hong Kong, based upon for unsubstantiated and vague allegations of "endangering national security";

Whereas, Jimmy Lai, a 75-year-old Hong Kong pro-democracy advocate and media entrepreneur, has been targeted and persecuted for decades, most recently through multiple prosecutions, including related to exercising his rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, his sentencing to over five years in prison under politically motivated fraud charges and the seizure of his multimillion dollar independent media organization Apple Daily by the Hong Kong authorities;

Whereas Mr. Lai is now one of the highest profile cases facing trial under vaguely-defined charges under the so-called "national security law";

Whereas, Cardinal Zen, a 90-year-old Roman Catholic cardinal, and five other colleagues were found guilty of politically motivated charges related to failing to register a humanitarian fund that helped anti-government protesters;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China's undermining of democracy in Hong Kong has ramifications for the international order, including with regard to the future of Taiwan;

Whereas the Hong Kong government has conducted a public relations campaign to convince global business leaders that Hong Kong remains a critical and attractive international financial center, while simultaneously undermining the independence of institutions that encouraged its growth over the past several decades;

Whereas Hong Kong still maintains a separate voting share from the People's Republic of China at many multilateral organizations—including the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the Financial Action Task Force, the International Olympic Committee, and the World Trade Organization—effectively doubling the People's Republic of China's voting power at these critical institutions; and

Whereas the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act (Public Law 116-76; 22 U.S.C. 5701 note), signed into law in November 2019,

requires the President to use sanctions to promote accountability for those responsible for certain conduct that undermines fundamental freedoms and autonomy in Hong Kong: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the Government of the People's Republic of China's "Hong Kong national security law" and related human rights abuses;

(2) urges all governments that value democracy or autonomy to hold the Chinese Communist Party accountable for its destruction of Hong Kong's autonomy, rule of law, and freedoms;

(3) supports the people of Hong Kong as they fight to exercise fundamental rights and freedoms, as enumerated by—

(A) the Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong, done at Beijing December 19, 1984;

(B) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, done at New York December 19, 1966; and

(C) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, done at Paris December 10, 1948;

(4) condemns the Government of the People's Republic of China's practice of bringing false and politically motivated charges, such as fraud, against Hong Kongers in order to tarnish their reputations in advance of their national security law trials;

(5) calls upon the Hong Kong government to immediately drop all sedition and national security law-related charges and free all defendants immediately, including Jimmy Lai and Cardinal Zen;

(6) expresses extreme concern about the Government of the People's Republic of China's state-directed theft of Apple Daily, and holds that Hong Kong no longer has credibility as an international business center due to the erosion of the regulatory and legal environments that have promoted its economic growth for decades;

(7) encourages the United States Government and other governments to take steps at multilateral institutions to ensure that voting procedures recognize that there is no longer a meaningful distinction between Hong Kong and mainland China; and

(8) urges the United States Government to use all available tools, including those authorized by the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, in response to the Government of the People's Republic of China's actions in Hong Kong.

SENATE RESOLUTION 107—RECOGNIZING THE EXPIRATION OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY CONGRESS IN MARCH 1972, AND OBSERVING THAT CONGRESS HAS NO AUTHORITY TO MODIFY A RESOLUTION PROPOSING A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AFTER THE AMENDMENT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE STATES OR AFTER THE AMENDMENT HAS EXPIRED

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. COTTON, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. VANCE, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. LEE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 107

Whereas article V of the Constitution of the United States gives two-thirds of the Senate and two-thirds of the House of Representatives the power to propose constitutional amendments and their mode of ratification by the States;

Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States in *Dillon v. Gloss*, 256 U.S. 368 (1921) unanimously held that Congress may, in proposing a constitutional amendment, incorporate "a definite period for ratification [that] shall be fixed, so that all may know what it is and speculation on what is a reasonable time may be avoided ...";

Whereas the Supreme Court in the *Dillon v. Gloss* decision held that whether Congress uses its power to include such a "definite" deadline was "a matter of detail which Congress may determine as an incident of its power to designate the mode of ratification" of an amendment, which mode Congress has always dictated in the proposing clause of a resolution;

