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## Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

### PRAYER

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

Eternal God, stay close to us, and we will have no need to fear. Enable us to feel the joy of Your saving presence. You have been our refuge in ages past. You continue to be our hope for the seasons to come.

Inspire our Senators to live with a sense of accountability to You. Remind them that You are the only constituent they absolutely must please. Lord, help them to emulate the depths of Your caring in their relationships and responsibilities, ever seeking to glorify Your Name.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

### NOMINATION OF JUSTIN GEORGE MUZINICH

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, this will be a busy week here in the Senate. We begin by making more progress on the President's nominees. Later today, we will vote to advance the nomination of President Trump's choice to serve as Deputy Secretary at the Department of the Treasury, Justin Muzinich. This nomination was re-

ported favorably by our colleagues on the Finance Committee earlier this year. Chairman HATCH has characterized the nominee as "qualified, competent, and ready to get to work."

As we speak, of course, Mr. Muzinich is already serving as senior counselor to Secretary Mnuchin. He is drawing on years of experience in financial management and putting that experience to work through public service. The nominee holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and a JD from Yale. He has a distinguished record in the private sector and as an instructor at Columbia Business School.

As the Treasury Department continues its work implementing the new Tax Code, developing foreign sanctions, and in a variety of other important areas, it is more important than ever that the Deputy Secretary position be filled; therefore, I would urge each of my colleagues to join me in voting to fill that vacancy with this well-qualified nominee as we advance his nomination later today.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I have spoken on the Senate floor on a number of occasions recently about the migrant crisis on our southern border and tried to shed a little more context and light on what is happening there and why this is so important not only to the United States but to our neighbors to the south, as well as Central America.

I know there is this idea out there that all we need to do is build more in-

frastructure along the border, and somehow this problem will be resolved. I am here to say that is not the case. The border infrastructure that some people such as the President call a wall, others call a fence, is certainly a critical piece of the puzzle, but it is much more complex than that, and it affects not only public safety in the United States, it affects our economy and jobs in the United States.

While the focus happens to be on what is happening in Tijuana or another flash point across the border, what I would encourage us all to do is not just take a narrow focus but pull back to, let's say, a 30,000-foot perspective and try to understand all this in context. We know, unfortunately, sometimes in the political arguments that are given, the facts get missed or misconstrued, and sometimes political expediency is inconsistent with our need to do the hard work necessary to find a right solution. This, of course, is part of the general debate we have about what should be our immigration policies in the United States.

I, personally, believe legal immigration has been to the benefit of our country. Virtually all of us came from somewhere else at some point in our family history, but the important point is, legal immigration is very different from uncontrolled illegal immigration, which is what we are seeing still flooding across our southern borders, when the public is paying attention and when things like the migrant crisis in Tijuana has occurred. The fact is, this is a daily occurrence. It is not just large caravans of migrants from Central America. We have minicaravans showing up on a daily basis, and these problems certainly aren't going away.

I have the honor of representing about 28 million Texans, 40 percent of whom are Hispanic, but I also represent a large number of Indian Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Chinese Americans, and Korean Americans. In

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



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other words, we are a very diverse State. I know many people are not aware of that, but it is absolutely true. When I tell people the third most commonly spoken language in Texas is Vietnamese, it usually surprises people. Of course, like every Member of the Senate, I consult with my constituents on a regular basis to try to learn from them what they think we ought to be advocating for on their behalf. The border communities I represent have experienced very real consequences—negative consequences—from the migrant crisis, and they have also seen the humanitarian consequences of people making this treacherous journey across Mexico, up from Central America, traveling up to the United States. Of course, it should be no surprise, in some cases, that journey is simply too strenuous and proves to be too much, and a number of these migrants actually lose their lives. They die trying to make their way to the United States.

In Brooks County, which includes Falfurrias, which is a border checkpoint about 50 or so miles north of the Rio Grande River, these communities don't have the resources to recover all the remains from those migrants who die in their counties, causing the costs to be placed on local government and, in turn, local taxpayers. For example, the burden falls on them to come up with forensic experts and medical examiners who are already overburdened and understaffed. This is a real problem for many of our border communities, and this is why I joined with Senator CRUZ and Congressman HURD and Congressman GONZALEZ to pass a bill to help local jurisdictions improve the recording and reporting of missing persons and unidentified remains found along the U.S.-Mexican border.

My hope is, this bill will help our local communities identify those who have gone missing, process those unidentified remains, and invest in forensic expertise to provide closure to the families in the United States and abroad who have lost loved ones.

Texas, I understand, is unique in many respects, given our long common border with Mexico, but both of our nations benefit from the commerce and trade that comes across that 1,200-mile border. As a matter of fact, Mexico is one of our closest trading partners. That shouldn't surprise any of us. That also means, our border communities are on the frontlines with some of the challenges that go with an unsecured border, like drug trafficking and gang violence.

Recently, I talked about the many complex facets of the migrant crisis as well as the way we can combat violence and exploitation by the gangs, cartels, and transnational criminal organizations. I have talked about the fact that the very same organizations that charge migrants \$8,000, for example, to transport them from Central America, across Mexico, and into the United States are the very same organizations that transport the heroin that is grown

in Mexico, processed there, and brought into the United States—the poison that unfortunately has killed far too many Americans who died from overdoses.

These criminal organizations are commodity-agnostic. They really don't care about the human beings. The only thing they care about is the money. So they will transport the migrants, traffic in children and women for sex—sex slaves in the United States—and they also traffic in illegal drugs that kill thousands upon thousands of Americans every year.

I mention the fact that we need to focus on strengthening our partnerships in Mexico and Central America in order to address this crisis, but I want to focus on one aspect of this relationship in my remaining time and talk about why trade remains such an important piece of the puzzle. The lack of sufficient resources at the border, including outdated ports of entry, including lack of personnel, technology, and equipment, have been a contributing factor to the crisis. In fact, look at how most of the high-value drugs get into the United States. It is through the ports of entry, and we need to upgrade those ports of entry and make sure they are staffed not only to monitor this trade as it comes across the border but also to identify the heroin and other illegal drugs coming into the United States so we can stop them. The only way we are going to be able to do that is by investing in our ports of entry, the antiquated infrastructure and inadequately staffed ports of entry.

Then, again, I have heard people say that what we ought to do is just cut off our border—close it all down. Can you imagine what that would do to the legitimate trade and commerce that comes across our border to support millions of American jobs?

About 5 million American jobs depend on trade with Mexico. About 8 million American jobs depend on trade with Canada. This idea that we can somehow close down the border is unrealistic. Even if it were attempted, it would be economically harmful to many millions of people in the United States.

My State has the second largest State economy in the United States, with Mexico being our top import and export partner. So closing off the border would have a significant negative impact, as I said, not only for Texas but nationwide. We have about 29 air, land, and sea ports of entry into Texas, more than any other State in the Nation. That includes the busiest inland port along the entire U.S.-Mexico border in terms of total volume.

The border communities in Texas know that when our ports are tied up with migrants and migrant families or illegal drugs and contraband, legitimate trade can slowly grind to a halt. Any disruption of legitimate international commerce has a swift impact on the pocketbooks and livelihoods of all of our border residents and, indeed,

of many people beyond those people living on the border.

Congress has taken some steps to protect and increase the volume of trade across our ports of entry. That includes my Cross-Border Trade Enhancement Act, which is now law, to permanently authorize a public-private pilot program that will ultimately lead to staff efficiencies and allow for infrastructure improvements to our ports of entry.

More than 10 Texas land ports—including the Paso del Norte Bridge in El Paso and the World Trade Bridge in Laredo—have taken advantage of the opportunities this program provides. Many Texas air and sea ports have begun to utilize this valuable program as well.

In addition, last week I joined the junior Senator from Michigan to introduce a bipartisan bill that would require the Department of Homeland Security to conduct a threat and operational analysis at all of our U.S. ports of entry, because the same ports that let in legitimate trade and commerce can also be points of exploitation and access for people who wish to do us harm.

This analysis will then become the basis of an implementation plan to ensure our ports can improve wait times for legitimate trade and prevent illegal contraband from crossing our borders. As I said, we have long thrived on international trade and travel through our many ports, but we need to take a hard look at the vulnerabilities and inefficiencies in the system.

It is important that we find targeted solutions to enhance legitimate trade and travel while ensuring that bad actors have fewer opportunities to thwart our protections. It is a message that says “first, do no harm”—a Hippocratic oath of sorts. That is the same advice I gave Ambassador Lighthizer as he negotiated a modernized trade deal with Mexico and Canada, which I was glad to see was signed by those three countries in Argentina at the G20 at the end of last month.

I look forward to reviewing the agreement with my colleagues in the Senate to ensure it is a good deal, and I stand ready to work with the administration and my colleagues on implementing this important legislation.

But the new USMCA agreement is not just for the Texas economy. A modernized pact will help to provide long-term stability for the Mexican economy and strengthen our two countries' trade relationship. This is an important point when discussing the ways that Mexico and the United States can work together. This is a partnership that I hope to see continued, especially under Mexico's new President.

I was fortunate to attend President Lopez Obrador's inauguration a little over a week ago, along with Vice President PENCE, Secretary Nielsen, Secretary Perry, and other members of the administration, including Ivanka Trump, representing her father.

To me, the future of the U.S.-Mexico relationship is important. It is one that we all ought to care about. I think the opportunities are there for us to engage in strategic partnerships with Mexico in a number of ways—for example, dealing with the asylum problem that Secretary Nielsen has already begun to negotiate.

Through our partnership, we can work together to solve this migrant crisis by improving the economy and the opportunities that people have to live and work in their home country, as well as to protect trade, which supports so many jobs here in the United States.

I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Justin George Muzinich, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, the Senate will soon cast the first procedural vote on the nomination of Justin Muzinich to serve as the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury. I am going to oppose this nomination, and I would like to lay out exactly why, beginning with a basic rule that I intend to maintain going forward.

If a Treasury nominee says the Trump tax handouts will pay for themselves, I intend to oppose them. The reason why is that by sticking with this debunked claim, you are basically laying out the economic policy version of being a flat-earther. You are either peddling an idea you know is untrue, or you can't do math. Either way, you shouldn't have a pivotal, powerful job at the Treasury Department.

When Mr. Muzinich came before the Finance Committee for his nomination hearing, it was a titanic battle just to try to get him to offer any kind of substantive answer on pretty much anything. One question he finally answered straight up was whether he agreed that the Trump tax handouts would "pay for themselves and reduce our deficits." There he gave a one-word response, which was "yes."

