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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Eternal Lord, the fountain of wisdom, thank You for Your mighty love. Give our lawmakers the will and strength they need to meet the challenges of these times. May they bend their ear to Your Spirit's voice and follow Your leading. Lord, activate their conscience as You motivate them to live with honor. Keep them vigilant to look for redemptive possibilities in each of life's seasons, finding wisdom in Your precepts. May they hear the murmur of Your truth so they will not deviate from Your path.

Father of life, fill the precious hours of this day with Your presence.

We pray in Your majestic Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

NORTH KOREA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, North Korea's determined effort to field a nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile threatens the United States and our allies. By all appearances, Kim Jong Un has broken from a predictable cycle of escalation demonstrated by previous leaders by which the regime takes a provocative action, draws the United States into a negotiation, and extracts concessions. Instead, Kim appears willing to risk the disapproval of the U.N. and our regional allies by undertaking a breakneck testing program.

The President has made clear that a North Korea that is armed with a nuclear-armed missile—a capability they have yet to test—is unacceptable to us and threatens our vital national security interest. Thus, in order to allow the Senate to better understand this threat, I asked the administration to brief all Senators on the issue, and the President graciously offered to hold the meeting down at the White House. I encourage all of our colleagues to attend this afternoon's meeting on North Korea down at the White House.

NOMINATION OF ALEXANDER ACOSTA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, I am pleased that the Senate voted yesterday to confirm Rod Rosenstein to serve as Deputy Attorney General, despite the unnecessary delay, and I look forward to advancing another nominee today.

For the past 8 years, burdensome regulations put forth by the Obama administration have held back our economy and taken a toll on too many hard-working Americans. Fortunately, we now have an administration that has already proven its commitment to easing the regulatory burden on our economy and advancing policies that actually promote economic growth and job creation.

The Department of Labor nominee before us today, Alexander Acosta, shares that commitment, and he has just the right experience to address these issues. He was previously confirmed to three positions by voice votes here in the Senate, meaning not a single Senator of either party recorded a vote in opposition, so it is no surprise that he has earned a host of bipartisan support for his current nomination as well. We should confirm him without delay. The sooner we do, the sooner he can advance labor policies that put American workers, businesses, and our economy first.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on one other important matter currently being discussed here in the Senate, conversations are ongoing about the way forward on a government spending bill. Our friends on the other side of the aisle sent me a letter that asked for this bill to reject poison pill riders. I would suggest that if they take their own advice, we can finish this negotiation and produce a good agreement that both sides can support.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE CONGRESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, with the media and others looking at the first 100 days or so of this new administration, and looking at this new Congress and the Republican majority, I think it bears reflecting on the last couple of months in the Congress under the new Trump administration and looking at some of the accomplishments that have been made on behalf of the American economy and the American people.

We are committed to helping job creators do what they do best; that is, innovate, create more jobs, and employ

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

more people, and not force those same job creators to waste time dealing with onerous rules and regulations that bear no relationship to public safety. With a like-minded President, we have been able to deliver some real relief to the American people.

One of the ways we have been able to do that is through a mechanism known as the Congressional Review Act. The Congressional Review Act was created to give Congress an opportunity to do away with regulations with which it disagrees. It allows Congress to act as a real check.

The problem with regulations is, it is really a substitute for lawmaking. Of course, when Congress acts and passes laws, the President signs them, and then we are held accountable by the voters for the laws we pass. That is not so when it comes to the bureaucracy that writes regulations. Bureaucrats don't stand for election. Bureaucrats are not accountable to the people. So that is why it is really important for us to have a mechanism like the Congressional Review Act to act as a check on runaway regulation.

By using this mechanism, the Congressional Review Act, with an ally in the White House, we have started undoing some of the thousands of burdensome rules and regulations created by the Obama administration—rules and regulations that add up to a hefty pricetag for our country. By one estimate, the costs of these Obama-era regulations add up to more than $1 trillion. That is a tremendous wet blanket on the American economy. If the job creators have to pay somebody to help them comply with these onerous rules and regulations, they obviously are not paying somebody to grow their business and to be productive. By one estimate, the cost of these Obama regulations adds up to more than $1 trillion and more than 700 million hours of paperwork, but fortunately we have been able to chip away at them by working with the White House and focusing on bringing regulatory relief to the American people.

Here is the tally so far. So far, we have been able to save the American economy $636 billion worth of regulatory relief. That adds up to 52 million hours of compliance time. Again, when somebody is busy complying with busy work mandated by a micromanaging Federal bureaucracy, they are not doing productive work.

Now, some of these rules and regulations are things that we may not read or hear about in the headlines or the evening news—things like the stream buffer rule, the Bureau of Land Management planning rule, and the Securities and Exchange Commission resource extraction rule. These are not well-known rules and regulations, but they have a real cost on the American economy. There is a real reason why, after the great recession of 2008, our economy has been bouncing along at about 2 percent real growth. That is not enough growth to keep hiring people as they come of age and become eligible to work in the workforce. We need the economy to grow faster, and one of the ways to do that is to relieve businesses and the economy of those overly onerous regulations.

As I was thinking about it, I think what has happened to our economy is, it has died a death of 1,000 cuts. Each of these regulations, while they seem rather innocuous, in and of themselves, or people don't know about them, have actually accumulated to cause real damage to the American economy. So we have been able to help those small businesses that would like to hire more people to do productive work, to grow the economy, and to help pay their employees better wages. We have helped them by repealing these regulations to help our job creators and not hurt them.

This has always been, to me, the mystery of Washington, DC. Back home in Texas, we look at the job creator as a positive influence on our economy, as somebody who is going to be creating a real opportunity for someone to find productive work and to pursue their dreams, but here in Washington so often the opposite seems to be true. It almost seemed like the attitude, particularly of the previous administration, was, What other obstacles can we put in the way of businesses? What other burdens can we impose upon the economy in the name of trying to micromanage the economy from Washington, DC? Well, I think what we have seen—the evidence is pretty clear—is anemic growth, and that is something we need to roll back, along with these rules and regulations.

I am hopeful the President will be signing more of these Congressional Review Act initiatives soon. So far, he has signed 13 of them, and we have more in the queue.

As we look ahead to big-ticket items we all want to make progress on, I am committed to continuing to work with all of our colleagues and the administration in doing all we can to help small businesses, family farmers, and entrepreneurs spend more time doing productive work and less time doing busy work mandated by the bureaucrats here in Washington, DC.

One of those big-ticket items is tax reform. We have seen some big ideas floated out there by the House of Representatives and last night and today by the President and his Cabinet as well. I look forward to reviewing the proposal the President has made.

There is no question there is a lot of room for reforming our Tax Code. Our Tax Code is literally a self-inflicted wound which damages our economy. We have trillions of dollars earned by American-based businesses earned overseas that they will not bring back because they don't want to be taxed twice on that money. We know our Tax Code is way too complicated. It is riddled with loopholes, inconsistencies, and provisions that impede job creation. Pro-growth tax reform should be our goal. It is something that has united Republicans and Democrats in the past, and there is no reason we shouldn't be united again in accomplishing that tax reform.

So I look forward to hearing more about the President's proposal, and I applaud him for making a bold statement about the direction we ought to pursue. Now is finally the time to address it.

All of these efforts—tax reform, rolling back unnecessary regulations and rules, and providing a better environment for businesses to thrive—are vital to getting our economy back on track and away from years of stagnant growth we saw under President Obama.

I should note it is hard to argue with how business-friendly policies—and the promise of more—affect the economy and create an atmosphere conducive to building businesses and helping families get by.

I think what we have seen is a resurgence of public confidence in the American economy. One index by Gallup suggests that business owners are now more optimistic than they have been since the summer of 2007. That is the kind of confidence and optimism that helps them grow their business and create opportunity for the working man and woman in our country, and it is a testament to the sea change we have seen over the last few months since the new administration came into office and the American people chose to retain Republican majorities in the House and the Senate. More family-run businesses are expecting us to keep putting forward policies that empower job creators, not to get in their way.

I know we have only seen the first few months of the new Congress and we have only seen the first few months of a new Presidential administration, but I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish so far; frankly, without much help from our friends across the aisle who have done everything they can to slow-walk nominations and otherwise impede progress. I hope they realize that is bad politics, and it is not serving the interests of the American people very well. Sooner or later, enough Democrats are going to say: We came here not to just say no to every constructive proposal made but actually participate in the legislative process and work for the benefit of the American people.

I look forward to doing even more to help those who want to bring more jobs and more economic growth to our communities across this great land.

Mr. President, 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 to resume consideration of the Acosta nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of R. Alexander Acosta, of Florida, to be Secretary of Labor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11:30 a.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, as Senators continue to negotiate the appropriations bills this week, I want to reiterate my hopes that we can reach an agreement by this Friday. So long as we try to operate within the parameters our parties have operated under for the last few spending bills, I am optimistic about the chances for a deal.

I am glad the President has taken the wall off the table in the negotiations. Democrats have always been for border security. In fact, we supported one of the toughest border security packages in comprehensive immigration reform in an amendment offered by two of my Republican colleagues, Senator HOEVEN and Senator CORKER. We may address border security in this bill as well, but it will not include any funding for a wall, plain and simple.

Now, we still have a few issues to work out, including the issue of cost sharing, Puerto Rico, and getting permanent healthcare for miners, which I was glad to hear the majority leader voice support for yesterday—permanent healthcare for miners. I want to salute Senator MANCHIN, who has worked so long and hard for these poor miners who have struggled and have had hard, hard, hard lives. They shouldn't have their health benefits taken away. But above all, in the bill we have to make sure there are no poison pill riders. That has been a watchword of our negotiations in the past and is what led to success, and I hope both sides of the aisle will pursue that now.

We Democrats remain committed to fighting President Trump's cutback on women's health, a rollback of financial protections in Wall Street reform, rollbacks of protections for clean air and clean water, and against a deportation force. Those are the kinds of poison pill riders that could hurt an agreement, and I hope we will just decide at the given time that we can debate them in regular order, but they shouldn't hold the government hostage and pass them without debate.

THE PRESIDENT'S TAX PLAN

Mr. President, today we will also be hearing some details—we don't know how many—about the President's tax plan. We will take a look at what they are proposing, but I can tell you this: If the President's plan is to give a massive tax break to the very wealthy in this country—a plan that will mostly benefit people and businesses like President Trump's—that will not pass muster with Democrats.

The very wealthy are doing pretty well in America. Their incomes keep going up. Their wealth keeps going up. God bless them. Let them do well. But they don't need another huge tax break while middle-class Americans and those struggling to get there need help just staying afloat. It is already the case that CEOs and other folks at the top of the corporate ladder can use deductions and loopholes to pay less in taxes than their secretaries. We don't need a plan that establishes the same principle in the basic rates by allowing wealthy businessmen, like President Trump, to use passthrough entities to pay 15 percent in taxes while everyone else pays in the twenties and thirties. We don't need a tax plan that allows the very rich to use passthroughs to reduce their rates to 15 percent while average Americans are paying much more. That is not tax reform. That is just a tax giveaway to the very, very wealthy that will explode the deficit.

So we will take a look at what the President proposes later today. If it is just another deficit-busting tax break for the very wealthy, I predict their proposal will land with a dud with the American people.

NORTH KOREA

Mr. President, later today, the Senate will be receiving a briefing by the administration on the situation in North Korea. I look forward to the opportunity to hear from the Secretary of State, who I understand drafted the administration's plan, and other senior administration officials about their views on North Korea and the posture of the United States in that region.

I think what many of my colleagues hope to hear articulated is a coherent, well-thought-out, strategic plan. So far, Congress and the American public have heard very little in the way of strategy with respect to North Korea. We have heard very little about strategy to combat ISIS. We have heard very little about a strategy on how to deal with Putin's Russia. We have heard very little about our strategy in Syria. Only a few weeks ago, the President authorized a strike in Syria. Is there a broader strategy? Does the administration support regime change or not? Do they plan further U.S. involvement?

These are difficult and important questions, and there are many more of them to be asked and answered about this administration's nascent national security policy for hotspots around the globe. I hope that later today, at least in relation to North Korea, we Senators are given a serious, well-considered outline of the administration's strategic goals in the Korean peninsula and their plans to achieve them.

THE PRESIDENT'S FIRST ONE HUNDRED DAYS

Mr. President, as we approach the 100-day mark of the Trump administration, we Democrats have been highlighting the litany of broken and unfulfilled promises that President Trump made to working families. It is our job as the minority party to hold the President accountable to the promises he made to voters, particularly the ones he made to working families who are struggling out there. Many of these folks voted for the President because they believed him when he promised to bring back their jobs or get tougher on trade or drain the swamp. So it is important to point out where the President has gone back on his word and where he has fallen short in these first 100 days.

On the crucial issues of jobs and the economy, this President has made little progress in 100 days. His party hasn't introduced a major job-creating piece of legislation to date, and he has actually backtracked on his promises to get tough on trade and outsourcing, two things which have cost our country millions of jobs. I was particularly upset to see the President consider repealing President Obama's law that prevented corporate inversions that allowed big corporations to locate overseas to lower their tax rates.

Instead of draining the swamp and making the government more accountable to the people, President Trump has filled his government with billionaires and bankers and folks ladened with conflicts of interest. Amazingly enough, he was going to clean up Washington and make it transparent. The White House has decided to keep the visitor log secret and, even worse, allowed waivers to lobbyists to come to work at the White House on the very same issues they were just lobbying on, and those waivers are kept secret. We will not even know about them.

These reversals aren't the normal adjustments that a President makes when transitioning from a campaign to the reality of government; these are stunning about-faces on core promises the President made to working Americans.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. President, I would like to focus now on one issue: the President's promises on healthcare. On the campaign trail, the President vowed to the American people that he would repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act with better healthcare that lowered costs, provided more generous coverage, and guaranteed insurance for everyone, with no changes to Medicare whatsoever. That is what he said. We are not saying this; he said that. Those are his words: I am going to cover everybody. He said, ''We're going to have insurance for everybody . . . much less expensive and much better.''

''We're going to have insurance for everybody.'' But once in office, President Trump broke each and every one of these promises with the rollout of his healthcare bill, TrumpCare. Did

TrumpCare lower costs, as he promised? No. The CBO said premiums would go up by as much as 20 percent in the first few years under TrumpCare.

His bill allowed insurance companies to charge older Americans a whopping five times the amount they could charge to younger folks, and it was estimated that senior citizens could have to pay as much as $14,000 or $15,000 more for healthcare, depending on their income and where they lived.

Did his bill provide for better coverage? No. In fact, the most recent version of the TrumpCare bill would allow States to decide whether to protect folks who have preexisting conditions. This was one of the most popular things in ObamaCare, even if people didn't like some other parts of it. If you are a parent and your child has cancer, the insurance companies said: We are cutting you off, and you have to watch your child suffer because you can't afford healthcare. ACA, the Affordable Care Act, ended that. They couldn't cut you off or not give you insurance because your child or you had a serious illness that would cost the insurance company a lot of money. But now, in the proposal they are making, it is up to the States. Tough luck if you live in a State without it.

Did his bill guarantee ''insurance for everyone''? That is what he said. No, far from it. The Congressional Budget Office said that TrumpCare would result in 24 million fewer Americans with health coverage after 10 years.

Despite an explicit pledge from Candidate Trump on the eve of the election that he would protect Medicare—because hard-working Americans ''made a deal a long time ago''—TrumpCare slashed more than $100 billion from the Medicare trust fund.

TrumpCare was the exact opposite of everything the President promised his healthcare bill would be. Americans should breathe a sigh of relief—a huge sigh of relief—that the bill didn't pass.

There is a lack of fundamental honesty here. If you believe that there shouldn't be government involvement in healthcare and the private sector should do it all, that is a fine belief. I don't agree with it. But that means higher costs and less coverage for most Americans, and the President and, frankly, many of our Republican colleagues are trying to have it both ways. They want to say to their right-wing friends: I am making government's involvement much less. But then they say to the American people: You are going to get better coverage, more coverage, at lower rates. The two are totally inconsistent. That is why they are having such trouble with TrumpCare over in the House, and there will be even worse trouble here in the Senate, if it ever gets here, which I hope it doesn't.

Healthcare is another example of why this President has so little to show for his first 100 days. Instead of reaching out to Democrats to find areas where we could compromise on improving our healthcare system—we Democrats have always said: Don't repeal ObamaCare; improve it. We know it needs to have some changes. But, instead, they started out on their own in a partisan way, the very same party that criticized President Obama for working just with Democrats on the issue, despite a yearlong effort to try. So it failed, and it is emblematic of the President's first 100 days. The President's ''my way or the highway'' approach is one of the main reasons he has so little to show on healthcare and so little to show for his first 100 days in office.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. FLAKE pertaining to the introduction of S. 946 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. FLAKE. I yield back the remainder of my time.