Whereas House Joint Resolution 208, 92nd Congress, referred to in this resolution as the "Equal Rights Amendment Resolution" contained a ratification deadline of 7 years in the proposing clause of the resolution, as has every constitutional amendment submitted by Congress to the States since 1960, and proposed an amendment referred to in this resolution as the "Equal Rights Amendment";

Whereas, in *Illinois v. Ferriero*, No. 21-5096 (D.C. Cir. 2023), a unanimous ruling issued on February 28, 2023, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit rejected the claim of the Attorneys General of Illinois and Nevada that a deadline in a proposing clause is not effective, with the court calling that claim "unpersuasive" and observing that "if that were the case, then the specification of the mode of ratification in every amendment in our nation's history would also be inoperative";

Whereas, in the same unanimous ruling, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit noted that the Supreme Court has affirmed the authority of Congress to set a binding ratification deadline, and the court of appeals refused to order the Archivist to certify the Equal Rights Amendment as part of the Constitution and dismissed the lawsuit brought by Illinois and Nevada;

Whereas Representative Martha Griffiths, the sponsor of the Equal Rights Amendment Resolution, said in 1971, speaking of the deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment, "I think it is perfectly proper to have the 7-year statute so that it should not be hanging over our heads forever.";

Whereas, under article V of the Constitution, a proposed amendment does not become part of the Constitution unless it is either "ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof" with one or the other mode of ratification being dictated by Congress in the proposing clause of a resolution;

Whereas only 35 States ratified the Equal Rights Amendment before its 7-year deadline, resulting in fewer than the 38 State ratifications necessary for adoption under article V of the Constitution;

Whereas, before the original deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment expired, 4 of the 35 States that voted to ratify voted to rescind their ratifications;

Whereas Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in 2020 observed, when explaining why she thought the Equal Rights Amendment needed to start over, "If you count a latecomer on the plus side, how can you disregard States that said we've changed our minds?";

Whereas, in *Idaho v. Freeman*, 529 F. Supp. 1107 (D. Idaho 1981), Judge Marion Callister

of the United States District Court for the District of Idaho held that article V of the Constitution did not permit Congress to extend a ratification deadline, writing, "Once the proposal has been formulated and sent to the States, the time period could not be changed any more than the entity designated to ratify could be changed from the State legislature to a State convention or vice versa. Once the proposal is made, Congress is not at liberty to change it.";

Whereas, on March 5, 2021, Judge Rudolph Contreras of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia held in *Virginia v. Ferriero*, 525 F. Supp. 3d 36 (2021) that the deadline contained in the Equal Rights Amendment Resolution was constitutionally valid and that the legislative actions of 3 State legislatures in 2017 through 2020, purporting to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, "came too late to count";

Whereas Judge Contreras noted, "Inclusion of a deadline was a compromise that helped Congress successfully propose the ERA where previous attempts to pass a proposal had failed.";

Whereas, while Judge Contreras found it unnecessary to reach the question of whether Congress could retroactively alter a deadline, he did observe that "the effect of a ratification deadline is not the kind of question that ought to vary from political moment to political moment ... Yet leaving the efficacy of ratification deadlines up to the political branches would do just that.";

Whereas, on January 6, 2020, the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel issued a legal opinion stating, "We do not believe, however, that Congress in 2020 may change the terms upon which the 1972 Congress proposed the ERA for the States' consideration. Article V does not expressly or implicitly grant Congress such authority. To the contrary, the text contemplates no role for Congress in the ratification process after it proposes an amendment. Moreover, such a congressional power finds no support in Supreme Court precedent.";

Whereas the 2020 Office of Legal Counsel opinion also observed, "Because Congress and the State legislatures are distinct actors in the constitutional amendment process, the 116th Congress may not revise the terms under which two-thirds of both Houses proposed the ERA Resolution and under which 35 State legislatures initially ratified it. Such an action by this Congress would seem tantamount to asking the 116th Congress to override a veto that President Carter had returned during the 92nd Congress, a power this Congress plainly does not have."; and