Some call this trickle-down economics. Others call it voodoo economics. I call it, plain and simple, rainbow and unicorn math. No matter what you call it, it just isn't connected to reality. The Trump tax handout will not pay for itself, and even after independent, nonpartisan economic analyses demonstrated that was the case and even after months of data were released showing that the Trump tax law has failed to live up to the administration's fantasy land promises, Mr. Muzinich continues to cling to this false claim.

I will give him credit. He has what my relatives call—what Jewish people call—chutzpah, but that sure isn't going to win him my support.

In my judgment, it also raises a fundamental question of honesty. Before his nomination hearing, newspaper reports ran glowing quotes about him from several key officials at the Treasury Department. They praised Mr. Muzinich's financial expertise, and they talked about the expansive role he would play in a whole host of areas at the Treasury Department—not just tax policy but debt management. Republican committee members talked all about the work he had put into the development of the Trump tax law.

I was pretty interested in Mr. Muzinich's substantive views on these big questions because I had read these glowing tributes from his colleagues, and I thought, well, if we are going to have someone promoted to this important position, we really ought to get a sense of what he believes on the really important, substantive economic issues. So I began to ask the nominee about these questions, and he, as I indicated, just put any response sort of in the "well, I couldn't possibly get into that" category.

I wanted to know why because, eventually, we got around to his saying that he really wasn't going to get into these issues because he said if he was confirmed, he would just be, in his words, a "building manager."

A building manager is somebody who doesn't get praised by his colleagues as being an expert on debt management and tax policy. Building managers have important responsibilities. They are involved in things like acoustics and ventilation. They have responsibilities. That is what building managers do. They certainly don't have duties like those described by Mr. Muzinich's colleagues.

I had some real difficulty reconciling the way his own colleagues described him in these important publications and what he told me about his responsibilities as the building manager. I think he really is not reflecting what his job is all about, and the fact that he would misrepresent that to me in our discussions prior to his nomination—he misrepresented to the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee in charge of the nomination—is, in my view, very troubling.

I also have had very serious questions about the way Mr. Muzinich re-

sponded to my questions about the Trump administration's new policy—really, just a couple of months old—that would open the floodgates to more foreign dark money in American elections. We all know from this last election about what dark money means.

We had our airwaves and TV sets, from sea to shining sea, dominated by television commercials that had a tag line on it—something akin to "Americans for high school football" or "Americans who believe in our flag," or various other things that none of us would possibly disagree with but that would in no way reflect who actually paid for that commercial that found its way to our TV sets.

There were increased floods of dark money commercials through the past November election, and right before that, the Trump administration adopted a rule that would make it even easier for foreign dark money to make its way into our elections.

We will be talking about that rule later this week. There is going to be an effort with Senator TESTER and me to overturn that flawed policy, but the fact is that this is something that an individual who was nominated for the important position Mr. Muzinich seeks would have some views about and particularly because the rule change—the rule change made by the Trump administration to allow more dark money in American elections—was announced just hours after the American people learned about the illicit activities that an accused Russian spy Maria Butina had used to infiltrate conservative groups and undermine our democracy.

So if that were a coincidence, that the Trump administration announced this new rule to make it easier for foreign dark money to make its way into our elections—announced just a few hours after the American people learned about Maria Butina—I have to tell you that it is a coincidence for the ages.

The Trump administration and other officials, of course, say that Maria Butina was just an innocent college student attending American University. I don't know of many college students who go to South Dakota with an NRA political operative to set up a shell company. That is not common behavior for an American college student. Yet, given the fact that the Trump administration had made it easier to get foreign dark money into our elections—and a common vehicle for doing that would be one's using a shell company—it certainly, again, raises very troubling signs that a nominee for this key position will take no position whatsoever on something so important as that of protecting our elections.

The fact is, with this new policy, the President is essentially blinding law enforcement and telling foreigners and dark money groups that it is open season for election cash to flow.

I asked Mr. Muzinich about this. I asked: What do you think about this

problem in terms of preventing foreign influence and enforcing election law? I couldn't get a straight answer. Finally, he told me: "The intent was to further efficient tax administration."

I can tell you something. I don't think Maria Butina was interested in anything that had to do with efficient tax administration. I don't think she was interested in anything close to that when she went to South Dakota with an NRA operative to set up a shell company. Maybe this was just Mr. Muzinich's way of dodging the question. If not, then he is basically suggesting that it is just fine with him for special interests and foreign actors to buy American elections because they may be able to sell the American people on the proposition that makes tax reporting easier.

I have said before that I don't agree with every Treasury nominee on every issue from the Trump administration. I realize that. Then there have been individuals on key economic questions whose nominations I have supported. I thought Jerome Powell, who was Donald Trump's nominee, was a very wise choice to head the Federal Reserve. I have supported the President on important economic positions, and I voted for plenty of Republican nominees to the Treasury Department before. Yet I do expect nominees to be straight with me and with the committee. After all of the bobbing and weaving on issue after issue, this is a nominee who doesn't come close to passing that bar. In my view, he has not met the commonsense, basic test of giving some sense of where he stands on the important issues.

I see my good friend and seatmate on the Finance Committee who is here, and we talk often about these issues.

I will just say to my colleagues that the proposition that Mr. Muzinich is going to be the building manager for the Department of the Treasury is just a little bit much to swallow when you look at what his colleagues said he had talked about in the past with respect to tax management and tax reform and other important questions.

Finally, in Mr. Muzinich's claiming that the Trump tax handouts will pay for themselves, he has failed on that issue by \$1.5 trillion. I am not going to support a nominee for this position who is going to bring unicorn and rainbow fantasies to tax policy and to these key questions that are so important to the American people. I urge my colleagues to oppose the nomination of Mr. Muzinich.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

#### AMERICA'S SPACE PROGRAM

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I rise to speak on a subject that our colleagues know is very dear to my heart—America's space program. Although this is the last of many, many floor speeches I have made on the subject, I stand before the Senate with a heart that is full of gratitude, joy, and

hope for the future of our space program.

I have been extremely privileged to have witnessed and in some cases to have participated in the extraordinary triumphs of our Nation's 60-year quest to explore the heavens. I flew to orbit and marveled at the beauty, fragility, and seemingly peacefulness of Mother Earth, our planet.

I had the honor of making that trip with one of the finest crews to have ever flown in America's space program. There was CAPT Robert "Hoot" Gibson, our commander, as well as Maj. Gen. Charlie Bolden, Retired, our pilot, who flew five missions—four as commander. Of course, General Bolden ultimately became the Administrator of NASA for the entire time of the Obama administration. There was Dr. George Nelson, otherwise known to all in the astronaut office as Pinky. There was Dr. Steve Hawley, Dr. Franklin Chang-Diaz—the first Hispanic-American astronaut—and Bob Cenker, who was an engineer at the time with RCA, which was the satellite that we launched while in orbit.

It was a profound and humbling experience that reinforced my belief that we needed to not only be good stewards of our planet but that we should always try to treat others with whom we may differ culturally, ethnically, or socially with dignity, compassion, and respect.

In looking back at Earth from the window of a spacecraft, you don't see political divisions, racial divisions, religious differences. You don't see the suffering or the injustice that face those back home on the planet. Instead, you quickly realize that we on this planet, our planet Earth, are all in this together.

I have been filled with wonder over some of the greatest scientific discoveries of our age—the discovery of the signs of water; the discovery of, perhaps, even life on Mars; the discovery that our galaxy is full of countless planets—many of them, very possibly, inhabitable; and the discovery that our universe is being driven apart by mysterious forces known as dark energy and is filled with a mysterious material known as dark matter.

Along with my fellow Americans, I grieved when, tragically, we lost two space shuttles and the brave astronauts aboard. I have grieved as we have lost astronauts along the way, even in the Apollo 1 fire. I grieved with America as we thought *Apollo 13* was lost and how, miraculously, in one of NASA's greatest success stories—with three humans on the way to the Moon when the explosion occurred and not having any idea how we could get them back—the whole NASA team came together. The engineers, the mathematicians, the astronauts on the ground, the controllers, and the contractors all devised a way to bring back Jim Lovell's crew.

As everyone in NASA's family is keenly aware, navigating the heavens is as dangerous now, if not more so, than the crossing of the oceans was 100,

200, 300 years ago. Leaving the relative safety and comfort of home to explore new frontiers is every bit as important now as it was then. We must proceed with caution lest we foolishly put the lives of the explorers at risk, but we must also proceed with courage lest we risk remaining stuck on the ground.

I have also had the honor of collaborating with heroes like John Glenn, Tom Stafford, and Neil Armstrong on the future of our space program. I have been very proud to have played a little part in the establishment of our thriving commercial space industry with the drafting and passage of the Commercial Space Launch Acts of 1984 and 1988, back when I was a young Congressman, and to have witnessed the rise of and contributions of present-day space entrepreneurs like Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos.

At the same time, I appreciate the steady hand and transformative contribution of the NASA leaders, like Charlie Bolden, Bill Gerstenmaier, and Bob Cabana. I can't help but remember the guiding hand of George Abbey—that was so strong—at the Johnson Space Center, and I have celebrated the long overdue emergence of female superstars, like Marillyn Hewson and Gwynne Shotwell, amongst the space industry leadership.

It has been a pleasure working in Congress with a number of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to advance the space ambitions of our country because, as I have said many times before, space is, and should always remain, a nonpartisan issue. NASA is a nonpartisan Agency.

I am also encouraged by NASA Administrator Bridenstine's leadership in his early tenure at the helm of this Agency, and I wish him much success. I applaud him for continuing to make good on his promises to keep NASA out of partisan politics and to heed the advice of the Agency's talented and experienced space professionals and scientists.

NASA is a unique Agency, the head of which is like the Department of Defense. The Secretary of Defense is not looked upon as partisan; neither is the Administrator of NASA.

I could not be more gracious and humbled to be here today and to tell you, as we celebrate NASA's 60th birthday this year, our space program has a spectacular and an exciting future. It is a future full of opportunity, and it is a future that will require everyone—industry, Congress, and the Agency, as well as our international partners—pulling in the same direction to make it a reality.

If you go back a few years to 2010, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and I recognized back then that we had set NASA's human space flight program on its current dual path, to build private sector capabilities in low-Earth orbit and a government-led program for deep space and, ultimately, Mars. We recognized some of the misdirection and lack of direction the space program

had; it needed direction. Once Kay Bailey Hutchison and I passed the NASA authorization in 2010, that dual-path approach started to bear fruit, including our recapturing of a majority of the global commercial launch market—a market we had almost completely lost to overseas competitors.