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

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time during the quorum call be equally divided.

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

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

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

REMEMBERING JAY DICKEY

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I come to the floor to honor the memory of former Congressman Jay Dickey, who passed on April 20. When Jay Dickey roamed the Halls of Congress, you knew there might be mischief afoot—and what merry mischief it was.

Jay was opinionated, colorful, and zany. Now that he has passed, the warm laughter of memories once again echoes in these cold, marble halls as we reflect on his life.

He died last Thursday after a battle with Parkinson's, a battle he fought like every other—with determination and gusto. I, for one, will miss his counsel and friendship, as will the people of Arkansas whom he loved so deeply.

Jay was an Arkansas original. He was born and bred and in the end breathed his last in his hometown of Pine Bluff. He shared a lot in common with the mighty pines of South Arkansas. He stood tall and proud of his community's heritage. He was a pillar of the community. A lawyer and a businessman, he left his mark as an entrepreneur, starting franchises throughout the State, as an advocate representing the city and later taking on such famous clients as coach Eddie Sutton.

Unlike the proverbial tree in the forest, now that Jay Dickey has fallen, the whole State has taken notice.

But, of course, a man's accomplishments are only a window into his character. You had to know Jay personally to get a sense of all the fun there was inside him. It was as if his feet had sunk deep into the soil and soaked up all of the Natural State's richness: its humor, its earnestness, and its strip-the-bark-off candor.

I got to know Jay in my first political campaign. We had never met, and I was a political newcomer, but Jay spent many hours getting to know me and ultimately supported my candidacy, which helped to put me on the map.

Of course, Jay shared a lot of candid advice too. After attending one of my early townhalls, Jay and I went to lunch down the road at Cracker Barrel. I asked him how I did. Jay replied:

Ya did good. Ya did good. But you gotta cut it down some. Ya see that baked potato there? That's a fully loaded baked potato—it's got cheese, sour cream, bacon, onions. Your answers are like that fully loaded baked potato! Make em like a plain potato.

That is just one of the countless stories that added to his legend.

This was the man who offered a ninth grader a college-level internship because he thought the kid had potential; the man who answered any phone in his office that rang twice, just to keep his staff on their toes; the man whose dog once drove his truck into a radio station in Hampton because he left the truck running during an interview to keep the dog cool, and somehow that dog put it in gear; the man who kept a picture of Jesus on his wall, and who, when meeting a new client, would point to the picture and say: ''Have you met my friend?''

Yes, the first great joy of his life was his faith, but the second great joy was politics. Jay was the first Republican elected to Congress from South Arkansas since Reconstruction. He won in 1992, the very same year Arkansas elected our Democratic Governor as President.

Despite being who the Democrats must have viewed as the most Republican incumbent in the country, he held onto that seat for almost a decade. Arkansans knew good stock when

they saw it. He lost only by the narrowest of margins in 2000, with President Bill Clinton campaigning for his opponent, then-State Senator Mike Ross. True to form for Jay, he and Mike would become friends after that race, speaking regularly about issues and their faith.

Jay's time in office will not be remembered as a historical oddity, an anomaly, or a one-off because unconventional though it was, it was also a forerunner of things to come. It was an early sign of a coming political realignment, as the small towns that dotted rural America—towns where few people had ever even seen a Republican, never mind voted for one—were starting to cast their votes up and down the ballot for the Grand Old Party.

In other words, Jay Dickey was a trailblazer—or perhaps a bulldozer. He smashed through history and precedent and grooved a path in rough terrain for the rest of us to follow. For that, he has my thanks and the thanks of the people of Arkansas, and for his humorous, quirky, unparalleled example, he has the thanks of the U.S. Congress, which today is a little sadder for his passing but also a little brighter for his memory.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, on Monday morning I stood with workers and fellow public officials in Bridgeport, CT, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the L'Ambiance Plaza disaster. Thirty years ago last Sunday, L'Ambiance Plaza collapsed, 28 families lost loved ones, and 22 others were seriously injured in the collapse. Their worlds collapsed as the lift-slab construction used as the device for building L'Ambiance Plaza, in effect, imploded.

The workers were constructing a 16-story apartment building when that disaster happened. The lift-slab construction method used at that site subsequently was banned. It was banned because it was unsafe.

That disaster was preventable, as so many workplace injuries and deaths are preventable. That was a tragedy in the modern American workplace 30 years ago—L'Ambiance Plaza. It is an urgent and great need for this Nation to confront. L'Ambiance Plaza collapsed, literally, within seconds, and when it was over, the 28 workers who woke up that day and left their homes never came back. Their families, who said good-bye, never saw them again alive. They were victims of workplace dangers that day, but so many others have followed them since.

Those families are still affected, still grieving. One of them spoke at that ceremony on Monday morning, and it provides for many of us the memories of that day when literally hundreds of workers from throughout Connecticut went to that site, digging, often by hand, through the wreckage, trying to find the living survivors. On that day, and every day since, I have sought to increase the safety of our workplaces and avoid those kinds of tragedies. That is why I am here today, because that pledge would be, in my view, inconsistent with voting for the nomination of Alexander Acosta to be Secretary of Labor.

I will state at the outset that I commend Mr. Acosta for his record of public service during the Presidency of George W. Bush, serving as a National Labor Relations Board member and holding two positions at the Department of Justice, as Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division and, later, as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Florida. I want to thank him for his willingness to serve again. I say that in all seriousness, as a former U.S. attorney myself.

I believe that, as Secretary of Labor, he will have important responsibilities if he is confirmed in the area of enforcement, and I am constrained to oppose his nomination because I believe, No. 1, that this administration needs a champion, not simply a bystander, and Mr. Acosta has given me no reason at his hearings and in his record to assure me that he will overcome what I see as a bias against enforcement in this administration.

Last month President Trump proposed a budget that guts the Department of Labor. The budget admittedly is short on specifics and boasts little more than one page about the agency that is tasked with ensuring the safety of tens of millions of American workers. Let me make clear: It would slash resources at the Department of Labor by 21 percent. That is $2.5 billion. That means 21 percent fewer inspectors, 21 percent fewer investigators, 21 percent less enforcement. That is one-fifth less enforcement, when, in fact, five times more enforcement is appropriate. The budget, although short on details, singled out programs that helped to train workers and employers in ways to ensure avoidance of hazards on the job.

President Trump has proposed the elimination—the zeroing out—of that program. At his confirmation hearing last week, Mr. Acosta demonstrated neither a willingness nor an interest in challenging the budget or the President's priorities, stressing that his soon-to-be boss, President Trump, guides the ship. I find that view and perspective alarming. There is an old saying that budgets are ''moral documents.'' It is a saying frequently repeated, but it has a real meaning when it comes to enforcement of worker safety. It has a real meaning to real people in their lives or loss of lives. It is a matter of life or death. Where you put scarce dollars and resources reveals moral values and moral priorities.

President Trump has put his values on clear display in this budget. He believes in building a wall, a needless show project that he mentioned repeatedly in his budget, but he has given short shrift or no shrift to efforts that protect people who go every day to workplaces where they are in serious jeopardy, and where—as in L'Ambiance Plaza—they can lose their lives. Voting for Mr. Acosta would mean failing to keep that pledge that I believe I made to the families of L'Ambiance, to the workers who lost their lives there, and to countless other workers in danger every day in workplaces that must be made safer—and can be—through vigorous enforcement of rules and laws that exist now and improvement of those laws.

One of the greatest challenges facing our Nation today is fairness in the workplace, particularly fairness in pay for women, fairness concerning pay disparity between men and women, with women making a fraction of what men make for the same work. On this critical issue also, this nominee is silent. On other issues critical to the modern workplace—overtime pay, minimum wage, protecting workers' retirement, fighting discrimination, matters that affect women and minorities more than others—he has said little or nothing, certainly little to indicate that he will be an enforcer of laws that protect minorities and women and others who may be the victims of discrimination.

There is no question that this nominee is far better than the President's first proposed person to fill this job, Andy Puzder, who rightly and fortunately withdrew, but the standard we should use is not whether he is better than his predecessor, who was found wanting even before the vote was taken, but rather whether they can be trusted to protect workers, to enforce rules vigorously and fairly, and to fight for a budget and a set of priorities that are critical to the future of American workers. On that score, unfortunately, I answer this question with a clear ''no,'' and I will vote against this nominee.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to oppose the nomination of Alexander Acosta to be Secretary of Labor.

I did not come to this decision lightly, but, after closely examining Mr. Acosta's record, I cannot in good conscience vote for his confirmation to be Labor Secretary on behalf of the American people.

The most troubling part of Mr. Acosta's record is how he handled a 2007 sex trafficking case that he oversaw while serving as the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Florida. In that case, which left many vulnerable victims devastated when it concluded, Mr. Acosta failed to protect underage crime victims who looked to his office to vindicate their rights against billionaire Jeffrey Epstein.

The case, led by Mr. Acosta's office and the FBI, involved an investigation

of Mr. Epstein for his sexual abuse and exploitation of more than 30 underage girls.

It ended with an agreement, negotiated by Mr. Acosta's office, in which Mr. Acosta agreed not to bring Federal charges, including sex trafficking charges, against Mr. Epstein in exchange for his guilty plea to State charges and registration as a sex offender. Thanks to this agreement, Mr. Epstein served a mere 13 months of jail time and avoided serious Federal charges that would have exposed him to lengthy prison sentences.

What troubles me about this case is not just the leniency with which Mr. Epstein was treated, but how the victims themselves were treated.

In 2004, I authored the Crime Victims' Rights Act with then-Senator Kyl because we both saw that victims and their families were too frequently ''ignored, cast aside, and treated as nonparticipants in a critical event in their lives.'' I strongly believe victims have a right to be heard throughout criminal case proceedings.

My concern with how Mr. Acosta handled this case stems from his office's obligations under the Crime Victims' Rights Act. The victims have asserted that Mr. Acosta's office did not provide them with notice of the agreement before it was finalized, nor were they provided with timely notice of Mr. Epstein's guilty plea and sentencing hearings. Worse, throughout the process, the victims were denied the reasonable right to confer with the prosecutors; this flies in the face of the Crime Victims' Rights Act we authored.

I am very concerned that Mr. Acosta's office did not treat the victims ''with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy'' as required by law. Rather, according to the victims, Mr. Acosta's office ''deliberately kept [them] 'in the dark' so that it could enter the deal'' without hearing objections. These allegations raise serious concerns.

From his position of immense power and responsibility, Mr. Acosta failed, and the consequences were devastating.

Another deeply troubling aspect of Mr. Acosta's record comes from his tenure when he led the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division from August 2003 to June 2005. According to the Justice Department's inspector general, that office repeatedly used political or ideological tests to hire career civil servants in violation of federal law.

During his confirmation hearing before the HELP Committee, Mr. Acosta himself admitted that discriminatory actions were taken under his supervision and that they should not have happened.

At a time when the public's faith in government institutions is eroding on a daily basis, Mr. Acosta's handling of these high-profile incidents lead me to question his ability to carry out the duties of Labor Secretary with fairness and impartiality.

This doubt is further compounded by statements that Mr. Acosta made during his hearing regarding whether he will exercise independence in upholding and enforcing certain rules and regulations, such as the fiduciary rule and overtime rule to protect workers.

In response to such questions, Mr. Acosta avoided making a commitment to uphold these rules as Secretary of Labor, and I am greatly concerned that he may not look out for the best interests of workers.

All of the issues I have outlined here simply do not allow me, in good faith, to vote in favor of Mr. Acosta's nomination.

Thank you.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to complete my remarks prior to the vote.

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

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I am honored to speak here today in support of Alex Acosta, and I wholeheartedly encourage my colleagues to support his nomination to be our next Secretary of Labor. I know this nominee well. As a fellow Floridian and as a native of Miami, I have been familiar with his work for many years. As I said when the President nominated him, I think he is an outstanding choice to lead the Department of Labor.

Alex has an impressive academic record. He has two degrees from Harvard—the first from Harvard College and then from Harvard Law School.

He also has a sterling record of public service in the State of Florida and in the United States of America. He was a member of the National Labor Relations Board. He was appointed by President George W. Bush and served from 2002 to 2003. From there, he was selected by President Bush to serve as Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, where he also served as Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General in that office. He also served our Nation as the U.S. Attorney in one of the most challenging districts in our country—Florida's Southern District.

Most recently, Alex has served the State of Florida as the dean of Florida International University College of Law, where he has been instrumental in raising the still young school's profile and in its graduating young men and women who are now well prepared to excel in their legal careers.

With every challenge he has confronted throughout his distinguished career, he has demonstrated his ability to effectively tackle with ease the problems at hand. He is a brilliant legal mind, someone with a deep knowledge of labor issues, and he is a proven leader and a proven manager. It is for these reasons and many more that I am confident that Alex Acosta will serve this Nation admirably.

He was—listen to this—previously confirmed unanimously by the Senate for three different positions in the U.S. Government. This man is not even 50 years old, and he has already been confirmed unanimously by the Senate for three separate positions. I believe that in a few moments, he will be one step closer to being confirmed to his fourth. He is well qualified for this role, and I look forward to working with him to ensure that Americans are equipped with the skills they need to be successful in the 21st-century economy.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The bill 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 R. Alexander Acosta, of Florida, to be Secretary of Labor.

John Barrasso, Susan M. Collins, Ron Johnson, Deb Fischer, Luther Strange, Bill Cassidy, Lindsey Graham, John Boozman, Mike Rounds, David Perdue, Lamar Alexander, Tom Cotton, Orrin G. Hatch, Todd Young, Mitch McConnell, Joni Ernst, Dan Sullivan.

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 R. Alexander Acosta, of Florida, to be Secretary of Labor shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 61, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 115 Ex.]

YEAS—61

Alexander	Graham	Paul
Barrasso	Grassley	Perdue
Blunt	Hatch	Portman
Boozman	Heitkamp	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Capito	Hoeven	Rounds
Cassidy	Inhofe	Rubio
Cochran	Isakson	Sasse
Collins	Johnson	Scott
Corker	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	King	Strange
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Tester
Crapo	Manchin	Thune
Cruz	McCain	Tillis
Daines	McCaskill	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Warner
Ernst	Menendez	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	Young
Flake	Murkowski	
Gardner	Nelson	

NAYS—39

Baldwin	Feinstein	Murray
Bennet	Franken	Peters
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Reed
Booker	Harris	Sanders
Brown	Hassan	Schatz
Cantwell	Heinrich	Schumer
Cardin	Hirono	Shaheen
Carper	Kaine	Stabenow
Casey	Klobuchar	Udall
Coons	Leahy	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Markey	Warren
Duckworth	Merkley	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murphy	Wyden

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). On this vote, the yeas are 61, the nays are 39.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, when workers and families fought back against President Trump's first disastrous pick for Secretary of Labor, Andrew Puzder, they made it clear that they want a Secretary of Labor who will fight for their interests, especially as President Trump continues to break promise after promise he made to workers on the campaign trail. I couldn't agree with them more. As bad as Puzder would have been, our standard cannot be ''not Puzder.''

Never has it been so critical to have a Secretary of Labor who is committed to putting workers' protections and rights first, even if that means standing up to President Trump. It is with this in mind that I cannot support Alexander Acosta to run the Department of Labor.

Given Mr. Acosta's professional history, I have serious concerns about whether undue political pressure would impact decision making at the Department. My concerns were only heightened at his nomination hearing, when Mr. Acosta said he would defer to President Trump on the priorities of the Department of Labor. The Trump administration has already cemented a reputation for flouting ethics rules and attempting to exert political pressure over Federal employees. We need a Secretary of Labor who will prioritize workers and the mission of the Department of Labor over special interests and political pressure.

Unfortunately, Mr. Acosta's time leading the civil rights division at the Department of Justice suggests he will not be the mission-focused Secretary of Labor workers across the country have demanded. A formal investigation by the inspector general showed that, under Acosta's tenure, the civil rights division illegally considered applicants' political opinions in making hiring decisions, ignoring their professional qualifications. As Assistant Attorney General, Acosta chose to recuse himself from consideration of a Texas redistricting plan, instead, allowing political appointees to overrule career attorneys who believe the plan discriminated against Black and Latino voters.

Mr. Acosta's past raises questions about whether—instead of making workers' rights and protections the priorities of that Department—he will allow political pressure to influence his decision making.