Whereas in oral argument before the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in the *Virginia v. Ferriero* case on September 28, 2022, Judge Robert Wilkins of that Court asked Deputy Assistant Attorney General Sarah Harrington, "Why shouldn't the Archivist just certify and publish [the Equal Rights Amendment] and let Congress decide whether the deadline should be enforced ...?", and Ms. Harrington answered, "The Constitution doesn't contemplate any role for Congress at the back end. Congress proposes the amendment, it goes out into the world, and the States do what they're going to do": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes that, under article V of the Constitution, the legitimate constitutional role of Congress in the constitutional amendment process for the Equal Rights Amendment ended when Congress proposed and submitted the Equal Rights Amendment to the States on March 22, 1972;

(2) recognizes that the Equal Rights Amendment expired when its ratification

deadline passed with fewer than three-fourths of the States ratifying;

(3) recognizes that Congress has no power to modify a resolution proposing a constitutional amendment after the amendment has been submitted to the States, or after the amendment has expired; and

(4) recognizes that the only legitimate way for the Equal Rights Amendment to become part of the Constitution is provided in article V of the Constitution, and requires re-introduction of the same or modified language addressing the same subject, through approval of a new joint resolution by the required two-thirds votes in each house of Congress.

SENATE RESOLUTION 108—RECOGNIZING THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OPPRESSION AND FORCED EVICTION OF MORE THAN 100,000 BHUTANESE CITIZENS DURING THE LATE 1980S AND 1990S

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

S. RES. 108

Whereas the Kingdom of Bhutan was responsible for the oppression and forced displacement of more than 100,000 Nepali language-speaking Bhutanese citizens, Lhotshampas and Sharchops, in the 1990s due to their identity, culture, language, religion, and political opinion;

Whereas many of these individuals experienced unjust detention, torture, and other forms of human rights abuses;

Whereas many political prisoners continue to be held in Bhutanese prisons for protracted sentences;

Whereas persecuted Bhutanese were forced to cross into Nepal, where some remained for nearly two decades in refugee camps;

Whereas thousands of Bhutanese refugees remain in refugee camps in Nepal, and the Government of Bhutan continues to deny dignified repatriation to those who desire it;

Whereas more than 250,000 Nepali-speaking Lhotshampa Bhutanese still inside Bhutan suffer political, social, and economic oppression as the Government of Bhutan has continuously refused to reinstate the citizenships that were stripped during the 1990s;

Whereas such incidences of human rights violations and abuses and extreme acts of violence perpetrated by any individual actor or state should be condemned;

Whereas the majority of the Nepali-speaking Lhotshampa, who were refugees in Nepal, have now resettled in other countries, including Australia, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States;

Whereas, although Bhutan and the United States have not established diplomatic relations, the two countries maintain warm and productive unofficial ties;

Whereas the Kingdom of Bhutan transitioned to democracy in 2008 and has held successive free and fair elections and transitions of power since that time;

Whereas the Kingdom of Bhutan has been a leader in the global fight against climate change and is the only carbon negative country;

Whereas the Kingdom of Bhutan has stood with the United States and other likeminded countries as the United Nations to condemn Russian aggression in Ukraine; and

Whereas, the Kingdom of Bhutan is a close Indo-Pacific partner of the United States committed to upholding the rules-based international order: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) declares that the Royal Government of Bhutan is responsible for the political, cultural, and ethnic oppression of Nepali-speaking Lhotshampas and Sharchops in Bhutan during the late 1980s and 1990s;

(2) urges the Royal Government of Bhutan to conduct a rapid and unconditional release of all political prisoners, whose crime was demanding democracy and human rights, with due restitution and reparations;

(3) in a spirit of friendship, urges the Royal Government of Bhutan to resume discussions with the Government of Nepal on the status of individuals in Nepal who assert a claim to Bhutan citizenship or residency;

(4) requests the Royal Government of Bhutan to restore citizenship for all Nepali-speaking Lhotshampas that have had it arbitrarily revoked;

(5) requests the Royal Government of Bhutan accept the voluntary return of its citizens from the refugee camps in Nepal; and

(6) urges the Royal Government of Bhutan to enter into a holistic peace building and reconciliation process and institute an independent Truth Commission to publicly investigate any human rights violations and abuses committed during the 1990s, publish its findings, and follow through on its recommendations to ensure no future displacement or oppression of Nepali-speaking Lhotshampas and other minorities in Bhutan.