We are also constructing the building blocks of the systems that will take us to Mars. In the last administration, President Obama said: We are going to Mars. Within a year, we should have two different U.S. vehicles safely transporting our astronauts to and from the International Space Station, which will allow us to increase the number of crew aboard the station and dramatically bolster our research there. It is research that will ultimately help us on our journey to Mars with humans.

I remain confident that we will continue to operate the ISS well past the middle of the next decade. As a matter of fact, Senator CRUZ and I are still trying, in this Congress, to get the date for the International Space Station extended to the end of the decade. It would be foolish to dispose of the orbital laboratory—designated a national laboratory, which is our toehold on the space frontier—just as it is reaching the most productive period, and that is what it is doing in its research on orbit.

There is still a lot more work to be done. We must focus our technology investments to ensure that the journey to Mars is safe, productive, and affordable. We need new propulsion systems to get us to Mars faster. Those are in the stages of research right now. As we begin conducting human missions farther and farther from Earth, we must ensure that each activity gets us closer to achieving the goal—which President Obama laid out for the decade of the 2030s—of “boots on Mars.”

We also need to prepare workers for the high-tech, good-paying jobs of the 21st century. It has been one of my singular achievements to have worked with other leaders in government and in industry to help bring about the dramatic modernization of the historic launch infrastructure at Cape Canaveral and the Kennedy Space Center.

All of these exciting developments would not have been possible without the talent, dedication, and commitment of the thousands of workers who poured their hearts and souls into the space shuttle and the space station. That same dedication and pride of accomplishment continue today with the building of new spacecrafts like Dragon, Starliner, and Orion.

A few short years ago, business at the cape was much different than it is today. Commercial launch companies were looking elsewhere to take their business, despite all of the available infrastructure and the amazing workforce on the Space Coast. Too much bureaucracy stood in the way of progress.

To address the problem, I convened the top leaders from the Air Force, NASA, and the FAA in Chairman

Rockefeller's office. I brought an aerial photo of all of the abandoned launch pads at the cape and got their commitment to work together with the private sector to bring these pads back to life. It is just amazing from that photograph to see all of those launch pads—all of which the older generation will remember gave so much inspiration to America in its early space days—abandoned. They are now roaring back to life with launches and landings on those very same pads.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge, as I already have, Senator CRUZ and his leadership, along with many of my colleagues here, for joining me in the fight to pass legislation to force the Agencies to reduce the overlap and duplication in regulations. I am grateful to have worked with so many to pave the way for the exciting future that lies ahead for commercial space endeavors.

I thank the Appropriations Committee, and I thank the leadership of the Appropriations Committee, including the Senator here on the floor, the Senator from Vermont. The proof is in the pudding how, over the years, they have provided the appropriations as we have brought NASA back to life on this dual track of commercial launches, going to and from low-Earth orbit, as well as exploring the heavens, which is NASA's mission.

I can also say that proof is in the pudding of the space launches coming back to life because Cape Canaveral hosted two-thirds of the nearly 30 American launches last year. The day is fast approaching when we will see multiple launches on the same day, as well as the largest, most powerful rocket ever assembled lifting off from the launch pad, beginning our journey to Mars.

Quite simply, jobs and ingenuity are soaring because rockets are soaring. As go Florida's Space Coast and the Houston area, so goes the U.S. space industry as a whole.

As we continue to move forward, it is also imperative that we continue our world-leading science and aeronautics activities. NASA pursues some of the most challenging and enduring questions facing humanity: How does life come to exist? Are we alone? What is to become of us and our planet? Engaging and empowering the U.S. science community should remain a top priority, enabling us to find new discoveries and to inspire and motivate future generations of scientists and engineers.

History has shown us that the nations that cease to explore begin to decline and collapse. It is our very nature, as Americans, to explore. Would humanity still exist if humans had not spread from Africa, to Asia, to Europe, to the Americas, and eventually to the remote reaches of the Arctic and the isolated islands of Polynesia? Would we, as a nation, have fulfilled our destiny if we did not push our frontier forward? I think not. Will humanity still

exist far in the future if we choose to stop exploring now?

The cosmos offers us limitless opportunities to expand—not just to survive but to thrive. Imagine the first baby boy or girl born away from planet Earth. Imagine the first artist to paint a sunset on Mars. Imagine our solar system inhabited by 100 billion dreamers, innovators, and creators. Imagine a future where those people—perhaps the grandchildren or great-grandchildren of those in primary school today—look back on our era as the time when humanity began to journey outward.

I believe that as we discover and experience the wonders of the cosmos, we will achieve the greatest outcome of all. We will find that our home planet Earth and all of the life and love that inhabits it have become even more beautiful and all the more precious to us.

With that I say, resoundingly, onward and upward. As the command given from the ground after the space shuttle has passed through maximum dynamic pressure, as the main engines have throttled back and the shuttle has ascended into the atmosphere and the mission can press forward to orbit, the command is given: Go at throttle up.

I yield the floor.

**THE PRESIDING OFFICER.** The Senator from Vermont.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

**MR. LEAHY.** Mr. President, of course, the senior Senator from Florida can speak from experience because he has been there—something no other Senator currently serving has ever done.

I believe they are bringing a chair over. If not, I will go get it.

On Friday, December 21—coming up fairly soon, just 11 days from today—the continuing resolution, what we call a CR, under which much of the government currently operates, is going to expire. Now, if we don't pass the remaining seven appropriations bills—bills that I believe the Senate is prepared to pass—the government will shutter the doors of nine Federal Departments and dozens of Agencies, and services the American people rely on will grind to a halt, coincidentally, just 3 days before Christmas.

There is absolutely no reason for the government to shut down. The Senate and House Appropriations Committees have been negotiating for weeks. I commend those Senators on both sides of the aisle. They have worked with us and certainly our staffs in conducting these negotiations.

We have a seven-bill minibus that would fully fund the Federal Government through the remainder of the fiscal year. We are very close to a deal. Six of the seven bills are nearly complete. Most of the funding issues are resolved. Only a few policy issues remain. A few hours of debate, and they would be all done.

Because we are the United States of America and we have to care about all

parts of the country, we are working on a disaster package for the victims of Hurricanes Florence and Michael, the California wildfires, the Hawaii volcano, the earthquake in Alaska, and other disasters from this year that have devastated the homes, communities, and lives of so many of our fellow Americans. These bills could be finished in short order, they could be put before the Congress for a vote—I suspect they would pass virtually unanimously—and then sent to the President for his signature into law.

So Republicans and Democrats have worked together. The appropriators have worked together. There is only one thing standing between fully funding our government and a shutdown; that is, President Trump. For months now, he has repeatedly called for a government shutdown unless we provide \$5 billion for his boondoggle border wall. Last month alone, President Trump publicly threatened to shut down the government over his wall at least five times, saying things in his Presidential statements, as we are pointing out here, such as: “This would be a very good time to do a shutdown,” as though any American believes it is a good time, with disaster funding and everything else pending, for a shutdown.

Those reckless and damaging threats are not new for President Trump. He set a destructive and uncompromising tone for our negotiations earlier in the year saying: “I would shut it down over this issue.” Then, something I never thought I would hear from the President of the United States of either party, he said: “I’d love to see a shutdown,” during a February press conference. This from a man who is supposed to have an obligation to all Americans.

Time and again, though, instead of showing his obligation to Americans, President Trump has used the government and the American people as a bargaining chip for his fabricated solution to his manufactured crisis. Now, just days before the CR is set to expire, the President appears ready to make good on his threat. He wants to score a made-for-reality-TV moment, and he doesn’t care how many thousands of hard-working American men and women are going to suffer for it.

We have been negotiating the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill for weeks, but as we get closer to the December 21 deadline, the President is digging in. His position is: Fund the wall—his wall—or he will shut down the government.

The President likes to stir up drama, but a government shutdown is not the backdrop for one of his reality TV shows. A government shutdown is a dreadful thing to do to so many loyal Americans. This is the real world. It has real-world consequences.

I will give some examples. If the government shuts down on December 22, an estimated 380,000 Federal employees will be furloughed without pay just

days before Christmas, never knowing if they will be paid. Nearly 430,000 Federal employees, including FBI agents, U.S. marshals, the Coast Guard, Border Patrol, and TSA employees will be forced to work without pay. The Secret Service, which will protect the President if he goes to one of his golf courses over the holidays, will be working without pay, but this is even worse: Millions of Americans—farmers, small businesses, homeowners, veterans, the disabled, and the elderly—will go without the government services on which they rely and for which they paid their taxes. There is no reason for this. In fact, it is unconscionable to put the country through this.

I oppose the President’s plan for a 30-foot-high wall along the southern border, especially—aside from the fact that it will do no good, this is a wall the President gave his solemn promise to the American people that Mexico, not American taxpayers, would pay for. He gave his word over and over and over again at rallies throughout the country, saying Mexico will pay for it. I haven’t seen one cent coming from Mexico, but the President is going to punish the American taxpayers if they don’t pay the money he promised Mexico would pay.

The United States is a country founded by immigrants. Walling ourselves off from our neighbors to the south is not only an expensive waste of American taxpayer dollars, it is immoral, it is ineffective, and it is an affront to everything this country stands for. We are better than this.

In fact, if we do what the President wants to do, we would have to seize land from ranchers and farmers in Texas and other border States—seize land from them that has been in their families for generations. It would require building walls through wildlife refuges and natural preserves. Incidentally, we would end up cutting ourselves off from the Rio Grande in the process because we can’t build a wall down the center of it. Basically, we are saying to Mexico: By the way, we are going to pay for the wall President Trump promised us you would pay for, and to help you out, we are going to give you the Rio Grande. You can have our half too. This is a cockamamie idea.

After all that and billions of wasted taxpayer dollars, what would be accomplished? Would it stop people from fleeing violence in their home countries and seeking sanctuary? Of course not. Would it stop drug smugglers and human traffickers from engaging in illegal activity? Definitely not. In fact, as one of my Republican friends said, show me a 30-foot wall, and I will show you a 31-foot ladder or a tunnel.

These are complex issues. We need real solutions, not bumper sticker slogans or angry tweets.