Mr. Acosta's refusal to take a strong stand on many of the most pressing issues workers face today was equally concerning. We need a Secretary of Labor who is committed to expanding overtime pay to more workers, fighting for equal pay, and maintaining protections for our workers. But in responding to questions about those priorities, Mr. Acosta made it clear that he simply plans to defer to President Trump, who has already made it abundantly clear that he will not stand up for workers.

Mr. Acosta continued to evade addressing my concerns about how he would prioritize workers' interests at the Department of Labor in our followup questions. We need a Secretary of Labor who will remain committed to the core principles of the Department of Labor—someone who will prioritize the best interests of our workforce, who will enforce laws that protect workers' rights and safety and livelihoods, and who will seek to expand economic opportunities for workers and families across our country.

Unfortunately, Alexander Acosta has failed to show he will stand up to President Trump and prioritize those principles and help our workers get ahead. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to listen to the millions of workers who have made their voices heard about the need for a Secretary of Labor who is committed to building an economy that works for everyone, not just those at the top, and vote against this nomination.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

(The remarks of Mr. DURBIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 948 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

GULF OF MEXICO OIL DRILLING MORATORIUM

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to address the Senate on the occasion of the solemn memorial of 7 years since the Deepwater Horizon explosion and the resulting oilspill, where 11 workmen were tragically killed.

The oilspill fouled the sensitive gulf ecosystem in ways that we still do not fully realize. Yet we are hearing today that the President is expected to issue an Executive order this week that ignores the implications of that tragedy, which was also the largest environmental disaster in U.S. history, by blindly encouraging more drilling in very sensitive areas.

I can tell you that drilling off the coast of Florida's neighboring States poses a real threat to our State's environment and our multibillion-dollar tourism industry, and that is because a spill off the coast of Louisiana can end up on the beaches of northwest Florida, just like a spill off the coast of Virginia or South Carolina can affect the entire Atlantic coast.

BP, as a result of Deepwater Horizon, agreed to pay more than $20 billion in penalties to clean up the 2010 oilspill and repay gulf residents for lost revenue. But, apparently, that wasn't enough, if BP's recent spill in Alaska is any indication.

So we shouldn't be surprised, since oil companies and their friends have fought against any new safety standards or requirements, that the President still wants to open up additional waters to drilling, despite the fact that we haven't applied the lessons learned from Deepwater Horizon. This is at a time when the United States has been able to find all new reserves of oil and gas onshore. So we are not in a time of a shortage of discovery or a shortage of oil reserves. Our domestic energy market is being affected by the low price of natural gas, since so much of the reserves are just tremendous here in the continental United States.

The most visible change since the Deepwater Horizon spill is the division of the Minerals Management Service into the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement. All of those changes were made as a result of trying to improve things after the BP spill, but it doesn't seem to have made any major improvements in oversight, according to a report issued by the GAO last month.

So I have come to the floor to try to alert other Senators about the importance of preserving the moratorium on drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. It makes no sense to put Florida's multibillion-dollar, tourism-driven economy at risk.

And there is something else at risk.

The Department of Defense has stated numerous times—I have two letters from two Republican Secretaries of Defense that say it—that drilling and oil-related activities are incompatible with our military training and weapons testing. That is the area known as the gulf training range. It is in the Gulf of Mexico off of Florida. It is the largest testing and training range for the United States military in the world.

Now, in that gulf training range is where the pilots of the F–22 are trained. That is at Tyndall Air Force Base. It is where the new F–35 pilots are trained, by the way, not only for the United States but also for the many foreign nations that have bought F–35s. Of course, that is essential to our national security.

That is just pilot training. That doesn't speak of the testing done on some of our most sophisticated weapons over hundreds and hundreds of miles of restricted airspace.

Oh, by the way, when the U.S. Navy Atlantic Fleet shut down our training in Puerto Rico and the island of Vieques, where do you think a lot of that training came to? The Navy still has to train. So they will send their squadrons down to Key West Naval Air Station at Boca Chica Key. When those pilots and their F–18 Hornets lift off the runway, within 2 minutes they are out over the Gulf of Mexico in restricted airspace. So they don't spend a lot of fuel and a lot of time to get there.

That is why a lot of our colleagues across the State of Florida on the other side of the aisle—in other words, this is bipartisan—have weighed in with this administration, urging continued protection for the largest military testing and training area in the world.

Opposition to drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico is bipartisan, bicameral—the Senate and House—but so is our opposition to drilling off the Atlantic coast.

Now, let me just distinguish between the two. Years ago, my then-Republican colleague Senator Mel Martinez and I both offered in law an exemption until the year 2022 of any oil drilling off of the coast of Florida. It is actually everything east of what is called the Military Mission Line. It is virtually the Gulf of Mexico off of Florida. Of course we did that for the reasons that I have already stated. That is in law up until 2022. But the administration will be coming forth with another plan for the 5-year period for oil drilling offshore for the years 2023 up through 2028.

It is my hope that the words of this Senator and the words of our bipartisan colleagues from the Florida delegation will convince the administration that it is not wise to impede the military's necessary training and testing area, not even to speak of the tremendous economic deprivation that will come as a result of an oilspill.

Just think back to the BP spill. Think back to the time when the beaches, the sugary-white sands of Pensacola Beach, were completely covered with oil. That picture—a very notable picture, a contrast of the black oil on top of the white sand—went around the world.

The winds started blowing the oil from the BP spill off the coast of Louisiana. The winds continued to blow it to the east, and so some of the oil got into Pensacola Bay, some of the oil started getting into Choctawhatchee Bay, and some oil got on the beautiful beaches of Destin and Fort Walton Beach. The winds took it as far east as the Panama City beaches. There they received basically tar balls on the beach. Then the winds reversed and started taking it back to the west, so none of the other beaches all the way down the coast of Florida—Clearwater, St. Petersburg, on down to the beaches off of Bradenton, Sarasota, Fort Myers, Naples, and all the way down to Marco Island—none of those beaches received the oil because the wind didn't keep blowing it that way. But the entire west coast of Florida lost an entire tourist season because our guests, our visitors, the tourists, didn't come because they had seen those pictures and they thought that oil was on all of our beaches.

Let me tell you how risky that was. In the Gulf of Mexico, there is something known as the Loop Current. It comes through the separation of the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico and the western end of Cuba and goes up into the gulf, and then it loops and comes south in the gulf. It hugs the Florida Keys and becomes the Gulf Stream that hugs the east coast of Florida. And about midway down the peninsula, it starts to leave the coast, follows and parallels the east coast of the United States, and eventually goes to Northern Europe. That is the Gulf Stream.

Had that oilspill been blown south from Louisiana and had the Loop Current come enough north, that oilspill would have gotten in the Loop Current, and it would have taken it down past the very fragile coral reefs of the Florida Keys and right up the beaches of Southeast Florida, where there is a huge tourism business.

By the way, the Gulf Stream hugs the coast in some cases only a mile off of the beach.

That is the hard economic reality of what could happen to Florida's tourism industry, not only on the west coast, as it already did in that season of the BP oilspill, but what could happen on the east coast of Florida too.

Opposition to drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico is certainly bipartisan, but so is the opposition to drilling off the Atlantic coast. In the last Congress, Members from both parties joined together to file a House companion to the legislation this Senator had filed that would prohibit seismic testing in the Atlantic off of Florida. The type of seismic airgun testing companies wanted to use to search for oil and gas would threaten thousands of marine mammals and fish, including endangered species such as the North American right whale. The blast from seismic airguns can cause permanent hearing loss for whales and dolphins, which disrupts their feeding, calving, and breeding.

In addition to the environmental damage those surveys would cause, businesses up and down the Atlantic coast would also suffer from drilling activity. Over 35,000 businesses and over 500,000 commercial fishing families have registered their opposition to offshore drilling in the Atlantic. From fishermen, to hotel owners, to restaurateurs, coastal residents and business owners understand it is too dangerous to risk the environment and the economy on which they depend.

There is one unique industry that opposes drilling off the Florida east coast. We made the case way back in the 1980s when Secretary of the Interior James Watt decided he was going to drill from Cape Hatteras, NC, all the way south to Fort Pierce, FL. This Senator was a young Congressman then and took this case on and finally convinced the Appropriations Committee not to include any funds for the execution and offering of those leases. It was a simple fact that that was where we were launching our space shuttle then, as well as our military rockets from Cape Canaveral, and you simply can't have oil rigs out there and be dropping the first stages and the solid rocket boosters from the space shuttle.

As we know, the Cape has come alive with activity—a lot of commercial rocketry, as well as the mainstays for our military space program. In a year and a half, NASA will launch the largest rocket ever, one-third more powerful than the Saturn V, which was the rocket that took us to the Moon, and that is the beginning of the Mars program, as we are going to Mars with humans. Because of that space industry—whether it is commercial or whether it is civilian NASA or whether it is military—you simply can't have oil rigs out there in the Atlantic where we are dropping the first stages of those rockets. That is common sense.

When President Obama took the Atlantic coast off the table from 2017 to 2022—that 5-year period planning in the offshore drilling plan—Floridians finally breathed a deep sigh of relief. They sighed happily too. If President Trump intends to open up those areas to drilling, his administration will receive and can expect to receive a flood of opposition from the folks who know what is going to happen.

It is this week—and here we are midweek—that we are expecting the Trump administration to move forward with an Executive order that would ignore the wishes of coastal communities. I want to say that the areas off of Florida in the east coast of the Atlantic are very sensitive, as I have just outlined, but there is nothing to say that if you have a spill off of Georgia or South Carolina, that it can't move south, and that starts the problem all over.

This announcement by the President will be like a big present for the oil companies, which, by the way, in areas in the Gulf of Mexico that are rich with oil—and there are, in fact, active leases that are not producing the oil. Why would they want to grant more leases in areas that are important to preserve the Nation's economy as well as our military preparedness?

I hope the President thinks twice before putting Florida's economy at such a risk. I hope he refrains from issuing this Executive order, but if he doesn't, this Senator and a bipartisan delegation from Florida will fight this order.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues in the Senate to oppose the nomination of Alexander Acosta for Labor Secretary.

The test of whether a nominee is qualified to be Labor Secretary is a pretty simple one: Will that person stand up for 150 million American workers and their families? Mr. Acosta has had multiple opportunities in more than 2 months since he was nominated for this position to demonstrate that he would stand up for workers, and time after time, he has refused.

Americans deserve to know where a nominee like Mr. Acosta stands on key policy matters that will have a powerful impact on the lives of working people.

At Mr. Acosta's confirmation hearing, I asked him where he stood on three policy issues that are important to working Americans and their families.

First, will you promise not to delay a rule that will protect 2.3 million Americans from being poisoned by lethal cancer-causing silica on the job?

Second, will you appeal a Texas court's injunction that has halted implementation of a new overtime rule that would give 4.2 million Americans a $1.5 billion raise in a single year?

And third, will you promise not to delay a rule that will stop investment advisers from cheating retirees out of an estimated $17 billion a year?

Now, these are not tough questions. For most people, these would have been total softballs: Will you keep workers from being poisoned, will you make sure that employers pay for overtime, and will you make sure that investment advisers aren't cheating retirees? Come on. This is the very least that a Labor Secretary can do—the very least.

Mr. Acosta refused to answer a single one of these questions. Instead, he bobbed and weaved, stalled and repeated my questions; he even insisted that these topics were so complex that he needed more time to study them. And it wasn't just my questions that Mr. Acosta refused to answer. He spent more than 2 hours ducking, hand-waving, and dodging basic questions from committee members—both Democrats and Republicans—questions about whether he would commit to stand up for workers on issues that profoundly affect their health, their safety, and their economic security.

Mr. Acosta has been so evasive about his views that we still have virtually no idea what he will do to help or harm workers if he is confirmed for this job.

The fact that Mr. Acosta isn't willing to step up on easy questions and tell us that he will be on the side of workers tells us a lot about him—and none of it is good.

That is particularly troubling, since Mr. Acosta is President Trump's nominee, and we can see how President Trump treats workers. In less than 100 days on the job, President Trump has managed to kill, weaken, or undermine an unprecedented number of protections for working people.

He signed a bill to make it easier for government contractors to steal wages from their employees.

He signed a bill to make it easier for employers to hide injuries and deaths that their workers suffer on the job.

He signed a bill to keep cities from offering retirement accounts to more than 2 million employees who don't have access to a retirement plan on the job.

He delayed a rule protecting workers from lethal, cancer-causing beryllium.

He delayed a rule protecting construction workers from deadly silica.

And he delayed a rule preventing investment advisers from cheating retirees—a rule that will save hard-working Americans about $17 billion a year.

That is a pretty long list, and it doesn't even include the devastating impact to workers of the President's proposed 20-percent cut to the Labor Department funding, which means fewer cops on the beat when employers steal wages or force people into unsafe working conditions.

During his campaign, President Trump talked a big game about standing up for workers and creating good, high-paying jobs. But if his first 100 days are any indication, his real plan is to keep corporate profits soaring by gutting the rules that American workers depend on to keep money in their pockets, food on their tables, and to keep them safe in the workplace.

Unlike President Trump's first failed nominee for this job, Mr. Acosta is not openly contemptuous of people who work hard for a living, and I suppose we should be thankful for that. But that is not the test for Labor Secretary. The test for Labor Secretary is whether this person will stand up for American workers.

Mr. Acosta won't make that commitment, and he has made it perfectly clear that he sure won't stand up to President Trump. That is just not good enough. Because of this ongoing evasiveness, I have no confidence that Mr. Acosta is the right choice for this position, and I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing his confirmation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the role.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

NOMINATION OF ROD ROSENSTEIN

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, today I wish to speak about my vote yesterday on the nomination of Rod Rosenstein to be Deputy Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice. I voted no on his nomination not because I think he is unqualified or because I think he is unfit for the job. He is neither of those things. Rather, I opposed his nomination because of the troubling actions the Justice Department is taking on criminal justice, civil rights, and immigration issues and because I firmly believe a special prosecutor is needed to investigate Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential election.

Since taking over as our Nation's top law enforcement official, Attorney General Sessions has indicated he wishes to roll back certain actions taken during the Obama administration. For instance, Attorney General Sessions is considering changes to existing Justice Department drug charging policies. I am concerned he will direct Federal prosecutors to increase the use of mandatory minimum penalties in low-level, nonviolent drug cases. Since 1980, our Federal prison population has increased by nearly 800 percent in large part because of the failed war on drugs and the use of mandatory minimums. Increasing the utilization of mandatory minimums will not make us safer or fix our broken criminal justice system. To the contrary, it will come at great cost—not only to American taxpayers, but to public safety, to families, and to confidence in our justice system. As Deputy Attorney General, Mr. Rosenstein will play a critical role in enacting those changes to existing charging policies.

Attorney General Sessions also recently indicated that the Justice Department may reverse its policy on the use of consent decrees to combat civil rights abuses by law enforcement when they occur. He has consistently criticized the use of consent decrees, and in his first major speech as Attorney General, he vowed to ''pull back'' on Federal suits against State and local police departments for civil rights abuses. There is no doubt that America's law enforcement community deserves our utmost respect and protection. These brave women and men have answered the call to serve and the vast majority of them serve with integrity. However, the Justice Department plays a critical role in assisting police departments struggling to combat systemic practices that unfairly target

minorities. Scaling back on the use of consent decrees means civil rights violations may not be remedied. As Deputy Attorney General, Mr. Rosenstein will play a critical role in reversing course on the use of consent decrees.

Finally, the pending investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential election has caused deep concern and anxiety for many Americans. We owe it to the public to conduct an investigation that is beyond reproach and ensure that every person, regardless of their political affiliation, has confidence in the results no matter what they are. While Mr. Rosenstein is undoubtedly a man of integrity, such an investigation can only be conducted by an independent, special prosecutor. It concerns me that, in his confirmation hearing, Mr. Rosenstein would not commit to appointing such a person.

Mr. Rosenstein has served his country with honor and distinction. He is well respected on both sides of the aisle. In most circumstances, I believe I would have supported his nomination. However, the disturbing agenda on civil and human rights of the Trump administration and the actions Attorney General Sessions continues to advance at the Justice Department and Mr. Rosenstein's responses to questions regarding this agenda at his confirmation hearing leave me deeply troubled about the role he will play as the second highest ranking individual at the Department. For those reasons, I voted no on his nomination to be Deputy Attorney General.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I supported Rod Rosenstein's nomination to become Deputy Attorney General. Throughout his 27-year career, Mr. Rosenstein has earned a reputation as a fair and focused administrator of justice. He has served in Maryland in both Republican and Democratic administrations and has earned the distinction of being the longest serving U.S. attorney in the country.