SENATE RESOLUTION 109—REQUESTING INFORMATION ON SAUDI ARABIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES PURSUANT TO SECTION 502B(C) OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1961

Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. LEE, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 109

Resolved,

SECTION 1. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON SAUDI ARABIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES.

(a) STATEMENT REQUESTED.—The Senate requests that the Secretary of State, not later than 30 days after the date of the adoption of this resolution, transmits to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, pursuant to section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2304(c)), a statement regarding Saudi Arabia's human rights practices that has been prepared in collaboration with the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and the Office of the Legal Adviser.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The statement submitted under subsection (a) should include—

(1) all available credible information concerning alleged violations of internationally recognized human rights by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including—

(A) torture and inhuman treatment of detainees;

(B) execution of people for nonviolent offenses;

(C) discrimination against women;

(D) severe restrictions on religious freedom;

(E) forced disappearances;

(F) transnational repression; and

(G) the denial of the right to life in the context of the armed conflict in Yemen caused by indiscriminate or disproportionate operations;

(2) a description of the steps that the United States Government has taken—

(A) to promote respect for and observance of human rights as part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's activities, including in the context of the armed conflict in Yemen;

(B) to discourage any practices that are inimical to internationally recognized human rights; and

(C) to publicly or privately call attention to, and disassociate the United States and any security assistance provided for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from, any practices described in subparagraph (B);

(3) an assessment, notwithstanding any practices described in paragraph (2)(B), whether extraordinary circumstances exist that necessitate a continuation of security assistance for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

(4) if such circumstances exist, a description of the circumstances and the extent to which security assistance should be continued (subject to such conditions as Congress may impose under section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2304)); and

(5) other information, including—

(A) an assessment from the Secretary of State of the likelihood that United States security assistance (as defined in section 502B(d) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2304(d))) will be used in support of Saudi activities related to the armed conflict in Yemen;

(B) a description and assessment of the actions that the United States Government is taking to ensure end use monitoring protocols for all weapons sold or transferred to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen;

(C) an assessment of any impact or adverse effect to Israel's qualitative military edge of security assistance provided by the United States or other countries;

(D) a description of any actions that the United States Government is taking to address allegations of detention, torture, or forced disappearances of United States citizens by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

(E) a description of any actions that the United States Government is taking to deter incidents of intimidation or harassment by the Government of Saudi Arabia against United States citizens, individuals in the United States, and their family members who are not United States citizens, whether living in Saudi Arabia or in the United States; and

(F) a description of any actions that the United States Government is taking to prevent the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from aiding Saudi citizens accused of violent crimes in the United States to flee from the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 110—HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THE LATE JAMES GEORGE ABOUREZK

Mr. ROUNDS (for himself, Mr. THUNE, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. MCCONNELL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BUDD, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr.

GRASSLEY, Mr. HAGERTY, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KELLY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEE, Mr. LUJÁN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MULLIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROMNEY, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. VANCE, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. YOUNG) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:.

S. RES. 110

Whereas James G. Abourezk was born in Wood, South Dakota, to Lebanese immigrants in 1931;

Whereas James G. Abourezk earned a degree in civil engineering from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, graduated from the University of South Dakota School of Law, and practiced law in Rapid City, South Dakota;

Whereas James G. Abourezk served in the United States Navy from 1948 to 1952;

Whereas James G. Abourezk was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1970 and represented the State of South Dakota from 1971 to 1973;

Whereas James G. Abourezk was elected to the United States Senate in 1972, representing the State of South Dakota from 1973 to 1979, and was the first Arab American to serve in the United States Senate;