We had such a solution in 2013. The Senate passed bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform. In a 2-to-1 vote, Republicans and Democrats

joined in on comprehensive immigration reform. The Republican leadership in the House would not bring it up because they were afraid it might violate the sacred Dennis Hastert rule, as they said to us.

Everyone agrees we need to keep our border safe and secure. That is not a Republican or a Democratic idea. We all believe our borders should be safe and secure. President Trump is not the first person to say that. We have all said that. In fact, over the last 2 years, we in Congress have invested more than \$3 billion for that purpose. It is the largest infusion of border security funding in recent history.

I am on the Appropriations Committee that gave that money. We have directed U.S. Customs and Border Protection to acquire new technologies that are proven to work on the border and at our ports of entry, purchase new air and marine assets, and hire additional personnel. This approach has resulted in the acquisition of integrated fixed towers on the border, remote video surveillance systems, enforcement helicopters and other aircraft, and upgrades to existing unmanned aerial systems. I have visited the border and seen some of those. For the ports of entry, where the large majority of illicit narcotics and other contraband enter, we have significantly increased funding for nonintrusive inspection equipment, and we have hired over 360 new Customs officers.

These are successes. These are things that work. These are things that do better than we have ever done before, but does the President tweet about this? No. He is fixated on building his wall not because it is good policy, but he hopes it will fire up his base.

This is not about border security, it is about politics, pure and simple.

Over the last 2 years, Congress has provided nearly \$1.7 billion to build or replace fencing on the southern border, but the administration has hardly spent any of that money, and the projects it has undertaken have ballooned in cost. In fact, of the money we gave them, they have only spent 6 percent of the funds—6 percent. This is such an amazing need to only spend 6 percent.

We have recently learned that one project in the Rio Grande Valley that was supposed to cost, according to the administration, \$445 million, will now cost the taxpayers nearly \$787 million, a 77-percent cost overrun, at a pricetag of \$31.5 million each mile. This is not for roads. This is for barriers. The President doesn’t talk about that, nor does he talk about the fact that the American taxpayers will have to pay it, not Mexico.

The administration is not responsible with the money we have already provided. Why trust him to spend responsibly the additional money they demand? The President wants the hard-working American taxpayers, not Mexico—even though he promised American taxpayers, gave his word, that

American taxpayers wouldn't have to pay for this, that Mexico would. Now he says: Forget what I said before. Give me a check for \$5 billion more or I am going to waste hundreds of millions of dollars by shutting down the government. That is a cynical, political stunt.

The President's own budget request to Congress for fiscal year 2019 was \$1.6 billion for his wall, not \$5 billion. I opposed this request when he made it in the spring, and I still do. I don't want to appropriate another dime to advance a nebulous and ineffective agenda that I fundamentally oppose, knowing the President will not keep his word and have Mexico pay for it. Our system of divided government requires compromise, so we came up with a bipartisan compromise to meet the President's \$1.6 billion request, with restrictions on where the money could be used and what type of barriers could be built, such as bollard fencing but not a 30-foot concrete wall. Instead of taking "yes" and declaring victory, the President repeatedly moved the goalpost and redefined the fine print. So much for the "Art of the Deal," more the "Art of the Steal."

By manufacturing a crisis over his wall, President Trump appears willing to shutter the doors of the Justice Department, Farm Service Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, the Small Business Administration, the National Park Service, the Department of Transportation, among others—that is just a few—grinding vital services for the American people to a halt, services the American people have paid for with their taxes, all to protect his ego and satisfy his base.

Actions have real-world consequences for hundreds of thousands of Federal employees and their families and millions of Americans who pay taxes and depend on their government to function properly.

Taxpayers don't send their hard-earned money to Washington so the President can shut down their government. Our job is to be good stewards of taxpayer money, not bend to the whim of the President's tweets. Congress controls the power of the purse, not the President. It is our job to make responsible, thoughtful decisions.

There is a bipartisan path forward. We can pass a seven-bill minibus comprised of bipartisan bills that meet the needs of the country or we can pass a six-bill minibus with a continuing resolution for Homeland Security.

Republicans do control the House, the Senate, and the Presidency, and they are in the driver's seat. The only reason the government shuts down on December 22, 3 days before Christmas, is if the President wants it to and the Republican leadership lets the President close the government. Let's hope that doesn't happen.

I yield the floor.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order and pursuant to rule

XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will report.

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 Justin George Muzinich, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury.

Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, Jerry Moran, Lisa Murkowski, John Barasso, David Perdue, Ron Johnson, Shelley Moore Capito, John Cornyn, Marco Rubio, Tom Cotton, Steve Daines, Michael B. Enzi, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Lamar Alexander, John Kennedy, Deb Fischer.

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 Justin George Muzinich, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 256 Ex.]

#### YEAS—55

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Gardner	Nelson
Blumenthal	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Perdue
Boozman	Hatch	Portman
Burr	Heller	Risch
Capito	Hoeven	Roberts
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Inhofe	Rubio
Coons	Isakson	Sasse
Corker	Johnson	Scott
Cornyn	Jones	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	King	Thune
Cruz	Kyl	Toomey
Daines	Lankford	Wicker
Enzi	Lee	Young
Ernst	McConnell	
Fischer	Moran	

#### NAYS—43

Baldwin	Hassan	Sanders
Bennet	Heinrich	Schatz
Booker	Heitkamp	Schumer
Brown	Hirono	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kaine	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Manchin	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	
Harris	Reed	

#### NOT VOTING—2

McCaskill Tillis

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 55, the nays are 43.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from New York.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 299

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, reserving the right to object and to take a couple minutes to give the Members the facts they need to make a decision tonight, I want to say a couple things.

I am chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. There are many Members in this Chamber who know their responsibility to that committee is greater than any other. I come down tonight to speak on an issue that has been bothering me and has been festering for years, but nobody has ever done anything about it. Nobody has ever done the hard work of saying this is what we need to do, and this is why we need to do it this way.

Well, the House has finally done it this year, and we have done it.

Granted, this is a UC motion and not a debate on the floor. It is because we finally addressed all the issues everybody said about the blue water bill that they didn't like, except that some people would like to say it differently.

Some people want another study even though we have studied it enough to do it. Some people want to wait until the VA says they need to do this, that, or the other. Some people say the VA could call and will tell you the other. Somebody said we don't even have the right numbers of how many people this might affect. Nobody has the right number about how many people will get sick in the future from a disease we don't know exists until the time they contract it.

What happened in this case is very simple. The Veterans' Administration, years ago, decided if someone contracted one of the cancers of which a contributing factor was napalm and Agent Orange, they qualified for benefits, except if they served on the blue water, which is not the rivers, and didn't serve on the ground, then they didn't. So in other words, we have ground troops who fought in Vietnam. We have river fighters in Vietnam who get the benefit. If you served on a Navy ship carrying napalm, but you never touched the ground and only stayed on the blue water, you are not eligible. So we have two classes of victims who are veterans of the United States of America who fought and risked their lives who have been trying for years to get an equal treatment with their other brothers.



This was done for many. I am not going to go over the things I have heard because some of them are outrageous. Nonetheless, everybody looked for a way to try and get some of the benefit back once the VA had it taken over.

What the Congress is about to do—and the House has now passed a bill unanimously this year that will benefit this motion. The Senate has had two hearings, and we have done a lot of work on it. I have done a lot of work on it because I knew how big the issue was. I talked to the people in the VA. I realize everybody in here can go find somebody who says they don't like it. There are people at the VA who don't like it, but let me tell you what I don't like: I don't like having two classes of beneficiaries for disease and health. I don't like not shooting straight with the same people who ought to qualify for the same thing. I really don't like putting off the decision 1 more year until we get one more study. This thing has been studied as long as it needs to be studied. We have the best information we possibly can get. I tried my best to give some of the Members the exact information they asked me for, but the CVA will not give it to me because they don't have it because it is predictive in the future, not present experience.

So I would ask every Member, before they consider casting a "no" vote against this UC, to think about what you are doing. You are saying no to those who had a benefit taken away from them by the VA itself. You are putting off a decision we are going to have to make in the future. You are not allowing us to do what we really ought to do. I would ask each of you to search your heart, search your past, and think about the veterans in your State and cast a vote for doing the right thing for the right people at the right time and not object to the motion made by the Senator from New York.

I have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I appreciate my colleagues' work on this legislation. I am pretty sure I have never opposed a bill that Senator ISAKSON was involved in. If you are looking for thoroughness in legislation, he is the epitome of it, but on this bill, many of us have been recently made aware of the potential cost growth and budget-sharing and operational pressures that would happen at the VA. They are having a lot of problems anyway, but the VA's analysis shows that the cost could be nearly five times what Congress assumed it was when the House of Representatives passed it—and they did pass it by those strong numbers.

A recent letter from the Congressional Budget Office estimated an increased cost from their first estimate of about \$1.3 billion. So there is clearly more work to do just on figuring out

the spending and the administration of this and the deficit impact this bill will have, while we still want to make sure the veterans who are having the problems get the solutions they need.

There will be a report out in June that is going to maybe narrow down the risks. I am not that excited about any studies, but another concern I have heard from veterans is the pay-for. There will be an increase in the interest rate for housing for some veterans who are trying to buy a house. That isn't enough money to cover the renewed estimates of how much this is.

I think the bill can be made more specific—which is really tough for JOHNNY because he has been working on it, and it will be specific—but we need to get some way to justify the numbers that range between 63,000 people and 440,000 people. That is a pretty big gap on whom we let in. If they have a problem, and we need to take care of it, I think we need to spend a little bit more time doing it. I know that is difficult at the end of a session, but as a result I am going to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, the House of Representatives has already passed this bill unanimously, 382 to 0. The bill is fully paid for, and it is long past time that we do the right thing. We have to right this wrong and help these veterans.

The only thing standing in the way of this bill to help the Vietnam veterans is the U.S. Senate, and that is shameful. We have just days before the Congress is finished. Our blue water veterans are waiting for us, their families are waiting for us, and some of them are dying waiting for us.

These patriotic Americans went to Vietnam. They risked their lives. They were exposed to the chemical, Agent Orange, which we now know is highly toxic. Some of them were exposed on the ground, some while patrolling the rivers, and some were exposed while stationed on ships off the Vietnamese coast. These are called our blue water Navy vets.

Now, all these years later, Agent Orange has made many of them sick and they are severely ill. There have been four different health studies by the CDC about the detrimental effects of Agent Orange exposure, and the blue water Navy veterans have been shown to suffer those exact diseases at the same rate as the other exposed veterans, but some of my colleagues are wrongly insisting on a fifth study.