I had the honor to introduce Mr. Rosenstein to the Senate Judiciary Committee at his confirmation hearing. He has aggressively prosecuted not only dangerous gangs and criminals in Maryland but also elected officials who violated the people's trust. He has shown impartiality in these investigations, and his successful prosecutions have led to ethics reforms that increased transparency and public confidence in Maryland.

When Mr. Rosenstein and I met recently, I asked him if he supported the consent decree negotiated between the Obama administration and the city of Baltimore. He assured me that, if the court formally entered the consent decree, he would support its implementation. Attorney General Sessions, however, has frequently expressed skepticism about consent decrees. Baltimore is the only city to invite the Justice Department to conduct a thorough, methodical analysis of its police department in order to foster transparency and increase trust between police officers and Baltimore city residents. As the former U.S. attorney in Maryland, Mr. Rosenstein is well acquainted with the challenges that the city faces. He has prosecuted corruption charges against Baltimore city police officers and should recognize the importance of reform and effective community policing. I trust Mr. Rosenstein will keep his promise to support the consent decree.

In addition to being a top-notch lawyer, Mr. Rosenstein is known for the professional manner in which he runs his current office. In his letter of support, Maryland's Attorney General Brian Frosh notes that Mr. Rosenstein ''inherited an office in turmoil'' when he became Maryland's U.S. attorney, but with a ''steady hand and superb management,'' created a department that is now universally respected. Those skills will be put to the test immediately. Mr. Rosenstein will assume the office of Deputy Attorney General at a tumultuous time for the Justice Department. His job will be to serve justice, not political leaders.

As Mr. Rosenstein and I discussed, the question for him is the same that then-Senator Sessions posed to Sally Yates during her hearing to become Deputy Attorney General. Senator Sessions said: ''You have to watch out because people will be asking you to do things you just need to say no about.'' Senator Sessions then asked: ''Do you think the Attorney General has the responsibility to say no to the President if he asks for something that's improper?'' Like Sally Yates, Mr. Rosenstein said that he would be willing to put his job on the line to uphold the integrity of the Department of Justice.

I believe that any investigation into the ties between the Trump administration and Russian interference in our elections will require the appointment of an independent special counsel, and I have also joined my fellow Senators in calling for a nonpartisan commission.

I also made clear to Mr. Rosenstein that, if the FBI Director did, in fact, request that the Justice Department deny President Trump's unsubstantiated claims that the Obama administration wiretapped Trump Tower, then the Justice Department has a duty to immediately let the public know the truth.

It is vitally important that the American public have faith that our laws apply equally to all Americans, regardless of rank or position. Rod Rosenstein has applied that principle faithfully during his time as U.S. attorney in Maryland. It is essential that he apply the same principle at the Department of Justice.

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on April 26 of each year, we celebrate World Intellectual Property Day and recognize the important role of intellectual property rights in the fabric of our society. This year, we take time to recognize the innovators and creators who are making our lives healthier, safer, and more productive through their ingenuity and the robust system of intellectual property protections enshrined in our laws.

The Founding Fathers recognized the value of intellectual property, empowering Congress ''to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.''

Placing this authority within Congress's enumerated powers underscores the weight that our Founding Fathers placed on intellectual property's value to the budding Nation as a means of fostering economic development and growth. Our success as a nation in agriculture, manufacturing, technology, and medicine shares a common thread of intellectual property rights.

True to their predictions, our system of intellectual property has fostered innovation and ensured America's role as an economic engine of inventions that have made us healthier, safer, and more secure.

Our system of intellectual property rights has evolved since the ratification of the Constitution and the passage of the Copyright Act of 1790, but its core mission of promoting innovation has remained constant.

Our innovators and creators rely on IP protections such as patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets to help drive and recoup their investments of ingenuity.

Of course, the innovation that intellectual property helps encourage benefits society more broadly as well. It drives enormous economic activity and development, helping assure America's place as an economic and intellectual beacon to the world. As the U.S. Chamber's Global Intellectual Property Center recently pointed out, IP-intensive industries employ over 40 million Americans, accounting for 34.8 percent of total U.S. gross domestic product.

Iowans have long held intellectual property as an integral part of our economy. Our commitment to growth and innovation has led to $11.2 billion in annual IP-related exports from the State, more than 667,000 IP-related jobs, and 19.9 percent higher wages for direct IP workers than non-IP workers.

As a society, we depend on innovators to make our lives better and to solve the challenges we face. These innovators, in turn, depend on different forms of intellectual property.

The Judiciary Committee will continue to play an important role in protecting intellectual property and we will continue to work to advance innovation. This week, Senator LEAHY and I reintroduced the Patents for Humanity Program Improvement Act to encourage and reward companies that innovate and use patented technology to

address humanitarian needs. This legislation improves the incentives for small businesses to participate in the program, by ensuring that the prize—a certificate for expedited processing of certain matters at the USPTO—can be transferable to third parties.

Yesterday, we held a hearing with witnesses from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and industry innovators who described the central role that intellectual property has played in allowing their businesses to grow and innovate. We also heard about some of the enforcement challenges that those in IP-intensive industries face as they seek to protect their intellectual property.

As a cochair of the Congressional Trademark Caucus, which we just relaunched this week, I recognize the value of trademarks and their impact on society and the economy, as well as how counterfeiting can seriously impact consumer health and safety. Counterfeiting of goods presents a worldwide problem with enormous health and economic impacts, costing the global economy over 2.5 million jobs per year, while draining tax revenue and hurting the ability of American companies to compete in foreign markets.

Similarly, trade secret theft is an increasingly serious problem. A report by the IP Commission found that annual losses due to trade secret theft are over $300 billion and is the cause of an estimated loss of 2.1 million American jobs. That is why we passed into law the Defend Trade Secrets Act of 2016. This important legislation brings needed uniformity to trade secret law and provides more certainty to the innovators who rely on trade secrets to develop novel solutions to important problems that face us as a nation.

Intellectual property is a key driver of innovation and fundamental building block of our modern economy. This World IP Day, as we recognize the positive impacts IP has on innovation, let us continue to find ways to work together to ensure its protection against infringement and maintain the United States enduring position as the most innovative and creative country in the world.

TRIBUTE TO MARK SCHLEFER

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate and honor a Vermont resident for his outstanding commitment to ensuring transparency between the Federal Government and the American public. Mark Schlefer of Putney, VT, played an integral role in the creation of the Freedom of Information Act, FOIA, that came into effect in 1967. Since its incorporation, FOIA has given the American people the right to request to access records from any Federal agency and has required agencies to post certain categories of information and frequently requested records online.

Mr. Schlefer was inspired to join the legal group that drafted FOIA after working with a shipping client, Pacific Far East Line, which was denied tariff documentation to stop at the Mariana Islands by the Federal Maritime Commission. Mr. Schlefer was upset to find that the Federal Maritime Commission was not required to provide an explanation of the justification behind the rejection.

Along with two other lawyers who came across similar situations with government agencies, Mr. Schlefer helped to draft the legislation for FOIA. After years of working on the bill and convincing both Members of the House and the Senate to support the legislation, it was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 4, 1966.

FOIA helped pave the way for greater government transparency. Increased transparency restores faith in governance by holding government officials accountable to the American people. A truly transparent government roots out systemic waste, fraud, and abuse. It is clear that we need to maintain the transparency and accountability of government to the people it is meant to represent. I strongly believe that, as a democracy, we must strive to make our government as transparent as possible and that citizens should be able to obtain information from the government in a reasonable fashion.

Without FOIA, much of the U.S. Government would still be closed off to the American people. This legislation has been an inspiration to other governments and has served as a model throughout the world for opening government information to the public. Since FOIA was enacted nearly 50 years ago, similar Freedom of Information laws have been passed in all 50 States and 93 other nations.

Mark Shlefer has demonstrated an extraordinary level of commitment to ensuring the American people had access to more information throughout the Federal Government. Since its initial enactment, all three branches of the Federal Government have recognized the FOIA as a vital part of our democracy. I heartily applaud Mr. Schlefer for leading the way to a more transparent government. I have no doubt that his outstanding life work has had a significant and positive impact on people and their governments throughout the world.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE STIVERS AND BRAD WENSTRUP

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I would like to recognize my friend and colleague, Congressman STEVE STIVERS, and congratulate him on his promotion to brigadier general in the Ohio National Guard.

STEVE has served our State and our Nation in uniform for more than three decades. When his guard unit was called up in 2005, he served our country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. His leadership earned him the Bronze Star, and his service and sacrifice earned him the honor of a grateful nation.

But STEVE hasn't been content to only serve in uniform—he is working to support his fellow soldiers in Congress. He and I have worked together to make sure that servicemembers who suffer traumatic brain injuries have their medical records given from the DOD to the VA. We are working to designate the new Ohio veterans Museum in Columbus as the National Veterans Museum.

As persuasive as STEVE is, he is nothing compared to his mother. A few years ago, STEVE's mother, Carol, brought to my attention the need to preserve the Parker House—a way station on the Underground Railroad located in Ripley, OH. She wanted to incorporate it into the National Park System.

I worked with STEVE, who of course couldn't say no to his mother, and others in the Ohio delegation, including JOYCE BEATTY, to preserve this house where a freed slave worked and helped others find their way to freedom. This January, the National Park Service award $50,000 to the Ohio History Connection to help preserve the sites throughout Ohio that played critical roles in the civil rights movement, including the Parker House.

STEVE is not the only member of our delegation to carry on the proud tradition of Ohioans serving our Nation in uniform. I would also like to congratulate my friend BRAD WENSTRUP on his promotion to colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve.

BRAD also served a tour in Iraq as a combat surgeon. He was awarded a Bronze Star and a Combat Action Badge and earned the honor and gratitude of all Ohioans. It is not just overseas where BRAD serves our troops. He fulfills his Reserve duties, treating our wounded soldiers at Walter Reed, and fights to ensure our servicemembers and veterans have the support they deserve on the House Armed Services Committee and Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Whether it is supporting our State's civil rights heritage or supporting our troops, BRAD and STEVE have always been dedicated public servants for Ohio. They are both so deserving of these promotions. We thank them and their entire families—STEVE's wife, Karen, and children Sarah and Sam, and BRAD's wife, Monica, and son Brad, Jr.—for their sacrifice for our country.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING INA M. BOON

• Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I ask the Senate to join me today in honoring the life of Ina Boon, a beloved member of the St. Louis community. With her passing, Ina has left a powerful legacy of public service that will always be cherished, and St. Louis will not be the same without her.

In addition to being a wife, a mother, and dear friend to so many, Ina was a

fighter. Not the kind you see shuffling in rings on television; Ina was a special kind of warrior. Her weapons were her voice, her feet, and, as anyone who knew her would tell you, her tenacious nature. Her cause was one that is dear and relevant to every American—true freedom, equality, and justice for all. For decades, Ina fought on the front lines of the civil rights movement for justice and equality for all citizens in my home State of Missouri and in numerous other States throughout the country.

For more than 50 years, Ina was the fearless leader who served tirelessly at the helm of the St. Louis NAACP Region IV branch. Whether she was advocating for diversity and inclusion in hiring and housing practices, fighting for equal access and fair treatment in healthcare and education, or helping young people find jobs and urging them to register to vote, Ina's life reveals an inspiring commitment to social change and progress.

Her half-century record of service provides a clear example of how much good can be accomplished with a steadfast and caring spirit. At the same time, Ina's life shows the selfless and generous heart of a public servant. When times were lean at NAACP, Ina worked hard and faithfully while giving up her pay. Additionally, even though she was committed to large-scale, systemic social changes across the State and country, Ina was equally committed to her family and her neighbors. She nurtured her son, mentored young people, and remained active in her church, serving in various leadership positions.

Ina recently passed away at the age of 90. She was blessed to live a long life and bear witness to some incredible historic moments in our State's history and our country's history as well. I know that Ina was humbled to play a role in some of these moments. With Ina's passing, we have lost a prolific public servant and a dynamic individual. Ina is survived by her son Gentry, as well as nieces, nephews, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and a host of extended family members and friends.

It may come as small comfort to them, but Ina will forever be a part of St. Louis history. She will always be remembered for her leadership, passion, and activism. Right now, many of my fellow Missourians are justifiably saddened by the loss of one of our local champions, but my hope is that Ina's legacy will inspire current and future generations of leaders to continue the vitally important work of perfecting our vibrant, diverse Union.

I ask that the Senate join me in honoring the life and legacy of Mrs. Ina M. Boon.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:10 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 455. An act to designate the United States courthouse located at 501 East Court Street in Jackson, Mississippi, as the ''R. Jess Brown United States Courthouse''.

H.R. 534. An act to require the Secretary of State to take such actions as may be necessary for the United States to rejoin the Bureau of International Expositions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 876. An act to reform programs of the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1372. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to ensure that the needs of children are considered in homeland security planning, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 35. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers Memorial Service and the National Honor Guard and Pipe Band Exhibition.

H. Con. Res 36. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 455. An act to designate the United States courthouse located at 501 East Court Street in Jackson, Mississippi, as the ''R. Jess Brown United States Courthouse''; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 534. An act to require the Secretary of State to take such actions as may be necessary for the United States to rejoin the Bureau of International Expositions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 876. An act to reform programs of the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 1372. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to ensure that the needs of children are considered in homeland security planning, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

EC–1386. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Bacillus Thuringiensis (mCry51Aa2) Protein in or on Cotton; Temporary Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9957–23) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 11, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1387. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Bacillus simplex strain BU288; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9960–61) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1388. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pyroxasulfone; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9959–25) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 17, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1389. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pyriofenone; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9953–96) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 17, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1390. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Deltamethrin; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9959–54) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 17, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1391. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benzobicyclon; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9961–02) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1392. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Tioxazafen; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9955–97) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1393. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Robert S. Ferrell, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1394. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Michael E. Williamson, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1395. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Patrick J. Donahue II, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1396. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel, General Law, Ethics, and Regulation, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Under Secretary (Terrorism and Financial Intelligence), Department of the Treasury, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1397. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel, General Law, Ethics,

and Regulation, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary (International Markets and Development), Department of the Treasury, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1398. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, three (3) reports relative to vacancies in the Department of Housing and Urban Development, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1399. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the Central African Republic that was declared in Executive Order 13667 of May 12, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1400. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Yemen that was originally declared in Executive Order 13611 on May 16, 2012; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1401. A communication from the General Counsel of the National Credit Union Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Civil Monetary Penalty Inflation Adjustment'' (RIN3133–AE67) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 20, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1402. A communication from the Minority Whip of the Puerto Rico House of Representatives, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA) and its expenditures; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–1403. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; Connecticut; General Permit to Limit Potential to Emit from Major Stationary Sources of Air Pollution'' (FRL No. 9952–93–Region 1) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1404. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Promulgation of State Implementation Plan Revisions; Infrastructure Requirements for the 2008 Lead, 2008 Ozone, 2010 NO2, 2010 SO2, and 2012 PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standards; Wyoming'' (FRL No. 9958–35–Region 8) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1405. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; CT; Approval of Single Source Orders'' (FRL No. 9958–37–Region 1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1406. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; ME; Emission Statement Reporting'' (FRL No. 9961–42–Region 1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1407. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; Rhode Island; Repeal of NOx Budget Trading Program'' (FRL No. 9961–57–Region 1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1408. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; TN: Non-interference Demonstration for Federal Low-Reid Vapor Pressure Requirement in Middle Tennessee'' (FRL No. 9961–48–Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1409. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; District of Columbia; Revision of Regulations for Sulfur Content of Fuel Oil'' (FRL No. 9961–31–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1410. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Plans; State of Maryland; Control of Emissions from Existing Hospital/Medical/Infectious Waste Incineration Units'' (FRL No. 9961–37–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1411. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of State Air Quality Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; State of Delaware, District of Columbia, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, City of Philadelphia; Control of Emissions from Existing Commercial and Industrial Solid Waste Incinerator Units'' (FRL No. 9961–23–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1412. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval of Arizona Air Plan Revisions, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and Pinal County Air Quality Control District'' (FRL No. 9961–36–Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1413. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval of California Air Plan Revisions, Butte County Air Quality Management District'' (FRL No. 9957–15–Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1414. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Determination of Housing Cost Amounts Eligible for Exclusion or Deduction for 2017'' (Notice 2017–21) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 24, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1415. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Examination of Returns and Claims for Refund, Credit, or Abatement; Determination of Correct Tax Liability'' (Rev. Proc. 2017–26) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 24, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1416. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Applicable Federal Rates—February 2017'' (Rev. Rul. 2017–4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1417. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Application of Modified Carryover Basis to General Basis Rules'' ((RIN1545–BK09) (TD 9811)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1418. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Transfers of Certain Property by U.S. Persons to Partnerships with Related Foreign Partners'' ((RIN1545–BM95) (TD 9814)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1419. A communication from the President of the United States to the President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, transmitting, consistent with the War Powers Act, a report relative to targeted missile strikes on the Shayrat military airfield in Syria, received during adjournment of the Senate on April 8, 2017; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1420. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2017-0069–2017–0076); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1421. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Rules for Certain Reserves'' (Rev. Rul. 2017–3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1422. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of General Counsel, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged (Subpart C—Migrant Education Program)'' (RIN1810–AA99) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April

21, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1423. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties for Inflation'' (RIN1810–AA16) received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1424. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Requirements to Submit Prior Notice of Imported Food; Technical Amendments'' (Docket No. FDA–2017–N–0011) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1425. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Market Stabilization'' ((RIN0938–AT14) (CMS–9929-F)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 18, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1426. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's amended fiscal year 2016 report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1427. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Deputy Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1428. A communication from the Executive Director, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, Central Intelligence Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency's fiscal year 2016 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1429. A communication from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Transportation's fiscal year 2016 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1430. A communication from the Census Bureau Federal Register Liaison Officer, Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Foreign Trade Regulations (FTR): Clarification on Filing Requirements'' (RIN0607–AA55) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1431. A communication from the Acting Chief Privacy Officer, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''2016 Data Mining Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1432. A communication from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report on the Department's activities during calendar year 2015 relative to prison rape abatement; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1433. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0245)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1434. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–8851)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1435. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0245)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1436. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–8184)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1437. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9299)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1438. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–6897)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1439. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0651)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1440. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; M7 Aerospace LLC Models Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9531)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1441. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; American Champion Aircraft Corp.'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0283)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1442. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Embraer S.A. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0059)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1443. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Meggitt (Troy), Inc. Combustion Heaters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0603)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1444. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class C Airspace; Little Rock, AR'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0233)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1445. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Louisville, GA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0581)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1446. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Monongahela, PA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9102)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1447. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Savannah, GA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9101)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1448. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (1); Amdt. No. 3740'' (RIN2120–AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1449. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (69); Amdt. No. 3739'' (RIN2120–AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1450. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (36); Amdt. No. 3741'' (RIN2120–AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1451. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9385)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 25, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1452. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; General Electric Company Turbofan Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0879)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1453. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–7095)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1454. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0189)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1455. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–3257)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1456. A communication from the Deputy Under Secretary for Operations performing the duties of Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Chesapeake Bay Office Biennial Report to Congress; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1457. A communication from the Trial Attorney, Federal Railroad Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Implementation of the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act for a Violation of a Federal Railroad Safety Law, Federal Railroad Administration Safety Regulation or Order, or the Hazardous Material Transportation Laws or Regulations, Orders, Special Permits, and Approvals Issued Under Those Laws'' (RIN2130–AC59) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1458. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2017 Revisions to the Civil Penalty Inflation Adjustment Tables'' ((RIN2120–AK90) (Docket No. FAA–2016–7004)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1459. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Standard for Infant Bath Tubs'' (CPSC Docket No. CPSC–2015–0019) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 19, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1460. A communication from the Deputy Chief Financial Officer, National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Schedule of Fees for Access to NOAA Environmental Data, Information, and Related Products and Services'' (RIN0648–BG39) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 24, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1461. A communication from the Acting Chief of Technology Transfer Office, John H. Glenn Research Center, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, a report relative to the Center's Technology Transfer Office; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 942. A bill to require a plan to combat international travel by terrorists and foreign fighters, accelerate the transfer of certain border security systems to foreign partner governments, establish minimum international border security standards, authorize the suspension of foreign assistance to countries not making significant efforts to comply with such minimum standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 943. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an accurate comprehensive student count for the purposes of calculating formula allocations for programs under the Johnson-O'Malley Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. ERNST, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. THUNE, Mr. UDALL, Mr. HEINRICH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. DONNELLY, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 944. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform and extend the incentives for biodiesel; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 945. A bill to amend the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 to authorize funds to identify and eliminate excessive occupational licensure; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. LEE, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 946. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire additional Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists to provide treatment court services to justice-involved veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 947. A bill to protect passengers on flights in air transportation from being denied boarding involuntarily, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 948. A bill to designate as wilderness certain Federal portions of the red rock canyons of the Colorado Plateau and the Great Basin Deserts in the State of Utah for the benefit of present and future generations of people in the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 949. A bill to require the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to create a classification that more accurately reflects the vital role of wildland firefighters; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 950. A bill to correct problems pertaining to human resources for career and volunteer personnel engaged in wildland fire and structure fire; to the Committee on

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 951. A bill to reform the process by which Federal agencies analyze and formulate new regulations and guidance documents, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 952. A bill to increase the role of the financial industry in combating human trafficking; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. HEINRICH:

S. 953. A bill to require the United States Secret Service to make certain White House visitor logs available to the public, and for other purposes; 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. WICKER (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. GARDNER, and Mr. UDALL):

S. Con. Res. 13. A concurrent resolution calling upon the President to issue a proclamation recognizing the abiding importance of the Helsinki Final Act and its relevance to the national security of the United States; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 236

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 236, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 372

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 372, a bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to ensure that merchandise arriving through the mail shall be subject to review by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and to require the provision of advance electronic information on shipments of mail to U.S. Customs and Border Protection and for other purposes.

S. 384

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 384, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the new markets tax credit, and for other purposes.

S. 445

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 445, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 487

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 487, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an exclusion for assistance provided to participants in certain veterinary student loan repayment or forgiveness programs.

S. 497

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 497, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 512

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 512, a bill to modernize the regulation of nuclear energy.

S. 534

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 534, a bill to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes.

S. 591

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 591, a bill to expand eligibility for the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to expand benefits available to participants under such program, to enhance special compensation for members of the uniformed services who require assistance in everyday life, and for other purposes.

S. 678

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 678, a bill to delcare English as the official language of the United States, to establish a uniform English language rule for naturalization, and to avoid misconstructions of the English language texts of the laws of the United States, pursuant to Congress' powers to provide for the general welfare of the United States and to establish a uniform rule of naturalization under article I, section 8, of the Constitution.

S. 720

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 720, a bill to amend the Export Administration Act of 1979 to include in the prohibitions on boycotts against allies of the United States boycotts fostered by international governmental organizations against Israel and to direct the Export-Import Bank of the United States to oppose boycotts against Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 722

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 722, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran's ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes.

S. 819

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 819, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

S. 842

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 842, a bill to prohibit Federal agencies and Federal contractors from requesting that an applicant for employment disclose criminal history record information before the applicant has received a conditional offer, and for other purposes.

S. 867

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 867, a bill to provide support for law enforcement agency efforts to protect the mental health and well-being of law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

S. 926

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) were added as cosponsors of S. 926, a bill to authorize the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation to establish the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial as a commemorative work in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. ERNST, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. THUNE, Mr. UDALL, Mr. HEINRICH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. DONNELLY, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 944. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform and extend the incentives for biodiesel; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I have long been a champion of domestic biofuel production, including ethanol, biodiesel and cellulosic fuels. Domestic biodiesel production supports tens of thousands of jobs. Replacing traditional diesel with biodiesel reduces emissions and creates cleaner air. Homegrown biodiesel improves our energy security by diversifying our transportation fuels and reducing our dependence on foreign oil. Biodiesel itself is a very diverse fuel. It can be produced from a wide array of resources such as recycled cooking oil, soybean and other plant oils, and animal fats.

I am proud of the success of the American biodiesel industry, and I am glad to be introducing today the American Renewable Fuel and Job Creation Act of 2017, which will ensure the continued success. I appreciate Senator CANTWELL's leadership in joining this effort. I also appreciate the support of Senators ROBERTS, HIRONO, BLUNT, WHITEHOUSE, ERNST, HEITKAMP, THUNE, UDALL, HEINRICH, SHAHEEN, KLOBUCHAR, FRANKEN, DONNELLY, and MURRAY. This bill will modify the biodiesel fuel blender's credit to a domestic production credit starting this year and extend the credit through 2020.

Congress created the biodiesel tax incentive in 2005 when I was chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. As a result of this incentive and the Renewable Fuel Standard, biodiesel is providing significant benefits to the nation.

Senator CANTWELL and I have been advocating the mixture credit be modified to a producer credit since 2009. Converting to a producer credit improves the incentive in many ways. The blenders credit can be difficult to administer because the blending of the fuel can occur at many different stages of the fuel distribution. This can make it difficult to ensure that only fuel that qualifies for the credit claims the incentive. It has been susceptible to abuse because of this.

A credit for domestic production will also ensure that we are incentivizing the domestic industry and associated American jobs, rather than subsidizing imported biofuels. A credit for domestic production will also ensure that we are incentivizing the domestic industry and associated American jobs, rather than subsidizing imported biofuels. Since 2014, we have seen imports increase from 510 million gallons to about 1 billion gallons in 2016, and already in the first quarter of 2017 imports are 10 percent higher than they were last year at this time.

We should not provide a U.S. taxpayer benefit to imported biofuels. By restricting the credit to domestic production, we will also save taxpayer money. The nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation estimated a similar amendment adopted in the Finance Committee in 2015 would have reduced the cost of the extension by $90 million for 2016 alone.

Importantly, modifying the credit will have little to no impact on the consumer. Much of the credit will continue to be passed on to the blender and ultimately, the consumer. Additionally, the U.S. biodiesel industry is currently operating at approximately 65 percent of capacity, which does not even account for idled capacity. The fact is, the domestic biodiesel industry has the capacity and access to affordable feedstocks to meet the demand of U.S. consumers.

The current biodiesel credit expired at the end of 2016. Adoption of the American Renewable Fuel and Job Creation Act of 2017 should be strongly considered as part of tax reform efforts currently underway. Absent tax reform, Congress should include it as part of any tax legislation extending expired tax provisions.

Modifying the current blenders credit to a producers credit will ensure that the credit is doing what Congress intended—incentivizing investment in domestic biodiesel production and promoting American jobs. Surely we can agree that we should not be providing a U.S. taxpayer subsidy to already heavily subsidized foreign biodiesel imports. I therefore urge my colleagues to support the production of American biodiesel and this commonsense, cost reduction reform.

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

S. 945. A bill to amend the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 to authorize funds to identify and eliminate excessive occupational licensure; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

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

S. 945

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''New Hope and Opportunity through the Power of Employment Act'' or the ''New HOPE Act''.

SEC. 2. STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES.

Section 124(c) of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2344(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (16)(B), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (17), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(18) consulting and coordinating with other State agencies for the identification, consolidation, or elimination of licenses or certifications which pose an unnecessary barrier to entry for aspiring workers and provide limited consumer protection.''.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. LEE, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 946. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire additional Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists to provide treatment court services to justice-involved veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, Arizona is home to more than a half million veterans. They have served in every conflict from World War II to present-day operations in the Middle East. Nothing makes me prouder than to shake the hand of one of these veterans and to call them an Arizonan.

Fortunately, many of these veterans have the support of friends and family, as well as their fellow veterans with whom they served, but far too many who have served our country lack a support system that can help them successfully make the transition back to civilian life.

For those who have post-traumatic stress or traumatic brain injury, this could be particularly difficult. Studies have shown that veterans often do not seek out medical health treatment due to concerns about stigma, negative career prospects, lack of awareness, or logistical challenges in accessing care. For those who go without treatment, it can lead to substance abuse and, in some cases, run-ins with the law.

While there is no justification for criminal behavior, it is important to recognize when certain actions may be symptomatic of the harrowing experiences a veteran has endured during years of service. This is something the criminal justice system often fails to deal with. By not providing treatment that actually addresses a veteran's underlying service-connected issues, our criminal justice system sometimes creates a vicious cycle. It overcriminalizes service-connected mental illness, undertreats incarcerated veterans, and increases recidivism.

To address the problem, the VA created the Veterans Justice Outreach Program in 2009. The program was established to remove veterans from the regular criminal justice process and to provide specially tailored treatments to address many of these underlying issues. These veterans treatment courts have a proven record of preventing initial incarceration and reducing recidivism.

The lifeblood of the program is the veterans justice outreach specialists, VJO specialists, who link veterans to available court services. These outreach specialists identify veterans in jails and local courts, they assess their health status, and they help them develop the rehabilitation treatment program specific to each of their needs.

I recently had the opportunity to observe the veterans docket and meet with some of these dedicated specialists while visiting the Mesa Municipal Court earlier this month. Let me tell you, there is no substitute for seeing this firsthand. Even though it is a courtroom setting, there is a comradery and collaboration that you don't see in traditional courtroom proceedings. I was amazed at how many

organizations there are to help these veterans—to help them successfully transition and help them with treatment.

The collaboration I am talking about comes from having a judge and hard-working staff who have served in the military themselves. They understand the hardship of multiple deployments for servicemembers and their families. They understand the mental and physical tolls of combat. They understand that the transition back to civilian life can mark the beginning of a new battle for veterans.

The program has experienced remarkable success. The unfortunate reality is that the VA doesn't have enough outreach specialists to ensure access to already available treatment for justice-involved veterans. Demand for VJO specialists is outpacing the program's ability to serve eligible veterans. This means future veterans treatment courts can't be established, existing courts will go understaffed, and veterans will go unserved. That is not right.

That is why today I am introducing the Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act to ensure our veterans receive swift and appropriate access to justice. This legislation will provide 50 additional VJO specialists for veterans treatment courts nationwide. By increasing the number of dedicated specialists at these facilities, Congress can ensure that more veterans have access to the treatments they have earned with their service. This is bipartisan legislation. I will work to inform my colleagues about the need for this program and additional VJOs in the coming weeks and months.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 948. A bill to designate as wilderness certain Federal portions of the red rock canyons of the Colorado Plateau and the Great Basin Deserts in the State of Utah for the benefit of present and future generations of people in the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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

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

S. 948

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''America's Red Rock Wilderness Act of 2017''.

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

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Land Management.

(2) STATE.—The term ''State'' means the State of Utah.

TITLE I—DESIGNATION OF WILDERNESS AREAS

SEC. 101. GREAT BASIN WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the Great Basin region of western Utah is comprised of starkly beautiful mountain ranges that rise as islands from the desert floor;

(2) the Wah Wah Mountains in the Great Basin region are arid and austere, with massive cliff faces and leathery slopes speckled with piñon and juniper;

(3) the Pilot Range and Stansbury Mountains in the Great Basin region are high enough to draw moisture from passing clouds and support ecosystems found nowhere else on earth;

(4) from bristlecone pine, the world's oldest living organism, to newly flowered mountain meadows, mountains of the Great Basin region are islands of nature that—

(A) support remarkable biological diversity; and

(B) provide opportunities to experience the colossal silence of the Great Basin; and

(5) the Great Basin region of western Utah should be protected and managed to ensure the preservation of the natural conditions of the region.

(b) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the State are designated as wilderness areas and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Antelope Range (approximately 17,000 acres).

(2) Barn Hills (approximately 20,000 acres).

(3) Black Hills (approximately 9,000 acres).

(4) Bullgrass Knoll (approximately 15,000 acres).

(5) Burbank Hills/Tunnel Spring (approximately 92,000 acres).

(6) Conger Mountains (approximately 21,000 acres).

(7) Crater Bench (approximately 35,000 acres).

(8) Crater and Silver Island Mountains (approximately 121,000 acres).

(9) Cricket Mountains Cluster (approximately 62,000 acres).

(10) Deep Creek Mountains (approximately 126,000 acres).

(11) Drum Mountains (approximately 39,000 acres).

(12) Dugway Mountains (approximately 24,000 acres).

(13) Essex Canyon (approximately 1,300 acres).

(14) Fish Springs Range (approximately 64,000 acres).

(15) Granite Peak (approximately 19,000 acres).

(16) Grassy Mountains (approximately 23,000 acres).

(17) Grouse Creek Mountains (approximately 15,000 acres).

(18) House Range (approximately 201,000 acres).

(19) Keg Mountains (approximately 38,000 acres).

(20) Kern Mountains (approximately 15,000 acres).

(21) King Top (approximately 110,000 acres).

(22) Ledger Canyon (approximately 9,000 acres).

(23) Little Goose Creek (approximately 1,200 acres).

(24) Middle/Granite Mountains (approximately 80,000 acres).

(25) Mount Escalante (approximately 18,000 acres).

(26) Mountain Home Range (approximately 90,000 acres).

(27) Newfoundland Mountains (approximately 22,000 acres).

(28) Ochre Mountain (approximately 13,000 acres).

(29) Oquirrh Mountains (approximately 9,000 acres).

(30) Painted Rock Mountain (approximately 26,000 acres).

(31) Paradise/Steamboat Mountains (approximately 144,000 acres).

(32) Pilot Range (approximately 45,000 acres).

(33) Red Tops (approximately 28,000 acres).

(34) Rockwell-Little Sahara (approximately 21,000 acres).

(35) San Francisco Mountains (approximately 39,000 acres).

(36) Sand Ridge (approximately 73,000 acres).

(37) Simpson Mountains (approximately 42,000 acres).

(38) Snake Valley (approximately 100,000 acres).

(39) Spring Creek Canyon (approximately 4,000 acres).

(40) Stansbury Island (approximately 10,000 acres).

(41) Stansbury Mountains (approximately 24,000 acres).

(42) Thomas Range (approximately 36,000 acres).

(43) Tule Valley (approximately 159,000 acres).

(44) Wah Wah Mountains (approximately 167,000 acres).

(45) Wasatch/Sevier Plateaus (approximately 29,000 acres).

(46) White Rock Range (approximately 5,200 acres).

SEC. 102. GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) GRAND STAIRCASE AREA.—

(1) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(A) the area known as the Grand Staircase rises more than 6,000 feet in a series of great cliffs and plateaus from the depths of the Grand Canyon to the forested rim of Bryce Canyon;

(B) the Grand Staircase—

(i) spans 6 major life zones, from the lower Sonoran Desert to the alpine forest; and

(ii) encompasses geologic formations that display 3,000,000,000 years of Earth's history;

(C) land managed by the Secretary lines the intricate canyon system of the Paria

River and forms a vital natural corridor connection to the deserts and forests of those national parks;

(D) land described in paragraph (2) (other than East of Bryce, Upper Kanab Creek, Moquith Mountain, Bunting Point, and Vermillion Cliffs) is located within the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument; and

(E) the Grand Staircase in Utah should be protected and managed as a wilderness area.

(2) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the State are designated as wilderness areas and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(A) Bryce View (approximately 4,500 acres).

(B) Bunting Point (approximately 11,000 acres).

(C) Canaan Mountain (approximately 16,000 acres in Kane County).

(D) Canaan Peak Slopes (approximately 2,300 acres).

(E) East of Bryce (approximately 750 acres).

(F) Glass Eye Canyon (approximately 24,000 acres).

(G) Ladder Canyon (approximately 14,000 acres).

(H) Moquith Mountain (approximately 16,000 acres).

(I) Nephi Point (approximately 14,000 acres).

(J) Orderville Canyon (approximately 9,200 acres).

(K) Paria-Hackberry (approximately 188,000 acres).

(L) Paria Wilderness Expansion (approximately 3,300 acres).

(M) Parunuweap Canyon (approximately 43,000 acres).

(N) Pine Hollow (approximately 11,000 acres).

(O) Slopes of Bryce (approximately 2,600 acres).

(P) Timber Mountain (approximately 51,000 acres).

(Q) Upper Kanab Creek (approximately 49,000 acres).

(R) Vermillion Cliffs (approximately 26,000 acres).

(S) Willis Creek (approximately 21,000 acres).

(b) KAIPAROWITS PLATEAU.—

(1) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(A) the Kaiparowits Plateau east of the Paria River is one of the most rugged and isolated wilderness regions in the United States;

(B) the Kaiparowits Plateau, a windswept land of harsh beauty, contains distant vistas and a remarkable variety of plant and animal species;

(C) ancient forests, an abundance of big game animals, and 22 species of raptors thrive undisturbed on the grassland mesa tops of the Kaiparowits Plateau;

(D) each of the areas described in paragraph (2) (other than Heaps Canyon, Little Valley, and Wide Hollow) is located within the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument; and

(E) the Kaiparowits Plateau should be protected and managed as a wilderness area.

(2) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the State are designated as wilderness areas and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(A) Andalex Not (approximately 18,000 acres).

(B) The Blues (approximately 21,000 acres).

(C) Box Canyon (approximately 2,800 acres).

(D) Burning Hills (approximately 80,000 acres).

(E) Carcass Canyon (approximately 83,000 acres).

(F) The Cockscomb (approximately 11,000 acres).

(G) Fiftymile Bench (approximately 12,000 acres).

(H) Fiftymile Mountain (approximately 203,000 acres).

(I) Heaps Canyon (approximately 4,000 acres).

(J) Horse Spring Canyon (approximately 31,000 acres).

(K) Kodachrome Headlands (approximately 10,000 acres).

(L) Little Valley Canyon (approximately 4,000 acres).

(M) Mud Spring Canyon (approximately 65,000 acres).

(N) Nipple Bench (approximately 32,000 acres).

(O) Paradise Canyon-Wahweap (approximately 262,000 acres).

(P) Rock Cove (approximately 16,000 acres).

(Q) Warm Creek (approximately 23,000 acres).

(R) Wide Hollow (approximately 6,800 acres).

(c) ESCALANTE CANYONS.—

(1) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(A) glens and coves carved in massive sandstone cliffs, spring-watered hanging gardens, and the silence of ancient Anasazi ruins are examples of the unique features that entice hikers, campers, and sightseers from around the world to Escalante Canyon;

(B) Escalante Canyon links the spruce fir forests of the 11,000-foot Aquarius Plateau with winding slickrock canyons that flow into Glen Canyon;

(C) Escalante Canyon, one of Utah's most popular natural areas, contains critical habitat for deer, elk, and wild bighorn sheep that also enhances the scenic integrity of the area;

(D) each of the areas described in paragraph (2) is located within the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument; and

(E) Escalante Canyon should be protected and managed as a wilderness area.

(2) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the State are designated as wilderness areas and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(A) Brinkerhof Flats (approximately 3,000 acres).

(B) Colt Mesa (approximately 28,000 acres).

(C) Death Hollow (approximately 49,000 acres).

(D) Forty Mile Gulch (approximately 6,600 acres).

(E) Hurricane Wash (approximately 9,000 acres).

(F) Lampstand (approximately 7,900 acres).

(G) Muley Twist Flank (approximately 3,600 acres).

(H) North Escalante Canyons (approximately 176,000 acres).

(I) Pioneer Mesa (approximately 11,000 acres).

(J) Scorpion (approximately 53,000 acres).

(K) Sooner Bench (approximately 390 acres).

(L) Steep Creek (approximately 35,000 acres).

(M) Studhorse Peaks (approximately 24,000 acres).

SEC. 103. MOAB-LA SAL CANYONS WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the canyons surrounding the La Sal Mountains and the town of Moab offer a variety of extraordinary landscapes;

(2) outstanding examples of natural formations and landscapes in the Moab-La Sal area include the huge sandstone fins of Behind the Rocks, the mysterious Fisher Towers, and the whitewater rapids of Westwater Canyon; and

(3) the Moab-La Sal area should be protected and managed as a wilderness area.

(b) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the State are designated as wilderness areas and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Arches Adjacent (approximately 12,000 acres).

(2) Beaver Creek (approximately 41,000 acres).

(3) Behind the Rocks and Hunters Canyon (approximately 22,000 acres).

(4) Big Triangle (approximately 20,000 acres).

(5) Coyote Wash (approximately 28,000 acres).

(6) Dome Plateau-Professor Valley (approximately 35,000 acres).

(7) Fisher Towers (approximately 18,000 acres).

(8) Goldbar Canyon (approximately 9,000 acres).

(9) Granite Creek (approximately 5,000 acres).

(10) Mary Jane Canyon (approximately 25,000 acres).

(11) Mill Creek (approximately 14,000 acres).

(12) Porcupine Rim and Morning Glory (approximately 20,000 acres).

(13) Renegade Point (approximately 6,600 acres).

(14) Westwater Canyon (approximately 37,000 acres).

(15) Yellow Bird (approximately 4,200 acres).

SEC. 104. HENRY MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the Henry Mountain Range, the last mountain range to be discovered and named by early explorers in the contiguous United States, still retains a wild and undiscovered quality;

(2) fluted badlands that surround the flanks of 11,000-foot Mounts Ellen and Pennell contain areas of critical habitat for mule deer and for the largest herd of free-roaming buffalo in the United States;

(3) despite their relative accessibility, the Henry Mountain Range remains one of the wildest, least-known ranges in the United States; and

(4) the Henry Mountain range should be protected and managed to ensure the preservation of the range as a wilderness area.

(b) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the State are designated as wilderness areas and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Bull Mountain (approximately 16,000 acres).

(2) Bullfrog Creek (approximately 35,000 acres).

(3) Dogwater Creek (approximately 3,400 acres).

(4) Fremont Gorge (approximately 20,000 acres).

(5) Long Canyon (approximately 16,000 acres).

(6) Mount Ellen-Blue Hills (approximately 140,000 acres).

(7) Mount Hillers (approximately 21,000 acres).

(8) Mount Pennell (approximately 147,000 acres).

(9) Notom Bench (approximately 6,200 acres).

(10) Oak Creek (approximately 1,700 acres).

(11) Ragged Mountain (approximately 28,000 acres).

SEC. 105. GLEN CANYON WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the side canyons of Glen Canyon, including the Dirty Devil River and the Red,

White and Blue Canyons, contain some of the most remote and outstanding landscapes in southern Utah;

(2) the Dirty Devil River, once the fortress hideout of outlaw Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch, has sculpted a maze of slickrock canyons through an imposing landscape of monoliths and inaccessible mesas;

(3) the Red and Blue Canyons contain colorful Chinle/Moenkopi badlands found nowhere else in the region; and

(4) the canyons of Glen Canyon in the State should be protected and managed as wilderness areas.

(b) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the State are designated as wilderness areas and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Cane Spring Desert (approximately 18,000 acres).

(2) Dark Canyon (approximately 134,000 acres).

(3) Dirty Devil (approximately 242,000 acres).

(4) Fiddler Butte (approximately 92,000 acres).

(5) Flat Tops (approximately 30,000 acres).

(6) Little Rockies (approximately 64,000 acres).

(7) The Needle (approximately 11,000 acres).

(8) Red Rock Plateau (approximately 213,000 acres).

(9) White Canyon (approximately 98,000 acres).

SEC. 106. SAN JUAN-ANASAZI WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) more than 1,000 years ago, the Anasazi Indian culture flourished in the slickrock canyons and on the piñon-covered mesas of southeastern Utah;

(2) evidence of the ancient presence of the Anasazi pervades the Cedar Mesa area of the San Juan-Anasazi area where cliff dwellings, rock art, and ceremonial kivas embellish sandstone overhangs and isolated benchlands;

(3) the Cedar Mesa area is in need of protection from the vandalism and theft of its unique cultural resources;

(4) the Cedar Mesa wilderness areas should be created to protect both the archaeological heritage and the extraordinary wilderness, scenic, and ecological values of the United States; and

(5) the San Juan-Anasazi area should be protected and managed as a wilderness area to ensure the preservation of the unique and valuable resources of that area.

(b) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the State are designated as wilderness areas and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Allen Canyon (approximately 5,900 acres).

(2) Arch Canyon (approximately 30,000 acres).

(3) Comb Ridge (approximately 15,000 acres).

(4) East Montezuma (approximately 45,000 acres).

(5) Fish and Owl Creek Canyons (approximately 73,000 acres).

(6) Grand Gulch (approximately 159,000 acres).

(7) Hammond Canyon (approximately 4,400 acres).

(8) Nokai Dome (approximately 93,000 acres).

(9) Road Canyon (approximately 63,000 acres).

(10) San Juan River (Sugarloaf) (approximately 15,000 acres).

(11) The Tabernacle (approximately 7,000 acres).

(12) Valley of the Gods (approximately 21,000 acres).

SEC. 107. CANYONLANDS BASIN WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) Canyonlands National Park safeguards only a small portion of the extraordinary red-hued, cliff-walled canyonland region of the Colorado Plateau;

(2) areas near Arches National Park and Canyonlands National Park contain canyons with rushing perennial streams, natural arches, bridges, and towers;

(3) the gorges of the Green and Colorado Rivers lie on adjacent land managed by the Secretary;

(4) popular overlooks in Canyonlands Nations Park and Dead Horse Point State Park have views directly into adjacent areas, including Lockhart Basin and Indian Creek; and

(5) designation of those areas as wilderness would ensure the protection of this erosional masterpiece of nature and of the rich pockets of wildlife found within its expanded boundaries.

(b) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the State are designated as wilderness areas and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Bridger Jack Mesa (approximately 33,000 acres).

(2) Butler Wash (approximately 27,000 acres).

(3) Dead Horse Cliffs (approximately 5,300 acres).

(4) Demon's Playground (approximately 3,700 acres).

(5) Duma Point (approximately 14,000 acres).

(6) Gooseneck (approximately 9,000 acres).

(7) Hatch Point Canyons/Lockhart Basin (approximately 149,000 acres).

(8) Horsethief Point (approximately 15,000 acres).

(9) Indian Creek (approximately 28,000 acres).

(10) Labyrinth Canyon (approximately 150,000 acres).

(11) San Rafael River (approximately 101,000 acres).

(12) Shay Mountain (approximately 14,000 acres).

(13) Sweetwater Reef (approximately 69,000 acres).

(14) Upper Horseshoe Canyon (approximately 60,000 acres).

SEC. 108. SAN RAFAEL SWELL WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the San Rafael Swell towers above the desert like a castle, ringed by 1,000-foot ramparts of Navajo Sandstone;

(2) the highlands of the San Rafael Swell have been fractured by uplift and rendered hollow by erosion over countless millennia, leaving a tremendous basin punctuated by mesas, buttes, and canyons and traversed by sediment-laden desert streams;

(3) among other places, the San Rafael wilderness offers exceptional back country opportunities in the colorful Wild Horse Badlands, the monoliths of North Caineville Mesa, the rock towers of Cliff Wash, and colorful cliffs of Humbug Canyon;

(4) the mountains within these areas are among Utah's most valuable habitat for desert bighorn sheep; and

(5) the San Rafael Swell area should be protected and managed to ensure its preservation as a wilderness area.

(b) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the State are designated as wilderness areas and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Cedar Mountain (approximately 15,000 acres).

(2) Devils Canyon (approximately 23,000 acres).

(3) Eagle Canyon (approximately 38,000 acres).

(4) Factory Butte (approximately 22,000 acres).

(5) Hondu Country (approximately 20,000 acres).

(6) Jones Bench (approximately 2,800 acres).

(7) Limestone Cliffs (approximately 25,000 acres).

(8) Lost Spring Wash (approximately 37,000 acres).

(9) Mexican Mountain (approximately 100,000 acres).

(10) Molen Reef (approximately 33,000 acres).

(11) Muddy Creek (approximately 240,000 acres).

(12) Mussentuchit Badlands (approximately 25,000 acres).

(13) Pleasant Creek Bench (approximately 1,100 acres).

(14) Price River-Humbug (approximately 120,000 acres).

(15) Red Desert (approximately 40,000 acres).

(16) Rock Canyon (approximately 18,000 acres).

(17) San Rafael Knob (approximately 15,000 acres).

(18) San Rafael Reef (approximately 114,000 acres).

(19) Sids Mountain (approximately 107,000 acres).

(20) Upper Muddy Creek (approximately 19,000 acres).

(21) Wild Horse Mesa (approximately 92,000 acres).

SEC. 109. BOOK CLIFFS AND UINTA BASIN WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the Book Cliffs and Uinta Basin wilderness areas offer—

(A) unique big game hunting opportunities in verdant high-plateau forests;

(B) the opportunity for float trips of several days duration down the Green River in Desolation Canyon; and

(C) the opportunity for calm water canoe weekends on the White River;

(2) the long rampart of the Book Cliffs bounds the area on the south, while seldom-visited uplands, dissected by the rivers and streams, slope away to the north into the Uinta Basin;

(3) bears, Bighorn sheep, cougars, elk, and mule deer flourish in the back country of the Book Cliffs; and

(4) the Book Cliffs and Uinta Basin areas should be protected and managed to ensure the protection of the areas as wilderness.

(b) DESIGNATION.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the following areas in the State are designated as wilderness areas and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System:

(1) Bourdette Draw (approximately 15,000 acres).

(2) Bull Canyon (approximately 2,800 acres).

(3) Chipeta (approximately 95,000 acres).

(4) Dead Horse Pass (approximately 8,000 acres).

(5) Desbrough Canyon (approximately 13,000 acres).

(6) Desolation Canyon (approximately 555,000 acres).

(7) Diamond Breaks (approximately 9,000 acres).

(8) Diamond Canyon (approximately 166,000 acres).

(9) Diamond Mountain (also known as ''Wild Mountain'') (approximately 27,000 acres).

(10) Dinosaur Adjacent (approximately 10,000 acres).
(11) Goslin Mountain (approximately 4,900 acres).
(12) Hideout Canyon (approximately 12,000 acres).
(13) Lower Bitter Creek (approximately 14,000 acres).
(14) Lower Flaming Gorge (approximately 21,000 acres).
(15) Mexico Point (approximately 15,000 acres).
(16) Moonshine Draw (also known as ''Daniels Canyon'') (approximately 10,000 acres).
(17) Mountain Home (approximately 9,000 acres).
(18) O-Wi-Yu-Kuts (approximately 13,000 acres).
(19) Red Creek Badlands (approximately 3,600 acres).
(20) Seep Canyon (approximately 21,000 acres).
(21) Sunday School Canyon (approximately 18,000 acres).
(22) Survey Point (approximately 8,000 acres).
(23) Turtle Canyon (approximately 39,000 acres).
(24) White River (approximately 23,000 acres).
(25) Winter Ridge (approximately 38,000 acres).
(26) Wolf Point (approximately 15,000 acres).

TITLE II—ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

SEC. 201. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

(a) NAMES OF WILDERNESS AREAS.—Each wilderness area named in title I shall—
(1) consist of the quantity of land referenced with respect to that named area, as generally depicted on the map entitled ''Utah BLM Wilderness''; and
(2) be known by the name given to it in title I.
(b) MAP AND DESCRIPTION.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall file a map and a legal description of each wilderness area designated by this Act with—
(A) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and
(B) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.
(2) FORCE OF LAW.—A map and legal description filed under paragraph (1) shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary may correct clerical and typographical errors in the map and legal description.
(3) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Each map and legal description filed under paragraph (1) shall be filed and made available for public inspection in the Office of the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

SEC. 202. ADMINISTRATION.

Subject to valid rights in existence on the date of enactment of this Act, each wilderness area designated under this Act shall be administered by the Secretary in accordance with—
(1) the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.); and
(2) the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.).

SEC. 203. STATE SCHOOL TRUST LAND WITHIN WILDERNESS AREAS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), if State-owned land is included in an area designated by this Act as a wilderness area, the Secretary shall offer to exchange land owned by the United States in the State of approximately equal value in accordance with section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1782(c)) and section 5(a) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1134(a)).
(b) MINERAL INTERESTS.—The Secretary shall not transfer any mineral interests under subsection (a) unless the State transfers to the Secretary any mineral interests in land designated by this Act as a wilderness area.

SEC. 204. WATER.

(a) RESERVATION.—
(1) WATER FOR WILDERNESS AREAS.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to each wilderness area designated by this Act, Congress reserves a quantity of water determined by the Secretary to be sufficient for the wilderness area.
(B) PRIORITY DATE.—The priority date of a right reserved under subparagraph (A) shall be the date of enactment of this Act.
(2) PROTECTION OF RIGHTS.—The Secretary and other officers and employees of the United States shall take any steps necessary to protect the rights reserved by paragraph (1)(A), including the filing of a claim for the quantification of the rights in any present or future appropriate stream adjudication in the courts of the State—
(A) in which the United States is or may be joined; and
(B) that is conducted in accordance with section 208 of the Department of Justice Appropriation Act, 1953 (66 Stat. 560, chapter 651).
(b) PRIOR RIGHTS NOT AFFECTED.—Nothing in this Act relinquishes or reduces any water rights reserved or appropriated by the United States in the State on or before the date of enactment of this Act.
(c) ADMINISTRATION.—
(1) SPECIFICATION OF RIGHTS.—The Federal water rights reserved by this Act are specific to the wilderness areas designated by this Act.
(2) NO PRECEDENT ESTABLISHED.—Nothing in this Act related to reserved Federal water rights—
(A) shall establish a precedent with regard to any future designation of water rights; or
(B) shall affect the interpretation of any other Act or any designation made under any other Act.

SEC. 205. ROADS.

(a) SETBACKS.—
(1) MEASUREMENT IN GENERAL.—A setback under this section shall be measured from the center line of the road.
(2) WILDERNESS ON 1 SIDE OF ROADS.—Except as provided in subsection (b), a setback for a road with wilderness on only 1 side shall be set at—
(A) 300 feet from a paved Federal or State highway;
(B) 100 feet from any other paved road or high standard dirt or gravel road; and
(C) 30 feet from any other road.
(3) WILDERNESS ON BOTH SIDES OF ROADS.—Except as provided in subsection (b), a setback for a road with wilderness on both sides (including cherry-stems or roads separating 2 wilderness units) shall be set at—
(A) 200 feet from a paved Federal or State highway;
(B) 40 feet from any other paved road or high standard dirt or gravel road; and
(C) 10 feet from any other roads.
(b) SETBACK EXCEPTIONS.—
(1) WELL-DEFINED TOPOGRAPHICAL BARRIERS.—If, between the road and the boundary of a setback area described in paragraph (2) or (3) of subsection (a), there is a well-defined cliff edge, stream bank, or other topographical barrier, the Secretary shall use the barrier as the wilderness boundary.
(2) FENCES.—If, between the road and the boundary of a setback area specified in paragraph (2) or (3) of subsection (a), there is a fence running parallel to a road, the Secretary shall use the fence as the wilderness boundary if, in the opinion of the Secretary, doing so would result in a more manageable boundary.
(3) DEVIATIONS FROM SETBACK AREAS.—
(A) EXCLUSION OF DISTURBANCES FROM WILDERNESS BOUNDARIES.—In cases where there is an existing livestock development, dispersed camping area, borrow pit, or similar disturbance within 100 feet of a road that forms part of a wilderness boundary, the Secretary may delineate the boundary so as to exclude the disturbance from the wilderness area.
(B) LIMITATION ON EXCLUSION OF DISTURBANCES.—The Secretary shall make a boundary adjustment under subparagraph (A) only if the Secretary determines that doing so is consistent with wilderness management goals.
(C) DEVIATIONS RESTRICTED TO MINIMUM NECESSARY.—Any deviation under this paragraph from the setbacks required under in paragraph (2) or (3) of subsection (a) shall be the minimum necessary to exclude the disturbance.
(c) DELINEATION WITHIN SETBACK AREA.—The Secretary may delineate a wilderness boundary at a location within a setback under paragraph (2) or (3) of subsection (a) if, as determined by the Secretary, the delineation would enhance wilderness management goals.

SEC. 206. LIVESTOCK.

Within the wilderness areas designated under title I, the grazing of livestock authorized on the date of enactment of this Act shall be permitted to continue subject to such reasonable regulations and procedures as the Secretary considers necessary, as long as the regulations and procedures are consistent with—
(1) the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.); and
(2) section 101(f) of the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990 (Public Law 101–628; 104 Stat. 4469).

SEC. 207. FISH AND WILDLIFE.

Nothing in this Act affects the jurisdiction of the State with respect to wildlife and fish on the public land located in the State.

SEC. 208. MANAGEMENT OF NEWLY ACQUIRED LAND.

Any land within the boundaries of a wilderness area designated under this Act that is acquired by the Federal Government shall—
(1) become part of the wilderness area in which the land is located; and
(2) be managed in accordance with this Act and other laws applicable to wilderness areas.

SEC. 209. WITHDRAWAL.

Subject to valid rights existing on the date of enactment of this Act, the Federal land referred to in title I is withdrawn from all forms of—
(1) entry, appropriation, or disposal under public law;
(2) location, entry, and patent under mining law; and
(3) disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing or mineral materials.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 20 years ago, when I was elected to the U.S. Senate, a group of people came to me and asked me to sponsor a bill. It was a bill that had been sponsored many times by Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey. He retired shortly before I arrived.

The bill related to the Utah wilderness. I remember saying to those who approached me: This isn't my State. It is the State of Utah.

They said: This is a bill which we are having some controversy with when it

comes to the Utah congressional delegation.

Secondly, I said: It is a wilderness bill about a part of the world that I have never seen. I don't feel right introducing it.

They said: Why don't you come out and look at it?

I did just a few weeks later. My wife and I went and took a look at the Red Rocks Wilderness area in Utah. I will tell you, initially, as a midwesterner, when I looked at the stark landscape, I looked around thinking, what are we trying to preserve here? I took a closer look, which everyone should, and found a unique part of America—a wilderness area which can't be found anywhere else and a wilderness area which boasts archeological and historic and environmental significance way beyond what many people in the rest of the lower 48 might appreciate.

Today, I am reintroducing the America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. It would safeguard 9.2 million acres of Park Bureau Land Management land in Utah as wilderness—some of the last great wild places in the lower 48.

Throughout my time in the Senate, I have worked with the committed volunteers of the Utah Wilderness Coalition to protect the stunning, fragile desert landscape. These unique lands are rich in archeological resources and provide a habitat for rare plants and species. They offer unparalleled research, educational, and recreational opportunities for scientists, teachers, outdoor enthusiasts, and families.

The Bureau of Land Management has confirmed that the vast majority of the majority of the lands meet the qualifications for a wilderness designation. However, despite their pristine condition and their historical significance, these lands are threatened by oil and gas development, as well as rampant off-road vehicle use.

Although these activities are appropriate in some places, they don't belong in such a fragile landscape. Designating these lands as wilderness would safeguard wildlife, protect ancestral lands, help mitigate climate change, and provide access to future generations of hunters, anglers, hikers, boaters, and lovers of the natural world.

Last December, President Obama took an important step in protecting some of Southern Utah's fragile lands by designating the Bears Ears National Monument, which contains some of the lands that would be protected by my Red Rocks bill.

The 1.35 million-acre swath of land covers forested mesas and red rock canyons, and the designation protected the region's abundant Native American cultural resources. The monument contains well over 100,000 cultural and archeological sites. Let me say that again. Over 100,000 cultural and archeological sites, including ancient cliff dwellings, granaries, burial sites, and kivas, as well as spectacular pictographs and petroglyphs strewn upon rock walls and boulders all across the region.

Artifacts range from 700 to 12,000 years old, providing tribes with an incredible insight into the shared history of their ancestral homeland, bolstering their deep spiritual connection to the land itself.

The Bears Ears National Monument, designated by President Obama, is the first monument of its kind to be proposed and advocated by a united coalition of five Tribes who sought its protection because of its importance in their respective culture. In total, 30 Native American tribes with ancestral, historical, and contemporary ties to the Bears Ears region supported the designation.

The Tribal coalition's original Bears Ears proposal was 1.9 million acres. You see them here. It is slightly larger than the 1.35 million-acre designation by President Obama.

Many in the Utah delegation, including one of my colleagues in the Senate, have raised concerns about President Obama's decision to protect this area and even the size of the designation. One of the critics of the size of the designation is the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, ROB BISHOP.

Last Congress, before President Obama designated the Bears Ears region a national monument, the same Chairman BISHOP introduced a bill that would have protected part of the Bears Ears region while opening other areas of land for oil and gas development.

Look at the two here in comparison. Chairman BISHOP's proposal protected 1.28 million acres—only 17,500 acres smaller than the area protected by President Obama.

As you can see from these maps, the areas protected by Chairman BISHOP's Public Lands Initiative are not that much different than the areas protected by the Bears Ears National Monument. To argue that the designation is so much larger than anyone anticipated is to ignore what the chairman submitted in his own legislation last year. Both are much smaller than what the Tribes originally requested, which is the third map here.

Despite that, Utah's congressional delegation has called the area ''well beyond the areas in need of protection'' and they pushed President Trump to consider shrinking or overturning this wilderness monument designation. Yet Utah's Salt Lake Tribune called Utah politicians' determination to rescind these designations ''blindness.''

Let me quote the Salt Lake Tribune:

> That blindness can be sourced to Utah's one-party political system that has given us leaders who are out of touch with their constituents.

They then continue and say:

> The Bears Ears monument may be with us forever, and there is no bucket of gold waiting if it does go away. The presidential proclamation bent far toward the same boundaries and shared management [Utah Rep. Rob] Bishop pursued with his public lands initiative.

They saw the same maps and said: Why is this acceptable and this objectionable?

Today, President Trump is planning to sign an Executive order. It is going to call on the Department of Interior to review previous national monument designations under the Antiquities Act.

While the President's Executive order will target the Bears Ears National Monument first, the order is going to go well beyond Utah and consider changes to all of the national monuments that have been designated since 1996—more than 50 different sites.

These are areas designated ''national monument protected areas'' by Republican and Democratic Presidents with bipartisan support. Yet President Trump is going to insist with his new order that he can review and change every single one of them.

Let me tell you the list of places and sites of great cultural significance that could be impacted: A portion of Sequoia National Forest in California, Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historic Park in Maryland, African Burial Ground National Monument in New York, and in my home State of Illinois, the Pullman National Monument.

It is rare for any national monument designation to be changed by another President. It happened once. The last time a President used the Antiquities Act to adjust the borders of a national monument was over a century ago, in 1915. Then-President Woodrow Wilson shrunk Washington State's Mount Olympus National Monument so they could harvest more timber resources from this land.

A lot has changed since 1915, including our views on conservation. Attacks on conservation seem to have remained consistent. One of our greatest conservation Presidents, Teddy Roosevelt—a proud Republican, I might add—faced a great deal of opposition to his designation of a national monument that most of us are familiar with—the Grand Canyon.

Most Americans can't imagine our country without the iconic Grand Canyon because it is truly a national treasure. At the time of its 1908 designation by President Roosevelt, groups were opposed to protecting that area. For years after its designation, oil and gas miners fought additional protections for the Grand Canyon.

The attacks on the Bears Ears designation doesn't seem all that different from the attacks on the Grand Canyon, but the attacks on the Bears Ears National Monument also attack the Native people who have worked so hard to get this area protected.

Let's be very honest. When we look at how Native Americans were treated by our government and the settlers, we certainly look back with some shame and some embarrassment. What the Tribes are asking for here is a protection of areas that are of special significance to them and special significance to the environmental legacy, which we should be leaving to future generations.

The President's decision to review these national monuments puts the future of these resources in jeopardy and threatens our culture, history, and heritage. If President Donald Trump decides to use the Antiquities Act to reverse one of these monuments, he would treading in uncharted water. Never before has a President used the Antiquities Act to repeal a national monument. For what purpose? For oil and gas exploration? For off-the-road vehicle use?

These monuments themselves help promote tourism and outdoor recreation. Regions with national monuments saw increased employment and personal income growth—exactly the opposite of what the critics promised. Specifically, rural counties in the West, with protected lands, saw jobs increase by 345 percent over areas without protected lands—345 percent. Despite the opposition from Utah's elected officials, many in the State, including the Tribes, want to protect those areas, and I want to help them.

Teddy Roosevelt once said:

It is also vandalism wantonly to destroy or to permit the destruction of what is beautiful in nature, whether it be a cliff, a forest, or a species of mammal or bird. Here in the United States we turn our rivers and streams into sewers and dumping-grounds, we pollute the air, we destroy forests, and exterminate fishes, birds, and mammals—not to speak of vulgarizing charming landscapes with hideous advertisements. But at last it looks as if our people were awakened.

That was said by that Republican President over a century ago. Since Teddy Roosevelt's time, we have made progress in protecting our lands and waters, but these recent attacks and this recent Executive order by President Donald Trump show that we still have a long way to go.

I urge this administration, this Republican administration, to heed the words of Teddy Roosevelt. Carefully consider the legacy they will leave to future generations. It would be foolish not to protect Bears Ears and other monuments, just as it would have been foolish to listen to the critics and refuse to protect the Grand Canyon.

These monuments are for all of us, and we must ensure that they remain in their current natural condition for future generations to enjoy.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 949. A bill to require the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to create a classification that more accurately reflects the vital role of wildland firefighters; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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

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

S. 949

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Wildland Firefighter Recognition Act''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the term ''Director'' means the Director of the Office of Personnel Management;

(2) the term ''employee'' has the meaning given the term in section 2105 of title 5, United States Code;

(3) the term ''Federal land management agency'' means—

(A) within the Department of the Interior—

(i) the Bureau of Land Management;

(ii) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

(iii) the National Park Service; and

(iv) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and

(B) within the Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service;

(4) the term ''wildland fire''—

(A) means any non-structure fire that occurs in vegetation or natural fuels; and

(B) includes prescribed fire and wildfire; and

(5) the term ''wildland firefighter'' means—

(A) an employee of a Federal land management agency, the duties of whose position are primarily to perform work directly related to the prevention, control, suppression, or management of wildland fires, including an employee of a Federal land management agency who is assigned to support wildland fire activities; and

(B) an employee of a Federal land management agency who is transferred to a supervisory or administrative position from a position described in subparagraph (A).

SEC. 3. CLASSIFICATION OF WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS.

(a) REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director, in cooperation with the Federal land management agencies, shall commence development of a distinct wildland firefighter occupational series that more accurately reflects the variety of duties performed by wildland firefighters.

(2) DESIGNATION.—The official title assigned to any occupational series established under paragraph (1) shall include the designation of ''Wildland Firefighter''.

(3) POSITIONS DESCRIBED.—Paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to any class or other category of positions that consists primarily or exclusively of forestry technician positions, range technician positions, or any other positions the duties and responsibilities of which include—

(A) significant prevention, preparedness, control, suppression, or management activities for wildland fires; or

(B) activities necessary to meet any other emergency incident to which assigned.

(4) CONSULTATION.—It is the sense of Congress that the Director should consult with employee associations and any other groups that represent wildland firefighters in carrying out this subsection.

(5) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act—

(A) the Director shall complete the development of the wildland firefighter occupational series required under paragraph (1); and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall use the wildland firefighter occupational series developed under paragraph (1) in the advertising and hiring of a wildland firefighter.

(b) HAZARDOUS DUTY DIFFERENTIAL NOT AFFECTED.—Section 5545(d)(1) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''except'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''except—

''(A) an employee in an occupational series covering positions for which the primary duties involve the prevention, control, suppression, or management of wildland fires, as determined by the Office; and

''(B) in such other circumstances as the Office may by regulation prescribe; and''.

(c) CURRENT EMPLOYEES.—Any individual employed as a wildland firefighter on the date on which the occupational series established under subsection (a) takes effect may elect to—

(1) remain in the occupational series in which the individual is working; or

(2) be included in the wildland firefighter occupational series established under subsection (a).

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 950. A bill to correct problems pertaining to human resources for career and volunteer personnel engaged in wildland fire and structure fire; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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

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

S. 950

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Wildland Firefighter Fairness Act''.

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

SEC. 2. SINGLE QUALIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEM.

(a) MERGING 2 SYSTEMS.—The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall work with States and the Workforce Development Committee of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group to merge the Incident Qualification System and the Incident Qualification and Certification System into a single system by September 30, 2025.

(b) ELIMINATION OF BUREAU ADD-ON REQUIREMENTS.—On and after October 1, 2021, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may not require a person to demonstrate additional competencies to obtain, make use of, or maintain a qualification or certification for a fire position, regardless of which jurisdictional agency employs the person.

SEC. 3. PERSONNEL FLEXIBILITY RELATING TO THE ROBERT T. STAFFORD DISASTER RELIEF AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ACT.

(a) DEFINITION OF TIME-LIMITED APPOINTMENT.—Section 9601 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

''(2) the term 'time-limited appointment' includes—

''(A) a temporary appointment and a term appointment, as defined by the Office of Personnel Management;

''(B) an appointment pursuant to section 306(b)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster

Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5149(b)(1)); and

''(C) an appointment pursuant to subtitle E of title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12611 et seq.).''.

(b) COMPETITIVE SERVICE; TIME-LIMITED APPOINTMENTS.—Section 9602 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (b) through (e) as subsections (d) through (g), respectively;

(2) in subsection (a), in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''Notwithstanding'' and inserting ''APPOINTMENTS TO LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES.—Notwithstanding''; and

(B) by inserting ''described in section 9601(2)(A)'' after ''time-limited appointment'';

(3) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

''(b) APPOINTMENTS UNDER THE ROBERT T. STAFFORD DISASTER RELIEF AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ACT.—Notwithstanding chapter 33 or any other provision of law relating to the examination, certification, and appointment of individuals in the competitive service—

''(1) an employee appointed under the authority described in section 9601(2)(B) and serving under a full-time, time-limited appointment is eligible to compete for a permanent appointment in the competitive service at the Federal Emergency Management Agency or any other agency (as defined in section 101 of title 31) under the internal merit promotion procedures of the applicable agency if—

''(A) the employee has served under 1 or more time-limited appointments for at least 2 years without a break in service; and

''(B) the performance of the employee has been at an acceptable level of performance throughout the 1 or more time-limited appointment periods referred to in subparagraph (A); and

''(2) an employee appointed under the authority described in section 9601(2)(B) and serving under an intermittent, time-limited appointment is eligible for a permanent appointment in the competitive service at the Federal Emergency Management Agency or any other agency (as defined in section 101 of title 31) under the internal merit promotion procedures of the applicable agency if—

''(A) the employee has served under 1 or more time-limited appointments;

''(B) the employee has been deployed at least 522 days;

''(C) the employee has not declined any deployments while in an 'available' status; and

''(D) the performance of the employee has been at an acceptable level of performance throughout the 1 or more time-limited appointments referred to in subparagraph (A).

''(c) APPOINTMENTS UNDER THE NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACT OF 1990.—

''(1) DEFINITION OF EMPLOYEE.—Notwithstanding section 160(a) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12620(a)), in this subsection, the term 'employee' includes individuals appointed under subtitle E of title I of that Act (42 U.S.C. 16211 et seq.).

''(2) COMPETITION FOR PERMANENT APPOINTMENT.—Notwithstanding chapter 33 or any other provision of law relating to the examination, certification, and appointment of individuals in the competitive service, a member of the National Civilian Community Corps appointed under subtitle E of title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12611 et seq.) who serves 2 consecutive terms is eligible to compete for a permanent appointment in the competitive service at the Federal Emergency Management Agency or any other agency (as defined in section 101 of title 31) under the internal merit promotion procedures during the 2-year period beginning on the date of the expiration of the appointment under section 160(a) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12620(a)), if the performance of the employee has been at an acceptable level of performance throughout the period.'';

(4) in subsection (d) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)), by striking ''In determining'' and inserting ''WAIVER OF AGE REQUIREMENTS.—In determining'';

(5) in subsection (e) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)), by striking ''An individual'' and inserting ''TENURE AND STATUS.—An individual'';

(6) in subsection (f) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)), in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''A former'' and inserting ''FORMER EMPLOYEES.—A former''; and

(B) by inserting ''or the Federal Emergency Management Agency'' after ''management agency''; and

(7) in subsection (g) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)), by striking ''The Office'' and inserting ''REGULATIONS.—The Office''.

SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF SERVICE LIMITS FOR SEASONAL HIRES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term ''covered Secretary'' means—

(A) the Secretary of the Interior; and

(B) the Secretary of Agriculture;

(2) the term ''Director'' means the Director of the Office of Personnel Management; and

(3) the term ''pilot program'' means the pilot program established under subsection (b).

(b) PILOT PROGRAM.—The Director shall establish a pilot program for seasonal or temporary Federal employees, the duties of which primarily involve being a firefighter.

(c) EXPANSION OF SERVICE YEAR LIMITATIONS.—Under the pilot program, each covered Secretary may expand a service year limitation to enable a seasonal firefighter to be employed for a period that exceeds 1,040 hours in a given year if the covered Secretary determines the expansion to be necessary to stage fire crews earlier or later in a year to accommodate longer fire seasons.

(d) STANDARDS.—The Director, in cooperation with each covered Secretary, shall establish standards and guidelines for the pilot program.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which the pilot program is established, the Director shall submit a report that describes the use and impact of the pilot program to—

(1) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives.

(f) TERMINATION.—The pilot program shall terminate on the date that is 5 years after the date on which the pilot program is established.

SEC. 5. CIVIL SERVICE RETENTION RIGHTS.

Section 8151 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b) REGULATIONS.—

''(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

''(A) the term 'covered employee' means an employee who—

''(i) served in a position in the Forest Service or the Department of the Interior as a wildland firefighter; and

''(ii) sustained an injury while in the performance of duty, as determined by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, that prevents the employee from performing the physical duties of a firefighter;

''(B) the term 'equivalent position' includes a position for a covered employee that—

''(i) allows the covered employee to receive the same retirement benefits under subchapter III of chapter 83 or chapter 84 that the covered employee would have received in the former position had the covered employee not been injured or disabled; and

''(ii) does not require the covered employee to complete any more years of service than the covered employee would have been required to complete to receive the benefits described in clause (i) had the covered employee not been injured or disabled; and

''(C) the term 'firefighter' has the meaning given the term in section 8331.

''(2) REGULATIONS.—Under regulations issued by the Office of Personnel Management—

''(A) the department or agency that was the last employer shall immediately and unconditionally accord the employee, if the injury or disability has been overcome within 1 year after the date of commencement of compensation or from the time compensable disability recurs if the recurrence begins after the injured employee resumes regular full-time employment with the United States, the right to resume the former position of the employee or an equivalent position, as well as all other attendant rights that the employee would have had, or acquired, in the former position of the employee had the employee not been injured or disabled, including the rights to tenure, promotion, and safeguards in reductions-in-force procedures;

''(B) the department or agency that was the last employer shall, if the injury or disability is overcome within a period of more than 1 year after the date of commencement of compensation, make all reasonable efforts to place, and accord priority to placing, the employee in the former position of the employee or an equivalent position within the department or agency, or within any other department or agency; and

''(C) a covered employee who was injured during the 20-year period ending on the date of enactment of the Wildland Firefighter Fairness Act may not receive the same retirement benefits described in paragraph (1)(B)(ii) unless the covered employee first makes a payment to the Forest Service or the Department of the Interior, as applicable, equal to the amount that would have been deducted from pay under section 8334 or 8442, as applicable, had the covered employee not been injured or disabled.''.

SEC. 6. COMPUTATION OF PAY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 8114 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking subsection (e) and inserting the following:

''(e) OVERTIME.—

''(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term 'covered overtime pay' means pay received by an employee who serves in a position in the Forest Service or the Department of the Interior as a wildland firefighter while engaged in wildland fire suppression activity.

''(2) OVERTIME.—The value of subsistence and quarters, and of any other form of remuneration in kind for services if its value can be estimated in money, and covered overtime pay and premium pay under section 5545(c)(1) of this title are included as part of the pay, but account is not taken of—

''(A) overtime pay;

''(B) additional pay or allowance authorized outside the United States because of differential in cost of living or other special circumstances; or

''(C) bonus or premium pay for extraordinary service including bonus or pay for particularly hazardous service in time of war.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on October 1, 2019.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 13—CALLING UPON THE PRESIDENT TO ISSUE A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING THE ABIDING IMPORTANCE OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. GARDNER, and Mr. UDALL) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 13

Whereas the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) concluded on August 1, 1975 (in this joint resolution referred to as the ''Helsinki Final Act''), established a comprehensive concept of security that encompasses political-military, environmental and economic, and human rights and humanitarian dimensions;

Whereas the Helsinki Final Act set out a declaration of ten fundamental Principles Guiding Relations Between States, which all participating States committed to respect and put into practice in their relations with each other, that have been the basis of the international order in the OSCE Region since its inception in 1975;

Whereas these Principles, adopted on the basis of consensus by all participating States and reaffirmed through the years, enshrine—

(1) sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty;

(2) refraining from the threat or use of force;

(3) inviolability of frontiers;

(4) territorial integrity of States;

(5) peaceful settlement of disputes;

(6) non-intervention in internal affairs;

(7) respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief;

(8) equal rights and self-determination of peoples;

(9) cooperation among States; and

(10) fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law;

Whereas the Helsinki Final Act, for the first time in the history of international agreements, recognized that respect for, and implementation of, commitments to human rights and fundamental freedoms are integral to stability and security within and among nations;

Whereas, in the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the participating States declared, ''Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings, are inalienable and are guaranteed by law. Their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of government,'' and committed themselves ''to build, consolidate and strengthen democracy as the only system of government of our nations'';

Whereas, in 1991, participating States met in Moscow and unanimously agreed that ''issues relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are of international concern, as respect for these rights and freedoms constitutes one of the foundations of international order;'' and declared ''categorically and irrevocably. . . that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the CSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned'';

Whereas the CSCE was renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in January 1995, reaffirming the continued relevance and applicability of previously made principles and provisions in a Europe no longer divided between East and West and as the number of participating States increased from the original 35 to 57 today;

Whereas the Helsinki Final Act, by making respect for human rights and implementation of commitments by participating States a permanent priority in the relations between States, provided an international foundation for the democratic aspirations of peoples throughout Europe and contributed to the peaceful end to the Cold War;

Whereas the seventh Principle confirmed the right of the individual to know and act upon his or her rights, which inspired citizens from the participating States to associate and assemble for the purposes of monitoring and encouraging compliance with the principles and provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent documents of the CSCE and OSCE;

Whereas, during the Communist era, members of nongovernmental organizations, such as the Helsinki Monitoring Groups in Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, and Armenia as well as in Lithuania, and similar groups in Czechoslovakia and Poland, sacrificed their personal freedom and even their lives in their courageous and vocal support for the principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act;

Whereas members of nongovernmental organizations, civil society, and independent media across the region covered by the OSCE continue to risk their safety to advance the principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, often in the face of harassment and threats from their own governments who are OSCE participating States;

Whereas the United States Congress contributed to advancing the aims of the Helsinki Final Act by creating the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe to monitor and encourage compliance with its principles and provisions;

Whereas many countries continue to fall significantly short of implementing their OSCE commitments, particularly in the Human Dimension;

Whereas the Russian Federation is responsible for the clear, gross, and uncorrected violation of all ten Principles of the Helsinki Final Act;

Whereas, for many years, the Russian Federation has ignored its OSCE commitments related to the Human Dimension of comprehensive security by cracking down on civil society and independent media through harassment, intimidation, burdensome legal constraints, and violence, undermining the ability of its citizens to freely choose their leaders;

Whereas Russia's internal repression is directly related to its external aggression, including in Ukraine, Georgia, and Syria;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has interfered through information warfare and cyber-intrusions and otherwise engaged in deliberate and malicious efforts to undermine confidence in the democratic institutions and processes of other OSCE participating States;

Whereas the first Principle recognizes the right of each participating State ''to be or not to be a party to bilateral or multilateral treaties including the right to be or not to be a party to treaties of alliance; they also have the right to neutrality'';

Whereas the OSCE's participating States bear primary responsibility for raising violations of the Helsinki Final Act and other OSCE documents;

Whereas successive United States Administrations since the Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975 have made the Act's Principles Guiding Relations Between States a basis for United States policy toward Europe and the OSCE region as a whole; and

Whereas Congress has strongly supported and encouraged the United States to encourage improved compliance with these Principles, including by raising its concerns about non-compliance in a direct and frank manner and continues to do so today: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress calls upon the President to—

(1) issue a proclamation—

(A) reaffirming the United States' commitment to the Guiding Principles of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe;

(B) reasserting the commitment of the United States to full implementation of the Helsinki Final Act, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, defense of the principles of liberty, and tolerance within societies, all of which are vital to the promotion of democracy;

(C) urging all participating States to fully implement their commitments under the Helsinki Final Act;

(D) calling upon all participating States to respect each other's sovereign right to join alliances;

(E) condemning the clear, gross, and uncorrected violation of all ten core OSCE principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act by the Russian Federation with respect to other OSCE participating States, including Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine; and

(F) condemning all other violations of the Helsinki Final Act and its fundamental Guiding Principles; and

(2) conveying to all signatory states of the Helsinki Final Act that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic principles, economic liberty, and the implementation of related commitments continue to be vital elements in promoting a new and lasting era of democracy, peace, and unity in the region covered by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have 8 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 26, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, ''A Review of the Technical, Scientific, and Legal Basis of the WOTUS Rule.''

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 26, 2017, at 1:30 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 26, in between votes in SD–430.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 26, 2017, at 10 a.m., in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Duplication, Waste, and Fraud in Federal Programs.''

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on April 26, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 26, 2017, at 10 a.m., in 428A Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled, ''The Challenges and Opportunities of Running a Small Business in Rural America.''

COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Wednesday, April 26, 2017 from 10 a.m. in room SD–106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to hold a hearing entitled, ''Nomination of Courtney Simmons Elwood to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.''

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SPACE, SCIENCE, & COMPETITIVENESS

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 26, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold Subcommittee Hearing on ''Reopening the American Frontier: Reducing Regulatory Barriers and Expanding American Free Enterprise in Space.''

KIDS TO PARKS DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 123 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 123) designating May 20, 2017, as ''Kids to Parks Day.''

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 123) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of April 7, 2017, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, April 27; 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 to resume consideration of the Acosta nomination; finally, that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Acosta nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

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 2:05 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 27, 2017, at 10 a.m.