Whereas James G. Abourezk re-established the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate, serving as the first Chair of the Committee after re-establishment;

Whereas James G. Abourezk co-authored and worked to pass Public Law 95-341 (commonly known as the "American Indian Religious Freedom Act") (42 U.S.C. 1996 et seq.), the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.), and the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.);

Whereas James G. Abourezk, after leaving the Senate, co-founded and was the first chair of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee;

Whereas James G. Abourezk served as the first Attorney General of the Navajo Nation from 1982 to 1983; and

Whereas James G. Abourezk continued to advocate on behalf of Native American communities after his retirement: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the Senate—

(A) has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of James G. Abourezk, former member of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives;

(B) honors the life and legacy of James G. Abourezk for his unwavering dedication to South Dakota as a public servant and his accomplishments in legislating with principle and dedication for the good of the people of the United States; and

(C) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate communicate this reso-

lution to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of James G. Abourezk; and

(2) when the Senate adjourns today, it stand adjourned as a further mark of respect to the memory of James G. Abourezk.

SENATE RESOLUTION 111—RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF MAPLE SYRUP PRODUCTION TO MAINE AND DESIGNATING MARCH 26, 2023, AS "MAINE MAPLE SUNDAY"

Mr. KING (for himself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:.

S. RES. 111

Whereas the art of making sugar and syrup from the sap of the maple tree (also known as acer saccharinum) was developed by Native Americans of the Northeastern United States;

Whereas the production of maple syrup in Maine has a seasonal window between January and May, which is when temperatures drop below freezing at night and rise above freezing during the day;

Whereas Maine accounts for 17 percent of United States production of maple syrup and is the third largest producer among the States;

Whereas Maine maple syrup producers make more than 575,000 gallons of syrup annually, generating more than \$27,000,000 for the Maine economy;

Whereas maple syrup production in Maine supports more than 560 full-time and part-time jobs that generate more than \$17,300,000 in wages;

Whereas Maine Maple Sunday has been observed for 40 years, with more than 100 sugarhouses participating from Aroostook to York County, Maine, and attracting thousands of visitors annually;

Whereas Maine Maple Sunday is always observed the fourth Sunday in March; and

Whereas on March 26, 2023, Maine maple syrup producers will host the 40th annual Maine Maple Sunday: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 26, 2023, as "Maine Maple Sunday"; and

(2) recognizes the contribution and importance of maple syrup producers and their families in the State of Maine.

SENATE RESOLUTION 112—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 27 THROUGH MARCH 3, 2023, AS "PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEEK"

Mr. TESTER (for himself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 112

Whereas public education is a significant institution in a 21st-century democracy;

Whereas public schools in the United States educate students about the values and beliefs that hold the individuals of the United States together as a nation;

Whereas public schools prepare young individuals of the United States to contribute to the society, economy, and citizenry of the country;

Whereas 90 percent of children in the United States attend public schools;

Whereas Federal, State, and local lawmakers should—

(1) prioritize support for strengthening the public schools of the United States;

(2) empower superintendents, principals, and other school leaders to implement, manage, and lead school districts and schools in partnership with educators, parents, and other local education stakeholders; and

(3) support services and programs that are critical to helping students engage in learning, including counseling, extracurricular activities, and mental health support;

Whereas public schools should foster inclusive, safe, and high-quality environments in which children can learn to think critically, problem solve, and build relationships;

Whereas public schools should provide environments in which all students have the opportunity to succeed beginning in their earliest years, regardless of who a student is or where a student lives;

Whereas Congress should support—

(1) efforts to advance equal opportunity and excellence in public education;

(2) efforts to implement evidence-based practices in public education; and

(3) continuous improvements to public education;

Whereas every child should—

(1) receive an education that helps the child reach the full potential of the child; and

(2) attend a school that offers a high-quality educational experience;

Whereas Federal funding, in addition to State and local funds, supports the access of students to inviting classrooms, well-prepared educators, and services to support healthy students, including nutrition and afterschool programs;

Whereas teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals should provide students with a well-rounded education and strive to create joy in learning;