We do not have another year to wait. Some of our veterans will not last that long. Many blue water veterans have already passed away from the disease associated with Agent Orange exposure.

The 1991 bill to provide coverage for veterans exposed to Agent Orange didn't discriminate between those who served offshore and those who served on rivers or on the ground. Yet due to

a decision by a VA bureaucrat in 2002, the coverage for those who served offshore was wiped out. It doesn't make any sense, and we must help all of our veterans.

It would be tragic; it would be an absolute failure of this institution if we did not respond to this call for help from our veterans community. I urge my colleagues to reconsider their choice to block this legislation. The bill has had multiple hearings. It has gone through multiple drafts over the years. It has been subject to numerous studies.

I have a letter right here to the CBO from the Military-Veterans Advocacy association, literally going through each of the arguments that Senator ENZI just made to explain why those aren't true.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the RECORD.

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

MILITARY-VETERANS ADVOCACY, INC.,  
November 30, 2018.

Re CBO Revision to the cost for H.R. 299.

Hon. KEITH HALL,  
Director, Congressional Budget Office,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR DIRECTOR HALL: I have reviewed the CBO letter of November 29, 2018 to Senator Enzi concerning the score for H.R. 299. By way of introduction I am a retired Navy Commander familiar with manning policies and surface ship operations during and immediately following the Vietnam War. I am currently the Executive Director of Military-Veterans Advocacy (MVA). MVA has been advocating for this bill since 2011. In January of 2015 we met with CBO analysts to provide relevant information.

I personally worked with the House Veterans Affairs Committee to define the geographic points for the current version of the bill. The geographic points are mirrored by the red line on the enclosed chart. The dashed line represents the boundary of the territorial sea which is 12 nautical miles seaward. In other words, the current language in H.R. 299 exactly mirrors the boundaries of the territorial sea. The bold line encompasses the entire theater of operations which, as you can see, is much larger than the area covered by H.R. 299. This same chart was provided to the CBO in January of 2015 and was used as the basis for all subsequent scoring. Accordingly, paragraph 2 of the CBO letter is in error. There was no change in the nautical area.

Additionally, it must be remembered that most ships operated close to shore usually within the 10 fathom curve. This was to maximize the field of fire for operations ashore. Logistics ships conducting underway replenishment would try to approach the gun line to reduce the time the gun ships were offline. Consequently any minor changes in the nautical area would have little or no effect.

In preparation for the CBO meeting, MVA conducted a manpower analysis of the ships that deployed. Records showed that 713 ships deployed to the Vietnam theater of operations. Congressional Research Service placed the number of personnel in entire theater at 229,000. The same CRS publication pegged the number of Navy personnel serving in Vietnam at 174,000. American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics (Feb. 2010) p. 11. Liaison with the



Naval Historical and Heritage Command by MVA and the offices of then Congressman Chris Gibson confirmed that the 174,000 number represented just those in the territorial sea, internal rivers and on land. A analysis by MVA showed 173,500 personnel deployed on ships within the territorial sea. This information was provided to CBO during the January 2015 meeting.

Significant numbers of personnel deployed into the theater are not included in H.R. 299. This includes ships, mostly carriers, assigned to Yankee Station throughout the war. Yankee Station was located at 17° 30' N, 108° 30' E which is 30 nautical miles north of the Demilitarized Zone. Multiple carrier battle groups were kept on station in this area and seldom, if ever, transited south. A corresponding station off South Vietnam, Dixie Station, was the site of one carrier battle group designated for close air support missions in South Vietnam. It was abandoned in the summer of 1966 as more warplanes became available for use in land based airfields in South Vietnam. Dixie Station was located at 11° N and 110° E which is also outside the scope of the bill. Admittedly, some ships from Dixie Station may have entered the territorial sea but they should have been included in 174,000 number.

Navy ships at the time were not manned to full complement. The authorized strength reflected on the Enlisted Distribution and Manning Report (EDVR) included Reserves who in time of war would be mobilized to round out the crew. Instead ships were manned in accordance with the Navy Manning Plan (NMP) that was roughly 80% of the personnel allowance for the ship. Additionally, due to the length of the war, many senior people, both officer and enlisted, made multiple deployments. On the average, about 25% of the personnel deployed into the territorial sea made multiple deployments. This number is based on the rating structure for ships at the time and the pay grade distribution as well as personal and anecdotal knowledge.

As of December 2014, MVA estimated that 80,305 personnel of the 174,000 deployed were covered under existing law. This number, along with the analysis, was presented to CBO. Since that time, additional ships have been added to the ship's list. Additionally, an accelerated death rate has claimed many lives. It should also be remembered that on the average, only one in three Vietnam era veterans seek any kind of VA benefits.

VA claims that the bill will require them to hire additional people to prevent the unacceptable backlog from expanding. This is preposterous. A significant amount of personnel in the backlog are Blue Water Navy veterans. Establishing a presumption will actually help the VA to reduce the backlog.

We believe that the VA estimates are over-inflated and designed to mislead CBO as to the impact of the cost of the bill. Our current analysis supports the May 15, 2018 report and we believe that CBO, in light of the information provided herein, should revise their November 29, 2018 letter.

If you or your staff have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Additionally I will be in Washington, DC, next week and available for meetings.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

JOHN B. WELLS,  
Commander USN (Retired),  
Executive Director.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I hope all of us can come together to do the right thing by our veterans to make sure they get the coverage that they need and to stand by them in their greatest time of need.

I yield the floor to my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, as the lead Republican on this bill, I want to thank my colleague Senator GILLIBRAND for her leadership on this very important issue.

I am a fiscal hawk. I look at every penny spent by the Federal Government. I respect Senator ENZI and Senator LEE and their views, especially on fiscal issues. I urge this body to pass the blue water Navy bill by unanimous consent. This is about justice. This is about a bureaucracy making a decision and really not following the intent of this Congress.

It is correct that something was done wrong in 2002, as Senator GILLIBRAND has already laid out so eloquently. Our U.S. Navy veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange while serving in Vietnam have been denied proper care through the VA. Even though both Houses of Congress extended presumptive health coverage to all illnesses linked to Agent Orange, the VA thwarted congressional intent by choosing the narrowest possible definition of "service in the Republic of Vietnam," which included the country's territorial waters.

Our veterans deserve much better. It is unacceptable that a technicality in the law and a dysfunctional Federal bureaucracy have resulted in the prolonged suffering of thousands of our Nation's heroes. This legislation will ensure that the victims of Agent Orange-related disease receive the care and compensation they have long deserved. I will continue to fight for our veterans just as they have fought for us.

Thank you.

I yield to my fellow Montanan, Senator TESTER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. I want to tell you, the only thing standing in the way of this bill passing is the Senate.

I have a tremendous amount of respect for Senator ENZI. I know, as chair of the Budget Committee, he has a job to do, but we have a job to do.

People sign up for our military, and promises are made. The promises that are made are the cost of war. The Vietnam war has been over for decades, and these folks are dying every day. This deal was Agent Orange exposure. If you served on the mainland of Vietnam, you are covered, but if you were on a boat on the ocean next to Vietnam, you were not.

I am going to tell you something. If you have been around weed spray, which is what Agent Orange is—it is a defoliant—and if you have been around it, you don't have to be sprayed with it to be exposed to it. All you have to be is downwind. These folks on the ocean were downwind. Why do we know that? Because there has been study after study showing that these folks who served on the ocean next to Vietnam

are suffering from a higher level of cancer, hypertension, and heart disease.

We have a job to do here, folks. There are 30 VSOs, maybe more than that—Veterans Service Organizations—that expect us to act and do the right thing here today. I will tell you, the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, JOHNNY ISAKSON, has done a marvelous job this Congress, doing what is right for our veterans and making sure the VA has what is needed to serve our veterans. This is not the VA.

I know there are some in the administration who don't want to see us do this. But the truth is, this is a cost of war. It is our obligation to meet the needs of those folks who have sacrificed for this country. It is time to step up today, folks. We are the only thing standing in the way of this bill being passed and doing right by our Vietnam veterans.

I want to close with one thing. Since I have been ranking member and since I have been a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have talked to a lot of Vietnam veterans. These are the folks who came back from war, and there was nobody at the airport waiting for them—nobody. They couldn't wear their uniforms on the streets of our towns. Now we are going to deny them the benefit that they have earned because they were exposed to Agent Orange. There is no doubt they were exposed to Agent Orange.

It is time to look at ourselves here in the Senate and step up and say: Do you know what? It does cost a lot of money. Do you know what? It has been studied to death, and it can be studied some more, but the bottom line is, we need to do right by the folks who were willing to serve in the Vietnam war. Some of them were drafted. Some of them signed up on their own. But the bottom line is, they all expected to get the benefits. This is a benefit they should get.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. I thank Senator TESTER, Senator ISAKSON, Senator GILLIBRAND, and Senator BLUMENTHAL.

This is the cost of war. This is simple. If you were exposed to poison while serving our country, you deserve the benefits you have earned—no exception. My office holds roundtables with veterans all over the State. We have held more than a dozen over the past several months. We hear Ohio veteran after Ohio veteran raise this issue time and again.

Joe Benedict from Cleveland talked about how important these benefits are to veterans like him. Last week, I met with Mike Kvintus, another blue water Navy veteran from Cambridge, OH. He is 71 years old, and he drove 4 hours from his home in Eastern Ohio to get here. He talked to Members of Congress about what a burden the senseless policy is for so many veterans he knows who have already sacrificed for this

country. He urged us to put politics aside.

That is what Senator TESTER and Senator GILLIBRAND and Senator ISAKSON have asked us to do. Last year, we introduced the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, which would guarantee that all Vietnam veterans exposed to toxic Agent Orange chemicals have equal access to the care and benefits they have earned.

A number of us, myself included, raised the issue with VA Secretary Wilkie, both in private meetings in our office and in the Veterans' Affairs Committee, pressing him to expand benefits to all veterans.

Mr. Kvintus and Mr. Benedict and all of the veterans in our States—Georgia, Connecticut, Montana, New York, and Ohio—we all hear this. We all know that these veterans put themselves in harm's way. It is the cost of war.

We need to show the American people we can work together. We should start by putting partisanship aside, passing this bill tonight, and finally getting the care for veterans that they deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleagues Senator BROWN, Senator TESTER, most importantly, Senator GILLIBRAND, and our good friend Senator ISAKSON.