Whereas superintendents, principals, other school leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents make public schools vital components of communities and are working hard to improve educational outcomes for children across the country; and

Whereas the week of February 27 through March 3, 2023, is an appropriate period to designate as “Public Schools Week”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates the week of February 27 through March 3, 2023, as “Public Schools Week”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 113—RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR GREATER ACCESS TO RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL MEDIA PROGRAMMING

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. LUMMIS, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:

S. RES. 113

Whereas individuals living in rural areas in the United States need access to media content that is relevant to their daily lives;

Whereas rural and agricultural programming includes agricultural weather, agribusiness news, commodity market news, and western sports, and this programming is important to the farmers and ranchers of the United States for their way of life and making a living;

Whereas rural and agricultural programming covers matters that affect all individuals in the United States;

Whereas all individuals in the United States need to be exposed to, and informed

about, what is occurring outside of the major cities and suburbs of the United States;

Whereas all individuals in the United States feel the effects of inflation and supply chain shortages, and rural and agricultural programming is in a unique position to inform viewers of the roots of these issues;

Whereas the population of the world is projected to grow from 7,000,000,000 to approximately 9,000,000,000 by 2050, and agricultural productivity will need to increase to meet the growing demand for food and the projected increase in consumption;

Whereas a decrease in investment in agricultural research and development would result in a negative shock to agricultural productivity;

Whereas an informed public is key to supporting the proper level of investment in agricultural research and development;

Whereas significant consolidation in the media market and prioritization of consolidated media has had a negative impact on access to rural and agricultural programming; and

Whereas multichannel video programming distributors and providers of digital and streaming media should make delivery of rural and agricultural programming, including agricultural news and western lifestyle content, a priority: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes the importance of rural and agricultural programming and the need for greater access to rural and agricultural media programming.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I have nine 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 Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

The Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Isaac Holmes, an intern in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the Congress.

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

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THE LATE JAMES GEORGE ABOUREZK

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 110, 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. 110) honoring the life and legacy of the late James George Abourezk.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that 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. 110) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

MAINE MAPLE SUNDAY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 111, which is at the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 111) recognizing the importance of maple syrup production to Maine and designating March 26, 2023, as "Maine Maple Sunday".

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

Mr. SCHUMER. 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. 111) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 112, which is at the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 112) designating the week of February 27 through March 3, 2023, as "Public Schools Week".

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that 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. 112) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned under the provisions of S. Res. 110 until 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 16; 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; that following the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Clarke nomination, as provided under the previous order.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, if there is no further business to come be-

fore the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator WICKER.

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

The Senator from Mississippi.

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I rise this evening with a simple and sober message: The United States has entered a very dangerous period, a dangerous national security moment the likes of which we have not seen since the height of the Cold War. Although alarming, the moment is clarifying. The job of the Department of Defense and Congress is and always has been to provide for the common defense, as provided in the Constitution. We must stay focused on American military might and so prevent our adversaries from changing the course of our future.

An American-led 21st century is a peaceful and prosperous century. That is not what a century led by the Chinese Communist Party would look like. It is no surprise the pariah states of Russia, Iran, and North Korea are growing closer to Beijing and to each other. A free world is actually something that threatens them.

As the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, it is my hope that we will decide not just to compete in this dangerous era but that we win. To that end, I have identified three priorities: deterring conflicts, winning technological competitions, and investing in our military's personnel.

First, deterring conflicts. In American history, one foreign and defense policy has succeeded above all others: a national policy of preparedness.

President Washington said:

To be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace.

Theodore Roosevelt called it "wielding a big stick." President Reagan called it "peace through strength." Indeed, we ought to listen to those great captains of American purpose. We should rearm and strengthen the United States so no adversary dreams of acting against our interests.

With that in mind, I want to start with Taiwan and Ukraine. Without a doubt, there is no greater challenge than deterring Xi Jinping from taking Taiwan. Failing to defend Taiwan would plunge the globe into an economic depression and end our hopes for an American-led century.