Senator ISAKSON and Senator GILLIBRAND and I worked together closely on this issue when I was the ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. We engaged the VA through hearings, through meetings, through any way that we could reach the VA so that it would grant the presumption to all veterans who served in the territorial waters of Vietnam during the Vietnam war and were exposed to Agent Orange, to give them simple justice, and to treat them with the same presumption of service-connected disability as their fellow veterans who served in the Vietnam conflict with boots on the ground. If they served in those territorial waters, they deserve that same presumption.

Beyond the abstraction here, I want to talk about the face and voice of this problem, which, for me, is my good friend Gerry Wright.

Gerry Wright rode across this country on a motorcycle. The mantra on the motorcycle was "Sprayed and Betrayed." Gerry Wright is a victim of Agent Orange. He suffers from some of the same conditions as those brave veterans who served with boots on the ground. He joined me, along with Paul Scappaticci, Cynthia Johnson, and Gary Monk on Veterans Day. Just as he rode across the country, we came together to raise awareness about this issue.

If Americans saw and heard those faces and voices, if my colleagues heeded their call, there would be no objection in this body to this legislation. It is all of us who share a responsibility, and it is the VA that has to acknowl-

edge responsibility, as well, for its opposition over the years and its actions blocking simple justice for these veterans.

In the absence of justice from the VA, we have fought over these years—just as the blue water Navy veterans have fought for decades—to achieve that justice, and 5 months ago, that justice seemed within reach when the House unanimously passed, 382 to 0, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act.

The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee held a hearing on this legislation in August. Members had more than sufficient time to consider the language. There are more than ample funds to cover it. There is no reason—none whatsoever—for delaying this legislation, which has such broad support from the Veterans Service Organizations, stakeholders, and members of this body.

I want to remind my colleagues that this legislation also includes a provision that I led with Senator MORAN and Senator TESTER that would treat with fairness our Korean veterans. It is called the Fairness for Korean DMZ Veterans Act, ensuring all veterans who served in the Korean DMZ, when Agent Orange was used there, that they will also receive the healthcare and benefits they deserve. This measure is about justice for our Vietnam veterans, for our Korean war veterans, and it is a symbol, as well as a tangible and profoundly significant benefit of our commitment to cover the cost of war. This measure is not about a gift. It is not about charity. It is about what we owe the veteran. It is about keeping faith, making sure that we leave none of those veterans behind, and that we give them the simple justice they deserve. They have fought for this recognition over years, and "sprayed and betrayed" will be the appropriate designation if we fail in this duty for them.

Again, I thank Senator GILLIBRAND and Senator DAINES for their leadership, and I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

## 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in 1948, in the wake of two World Wars that caused death, destruction and atrocities on a massive and unprecedented scale, the world came together at the nascent United Nations to establish the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

These rights, envisioned as the "foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world," included article 19, the right of everyone to freedom of opinion and expression. This, of course, mirrors our First Amendment, which for more than two centuries has served as the cornerstone of our democracy. Article 19 also includes the ability to "receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers," as necessary to the realization of that right. The free and independent press has fulfilled this essential role around the world ever since.

Today is the 70th anniversary of that landmark declaration; yet as we commemorate that historic achievement, I have never been more concerned about the state of freedom of the press. Increasingly, around the world and even here in the United States, governments are actively trying to intimidate and silence the independent media. This year alone, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, over 43 journalists have been murdered for nothing more than publishing facts and informing the public. Countless others have been harassed and threatened. President Trump, who has called the press an "enemy of the people" and routinely denigrates journalists who do not portray him in a favorable light, has inspired the world's autocrats to decry "fake news" and imprison and even assassinate journalists who courageously report on corruption and other government misconduct.

Eleanor Roosevelt, one of our country's greatest defenders of human rights, served as chairwoman of the UN commission that wrote the Universal Declaration. Its commitment to the "inherent dignity" and "equal and inalienable rights" of all people is a testament to her vision of a more humane, just, and peaceful world, but like any such statement of principles, the declaration is aspirational. It has tangible meaning only to the extent that people apply it in practice. As the oldest democracy whose First Amendment has inspired countless people on every continent, it is incumbent on us all to defend the right of free expression enshrined in article 19 of the Universal Declaration, here and around the world.

### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, last week the Senate passed a second continuing resolution for fiscal year 2019, providing short-term funding for

many Federal Government agencies that have not yet received full year funding.

Several outstanding issues need to be resolved in order to complete the final seven appropriations bills, and I am hopeful that the hard work of the Appropriations Committee will not be in vain by resorting to a year-long continuing resolution for the remaining bills.

Congress must act in order to fully fund essential transportation and housing programs, environmental protection efforts, the Appalachian Regional Commission, NASA programs, the Census, FEMA relief programs, and to prevent President Trump from freezing the pay of over 2 million Federal civil servants, by enacting the 1.9 percent cost of living increase for Federal workers that the Senate passed on a broad bipartisan basis.

While I am glad this short-term continuing resolution will provide for an extension to keep the flood insurance program from unnecessarily lapsing, I want to see Congress enact a long-term reauthorization. This year's flooding of Ellicott City shows that we need a long-term solution. That is why I am an original cosponsor of the SAFE act, which provides for a 5-year extension for the program, in addition to important program enhancement as well as the Federal Flood Risk Management Act that ensures that federally owned or funded buildings, housing, and infrastructure, be made more weather-resistant and resilient so that we can protect our communities and our investment of Federal tax dollars.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I look forward to working with my colleagues over the next 2 weeks to complete the committee's fiscal year 2019 work.

#### BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS ACT OF 2017

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the November 29, 2018, letter from the Congressional Budget Office regarding H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017, be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,  
U.S. CONGRESS,  
Washington, DC, November 29, 2018.

Hon. MIKE ENZI,  
Chairman, Committee on the Budget,  
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On May 15, 2018, the Congressional Budget Office transmitted an estimate of the budgetary effects of H.R. 299, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on May 8, 2018. Among other things, the act would provide disability compensation to more of the veterans who served in the territorial seas of Vietnam during the Vietnam

War under the assumption that they had been exposed to Agent Orange, a blend of herbicides used by the Department of Defense to remove dense tropical foliage. CBO estimated that those provisions would increase direct spending by about \$900 million over the 2019-2028 period.

The bill that was passed by the House amended the earlier version to expand the nautical area in which veterans would be presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange. That change would increase CBO's estimate of the costs of the legislation by about \$250 million to account for the additional veterans that would be affected.

Since the original estimate was prepared in May, CBO has obtained new information that would affect future estimates of similar legislation. In total, we expect that accounting for this new information would increase the estimate of the legislation's effect on direct spending by at least \$1 billion over 10 years.

First, CBO now expects that more veterans would be affected by enactment of the bill than previously estimated. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) already presumes that veterans who served aboard certain U.S. Navy ships on the dates they were near the coast of Vietnam were exposed to Agent Orange. Using information about the crew size of those listed ships, CBO estimated that about two-thirds of veterans who served in the geographic area covered by the bill would obtain compensation under current law. Thus, in its estimate for H.R. 299, CBO projected that only one-third of veterans in the covered population would be newly eligible for disability compensation under that bill.

We have since learned from additional discussions with VA that there is considerably more uncertainty than we originally anticipated about the number of veterans that, under current law, VA would presume to have been exposed because of service aboard those vessels. Specifically, there is a greater likelihood that less than two-thirds of veterans who served in the geographic area covered by the bill would obtain compensation under current law.

To account for that uncertainty CBO would, in future estimates expect that half of affected beneficiaries would obtain benefits under current law, and thus would not be affected by enactment of H.R. 299. That estimate is in the middle of the range of possible outcomes. Using that updated estimate would mean that fewer veterans would be expected to receive benefits under current law and more would get benefits as a result of H.R. 299. The increase in the number of affected veterans would result in additional retroactive payments to veterans whose disability claims previously have been denied by VA and also would increase the number of recurring disability payments.

In addition, on the basis of new information from VA, CBO also would increase its estimate of the number of surviving spouses of deceased veterans who would receive compensation because the cause of those veterans' deaths would be presumed to have been caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

Finally, CBO would estimate that spending subject to appropriation would increase for additional personnel to process disability claims. Such spending would allow VA to handle new claims more quickly. Although H.R. 299 would not require VA to hire more personnel to process these additional claims, the department has indicated that it would need to do so in order to avoid a lengthy backlog.

CBO will incorporate this new information into its future estimates of the budgetary effects of such legislation.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Logan Smith.

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL,  
Director.

#### REMEMBERING LYUDMILA ALEXEYEVA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to Lyudmila Alexeyeva, a true giant for human rights in Russia and around the world. Ms. Alexeyeva passed away over the weekend in Moscow and left behind children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, but that was just her immediate family. Lyudmila's leadership and fearlessness inspired a generation of human rights and democracy activists in Russia; she was the grandmother of human rights in the country, and her stalwart leadership in the face of repression will truly be missed. Today is International Human Rights Day, a fitting moment to pay tribute this incredible leader.

In thinking about Lyudmila's legacy, three words come to mind: vision, tenacity, and courage.

Starting from her days drafting a Samizdat journal called the Chronicle of Current Events that scrutinized the Khrushchev regime, Lyudmila had the vision of a Soviet Union in which all of its citizens played a role in ensuring accountable governance and democratic principles. She saw the opportunity to fulfill this vision in the 1975 Helsinki Accords, especially those tenets which enshrined the critical notion that signatory countries' respect for human rights inside their borders was integral to security in the transatlantic region. The Brezhnev government at the time had no intention of honoring those elements of Helsinki, but Lyudmila worked together with her compatriots to set up the Moscow Helsinki Group to monitor implementation of the Accords. The Moscow Helsinki Group inspired the proliferation of sister organizations in other countries whose governments had committed to Helsinki principles, including here in Congress with the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe. This platform inside of the Soviet Union and across the transatlantic space was critically important to build those bonds of international solidarity among so many likeminded democrats and human rights defenders. She was indeed a true visionary for open, democratic societies, and the bonds she built with and among activists who shared that vision stand strong to this day.

Second, tenacity—Lyudmila faced so many obstacles during the Soviet period and the Putin era. After starting Moscow Helsinki, the pressure from the Soviet regime grew so great that she had to seek exile in the United States for 16 years. During that time, she became an American citizen, a proud moment for us here in this country. While in exile, she remained committed to

her vision. She advocated for international support for the plight of dissidents and human rights activists suffering repression in the Soviet Bloc. In the tradition of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Lyudmila wrote extensively on her country, publishing two important works: "The Thaw Generation. Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era" and "Soviet Dissent." She also worked for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty during this period.

Once she was able to return to Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union, Lyudmila dove right back into her work, scrutinizing the human rights record of Boris Yeltsin and resisting the sharp turn away from democracy under Vladimir Putin. As the space for civil society voices contracted inside Russia, Lyudmila was a clear and dogged advocate for freedom, a voice for the universal declaration of human rights and a voice for a better Russia. Despite this closing space, she expended enormous energy on mentoring and organizing a new generation of Russian human rights defenders to carry the torch. During this period, she would travel to Washington and was a true force of nature. She always had a few young activists in tow to make sure they were connected with key policymakers in DC. By doing so, she made clear to us in Washington that not all was lost inside Russia, that a tenacious new generation of activists was willing to take this baton of freedom and run the next leg of the race, and that they deserved our respect, attention, and support.

Finally, courage—Lyudmila did not have to do this work. This calling subjected her and her family to pressure and repression by different regimes over the years. It subjected her to 16 years in exile from her homeland. After so much hard work during the Soviet era, she could have settled into retirement, leaving the toils of civil society development and human rights defense to a new generation, but as repression grew under Putin, Lyudmila would continue the work undaunted. Well into her 70s and 80s, she would continue to organize. She would continue to travel to foreign capitals, only to face increased scrutiny at home. She would attend rallies in Moscow, sometimes in the dead of winter, under great physical threat. She would be arrested. She faced these challenges with remarkable composure and grace. Those images of Lyudmila during a Moscow street protest one New Year's Eve, dressed as a Russian holiday character, the Snow Maiden, in a powder blue coat as she stood up to thuggish Russian Government security forces, was a sight to behold. Her undaunted courage during this later period of her life was a true inspiration to so many of us around the world.

It is tragic that Lyudmila did not live to see her vision for Russia realized. It is tragic that the Russian people have been robbed of the opportunity to live in a democratic country.

It is tragic that the Putin regime continues to impose corruption and repression on a people who deserve so much better. Lyudmila understood what that "better" looks like and had a vision for her country: a governing system with true checks and balances; a country with a responsive government, held accountable to the people; a country where a strong civil society understood that it had a very important role and stake in the country's well-being. In her own way, Lyudmila symbolized that check and balance. She symbolized what a vibrant civil society in Russia could be if only taken to scale. She symbolized a place where Russia lived up to international human rights commitments, not as an answer to a foreign power, but because she saw fulfillment of these commitments as good for the citizenry and the country.

Our world is better because Lyudmila was here. Our world is better due to her vision, courage, and tenacity. We all have an obligation to carry on her work, not only in support for human rights in Russia, but in all those dark corners of the world where people are repressed by their governments. In the coming days, tributes like this will be heard around the world, extolling Lyudmila's many efforts and accomplishments in defense of liberty and human rights.

Lyudmila was a shining example to us all. Let us take this charge and be the embodiment of her life's work.

Rest in peace, Lyudmila.

#### TRIBUTE TO JANAK "HODGE" K. PATEL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today, I wish to recognize and honor the extraordinary public service of Janak "Hodge" Kanti Patel, who has been my State director for the past 6 years in the U.S. Senate and my district director for the prior 6 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. Over 22 years in the House and Senate, Hodge has served the people of Indiana with a high level of integrity and professionalism, combined with a strong emphasis on constituent services and community engagement.

A longtime resident of South Bend, IN, Hodge attended St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church and School, St. Joseph's High School, Holy Cross College, St. Mary's College, and the University Notre Dame. While at Notre Dame, Hodge interned for then-Third Congressional District U.S. Congressman Tim Roemer and was hired upon graduation as a case manager, where he worked on military, veterans, and immigration case work until he was promoted to the role of field representative in that same office.

In 2001, Hodge joined the staff of U.S. Senator Evan Bayh as his Northeast Indiana Regional Director, where he covered 21 counties and two offices: Fort Wayne and South Bend. Upon my election in 2006 to the U.S. House of Representatives, I invited Hodge to

join my team as district director. In his role, he helped establish three congressional offices and hired a highly dedicated team of nine staff members to help serve the more than 700,000 Hoosiers that I represented for three terms in Congress. Together we worked to establish an expanded VA community based outpatient clinic in downtown South Bend, a full service veterans healthcare clinic for St. Joseph County, as well as organized job fairs, job-seeker workshops, and access to capital events for small businesses across the Second Congressional District. Hodge also helped to organize more than 1 dozen constituent stakeholder advisory groups and oversaw our office's military service academy nominations process.

In 2012, when I was elected to the U.S. Senate, I once again asked Hodge to join me. As my State director, Hodge led my team in Indiana and played a vital role in hiring 20 staff members to help serve Hoosiers and established six Senate offices located in Evansville, Fort Wayne, Hammond, Indianapolis, Jeffersonville, and in my hometown of South Bend.

Over the last 6 years, Hodge oversaw our constituent services team that managed 12,000 cases and recovered \$12.6 million for Hoosiers. He also played an important role in working with our grants director to proactively seek out opportunities where we could enhance nonprofit organizations and local communities in their efforts to serve the public. Additionally, there were more than 100 projects around the state that Hodge and the Indiana State staff team worked on to ensure a favorable outcome. Finally, Hodge was also able to build coalitions and gain a high level of respect among his counterparts in Indiana on both sides of the aisle in both the House and Senate.

I am extremely proud to recognize Hodge Patel's 22 years of tireless commitment to public service on behalf of Hoosiers. I wish Hodge and his four children Harper, Dylan, Elliott and Quinn, as well as his partner, Ali Oesch, the best in their future endeavors outside of public service.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to section 1501(c) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-254), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Syria Study Group: Dr. Kimberly E. Kagan of Washington, DC.

#### ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 5:39 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following bills:

H.R. 1417. An act to amend the National Law Enforcement Museum Act to allow the

Museum to acquire, receive, possess, collect, ship, transport, import, and display firearms, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1861. An act to award a Congressional Gold Medal in honor of Lawrence Eugene "Larry" Doby in recognition of his achievements and contributions to American major league athletics, civil rights, and the Armed Forces during World War II.

H.R. 3398. An act to amend the Real ID Act of 2005 to permit Freely Associated States to meet identification requirements under such Act, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5238. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1234 Saint Johns Place in Brooklyn, New York, as the "Major Robert Odell Owens Post Office".

H.R. 6330. An act to amend the Small Business Act to modify the method for prescribing size standards for business concerns.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 3191. A bill to provide for the expeditious disclosure of records related to civil rights cold cases, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-424).

### EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. INHOFE for the Committee on Armed Services.

\*Thomas McCaffery, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

\*Lisa M. Schenck, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Military Commission Review.

\*William Bookless, of California, to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration.

Air Force nominations beginning with Col. David W. Abba and ending with Col. Steven P. Whitney, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 26, 2018.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Michael R. Berry, to be Major General.

Marine Corps nomination of Brig. Gen. Bradley S. James, to be Major General.

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. Duke Z. Richardson, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nominations beginning with Col. Kevin D. Admiral and ending with Col. Paul T. Stanton, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 29, 2018.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Terry R. Ferrell, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Col. Timothy D. Connelly, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Gerald R. Krimbill, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Stacy M. Babcock, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Lt. Gen. Eric J. Wesley, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Andrew P. Poppas, to be Lieutenant General.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. Robert D. Sharp, to be Vice Admiral.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report

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

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

Air Force nomination of Luke M. Sauter, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Tasha L. Pravecek, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Brian J. Neff, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Cory A. Cooper, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Joel A. Sloan, to be Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jamie J. Johnson and ending with Renee M. Summers, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 26, 2018.

Air Force nomination of Timothy B. Murphy, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Andrew M. Deramus, to be Major.

Air Force nomination of Brianne D. Newman, to be Major.

Air Force nominations beginning with Mohan S. Akella and ending with William E. Zutell III, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 29, 2018.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jennifer L. Gurganus and ending with April H. Clemmensen, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 29, 2018.

Army nominations beginning with Jason A. Ferguson and ending with Samuel M. Siegal, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 14, 2018.

Army nomination of Christopher G. Neeley, to be major.

Army nominations beginning with Samuel J. Hibronpadilla and ending with Scott D. Ingalsbe, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 14, 2018.

Army nomination of Jeremy W. Lewis, to be Major.

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

Army nomination of Loren C. Duwel, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Renereose V. Hinkle, to be Major.

Army nomination of Sarah L. Fortier, to be Major.

Army nomination of David A. Neveau, to be Major.

Army nomination of Kyle B. Hurst, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Raymond R. Adams III and ending with Matthew E. Wright, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 29, 2018.

Army nomination of Paul M. Fugere, to be lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Clarence K. Graham, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Jackson A. Kurtzman, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Jeremy T. Tennent, to be Major.

Army nomination of Jonathan D. Thompson, to be Major.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Robert A. Green, Jr. and ending with Jesus S. Mendez, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 29, 2018.

Navy nomination of Thomas J. Zerr, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Shelton L. Lyons II, to be Captain.

\*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.

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

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. PERDUE:

S. 3732. A bill to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to prohibit the Commodity Futures Trading Commission from compelling a person to produce or furnish algorithmic trading source code or similar intellectual property to that agency unless the agency first issues a subpoena; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. PERDUE:

S. 3733. A bill to prohibit the Securities and Exchange Commission from compelling a person to produce or furnish algorithmic trading source code or similar intellectual property to the Commission unless the Commission first issues a subpoena, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. JONES (for himself, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 3734. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to prohibit the distribution of any check or other negotiable instrument as part of a solicitation by a creditor for an extension of credit, to limit the liability of consumers in conjunction with such solicitations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 3735. A bill to protect freedom of speech in America's electoral process and ensure transparency in campaign finance; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. FLAKE:

S. 3736. A bill to amend Rule 611 of the Federal Rules of Evidence to prohibit cross-examination by the accused of minor victims of sexual assault; 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. COONS (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. Res. 718. A resolution establishing the John S. McCain III Human Rights Commission; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. COONS, Mr. REED, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BROWN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. Con. Res. 59. A concurrent resolution recognizing the need to improve physical access to many federally funded facilities for

all people of the United States, particularly individuals with disabilities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 352

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) were added as cosponsors of S. 352, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Master Sergeant Rodrick "Roddie" Edmonds in recognition of his heroic actions during World War II.

S. 480

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 480, a bill to reauthorize the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp.

S. 1042

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1042, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code to exclude Segal Americorps Education Awards and related awards from income.

S. 1101

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1101, a bill to eliminate discrimination and promote women's health and economic security by ensuring reasonable workplace accommodations for workers whose ability to perform the functions of a job are limited by pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition.

S. 1109

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1109, a bill to amend title VIII of the Public Health Service Act to extend advanced education nursing grants to support clinical nurse specialist programs, and for other purposes.

S. 1301

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1301, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the distribution of additional residency positions, and for other purposes.

S. 1303

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Mary-

land (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1303, a bill to prohibit discrimination in adoption or foster care placements based on the sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status of any prospective adoptive or foster parent, or the sexual orientation or gender identity of the child involved.

S. 1503

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1503, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

S. 2018

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2018, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make the child tax credit fully refundable, establish an increased child tax credit for young children, and for other purposes.

S. 2076

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

S. 2122

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2122, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 regarding reasonable break time for nursing mothers.

S. 3253

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3253, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide authority to add additional vaccines to the list of taxable vaccines.

S. 3369

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 3369, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require that group and individual health insurance coverage and group health plans provide coverage for treatment of a congenital anomaly or birth defect.

S. 3523

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S.

3523, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require a full military honors ceremony for certain deceased veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 3591

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3591, a bill to extend authorization for the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001 through fiscal year 2090, and for other purposes.

S. 3638

At the request of Mr. KYL, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3638, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce the rate of tax on estates, gifts, and generation-skipping transfers.

S. 3644

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3644, a bill to authorize a special resource study on the spread vectors of chronic wasting disease in Cervidae, and for other purposes.

S. 3649

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3649, a bill to provide for programs to help reduce the risk that prisoners will recidivate upon release from prison, and for other purposes.

S. 3656

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3656, a bill to authorize the Department of Energy to conduct collaborative research with the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to improve healthcare services for veterans in the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 3702

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 3702, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to prevent the misclassification of drugs for purposes of the Medicaid drug rebate program.

S.J. RES. 64

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 64, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of the Treasury relating to "Returns by Exempt Organizations and Returns by Certain Non-Exempt Organizations".

S. RES. 717

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from



Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 717, a resolution honoring the life and legacy of Rebecca Teresa Weichhand.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

### SENATE RESOLUTION 718—ESTABLISHING THE JOHN S. MCCAIN III HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 718

*Resolved,*

#### SECTION 1. JOHN S. MCCAIN III HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.

(a) COMMISSION ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the Senate the John S. McCain III Human Rights Commission (in this section referred to as the “Commission”).

(2) DUTIES.—The Commission shall—

(A) serve as a forum for bipartisan discussion of international human rights issues and promotion of internationally recognized human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(B) raise awareness of international human rights violations through regular briefings and hearings; and

(C) collaborate with the executive branch, human rights entities, and nongovernmental organizations to promote human rights initiatives within the Senate.

(3) MEMBERSHIP.—Any Senator may become a member of the Commission by submitting a written statement to that effect to the Commission.

(4) CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE COMMISSION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Two members of the Commission shall be appointed to serve as co-chairpersons of the Commission, as follows:

(i) One co-chairperson shall be appointed, and may be removed, by the majority leader of the Senate.

(ii) One co-chairperson shall be appointed, and may be removed, by the minority leader of the Senate.

(B) TERM.—The term of a member as a co-chairperson of the Commission shall end on the last day of the Congress during which the member is appointed as a co-chairperson, unless the member ceases being a member of the Senate, leaves the Commission, resigns from the position of co-chairperson, or is removed.

(C) PUBLICATION.—Appointments under this paragraph shall be printed in the Congressional Record.

(D) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the position of co-chairperson of the Commission shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

(b) COMMISSION STAFF.—

(1) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission is authorized, from funds made available under subsection (c), to—

(i) employ such staff in the manner and at a rate not to exceed that allowed for employees of a committee of the Senate under section 105(e)(3) of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Act, 1968 (2 U.S.C. 4575(e)(3)); and

(ii) incur such expenses as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out its duties and functions.

(B) EXPENSES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Payments made under this subsection for receptions, meals, and food-re-

lated expenses shall be authorized only for actual expenses incurred by the Commission in the course of conducting its official duties and functions.

(ii) TREATMENT OF PAYMENTS.—Amounts received as reimbursement for expenses described in clause (i) shall not be reported as income, and the expenses so reimbursed shall not be allowed as a deduction under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(2) DESIGNATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each co-chairperson of the Commission may designate 1 professional staff member.

(B) COMPENSATION OF SENATE EMPLOYEES.—In the case of the compensation of any professional staff member designated under subparagraph (A) who is an employee of a Member of the Senate or of a committee of the Senate and who has been designated to perform services for the Commission, the professional staff member shall continue to be paid by the Member or committee, as the case may be, but the account from which the professional staff member is paid shall be reimbursed for the services of the professional staff member (including agency contributions when appropriate) out of funds made available under subsection (c).

(C) DUTIES.—Each professional staff member designated under subparagraph (A) shall—

(i) serve all members of the Commission; and

(ii) carry out such other functions as the co-chairperson designating the professional staff member may specify.

(c) PAYMENT OF EXPENSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The expenses of the Commission shall be paid from the Contingent Fund of the Senate, out of the account of Miscellaneous Items, upon vouchers approved jointly by the co-chairpersons (except that vouchers shall not be required for the disbursement of salaries of employees who are paid at an annual rate of pay).

(2) AMOUNTS AVAILABLE.—For any fiscal year, not more than \$200,000 shall be expended for employees and expenses.

### SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 59—RECOGNIZING THE NEED TO IMPROVE PHYSICAL ACCESS TO MANY FEDERALLY FUNDED FACILITIES FOR ALL PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. COONS, Mr. REED, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BROWN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Ms. HIRONO) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. CON. RES. 59

Whereas the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States prevents Congress from making any law respecting an establishment of religion, prohibiting the free exercise of religion, or abridging the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, the right to peaceably assemble, or the right to petition for a governmental redress of grievances, and was ratified on December 15, 1791, as 1 of the 10 amendments that constitute the Bill of Rights;

Whereas the Bill of Rights, specifically the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, calls for the right of all indi-

viduals to peaceably assemble, and to this end, all individuals, regardless of their physical ability, shall be offered equal opportunity to access all amenities that are federally funded, in whole or part, with the exception of certain sites of historical importance approved by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (commonly known and referred to in this preamble as the “United States Access Board”) or a nonpartisan commission convened by the United States Access Board;

Whereas, in the 28 years since the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), there have been advances in technologies that benefit individuals with disabilities, such as automatic doors;

Whereas, in 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that—

(1) 61,000,000 individuals in the United States have a disability that impacts major life activities;

(2) 1 of every 7 adults experience a mobility impairment, which is the most common form of disability; and

(3) as people age, disability becomes increasingly common, affecting an estimated 2 of every 5 older adults;

Whereas, as significant advances in medical treatment result in improved health outcomes, the incidence of disability has increased over time;

Whereas, in 2016, an estimated 25.1 percent of veterans in the United States, or more than 2,000,000 individuals, reported having a service-connected disability;

Whereas the Act entitled “An Act to insure that certain buildings financed with Federal funds are so designed and constructed as to be accessible to the physically handicapped”, approved August 12, 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4151 et seq.) (commonly known as the “Architectural Barriers Act of 1968”), was enacted to ensure that certain federally funded facilities are designed and constructed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities;

Whereas title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791 et seq.)—

(1) prohibits discrimination against a person with a disability in programs and activities funded by the Federal Government;

(2) requires the elimination of architectural barriers for Federal employees and applicants with disabilities; and

(3) established the United States Access Board;

Whereas the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.)—

(1) prohibits discrimination against a person with a disability by a State or local government, including any department, agency, special purpose district, or other instrumentality of a State or local government, in programs and activities, transportation, communications, and the built environment;

(2) prohibits discrimination against a person with a disability in the activities of a place of public accommodation, which is an entity that is—

(A) generally open to the public; and

(B) within a category described in that Act, such as a restaurant, movie theater, school, day care facility, or doctor’s office; and

(3) requires a newly constructed or altered place of public accommodation or commercial facility (such as a factory, warehouse, or office building) to comply with the Standards for Accessible Design;

Whereas the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.)—

(1) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in multifamily housing, including military family housing; and

(2) requires the elimination of architectural barriers in common areas;

Whereas the United States Access Board has developed new guidelines for public rights-of-way that address various issues, including access for blind pedestrians at street crossings, wheelchair access to on-street parking, and various constraints posed by space limitations, roadway design practices, slope, and terrain;

Whereas the new guidelines developed by the United States Access Board cover pedestrian access to sidewalks and streets, including crosswalks, curb ramps, street furnishings, pedestrian signals, parking, and other components of public rights-of-way;

Whereas the aim of the United States Access Board in developing the new guidelines includes ensuring that—

(1) access for individuals with disabilities is provided wherever a pedestrian way is newly built or altered; and

(2) the same degree of convenience, connection, and safety afforded the public generally is available to pedestrians with disabilities;

Whereas, on the date on which the Attorney General adopts the new guidelines, the guidelines will become enforceable standards under title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.); and

Whereas the United States was founded on the principles of equality and freedom, and such principles require that all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, are able to engage as equal members of society: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—*

(1) recognizes the importance of equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in the United States;

(2) recognizes that too many facilities of Federal, State, and local governments remain inaccessible to people with disabilities due to architectural and other barriers;

(3) reaffirms its support of the Act entitled “An Act to insure that certain buildings financed with Federal funds are so designed and constructed as to be accessible to the physically handicapped”, approved August 12, 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4151 et seq.) (commonly known as the “Architectural Barriers Act of 1968”), title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791 et seq.), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), and the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.) and requires full compliance with such Acts; and

(4) pledges to make universal and inclusive design a guiding principle for all infrastructure bills and projects and will continue working to identify and remove the barriers that prevent all people of the United States, including people with disabilities, from having equal access to the services provided by the Federal Government.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a request for one committee to meet during today’s session of the Senate. It has the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committee is 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 Monday, December 10, 2018, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on pending nominations.

#### ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2018

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, December 11; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Muzinich nomination, with all postcloture time on the nomination expiring at 11:30 a.m.; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:49 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, December 11, 2018, at 10 a.m.