To ensure that never happens, Congress should pursue four priorities with Taiwan this year.

First, we should pressure the Biden administration to exercise the \$1 billion of drawdown authority we provided them in the Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act last year.

Second, we should match Taipei's growing investment in critical capabilities. I am disappointed that the Biden administration has once again failed to request foreign military fi-

nancing money for Taiwan. Congress will have to act.

Third, we should fix the foreign military sales backlog and pursue real reforms to the process. Right now, it takes us too long to get crucial weapons to our allies. For example, unless something changes, Taiwan will wait nearly a decade to get a recent order of Harpoons.

Fourth, we should expand our work with allies and partners to help Taiwan defend itself with military and non-military tools of power.

Yet, when it comes to deterring conflicts in the Western Pacific, helping the Taiwanese defend themselves is only part of the puzzle. The U.S. military itself must also be ready.

First, Congress and the Department of Defense should act this year to accelerate the most important short-term capabilities for our forces in a Western Pacific scenario. As in prior years, we will focus on a concise list of near-term joint capabilities, such as advanced naval mines, munitions, non-kinetic cyber and electronic warfare techniques, space capabilities, and a range of battle management software technologies related to the Joint All-Domain Command and Control effort.

Second, we should accelerate the innovative work in the Army and Marine Corps to reestablish their presence in the first island chain and expand our alliance partnership networks. Specifically, I look forward to continuing the committee's focus on the Pacific Deterrence Initiative. This initiative seeks to enhance our basing and logistics infrastructure west of the international dateline.

Third, we should focus on our munitions industrial base this year. Congress and the Department of Defense will expand the efforts in the Reed-Inhofe amendment, which has actually cut bureaucratic redtape and has pushed the Pentagon to sign multiyear contracts for 17 different munitions. We must promptly provide the industrial base with resources to expand production of key munitions, such as the Long Range Anti-Ship Missile and Standard Missile-6.

Fourth, we must tackle structural supply chain and workforce issues that hamper our munitions production. These activities are key to expanding our magazine depth, and they will significantly add to deterring China.

Even as we seek deterrence in the Western Pacific, we note that deterrence did not work in Ukraine. Our goal now should be to maximize U.S. interests through Ukrainian victory and deter further Russian aggression, including against our NATO and our non-NATO allies.

I will continue to focus on providing the Ukrainians with everything they need to achieve battlefield gains faster and hasten Ukraine's victory. As General Kellogg testified to our committee 2 weeks ago, Beijing is watching our actions in Ukraine. They are weighing whether to join the fray in this conflict.

That brings me to my second priority: investing in our competitiveness. While our fundamentals remain strong here in America, the Chinese are outcompeting us in multiple arenas. The Chinese are running the so-called 100-year marathon. To them, victory in that race means toppling American global leadership. We need to make the long-term investments to compete in the coming decades in this marathon. The Chinese Communist Party is working overtime to achieve what they call “the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” by 2049. Their goal is to be the global center of economic, political, and military power.

China has pulled off the fastest military buildup in history, and they are still building. Beijing has achieved real growth in its defense budget every year for two straight decades—every year for two straight decades. It is quite likely they already spend more than we do, particularly if we count only our China-focused military spending. These investments are paying off for Xi Jinping.

Quite honestly, in many areas of warfare, China’s military already exhibits greater quantity and sophistication than our own. I am particularly concerned about the rapid advancement of the Chinese navy compared to ours. The Secretary of the Navy recently shared a troubling fact: In one shipyard alone, the Chinese now boast more productive capacity than in every American shipyard combined.

I had the privilege of leading Congress to pass the SHIPS Act, which requires the Navy, in statute, to achieve a 355-ship fleet as soon as practicable. Unfortunately, the Biden administration has shirked its responsibility to enforce this statute and to maintain American naval superiority.

The administration has repeatedly sent Congress requests to actually shrink the fleet. This is unacceptable. It should be unacceptable on both sides of the aisle.

Thankfully, we took important steps in last year’s National Defense Authorization Act to prevent the Navy from retiring 12 ships. We now need to make sure the Navy’s battle force inventory grows each year instead of shrinking. I will push to make sure we build three destroyers per year, maximize the production of amphibious ships, and restore a healthy submarine industrial base.

For centuries, naval power has been the cornerstone of American defense policy. When we defeated the Axis Powers in World War II, our victory took place just as much in the steam and sweat of our shipyards as it did on the shores of Normandy or Iwo Jima. It validated George Washington’s words from a century and a half earlier when he said, “Without a decisive naval

force, we can do nothing definitive.” So let’s do the most definitive thing we can: make a monumental investment in American command of the seas.

It is also critical that we revitalize our capabilities in the air and in space. In many ways, our challenges in aircraft production mirror those of our shipbuilders: Years of anemic budgets have created a brittle industrial base. We need to expand our orders of tactical fighter aircraft above 72 per year to get our combat air forces healthy. We need similar actions in tankers and other aircraft. We cannot continue to buy fewer aircraft every year while our older aircraft costs more to maintain. This is a death spiral. The same problems hold for our nuclear weapons production infrastructure, which my predecessor, Senator Inhofe—along with Senators FISCHER, KING, and others—has worked for years to rectify.

Our defense industrial base should focus less on efficiency and more on effectiveness. Again, it is helpful to look back to World War II to understand what I mean. In the beginning of 1942, the Nazi war machine controlled all of Western Europe. Japan’s empire spanned from the borders of India to our smoldering fleet in Pearl Harbor. The forces of liberty were not on the march but on the defense. It took what one author called “freedom’s forge,” or American industrial capacity, to defeat evil. We need to unleash our forge of freedom again—complete with all the 21st-century technologies that make it superior. Pentagon bureaucracy cannot keep getting in the way of this goal.

To that effect, we must also focus on improving the Department of Defense’s ability to develop, integrate, and purchase innovative technology at scale. It is time for a culture shift at the Pentagon and here in Congress, one that prioritizes speed and effectiveness over compliance and efficiency. We may have to assume a bit more risk together, but we can and must accelerate innovation—accelerate innovation—while also improving oversight if we have the right tools.

We will win by deterring conflict, by winning the tech race, and thirdly and finally, by investing in our military personnel. We have long had cutting-edge technology, but our secret weapon has always been our people.

As a veteran myself, I know how important it is to attract the best personnel to serve our country in uniform. Unfortunately, we find ourselves in the worst military recruiting shortfall in 50 years. The injection of a hyperpolitical culture into our fighting forces I think takes a sledgehammer to military readiness and recruiting. I think it is part of the problem with our recruiting.

I will partner with any Member of Congress to expand the population of

Americans eligible for military service. I will also promote solutions in this Congress, including increased support for Junior ROTC and ROTC programs and expanded incentives for servicemembers. As we recruit, we must never lose sight of our current troops. We will continue to care for servicemembers and their families.

All this will take hard work, new ways of thinking, and new partnerships between Congress and the executive branch. It will also require additional funding.

We must achieve continued real growth in the defense budget. Significant real growth is absolutely required to strengthen deterrence against the Chinese Communist Party to an acceptable risk. Any additional investments in our national defense should have the best return possible, and we should innovate in new ways that will result in real savings to the taxpayers over the long run.

In conclusion, the challenges we face are significant. Our adversaries are testing us every day, and we cannot afford to make mistakes in our defense policy or to try to do defense policy on the cheap. Legendary columnist the late Charles Krauthammer reminded us often that “decline is a choice.” But I am confident we can choose to pass this generational test of American resolve if we work together in the spirit that has so long defined the work of this Congress and the Armed Services Committee.

To my colleagues on the committee and across this Chamber, I say: Let’s get to work.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, and pursuant to S. Res. 110, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m., Thursday, March 16, 2023, and does so as a further mark of respect to the late James G. Abourezk, former Senator from South Dakota.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:16 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 16, 2023, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 15, 2023:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

RAVI CHAUDHARY, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

BRENT NEIMAN, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE A DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ERIC M. GARCETTI, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA.