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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 27, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BRADLEY BYRNE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to enter into the RECORD this article written by Reverends Eason, Goodroe, and Castillo, all three of Spartanburg, South Carolina, who wrote an article that appeared Tuesday in the Greenville, South Carolina, News entitled, ''God Often Reminds Us to Welcome the Stranger.''

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I participated in another do-nothing Judiciary Committee hearing in this do-nothing Congress. This do-nothing hearing was unique. The goal was to make sure that the President was a do-nothing President as well.

It is not enough for the Republican majority to be setting records for how little they are doing. No. Ignoring immigration reform is bad enough—let alone the minimum wage, unemployment benefits, and the environment.

So the do-nothing Congress held a hearing yesterday entitled, ''Enforcing the President's Constitutional Duty to Faithfully Execute the Laws.'' The intent was clear: attack the President. It was held in the Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction over immigration, so there was lots of discussion about deferred action for DREAMers. This is where the President has exercised his power of prosecutorial discretion to temporarily suspend the deportation of people who came here to the U.S. as children.

Apparently, when the President stood just over there last month and delivered his State of the Union address, saying he would use his pen and phone to take executive action where the Congress was taking no action—well, that didn't go over well with this do-nothing Congress.

Look, I know it is easier for Republicans to blame Democrats and blame Obama and make excuses for why they can't do immigration reform this year. You have to keep it connected to reality. You put your principles for immigration reform on the table. You call them ''standards.'' And there were some things I liked and some things I didn't. But what I said was: Good. Thank you. It's a nice start. Let's sit down and talk some more.

NANCY PELOSI and the leadership of the Democratic rank and file in the House said: Good. Great starting point. Let's talk some more.

And the President you don't trust said: Good. It's a great starting point. Let's negotiate.

How did the Republicans respond? When Democrats said: Yes, let's talk; the Republicans said: No, just kidding. Immigration reform is hard. We would rather just talk about how awful it is that people are getting health care through ObamaCare.

You put something on the table, we say let's talk, and you say no, and then blame Democrats for blocking immigration. It makes no sense.

Questioning whether the President has the power to stop the deportation of immigrants who came here as children and have lived here practically their whole lives in the U.S., what are you thinking? The President not only has the power to suspend those deportations, he has the duty to suspend those deportations.

So here we are, with the entire country demanding reform of our immigration system, demanding we change our law. We see the parents of U.S. citizen children being deported and their children put in foster care. And we say there's got to be a better way to handle this situation that is good for the taxpayer, good for the immigrant family, good for our economy, and national security.

House Republicans see the situation and apparently say: No, we refuse to change the law because it is hard and we don't trust the President. And because the law is the law, we must deport them all.

When I and anyone else with a conscience looks at that American child being put in foster care because we have deported his parents and he looks at you doing nothing, we say something has to be done because it is the right thing to do from a moral perspective.

So, let me be clear, Mr. President, if you act to suspend the deportation of a person whose American child will be put in foster care, I will applaud you and so will most everyone on this side of the aisle. It will not only be us applauding. The three evangelical leaders

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who wrote the essay I entered into the RECORD, all three important religious leaders from Spartanburg, South Carolina, this is how they put it:

Immigration reform is an urgent need—inaction carries a profound human cost and we consistently see this in our ministries.

Hardworking, contributing members of our society live in constant fear of deportation. The victimization of individuals and families goes unreported, and families are torn apart as American-citizen children lose one or both of their parents to deportation proceedings.

They add:

We stand at a critical crossroads. Our broken and antiquated immigration system has precipitated an economic and moral crisis that we can ignore no longer.

Listen to your church elders. While you do nothing, the number on the board behind me continues to increase and the deportation machine continues.

If you don't, I and millions of others across this land will continue insisting that the President exercise his authority to stop deportation and separation of American families. We will force the President to act, and I assure you we will win that fight.

[From the Greenville News, Feb. 22, 2014]

GOD OFTEN REMINDS US TO WELCOME IMMIGRANTS

(By Ricky Eason, Jim Goodroe, and Greg Castillo)

Late last month, House Republicans released standards that will guide their efforts as they move forward on immigration reform. As evangelical leaders, we join voices from the business and law enforcement communities to strongly support this step.

We applaud any progress toward a solution for one of our nation's most complex and critical issues. With President Barack Obama's comments in the State of the Union address, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers' mention in her Republican response, and now the release of these standards, bipartisan support for immigration reform is clear.

In a time of bitter division and partisan politics, we call on our nation's leaders to transcend their differences and pass commonsense, broad reform that will strengthen our economy, make our nation safer, and give our undocumented neighbors an opportunity to come out of the shadows and earn legal status.

As faith leaders who call ourselves ''The Three Amigos,'' we represent the three largest ethnic groups in South Carolina. Although we come from communities with different cultural and political perspectives, we stand united in our Christian commitment to share the Gospel with all peoples (Matthew: 28:19), welcome and love the strangers in our midst (Leviticus 19:34, Matthew 25:31–46), and seek justice in our communities (Isaiah 1:17).

Throughout Scripture, God continually reminds His people to love and welcome the immigrants in their midst. As people who arrive to a strange place with no land, family or connections, immigrants are some of the most vulnerable people in any given community. For this reason, they consistently join widows and orphans in the Biblical ''triad of the vulnerable'' that God desires to protect (Exodus 22:21–22).

In our combined 60 years of ministry in the Upstate of South Carolina, we have served and ministered to immigrants from all over the world, documented and undocumented. While undocumented immigrants are often mischaracterized or used abstractly in political arguments, we know these people personally as our neighbors, friends, and brothers and sisters. Immigration reform is an urgent need—inaction carries a profound human cost that we consistently see in our ministries.

Hardworking and contributing members of our society live in constant fear of deportation, the victimization of individuals and families goes unreported, and families are torn apart as American-citizen children lose one or both parents to deportation proceedings. Striking a middle ground between the extreme positions of mass deportation and open borders, we join with House Republicans in advocating for a middle ground where those without documentation can come out of the shadows, make restitution, and get right with the law.

Such an approach is very different from amnesty, which is the absence of legal consequences. Instead, this realistic approach would allow undocumented immigrants to admit culpability and pay their debt to society without separating or harming families or causing undue harm to our nation's economy.

We stand at a critical crossroads. Our broken and antiquated immigration system has precipitated an economic and moral crisis that we can ignore no longer. The Republican standards moved us one step closer to a solution that will protect the border, help grow our economy, and provide an opportunity for undocumented immigrants to earn legal status and fully participate in our communities.

The time for further action is now. Congress needs to overcome its doubts, and keep moving toward the legislation that is so desperately needed.

We join other evangelical leaders from across the country in reaffirming our commitment to earnestly pray for Congress and for immigration reform in 2014.

MODERNIZING OUR DRUG AND DIAGNOSTICS EVALUATION AND REGULATORY NETWORK CURES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, this week we recognize the work of the tireless advocates for rare diseases. I had the honor of serving as the Republican chair of the Congressional Rare Disease Caucus. I consider it a very important responsibility as part of my service here and an honor to work for innovative treatments, new technologies, and to build an atmosphere of appreciation and understanding on Capitol Hill with the hard work of all the patient advocates. Their passion is often driven by the care of loved ones, and their personal stories are profiles in courage.

Hearing from countless advocates, many of whom are here in Washington this week, gives the members of the caucus renewed energy and purpose. Events held during Rare Disease Week highlight what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done, and there is a lot to do, but we will do it together.

I am working on important legislation in this area, the bipartisan Modernizing Our Drug and Diagnostics Evaluation and Regulatory Network, or MODDERN, Cures Act. It will update the Nation's drug evaluation process to encourage the discovery and development of new treatments for chronic and rare diseases. The measure will also create a system that rewards efficiency and effectiveness to the benefit of all persons with rare diseases.

The MODDERN Cures Act will encourage the development of drugs abandoned in the development process. It will create a new category of drugs known as dormant therapies for compounds with insufficient patent protection, drugs that offer the promise to treat conditions with unmet medical needs.

Updating regulatory networks such as patent reform will help open the pipeline for new innovations and therapies. Patients with degenerative conditions, cancers, and rare diseases await the genius of these new solutions. While we do not know the cause or cure of many of these rare diseases or cancers, we do know that awareness is the best protection, information is the best tool for innovation, and well-rounded care during and after treatment is the best therapy. That is our mission in the caucus: to work together to find solutions that make a lasting difference.

I again thank the families and the advocates whose challenges we may never completely understand, but whose commitment to their loved ones is unyielding and inspiring. The caucus pursues its mission in their name.

COMPREHENSIVE DENTAL REFORM ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Children's Dental Health Month. It is a critical part of overall health, yet it is also an issue frequently overlooked.

Too often we think of dental care as an optional service, but in reality, it is a critical component of overall health. Its importance first hit home for me 7 years ago when I learned the story of a young Maryland boy named Deamonte Driver.

In February of 2007, 12-year-old Deamonte came from school with a headache, which had started as a toothache days before. His mother, who worked hard to make ends meet with low-paying jobs, searched for a dentist who would accept Medicaid for her children. She found not one dentist. Let me say that again. She found not one single dentist who would care for her children's teeth.

At wit's end, Deamonte's mother brought him to the emergency room, where he received medication for pain, a sinus infection, and a dental abscess. Unfortunately, that was not enough. The bacteria from Deamonte's cavity spread to his brain, and at 12 years old, he died for lack of a simple procedure

early on to remove a tooth. He died less than 20 minutes away from where we stand today.

Deamonte's case served as a jarring lesson on the lack of access to care for many families. At the time of Deamonte's death, fewer than one in three children under the age of 20 in Maryland's Medicaid program received any dental service at all. In the years since, with the passage of the Affordable Care Act and new efforts to ensure a healthier America, we made significant progress in Maryland and across the country. In other words, we have changed the trajectory of so many children's destinies.

Now, 52 percent of children on Medicaid in Maryland receive dental services, even as the number of children enrolled has increased by 25 percent. In fact, through the work of government officials in Maryland's Dental Action Coalition, the State has led the way in increasing access for dental care for children.

Nationally, the number of children enrolled in Medicaid who received dental care in 2010 jumped to 46 percent, numbers that suggest progress, but also signal the work left to be accomplished.

The implementation of the Affordable Care Act has made a difference, allowing millions more children to receive critical medical and dental care right now. Even more children could access these services if Republican Governors in some States reverse their decisions to block the expansion of Medicaid.

I have often said that our children are the living messages we send to a future we will never see. Yet, even with the improvements we have seen, more must be done to ensure that both children and adults have access to needed treatment and preventive care. That is why I introduced the Comprehensive Dental Reform Act.

My legislation would provide funding to improve access to dental care through health clinics, school-based services, and other options for underserved populations; extend comprehensive dental coverage to Americans on Medicare, Medicaid, and VA benefits; increase the number of oral health professionals in communities in need; help support research and education to better integrate oral health with regular care.

We have come a long way, but more must be done to protect the dental health of our children and every American. If we can assure no child loses his or her life because a dentist couldn't be found to pull a tooth, Deamonte's death won't be in vain.

□ 1015

CALIFORNIA WATER: IT'S THE STORAGE, STUPID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. McCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, President Obama visited the drought-stricken Central Valley of California. He announced his administration's response: he wants to spend another billion dollars to study climate change.

Well, I think I can save him the trouble. The planet has been warming, on and off, since the last Ice Age, when glaciers covered much of North America. The climate has been changing since the planet formed, often much more abruptly than it has in recent millennia.

Until the planet begins moving into its next ice age, we can reasonably expect it will continue to warm, on and off. That is going to mean less water that can be stored in snowpacks and, therefore, more dams will need to be constructed to store that water.

There, I just saved a billion dollars. You are welcome.

Everyone thinks that the Colorado River is the mother lode of all water in the Western United States, but the Colorado is a junior system to the mighty Sacramento River system.

The difference is this: we store 70 million acre-feet of water on the Colorado and only 10 million acre-feet on the Sacramento. The rest is lost to the ocean.

Droughts are nature's fault. They are beyond our control. Water shortages, on the other hand, are our fault.

We have not built major water storage on the Sacramento system since 1979 because of opposition from the environmental left and, most recently, from this administration. Indeed, we have had to fight back against its attempts to tear down perfectly good existing dams, including four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River.

Even in years of plenty, this administration has insisted on diverting 200 billion gallons of water from Central Valley agriculture for the amusement of the delta smelt, devastating the economy, drying up a quarter million acres of fertile farmland, and throwing thousands of California families into unemployment.

Because of opposition from the environmental left, we have been unable to even raise the spillway of the Exchequer Dam by a lousy 10 feet in order to add 70,000 acre-feet of storage at Lake McClure.

Because of radical environmental regulations, 800,000 acre-feet of desperately needed water—that is a 1-acre column of water, 150 miles deep—was drained from Shasta, Oroville, and Folsom Lakes last fall, knowing full well that we were heading into a potentially catastrophic drought.

Now, Governor Brown proposes to spend $14 billion for cross-delta tunnels that will produce exactly zero additional storage and exactly zero additional hydroelectricity.

Yet, for a fraction of that cost, roughly $6 billion, we could complete the Shasta Dam to its design elevation, which would mean 9 million acre-feet of additional water storage, nearly doubling the storage capacity of the Sacramento River system.

Everyone has seen the eerie pictures of Folsom Dam as its lake lay almost completely empty. For just a few billion dollars, we could complete the Auburn Dam, upriver of Folsom, that would hold enough water to fill and refill Folsom Lake nearly 2½ times.

That is in addition to 800 megawatts of electricity for the region and 400-year flood protection for the Sacramento Delta. The billions we are currently spending on delta levee repairs is to protect against a 200-year flood.

Both projects have been stalled for decades because of environmental opposition. Enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, we are at a crossroads, and it is time to choose between two very different visions of water policy.

One is the nihilistic vision of the environmental left, increasingly severe government-induced shortages, higher and higher electricity and water prices, massive taxpayer subsidies to politically well-connected and favored industries, and a permanently declining quality of life for our children, who will be required to stretch and ration every drop of water and every watt of electricity in their bleak and dimly lit homes.

The other is a vision of abundance, a new era of clean, cheap, and abundant hydroelectricity, great new reservoirs to store water in wet years to assure abundance in dry ones, a future in which families can enjoy the prosperity that abundant water and electricity provide, and the quality of life that comes from that prosperity.

It is a society whose children can look forward to a green lawn, a backyard garden, affordable air-conditioning in the summer and heating in the winter, brightly lit homes in cities, and abundant and affordable groceries from America's agricultural cornucopia.

This is a time of choosing.

HONORING REVEREND FREDERIC D. REESE DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2014

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, in continuing my commitment to honoring African Americans from Alabama during this Black History Month, today I rise to honor the renowned educator, pastor, and civil rights activist Reverend Dr. Frederick Douglas Reese on this occasion of Black History Month 2014.

For his dedication and distinguished service to the city of Selma and the State of Alabama, I pay tribute today to the life and work of Reverend Dr. F.D. Reese. This beloved pastor and civil rights activist marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, in 1965, along with hundreds of other supporters.

By the mid-1960s, Reese was president of the Dallas County Voters League and was also a local teacher who presided over the Selma Teachers Association. Discouraged by Selma's efforts to hinder voter registration for African Americans, Reverend Reese advocated that the teachers press to make sure that the students actually went to register to vote.

Reese invited Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and members of the SCLC to lead Selma's voting rights protest. King's staff helped organize months of demonstrations in Selma, with Reverend Reese's assistance.

Reverend Reese is a historical figure of modern history known for his support of the civil rights and voting rights movement. Reverend Reese rose to national prominence as a civil rights leader after Selma's ''Bloody Sunday.'' He later marched with Dr. King from Selma to Montgomery as an advocate of voting rights.

Reverend Reese was born November 28, 1929. A believer in education, Reverend Reese graduated from Alabama State University and Livingston University, and also attended Southern University, the University of Alabama, and Auburn University before receiving his doctorate of divinity from Selma University.

Reverend Reese has served the Selma and Dallas County community faithfully for over six decades, and his exemplary work and commitment to social justice is well-known. Notably, Reverend Reese has never left his beloved community of Selma, where he helped to make it a center for the voting rights movement in the 1960s.

He remains active today, and he is known for saying that his fight today is to get young people to realize that the movement is still continuing. ''I tell young people,'' he said, ''that they cannot rest on our victories. We have to remain committed. That means registering to vote and participating in what this country has to offer. That means making a difference to others.''

Reverend Reese has stated that he marched so that everyone, regardless of color, could become a first-class citizen in America. Reverend Reese knows that you have to stand for what you believe in. He became nationally known for his beliefs and inspired others to stand as well.

Reverend Reese has remained committed to education and service. He became a principal in Selma, as well as a city council member, serving for over 12 years on the Selma City Council. He also ran for mayor in 1984 and led a campaign to motivate Walmart executives to hire African Americans as store managers.

In 2000, he was honored for his civil rights work by having a stretch of 3 miles of U.S. Highway 80, which was where he led the Montgomery to Selma March, named after him. It is now known as the Frederick Douglas Reese Parkway. The FDR Christian Academy in Indiana is also dedicated to him.

Reverend Reese has been a pastor of Selma's Ebenezer Baptist Church since 1965. Although he is retired from teaching, he is still very much active in Ebenezer Baptist Church, where he serves as the head minister emeritus and delivers a sermon each and every week.

On behalf of the Seventh Congressional District, the State of Alabama, and this Nation, during this Black History Month, I ask my colleagues to join me in acknowledging and celebrating the accomplishments of Reverend Dr. Frederick Douglas Reese from Selma, Alabama.

THE PATIENT OPTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as the truth of ObamaCare continues to come out, we see that the promises of this administration are just not factual.

ObamaCare is crushing our economy. It is killing jobs, and it is hurting hardworking Americans and family businesses the most.

There is a solution. It is called the Patient OPTION Act. It is H.R. 2900. It repeals ObamaCare in full, and it replaces it with free market, patient-centered reforms.

The Patient OPTION Act is a set of reforms that will revitalize American health care, not through government interference but by giving doctors and patients full control over their dollars and their decisions. In fact, it is the only health care plan that completely removes bureaucrats from everyone's personal health care decisions.

The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons has endorsed the bill, and now FreedomWorks is standing behind the OPTION Act as well. In fact, FreedomWorks said: ''The OPTION Act stands as the best conservative health care reform package yet released, and it should be considered for a vote as the House votes on alternatives to ObamaCare.''

While ObamaCare continues down the path of destruction and failure, the OPTION Act stands ready to provide health care relief that the American people want and need.

The Patient OPTION Act will make health insurance cheaper for everyone, so that most Americans can buy health insurance that they need at a price that they can afford. It will provide access to good quality health care for all Americans, no matter what a person's financial status is or even if they have preexisting conditions, and it will save Medicare from going broke.

I urge the House to vote on the Patient OPTION Act so we may put the final nail into the coffin that is ObamaCare and move towards real patient-centered care.

I finally urge the American people to contact their Congressmen and their Senators to cosponsor the bill and demand from leadership a vote in the U.S. House and the Senate on the Patient OPTION Act.

Through the voice of We the People, the strongest political force in America, we can repeal ObamaCare and replace it with true health care reforms that will make health insurance more affordable and accessible for everyone.

I hope that the American people and my colleagues will look toward the OPTION Act as an example of what real patient-centered health care and insurance looks like and bring this bill before the House and the Senate for a vote immediately.

PRESS FREEDOM DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the continued imprisonment of journalists in Egypt, and to restrictions on press freedoms worldwide.

Al Jazeera, the news network, has called today, Thursday, February 27, Press Freedom Day. Reporters in more than 30 cities around the world, including in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, are holding vigils to remember all the journalists currently at risk from governments that restrict the most valuable of international rights: the right to a free press and to freedom of speech.

The military-led government of Egypt has engaged in wholesale repression of the media, especially outlets thought to be sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood, since overthrowing President Mohamed Morsi in June 2013.

□ 1030

This repression culminated with the arrest of three Al Jazeera employees on December 29, 2013. On that day, Egyptian authorities arrested three employees of Al Jazeera and accused them of ''spreading lies harmful to State security and joining a terrorist group.''

Another 20 journalists were prosecuted this year for ''airing false news,'' among other apparently meritless charges.

Today, four Al Jazeera reporters are currently being detained in Egypt in the Tora Prison compound for their reporting from Egypt. They are charged with being members of the organizations on which they were reporting, a charge that Al Jazeera and other international media organizations and press protection groups have rejected.

Peter Greste, Al Jazeera English's Nairobi-based correspondent; Mohammed Fahmy, their senior producer in Egypt; and Baher Mohamed, their producer in Egypt, are all being held in one small cell in Egypt at that prison under difficult and, to put it gently, Spartan conditions.

They are allowed out of their cell for only 1 hour a day, and they have been detained since December 29. They had been separated, but I would thank the Egyptian authorities for at least bringing them together, so they can at least lean on each other for support.

Abdullah al-Shami, the Al Jazeera Arabic correspondent, has been held since August of 2013 and has been on a hunger strike, protesting his detention since January. Their families in Australia, Canada, and Egypt are working tirelessly for their freedom.

I can empathize with the fear and concern their families face each day, worrying about the physical and mental health of their loved ones.

Locking up reporters has never stopped the world from finding out what is going on in a country, particularly in this modern world.

Egypt is a proud nation with a proud history and has been a longtime ally of the United States of America. The Egyptian people, regardless of which government, party, or individuals they support, have made it clear: their choice is one of democracy and freedom.

For those goals to be achieved, freedom of the press and freedom of speech must be respected and promoted. I encourage the Egyptian Government and the Egyptian judiciary to immediately release these four journalists, as well as all other journalists currently detained, and to allow all members of the news media to operate in an unrestricted environment that is free from harassment, censorship, and arbitrary arrest and detention.

As White House spokesman Jay Carney has said:

> The restrictions on freedom of expression in Egypt are a concern, and that includes the targeting of Egyptian and foreign journalists and academics simply for expressing their views.

Earlier this month, I sent a letter signed by 15 Members of the Congress, urging the Secretary of State to take immediate action to help secure the release of these journalists in Egypt; and as Egypt struggles to find its identity, it is important for the international community to remind the Egyptian leadership—and all world leaders—of the need for a free press.

The imprisonment and prosecution of journalists sends a clear and ongoing message of harassment and intimidation to all journalists in Egypt. Free those journalists. A free society requires a free press.

OBAMACARE IS OFF THE MARK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, if you thought the Obama administration's rollout of www.healthcare.gov was bad, believe it or not, it got worse for another section of our citizens.

Back in Michigan, the Second District is home to a higher number of Latino citizens than any other congressional district in the State of Michigan; and like thousands of other residents across Michigan, Hispanic Michiganians are forced to deal with higher costs, the potential loss of their doctor, and canceled insurance policies all because of ObamaCare. These citizens are in need of the same information that we are all in search of.

Well, after being delayed for more than 2 months, the administration finally unveiled its Spanish language Web site, cuidadodesalud.gov, that contained an embarrassing amount of Spanglish. Even I couldn't come up with that much Spanglish.

Frankly, it is insulting that the administration would simply make up words, rather than provide an accurate translation of the President's signature achievement.

One friend made the humorous observation that it is just as bad in Spanish as it is in English, and nobody can work with it in Spanish either.

Well, Latinos are more adversely impacted in many ways by soaring premiums because the median age of the Hispanic population is actually 10 years younger than the national average; therefore, they are seeing these premiums soar, as it shifts those costs to younger Americans.

It is predicted that younger citizens are the very folks who are needed to sign up for this program in order to make it actuarially sound, but these are the same folks who are not doing so right now.

The focus of the debate, instead, needs to be on patient-centered solutions that not only lower costs, but deliver high-quality care to more citizens, none of which, unfortunately, ObamaCare actually does. I believe it is time to repeal and replace this failed policy.

You know, Mr. Speaker, House Republicans have led with numerous options, such as the Patient OPTION Act, as Dr. BROUN was just talking about; Dr. PRICE of Georgia; Dr. BENISHEK of my home State of Michigan; the Republican Study Committee plan—a number of plans are out there that have been proposed that I think would be a far better solution to those things that we can all agree on: having greater access for more people at a lower cost.

But I think one thing we can all agree on in any language is that ObamaCare is off the mark.

THE HOMELESS MIDDLE CLASS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the hardworking Americans who are being left behind in this country. Some sectors of our economy are recovering from the great recession, but not all boats are rising, not even close.

I recently spent a night in a homeless shelter and was dismayed that it was filled with members of the middle class and that earning above the minimum wage did not protect them from having to share a dorm room with dozens of other people.

The reality is a subclass of workers has emerged who do play by the rules and work hard, but find that they are literally only one step away from living on the streets by a single medical emergency or a slow day, if you are working for tips at $2.13 an hour. They work full time; but after putting in a full day, they go home to a homeless shelter.

We interact with these people every day. They take our food orders; they fix our cars and bag our groceries. They aren't looking for handouts or begrudging the success of others, but are simply trying to meet their basic needs. They face huge obstacles in finding a home in housing markets where rental costs have escalated beyond their reach.

Working 40 hours a week used to mean a minimum standard of living and a foothold on the first rung of the economic ladder to the middle class, but not anymore.

Let me tell you about some of their stories. One woman I spoke to was working at a Safeway in the bakery department. Her husband was working at OfficeMax in the warehouse. They were full-time wage earners, and they were living in a homeless shelter because they had to put together so much money for the first and last month's rent.

No one should be forced to live in shelters while they are working full time; but according to the National Center on Family Homelessness, 29 percent of the homeless in this country have jobs.

Let me tell you who else populates homeless shelters: veterans. That night, I listened to several veterans battling PTSD. One Iraq veteran who saw heavy combat said he once had a six-figure job in a Silicon Valley company before falling prey to drugs and alcohol.

We talked for a long time, as he slowly and haltingly unfolded his story about the worst side of battle that torments him to this day. He said: My country forced me to do terrible things.

Another veteran said she was raped while serving, but was eventually dishonorably discharged for admitting she was gay during the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy days. Her life has spiraled down since then.

A single mother with four children at another shelter I visited told me she was hastily evicted when the unit she rented was deemed illegal by housing authorities. Her $19 an hour job made her too rich for child care assistance, forcing her into homelessness. By the way, the father is nowhere to be found to pay child support.

After listening to the hardships of working families, veterans, and single mothers, I left the next day, committed to doing more. We should all be doing more in Congress. We should all be spending a night in a homeless shelter in our districts to hear the stories of our constituents; or just spend a few

hours at one. It will inform you in ways that go way beyond the mere numbers.

We need to understand why 1.6 million children are homeless at least one night in the year and why the number of homeless children enrolled in public schools has risen 72 percent since 2006.

Our inaction is crippling working families, single mothers, and veterans who have sacrificed so much for this Nation. I call on my colleagues today to take the homeless shelter challenge.

Talk to your constituents who do not have a home, and meet the families who are failing because of our indifference and our inaction.

VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to lend my voice to those who are being brutally silenced by the Nicolas Maduro regime in Venezuela.

After 15 years of suffering under Hugo Chavez's rule, the people of Venezuela have watched their liberties continue to be violently stripped away as Maduro further radicalizes the country's failed policies.

These policies produce the highest inflation rates in Latin America, leading to shortages of such basic goods as milk and toilet paper, and sending Venezuela into a desperate downward economic spiral that worsens every day.

The corruption that is enabled by the Maduro government and its supporters has also contributed to a society that is plagued by rampant violence. In this country of 30 million inhabitants, nearly 25,000 homicides were committed last year alone.

Worse still, the vast majority of these murders went unpunished, creating a climate of impunity that leaves ordinary citizens paralyzed by fear and hopeless about their own future and the future of their country.

As if this was not harsh enough, Mr. Speaker, Venezuelans are now facing the regime's repressive and violent actions. Weeks ago, Maduro and his cronies unleashed a bloody crackdown on students as they demonstrated against the regime's failed policies and peacefully demanded their basic human rights and democratic freedoms.

These students are expressing the sentiments of millions of Venezuelans who are sick and tired of the regime's destructive policies and fear for what may happen next. These students were exercising freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, yet Maduro responded to their brave calls of liberty with tear gas, rubber bullets, beatings, and live ammunition.

As the number of Venezuelan protesters swelled to the millions, Maduro has only stepped up the violence and his attempts to silence his critics by censoring radio and social media platforms.

By controlling the flow of information and the major media outlets, Maduro perpetuates his absurd conspiracy theories which cast blame on everyone, but himself, for this crisis of democracy in Venezuela.

Through the use of intimidation, unjust detentions, and violence, Maduro has followed the familiar playbook of other rulers who fear the desire of their citizens to live in freedom and under the rule of law.

This is especially the case with the brutal Castro tyranny, which has the biggest stake in keeping Maduro in power because of its mutual disdain for freedom, for democracy, for liberty, for the rule of law, and because of Castro's dependence on Venezuelan oil.

We have witnessed the Castro regime parachute in their own hired guns to help the Maduro regime continue its oppressive tactics against the people of Venezuela.

□ 1045

Since the countrywide protests began on February 12, Maduro's regime has murdered at least 14 Venezuelans, injured or unjustly detained hundreds more, and committed the worst abuses against protesters as stories of torture and other human rights violations continue to pour in.

This relentless repression will continue and intensify unless the United States and the international community speak with a unified voice and help to promote the rule of law, the human rights, and the democratic aspirations of the Venezuelan people.

I hope that we will be able to say that we did not stand idly by as the Venezuelan people were brutally repressed and that we had a voice in making sure that people knew what was going on in Venezuela. I hope that we will be able to say that we stood for justice, that we stood for peace, that we stood for human rights, that we stood for freedom, and that we stood for the rule of law at the moment when these were needed the most.

THE NEW CHANCE FOR A NEW START IN LIFE ACT OF 2014

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I do believe that we in this country have an obligation, commitment, and duty—and just simply out of friendship—to be concerned about the American people in the many ways that they come to this Congress or to their Members of Congress or to their elected officials. After contributing over the years to make America great, when they are in their time of need, it is most appropriate for us to respond.

It is now going on almost a year that we have not responded to hardworking Americans who, over the years, have contributed taxes. Maybe some of them are veterans who served in the United States military and are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, and now in their time of need we are fiddling and dillydallying. Unfortunately, we are doing so because our friends on the other side of the aisle cannot recognize that, but for the grace of God, there go I.

No, these individuals are not standing in line to get unemployment insurance. They are standing in line to apply for jobs. Because the people who are eligible for unemployment insurance are individuals who have worked most every day of their life, but, unfortunately, they have found in times of economic upswings and downswings, maybe because of their training or maybe because of being a recent veteran, that they are not able to get a job immediately.

This Congress has delayed over and over again where our friends on the other side of the aisle and those Republicans in the other body claim that they cannot offer one vote to be able to pass unemployment insurance.

These individuals need our commitment, America's commitment, as they have given a commitment to us. Right now in America, there are now 48 million Americans living in poverty, 22 million children. Some of the individuals here were not at minimum wage, but they are individuals that are working and making minimum wage and can't make it either.

We must confront these issues. There must be the attitude of the Good Samaritan in this Congress. I have introduced H.R. 3888, the New Chance for a New Start in Life Act of 2014. It provides grants to nonprofits and State and local governments to train individuals for the emerging industries, the new jobs, so that individuals such as those waiting in line for employment can find employment. I would like to add that legislation as we move forward on the extension of unemployment insurance—1.3 million, 1.5 million and growing, because every week some individual who is unemployed maxes out on the 26 weeks of what they get in unemployment insurance in the State. That is why this is called emergency unemployment insurance. That is why it is called insurance, because it covers individuals who have worked, who have contributed and who have worked.

So it is disappointing that we are here again not being able to extend the unemployment insurance again, not being able to put on the floor of the House and get a vote for increasing the minimum wage to $10.10, a bill that has been filed for more than a year, and to be able to look working families directly in the eye and suggest that they can survive on less than the increase of the minimum wage.

There are businesses that will support this. There are businesses who recognize that, as they provide for their employee, that employee churns into the economy. That employee is a consumer. That employee tries to buy a house or pays their rent or goes out and buys items for their children or for their elderly parents or for themselves.

Why don't we understand that investment is what America is all about? Because America is not broke, and we have the opportunity to invest and to create more research and development, but we are living under the umbrella with the big elephant in the room—sequester. That doesn't make sense, because this country is one of the richest countries in the world.

I can assure you that, if we invest in America, we will create jobs, and those jobs will then churn the economy again and continue to bring down the debt. I don't know why a commonsense approach to building this economy up should not be the direction of this country.

Yesterday, I spoke at a high-speed rail summit. It is very clear that a building of high-speed rail will create thousands of jobs and increase mobility of Americans, but yet the image is that we are broke, and that is a very sad commentary.

As I listened to the ads that were utilized in my State of Texas, individuals not running for Congress or the United States Senate but running for State offices, all they can talk about is standing up against Obama. I want to stand with President Obama and stand with him to build this country and make it greater. That should be the message: invest in people. That is what will make America the Nation that all have looked to.

AID FOR UKRAINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I first want to recognize Annie Lowrey and Michael Gordon—they are reporters from The New York Times—because I will summarize their article and plagiarize other portions of it in talking about Ukraine.

The world watched in wonder, concern, excitement, and sometimes horror, and marveled at the tenacity and the resiliency of the Ukrainian people. However, Ukraine is in desperate need now of billions of dollars—and quickly. Its economy is shrinking; its government treasury is empty; its foreign exchange funds are low; and its banking system is fragile. Which brings us to the point of: What are the next steps?

The first step is for the Ukrainian people to organize an interim government. I call upon them to do it as rapidly as they can so that the international community has someone then to negotiate with and deal with some of these pressing matters, and that they go into a positive direction in doing that.

The second thing is for the capitals of Brussels and Washington, D.C., to take immediate action to help offset some of these dire financial constraints that Ukraine has.

I want to applaud Secretary Kerry for already trying to address this and floating the idea of $1 billion that would then go to immediate aid, and I want to call upon the European Union, headquartered in Brussels, and all the individual European countries to do the same. It is important now for this financial faith and confidence so that the people of Ukraine can continue to move forward and develop some financial security in this transitional period.

This is also critical in that this occurs as a bridge before the International Monetary Fund weighs in. The International Monetary Fund obviously needs to have a stable government to deal with. It also needs to have—and will ask for—reforms, transparency, rule of law, and some financial controls to get the ledger solidified in Ukraine, and that is what they should do.

So the important aspect of this debate is that the individual countries that have concern about the stability of what were formerly called the captive nations, the Eastern Bloc, now countries that want to be in the European community of free, democratic institutions, that there has to be a bridge so that, obviously, the chaos that has been involved in the country of Ukraine will not continue post the departure of their President and so that stability can reign.

I call upon the people of Ukraine to keep the faith and work hard and move forward on these reforms. I call on the governments—as I mentioned before, my own government, and the governments of the European Union—to offer immediate assistance, and I call for the International Monetary Fund to move as expeditiously and as quickly as possible to help stabilize the situation in Ukraine.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF TUSKEGEE AIRMAN CAPTAIN LEON ''WOODIE'' SPEARS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Each February during African American History Month, Americans come together to celebrate the important contributions of African Americans throughout the Nation. I am proud to share the remarkable story of one of my constituents, Hayward resident, Captain Leon ''Woodie'' Spears.

Growing up near an airfield, young Woodie always dreamed of flying. After attending college, he was given the opportunity to achieve his dreams. Woodie was among the few selected to join other young African Americans in Alabama at the Tuskegee Airfield, where he was trained to fly. During training, Woodie overcame very tough odds, battling prejudice and racism, to earn his wings and the honor of serving with the Tuskegee Airmen.

Following training, then-Lieutenant Spears was sent to Italy at the height of World War II, serving with the all-African American 332nd Fighter Group.

Woodie's tensest moment came in March 1945, when his plane was hit by antiaircraft fire at 32,000 feet. He was forced to make an emergency landing in Germany, only to be taken prisoner later by the German Army. Later, Woodie was able to locate Russian forces and found his way back to safety.

Captain Spears and his fellow Tuskegee Airmen proved themselves in battle abroad, but upon returning home, they faced another battle—the struggle for equality. Denied basic human dignity, they fought back. With like-minded citizens, they changed America for the better, and, of course, that fight, their struggle, still continues today.

For their brave service during World War II, the Tuskegee Airmen were collectively awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2007. Captain Spears was among those present to receive this prestigious honor.

After Captain Spears' military career, he dedicated his life to public service, toured the country to share his military experiences during the time of segregation, and spoke up for equality for all. Although Captain Spears is no longer with us, we are reminded of the life motto he lived by: Dare to dream.

Captain Spears is just one of many African Americans with a unique story that makes our country what it is today. The story of Captain Spears reminds us that the United States has come a long way, but that we still have a much longer way to go to truly reach equality for all.

I will not rest until all Americans have an equal opportunity to achieve their dreams.

A RESPONSE TO TWO U.S. SENATORS REGARDING PUERTO RICO STATEHOOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the junior Senator from Mississippi and the junior Senator from West Virginia spoke on the Senate floor about Puerto Rico's political status. Because Puerto Rico is a territory and not a State, we have no Senators who can respond to these two Senators on the Senate floor. So, as the only elected representative in Congress of the 3.6 million U.S. citizens that live in Puerto Rico, I respond now.

The Senators discussed the referendum that was held in Puerto Rico in November 2012. However, neither Senator mentioned that, on the first question in that referendum, 54 percent of voters said they do not want Puerto Rico to be a territory, which means that my constituents no longer consent to the current status.

Likewise, neither Senator noted that, during a Senate hearing on the referendum held last August, the senior Democrat and the senior Republican on the Committee on Energy and

Natural Resources agreed that it was indisputable and clear that the people of Puerto Rico oppose the current territory status.

□ 1100

Finally, in their remarks yesterday, neither Senator acknowledged that in the referendum, statehood received more votes than any other status option, including the current status. In short, the Senators' discussion of the historic referendum was clearly deficient.

In addition, both Senators expressed opposition to the Puerto Rico Status Resolution Act, which I introduced last year in the House and which was introduced earlier this month in the Senate. The two Senators have every right to oppose this legislation, which calls for an up-or-down vote in Puerto Rico on the territory's admission as a State and outlines the steps the Federal Government would take if a majority of voters favor admission. But to argue, as the Senators did, that the bill excludes other options other than statehood makes no sense. A binary vote, by definition, is not exclusive. Those who support statehood can vote ''yes,'' and those who oppose it can vote ''no.'' This was precisely the format of the votes that led to Hawaii and Alaska becoming States.

I ask the Senators: Do you believe those earlier votes were unfair or exclusionary? In any event, there are now 132 Members of the House and Senate who have cosponsored the Puerto Rico Status Resolution Act and, therefore, disagree with these two Senators' characterization of the bill. Both Senators sought to contrast their opposition to the Puerto Rico Status Resolution Act with their apparent support for a Puerto Rico-related appropriation that the President included in his fiscal year 2014 budget request at my urging, and that recently became law. Under this appropriation, funding would be provided for the first federally sponsored vote in Puerto Rico's history, to be held among one or more options that are consistent with U.S. law and policy and that would ''resolve'' the status issue. Contrary to the suggestion made by both Senators, a vote on Puerto Rico's admission as a State is a perfectly valid and logical way to structure the federally sponsored plebiscite to be held pursuant to this appropriation.

Both Senators also expressed the view that the status debate is a ''distraction'' from efforts to tackle Puerto Rico's economic and fiscal challenges. This argument is familiar, but it is false. The reality is that Puerto Rico's economic problems are structural in nature and are rooted in the territory's unequal and undemocratic status. No wonder my constituents are relocating to the States in unprecedented numbers.

I look forward to the day when the men, women, and children I represent have the same rights and responsibilities as their fellow U.S. citizens residing in the States that the two Senators represent. We do not seek special treatment. We seek equality, and we intend to achieve it.

WAR ON POVERTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, it was 50 years ago that then-President Lyndon Johnson declared a war on poverty.

I rise today to join my colleagues in recognizing the 50th anniversary of this declaration, this promise that America will be a better place for the generations that come after us. I join them in restating our commitment to fighting for policies that lift all Americans up.

That American Dream that we so often speak of, it only happens if we embrace national initiatives that respect and encourage that dream—guaranteeing a fair wage, promoting educational opportunity, and investing in an economy that works for the 21st century. That is what we should be spending our time on here in Congress, not gutting consumer and safety protections, or political distractions like we see on this week's agenda.

I am not worried that the Republican Party has surrendered in the war on poverty; I am worried that they were never interested in it to begin with. A life in poverty shouldn't be a life sentence with no future, but for too many Americans, that is exactly what it is.

Mr. Speaker, 46.5 million Americans live in poverty today; 16 million of those are children. In my hometown of New York City, that is one in three children. One in three children. These families, these children, find themselves trapped in poverty, and they need a government that is willing to help them out of that morass.

Helping those in need has long been a part of our country's philosophy. That is why we have unemployment insurance for when workers lose a job through no fault of their own. That is why we have Social Security so that seniors no longer have to live out their final days in grinding poverty. That is why we have SNAP benefits so that no child goes hungry in the richest Nation on Earth.

These programs and other lifelines are under threat, putting millions of Americans in danger of slipping further into poverty. We cannot let that happen. We cannot let the threads of our social safety net slip apart. We have to make sure that a hard day's work pays enough to make ends meet.

Today, we have millions of Americans who are the working poor. That means they get up every morning, get dressed, go to work, and they put in 40-plus hours of work—or I would suggest even more—every week, but they are not making enough money to pay the bills or even meet basic needs like food and shelter. To me, that is not how America should be. If you work a full-time job, you should be able to feed and support your family, but the fact is, someone who works full time on minimum wage only makes about $14,000 a year—$14,000 a year. That is just not enough money, no matter how many ways you slice it to make ends meet, and it is definitely not enough to take care of children or families. It shouldn't be this way.

For all of our differences, we should be united in the desire to give our children a better way of life than we had. That is what I know my grandparents were thinking when they immigrated here from Ireland, just like many others.

They passed the Statue of Liberty, the famous signal of hope and opportunity. The words at the base say, ''Give me your tired, your poor.'' The Statue of Liberty doesn't say we should forget about poor children. No, it says give us your tired, give us your poor. Give us.

Imagine what a wonderful message that is, that America is actually about helping the poor. It is because that is who we are as Americans. That is what the war on poverty demands of us, living up to the ideals we have set for our country.

I urge every one of my colleagues to look inside themselves and recommit themselves to fighting the war on poverty, a fight that, as President Johnson said, we cannot afford to lose.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 8 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. YODER) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Compassionate and merciful God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We pray that You bless this country we love with all our hearts. We thank You for those who founded our Republic upon faith, respect for law, and constitutional rights of individuals, and the common good of the Nation and all its citizens.

Fan the flame of freedom in the hearts of all Americans, and especially those who serve in the Armed Forces. Strengthen the resolve of all the Members of this people's House, that they, attentive to Your commands, may follow their consciences and always do what is right as they wrestle with complex issues.

Grant that what they say with their lips they believe in their hearts, and what they believe in their hearts they may bring to practice in their lives and in our Nation.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GALLEGO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GALLEGO 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will now entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

A COMMONSENSE APPROACH TO REFORMING HEALTH CARE

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, last week, I held health care town halls all across my district. Constituents shared their experience with the President's health care law. While parts of the law have helped a few, a majority of people have been hurt.

We heard from a mother with a mentally ill, disabled son who lost his plan, small business owners who had to cut employee hours to avoid the law's penalties, and even a woman battling cancer who is now facing an uncertain future because of the law. They aren't lying.

Many promises made before the law's passage haven't and couldn't be kept. Americans have a right to feel frustrated.

It is time Washington stops imposing a law that is clearly not working. We were promised lower costs. Instead, the President's own analysts reported at least 11 million people who work at small businesses will see their premiums climb while their take-home pay drops.

House Republicans offer a step-by-step, commonsense approach to reforming our health care system that really does lower costs, providing access to quality care that people need.

We remain focused on policies that grow the economy and make life better for all Americans.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF EL PASO

(Mr. GALLEGO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, El Paso, Texas, has a rich and vast history spanning back hundreds of years. With the Ysleta Mission established in the 1600s, it has deep roots in Catholicism, but it wasn't until 1914 that the Roman Catholic Diocese of El Paso was established by Pope Pius X.

On March 3, the Roman Catholic Diocese of El Paso will celebrate its 100th anniversary. The diocese provides invaluable and multilingual services to 10 counties covering nearly 27,000 miles of southwest Texas.

From the historic missions Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario, through the Davis Mountains, and on to the Big Bend country, the diocese is rich in history.

While these three missions are a focal point of the 100th birthday celebration, all the churches in the diocese play a critical role in their respective communities and, through these historic missions and the far-flung churches where priests and nuns still ride the circuit, the Diocese of El Paso has a profound impact on young and old alike.

As a member of the Diocese of El Paso, I wish them great success over the next 100 years.

Feliz cumpleanos. Happy Birthday.

SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

(Mrs. WALORSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to pass additional bipartisan Iran sanctions legislation. While we are all hoping the diplomatic efforts to address Iran's nuclear program are successful, Congress must not neglect its responsibility to be prepared for all outcomes.

Changes to Iran's nuclear programs have been minimal thus far, and Iran continues to assert that it will not dismantle its nuclear facilities. In fact, Iran's Supreme Leader himself has predicted that diplomatic talks ''will lead nowhere.''

Iranian state television continues to air documentaries showing simulated attacks on Israel and on American forces as well. Passage of additional sanctions will demonstrate to the Iranian regime that the American people will not be swayed by empty rhetoric or a disingenuous commitment to peace.

Congress must stand together and reinforce our diplomatic quest for disarmament with the legislative tools necessary to support this goal.

PACE FINANCING PROGRAMS

(Mr. MCNERNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in supporting clean energy initiative financing programs like PACE to help people and businesses invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.

Thanks, in part, to increased energy efficiency, consumption of energy is down 5 percent nationally from 2007 levels. However, the growth of new renewable energy capacity has slowed down from 18 gigawatts installed in 2012 to 5.4 gigawatts in 2013, in part, due to a lack of access to capital.

PACE financing programs allow property owners to pay back the costs of clean energy technologies over longer periods of time. Property owners can recoup their investments through property assessments.

By encouraging distributed energy production and energy efficiency, property owners quickly increase the value of their properties. PACE programs are voluntary, and property owners across the country are eager to sign up.

SMALL BUSINESS JOB PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. MESSER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, the President has unilaterally delayed the employer mandate again. It is hard not to blame him.

Last week, CMS reported that 11 million Americans who work at small businesses will have higher premiums because of the President's health care law. The employer mandate will make this bad situation worse.

That might be why the President decreed that it will only apply to businesses with more than 100 employees, instead of those with 50 employees, as the law requires, at least for now.

This is a needed temporary reprieve, but it should be granted by Congress, not Presidential decree.

The President's behavior is lawless. As The Washington Post described it, the President has shown an ''increasingly cavalier approach to picking and choosing how to enforce this law.''

I encourage our colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 2577, the Small Business Job Protection Act, which is my bill to permanently codify this relief. Let's not forget that Congress, not the President, makes the laws.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND CRAWFORD W. KIMBLE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Reverend Crawford W. Kimble, pastor

emeritus of the Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church, which was originated in Freedmen's Town in 1872, and my dear friend. My sympathy to Mrs. Kimble and all of his family.

Reverend Kimble died earlier this week in Houston at the age of 95. He will be laid to rest on Saturday, March 1, 2014.

Reverend Kimble was the fifth of six pastors at the Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church. He served as pastor for approximately 35 years. His dream was part of the building of Good Hope in its current location on North MacGregor.

Reverend Kimble was born in Elgin, Texas, on March 24, 1918, and he followed the ministerial paths of both his father and grandfather. He began preaching at 33. He started his church in 1951, and he joined it.

He preached his first sermon in 1959, and later became the pastor to many giants of Texas, including the Honorable Barbara Jordan, the first African American United States Congresswoman from the South, and Dr. Lonnie Smith, who played an important role in minority voting rights in primary elections.

It is astounding to find that prior to becoming Reverend Kimble, he was in the newspaper business as an editor of the Houston Informer. He was also part of The Kansas City Call, which was the oldest African American newspaper, and it ended with The Kansas City Call that he was a part of.

After more than 30 years in retirement, Reverend Kimble continued to write. He had many books, and he also was part of the Crawford W. Kimble senior living facility, which he lived in in the Fourth Ward, Freedmen's Town, that was named after him by Reverend Elmo Johnson.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that this giant is deserving of our honor and respect and commendation, and let us all remember his book, ''Watch the Tree, It Might Fall on You.''

Reverend Kimble, may you rest in peace. God bless you, and God bless your family.

IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN FOR LIFE

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with the Women for Life in Venezuela. These women, headed by opposition leader Maria Corina Machado and the wife of an opposition leader who is in jail, Leopoldo Lopez, who is also a leader in this march, they have dressed in white, and they have carried white flowers as they march peacefully, demanding that the Maduro government end its violent suppression of pro-democracy movements in Venezuela.

In these protests, at least 14 people have been killed by the state thugs of Maduro, and many more have been unjustly harassed, detained, and beaten.

It is poignant that these women model themselves after the Ladies of White in my native homeland of Cuba, because Maduro seeks to do to the Venezuelan dissenters what the Castro brothers do to theirs: silence them through intimidation.

This is a classic example of an autocratic regime's false notion that might is right, but we must show Maduro and other violators that the world is watching, and that we will not allow these transgressions to pass unnoticed.

I stand in solidarity with the Women for Life in Venezuela, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

SET ASIDE THE DO-NOTHING AGENDA

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the 1.9 million unemployed Americans, including nearly 21,000 in Nevada, people who are struggling to put food on the table, a roof over their heads, and gas in their car.

Despite the daily struggle that these people have making ends meet while looking for a new, good-paying job, House Republicans have refused to bring a bill to the floor that would extend their critical lifeline. In fact, since the beginning of the 113th Congress, House Republicans have failed to bring a single jobs bill to the floor.

The American people have made it clear that they want this Congress to work to find solutions that represent a balanced approach, not partisan ideology that is out of touch with their needs and priorities.

I urge House Republicans to set aside their do-nothing agenda, address the serious challenges facing our country, and take meaningful action to achieve real results for the people we are sent here to serve.

TAX REFORM

(Mr. WILLIAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, for more than four decades I have owned my own business. I am a business guy, and I can say with certainty that today's economy is the hardest economy our country has seen from a small business standpoint.

Taxes and regulations are killing businesses, stifling growth, and preventing educated, qualified individuals from becoming job creators themselves.

America's Tax Code deals some of the harshest penalties for those who contribute most to the economy. We have the highest corporate tax rate in the world, and the top wage earners pay most of the Federal income taxes.

To restore fairness for all taxpayers, we need to cut the corporate rate to a real 25 percent, and collapse the current six tax brackets to just two, at 10 and 25 percent.

We need to cut the capital gains tax, the dividends tax, and eliminate the inheritance tax. We need an improved R&D tax credit to give the American manufacturers the ability to compete globally. With these cuts, we need to ensure that hard-earned taxpayer dollars taken by the IRS are no longer subject to waste, fraud, and abuse.

In the end, it is about simplifying and enabling American businesses to compete worldwide, putting more money into Americans' wallets than Uncle Sam's, and creating cash flow and opportunity for America. It is a winning formula. It has worked before. Let's try it again.

In God we trust.

□ 1215

A LIVING WAGE

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I signed a discharge petition in an effort to force an up-or-down vote on legislation that I have cosponsored, and that is H.R. 1010, the Fair Minimum Wage Act, which would increase the Federal minimum wage to $10.10 over the period of the next few years, giving up to 25 million Americans a well-deserved pay raise.

Many Americans who work at the minimum wage live in poverty; and I know that there are some in this body, particularly on the other side, who fundamentally don't even believe that there ought to be a minimum wage. That is a minority view.

Republicans and Democrats across the country believe that not only should we have a minimum wage, but that it ought to be increased. A recent poll showed that 71 percent of Americans favor an increase in the minimum wage.

So for those who believe that there ought to be a wage that is a living wage, it has to be a wage that does not put people in poverty. For that reason, I urge my colleagues to sign the discharge petition, and let's have a vote to give Americans the raise that they deserve.

CONGRATULATING THE 2014 WINTER OLYMPIANS

(Mr. STEWART asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all 230 American athletes who participated in the Sochi Olympics, and I am proud to say that 15 of these Olympians were from my home State of Utah and that seven of them won medals. Through their talent, their skill, and dedication, they represented Utah and our country very well.

These Utah athletes come from very different backgrounds. Some of them

are in the middle of their careers. Some of them are military members. Some are students. Many of them are parents.

They showed dedication and effort and that sacrifice can lead to success. These athletes should inspire all of us to strive to achieve our goals. As a father, I have seen their example inspire my six children.

While these Olympians weren't guaranteed a medal, that didn't stop them from working and sacrificing in every way to achieve their goals. We should all continue to look to these Olympic athletes for inspiration, to become better, and to be more dedicated to our goals, even when it is tough.

I wish these athletes good luck in the future and thank them for their inspiration.

WIND POWER

(Mr. LOWENTHAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, climate change is real and is happening now. To reduce the harmful effects of human-caused greenhouse gas pollution, this Nation and the world must transition to clean energy sources. That is why I am here today to support wind power and for extending the renewable electricity production tax credit.

My home State of California has been a leader in deploying this key technology, and it has paid dividends. Wind powers over 2.1 million California homes, and California is the home to 21 wind manufacturing facilities which have helped to stimulate capital investments of over $11 billion.

The California wind industry also supports over 7,000 jobs, ranking California as the second-highest wind-related job incubator in the Nation.

Wind power is part of the energy portfolio of the future. Let's make that future happen now and support the production tax credit.

OBAMACARE

(Mr. TIPTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, last week, the nonpartisan Office of the Chief Actuary for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services reported that as many as 11 million small business employees throughout the United States may see their health premiums rise after full implementation of ObamaCare.

That means approximately 14 percent of the men and women who are participating in the U.S. workforce will have less take-home pay and higher costs for services that they are forced to buy.

Just last week, I met with small businesses in Grand Junction, Colorado, and discussed this very issue. They told me about how they already provide affordable, quality health care plans for their employees. However, like many small businesses, they are concerned and confused about what the future holds for them under the President's health care law.

We can provide certainty to businesses, families, and every American looking to have affordable and accessible health care, but the President's health care law isn't the answer. Almost every week, there are new reports of increased costs and decreased access to care.

Why don't we put people first, rather than putting government first? That is why I support replacement legislation, such as H.R. 2300, making it market-based, affordable, and lower cost for our people.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MR. GEORGE SAJEWYCH

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to pay tribute to an American hero, Mr. George Sajewych, a U.S. citizen who experienced firsthand the violence in Kiev while peacefully assembling in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

An esteemed, long-time retired broadcaster for the Voice of America, originally from Chicago, Mr. Sajewych was one of many journalists to have endured ruthless violence firsthand when he was beaten by Berkut police forces.

The attack left him bleeding in the street, surrounded by the shreds of the helmet that he had worn for protection. His motorcycle helmet shattered by the beating. He was hospitalized after having suffered serious injuries.

I commend Mr. Sajewych for his fortitude and continuing resolve in standing for freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press, the fundamentals of an open society.

I urge our President to swiftly impose targeted financial and travel sanctions on any Ukrainian Government official found to have endorsed this brutal violence and to channel all financial assistance offered by our country to Ukraine only to those who are committed to upholding the rights of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of press.

Let us praise Mr. Sajewych for his courage and inspiration, standing at liberty's side.

HONORING THE DEDICATION OF THE SAM JOHNSON HIGHWAY

(Mr. MARCHANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the naming of U.S. Highway 75 in north Texas as the Sam Johnson Highway, after my friend and our colleague, Representative SAM JOHNSON. This Monday, over 200 gathered to attend the public sign unveiling ceremony in Collin County, Texas.

This highway is a major artery in the north Texas area. The recognition it now provides is fitting, but can never repay Congressman JOHNSON for his sacrifice and service for our country, first in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean and Vietnam wars, including 7 years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam.

After returning and being reunited with his family, he put years of hard work into being an entrepreneurial homebuilder in his community. He went on to serve in the State legislature and now serves as the U.S. Representative to Collin County, which he calls home.

I am honored to work with him in this Congress and on the Ways and Means Committee. I would like to thank my friend from Texas, SAM JOHNSON, for his years of service to our communities and our Nation.

SPECIAL INTERESTS IN ELECTIONS

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, we need a government by the people and for the people, not a government run by the special interests and for the corporations. But how do we get there?

First, we remove barriers to voting. From overcoming hurdles to absentee voting and difficulty with registration, to long lines at the polls, more can be done to make sure that our elections work for all voters.

We should take a good long look at the thoughtful recommendations of the President's bipartisan election commission, which listened to voters and to election officials and bundled together the best ideas.

Second, we can't let the big money interests choose our leaders. We need public campaign financing, like the bill recently introduced by my colleague, Representative SARBANES of Maryland.

In a post-Citizens United world, the voices of special interests will be much louder than those of average Americans, unless we act now and bring back government run by the people and for the people.

VENEZUELA

(Mr. DIAZ-BALART asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, for the last several weeks, the people of Venezuela have risen up to protest the corruption, the food shortages, the soaring crime rates, and particularly, the alarming repression in Venezuela.

Mr. Speaker, since the protests began, more than 500 people have been arrested, approximately 150 injured, and over a dozen have been killed. It is disgraceful to think the Chavez-Maduro regime has actually managed

to devastate the economy of Latin America's largest oil exporter to the point where, now, the Venezuelan people are facing shortages of basic goods, like cooking oil and even toilet paper.

Maduro has intensified his intimidation tactics by increasing political arrests and violence, labeling the opposition as terrorists and enemies of the State, and actually even expelling independent media, such as CNN.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the international community to aggressively express their commitment to the basic freedoms that are under assault in Venezuela; and I also, Mr. Speaker, urge our administration to—at the very least—demand that the OAS immediately convene its Permanent Council to invoke the democratic charter, since it has clearly been violated.

Now is the time to stand with the Venezuelan people.

ANNIVERSARY OF SUPREME COURT UPHOLDING 19TH AMENDMENT

(Ms. HANABUSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 92nd anniversary of Leser v. Garnett, where the Supreme Court upheld the 19th Amendment, which protects a woman's right to vote.

Our Nation's suffragettes stood up to the injustice. They fought for their rights. Without their perseverance and fearlessness, I and many of my colleagues would not be standing here today.

These suffragettes represent a long line of women who said no to the status quo, inspiring future leaders, like our very own former Congresswoman Patsy Mink from Hawaii, who authored title IX, a historic milestone for equality in women's sports.

Today, we honor the sacrifices of these suffragettes, and we commit ourselves to further equality, whether it means breaking the glass ceiling or lifting the floor beneath their feet.

Note that women make up two-thirds of the minimum wage workers. Increasing the minimum wage to $10.10 is critical for our Nation's hardworking women struggling to pull their families out of poverty.

It is time for my colleagues to recognize this. In the legacy of the suffragettes, we will continue to fight for what women deserve: equality.

AMERICA'S RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

(Mr. COTTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COTTON. Yesterday, I introduced the LOCAL Act, a bill allowing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to restore joint management programs with local nonprofit organizations to construct, operate, and maintain recreational facilities at lakes and reservoirs across the country.

Despite years of successful operation, the Corps recently determined they lacked the authority to continue these joint management programs and are in the process of suspending all local partnerships.

Arkansans know better than anyone how to manage our lands, and cuts to the Corps' budget shouldn't dictate our ability to enjoy these facilities. For years, these partnerships have allowed local groups, like the Friends of Lake Ouachita, to successfully maintain recreational facilities across our State.

Arkansas is known as the Natural State. One of our greatest points of pride is access to public lands and water. The LOCAL Act will ensure that facilities like Lake Ouachita and Beaver Lake remain easily accessible to future generations.

□ 1230

SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, we adults ask students to be model citizens, to devote themselves to their studies, and to become tomorrow's leaders. But what is our message when their leaders can't even ensure a school building that passes code inspection? Every day, the students at Trenton Central High School attempt to learn in a building that suffers from electrical fires due to poor wiring and leaking water; dripping bathroom sewage; and an absence of science labs and general inadequacy and indignities.

To fix these problems and provide Trenton students with a facility worthy of students and teachers for the 21st century, it is projected to cost $130 million. To bring all of New Jersey's schools up to code will cost several billions of dollars. Many States cannot manage that cost alone. We need to invest in our children by devoting Federal funds to school construction and renovation. With a modern school infrastructure, we can ask our students to become the community and world leaders we want them to be.

NATIONAL LATINO ENROLLMENT WEEK

(Mr. DENHAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, the administration has declared this week to be National Latino Enrollment Week in the hopes of mounting a special push—a big rush—of Latinos rushing to sign up for the Affordable Care Act because it is supposedly going to help their lives in so many ways. Yet Latinos nationwide, like millions of other Americans, are discovering that they just can't afford the Affordable Care Act. Not only is it causing them to lose coverage, but they also see their premiums rise and have their health care plans canceled.

The Spanish site that the administration promised would help people enroll reads as if it were written by a first-year Spanish student, and it has proven to have more problems than the actual English version of healthcare.gov.

Where we live in the Central Valley, Latinos already struggle to access doctors. We have got a huge shortage of doctors, doctors that are willing to take Medicare and Medicaid, because of the reimbursement rates. So now, with the Affordable Care Act, we are going to have even fewer doctors and less access. Health care reform that doesn't increase their access is meaningless. The Affordable Care Act has also heightened their struggles.

Mr. Speaker, we must repeal and replace this damaging law with one that benefits the Latino community and millions of others across the country.

ALL ECONOMIC REGULATIONS ARE TRANSPARENT ACT OF 2014

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENHAM). Pursuant to House Resolution 487 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2804.

Will the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. YODER) kindly take the chair.

□ 1232

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2804) to amend title 5, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to publish information about rules on the Internet, and for other purposes, with Mr. YODER (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Wednesday, February 26, 2014, amendment No. 6 printed in House Report 113–361 offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON) had been disposed of.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. CONNOLLY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in House Report 113–361.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

In the table of contents of the bill, insert after item pertaining to section 405 the following:

TITLE V—EXCEPTION

Sec. 501. Exception.

Add, at the end of the bill, the following:

TITLE V—EXCEPTION

SEC. 501. EXCEPTION.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the provisions of this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall not apply in the case of a rule pertaining to air quality or water quality, or a consent decree or settlement agreement pertaining to such a rule. In the case of such a rule, consent decree, or settlement agreement, the provisions of law amended by this Act shall apply as though such amendments had not been made.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am pleased to offer this simple amendment that would exempt rules that further protect our Nation's air and water quality from these new proposed hurdles. It is no surprise that a 2012 American Lung Association report found that Americans support the Clean Air Act by a 2 to 1 margin. Why? Because it is working. Harmful emissions are dropping, and air quality is better than it was a decade ago. But we still have 131 million fellow Americans—42 percent of the Nation—living in communities where pollution levels are deemed harmful for at-risk populations: young people and senior citizens. In fact, the national capital region is one of those areas. It is a nonattainment area for ground-level ozone.

It is pretty clear what my friends on the other side of the aisle think of government regulation, but I am curious if they have actually asked their own constituents what they think. For example, I wonder if the residents living downstream from the West Virginia chemical spill where a toxic substance has now been carried into neighboring Ohio and other points south and west share the same disdain for water quality regulation as some of my friends on the other side of the aisle. Or what about the residents near the North Carolina coal ash spill which is affecting drinking water there and in some parts of my own home State, Virginia?

Maybe we should ask the millions of parents who own one of the child car safety seats that are now the subject of a massive nationwide recall if they would feel more comfortable with less rigorous standards for safety for their children. I introduced another amendment to this bill to exempt those rules for child car safety seats so we can continue to have rigorous standards. Unfortunately, my friends on the other side of the aisle who control the Rules Committee refused to allow a vote on that amendment.

A poll conducted by the American Lung Association found nearly three of four respondents believe we shouldn't have to choose between this health and safety standard and promoting the economy on the other hand. They understand that is a false choice and that we can and must do both. But my friends on the other side of the aisle continue to perpetuate this canard that government regulation is a heavy boot on the neck of business in America.

Another poll conducted by the American Sustainable Business Council found 78 percent of employers believe responsible regulation is important for protecting small businesses from unfair competition and leveling the playing field. In fact, the most recent Wells Fargo/Gallup index of small businesses found just 11 percent cited regulations as a significant challenge when rated against other challenges they face in the economic marketplace.

Employers and the American people get it, Mr. Chairman. They recognize there is a role for fair, reasonable, and responsible regulation in protecting public safety and health and in promoting the economy. Again, the American Lung Association poll found a 2-to-1 majority believes environmental safeguards will spur innovation and investment and create jobs.

Now, I understand the frustration expressed by some of my colleagues that the current regulatory process can sometimes be too long, and sometimes it is, averaging 4 to 8 years in some cases. But the bill before us today will do nothing to reduce that timeline. Instead, it prolongs that process by requiring even more redundant analysis. How ironic is that?

This bill would strengthen the hand of special interests by allowing them to challenge Federal agencies on whether they assessed every possible alternative and chose the one least costly to it. Their bill would erect new hurdles for citizens to petition their government to finally act on long overdue or congressionally mandated safeguards and protections.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and to beat back these tired and hackneyed efforts by my friends on the other side who, on behalf of corporate polluters, have proposed this legislation. Our constituents expect safe drinking water, reliable child car safety seats, clean air, and countless other protections. Let's work together to improve the regulatory process rather than gut it and return our communities to the law of the jungle.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, air and water quality regulations, done properly, serve important goals, and I agree with my friend from across the aisle. He said the bill, however, his interpretation and ours are just different. The bill does nothing to frustrate the achievement of these goals.

But Federal air and water regulations have been the source of many of the most abusive, unnecessarily expensive, and job- and wage-destroying regulations in American history. Air regulations, for example, were precisely the regulations that inflicted the harm on Rob James, Avon Lake, Bob Sells and his workers, and Allen Puckett and his workers that I mentioned in, frankly, my opening statement in discussion yesterday. To remove these areas of regulation from the bill would severely weaken the bill's important reforms to lower the crushing costs of Federal regulation.

In looking at this amendment and looking at the discussion that was just had, Mr. Chairman, by the gentleman offering, it goes back to a tired argument that is not worthy of debate on this floor. For the opposite to present an amendment is fine. To present an amendment to say that you don't like the way we are wanting to do that is fine. But to retread and rework the idea that I or my children or anybody else's children want to breathe dirty air or drink dirty water or have child seats fall apart or child restraints be broken or anything else is just not worthy of debate here on this floor.

Let's take the bill. I will take your amendment, and it is offered in good faith. But when we look at this bill, we are looking at jobs. Again, the argument that was made to protect the government bureaucracy from more work is not also an accurate statement, especially when it does protect the men and women—the workers.

I said it yesterday. I will say it again. Do you want a clear determination on what party is looking out for whom? Do you look out for government workers and more regulations, or do you look out for the moms and dads who go to work to earn their living to take care of their families, to breathe clean air, to have clean water, and to have safety environments in a limited regulatory reform, which is what our Founders intended? That is what we do here.

I urge a ''no'' vote on this amendment and reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Gosh, if there is a tired debate on this floor, my good friend from Georgia has just identified it. It is that hackneyed phrase, ''crushing burden of regulation.'' Well, that would come as news to most Americans who have benefited from clean air regulation, which, by the way, has net created jobs, not destroyed them.

The Republican narrative here couldn't be more false except that they are protecting their base—their corporate base, in my view—at the expense of the average American citizen who wants to breathe clean air, who wants to drink clean water, and who wants to protect their children.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I have learned here through many

times here in Congress that we do come from different areas, but I am just amazed at my friend across the aisle because I am not sure which business, which one is working out when you look at the workers that I just named and you look at the businessowners that come to my office and discuss the fact that jobs are being lost and that things are being taken here because of regulatory burden. The tired argument here is not the fact.

The honest argument here is: What is the role that we are supposed to be doing? Where is the government role that should be there that should provide good regulatory reform? And I think what was actually said was that providing hurdles to keeping regulatory reform open. What we are saying is we want it transparent. We want businesses to be a part. And to have anything said less and to say, again, to rehash an argument that implies that others want to breathe dirty air, to drink dirty water, and to in any way harm the American people by simply bringing sense to our regulatory process is just simply a straw man. When you have got nothing else to talk about, let's throw the kitchen sink at it.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time and urge a ''no'' vote on this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in House Report 113–361.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

In the table of contents of the bill, insert after item pertaining to section 405 the following:

TITLE V—EXCEPTION

Sec. 501. Exception.

Add, at the end of the bill, the following:

TITLE V—EXCEPTION

SEC. 501. EXCEPTION.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the provisions of this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall not apply in the case of a rule made by the Secretary of Homeland Security, or a consent decree or settlement agreement pertaining to such a rule. In the case of such a rule, consent decree, or settlement agreement, the provisions of law amended by this Act shall apply as though such amendments had not been made.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

□ 1245

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak to the Jackson Lee amendment with great enthusiasm for its seriousness, and I say to my colleagues, there are no smoke and mirrors here.

This amendment exempts rules made by the Secretary of Homeland Security or any consent decree or settlement made as a result of this rule.

I don't think that we need to further educate our very diligent Members, whether they are on the Homeland Security or Judiciary or Intelligence or Armed Services Committees, or many other committees, about the new climate in which we live in this world after 9/11. We simply have to look at the landscape that we are around as we speak: Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ukraine, Venezuela, Nigeria, and Syria. Just a few days ago, I was on the Israeli side of the Syrian border, and I could look into a city very close and see constant mortar fire.

Everybody understands that with the new climate of franchise terrorism, al Qaeda travels from one conflict area to another, each time posing a threat to the United States of America or the West. Yet, we have legislation that does not exempt the actions of the Secretary of Homeland Security, who may be required to make emergency decisions.

This particular legislation has 60 new barriers, procedural requirements, before an important rulemaking can go forward. It requires a 6-month online presence before you can move forward.

I would offer to say that the conflicts in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, the crisis in the Ukraine, on which America is standing on the sides of those who believe in democracy, the fighting in Nigeria between Christians and Muslims, and the conflict in Syria that has a terrible impact as we move forward on the Palestinian and Israeli peace process—how can we not exempt the Secretary of Homeland Security?

Mr. Chairman, not only do we deal with issues of terrorism, but it is also the stand-up agency when America faces natural disasters. For example, Hurricane Rita was the fourth-most-powerful Atlantic storm in history, and made landfall with 120-mile-per-hour winds, which had devastating consequences for many of my Texas constituents. That occurred just a few years ago. Hurricane Rita came out of the gulf, but Hurricane Sandy came out of the east coast and the Atlantic waters. It brought havoc that no one ever expected. FEMA was vital in the restoration of the lives of Americans. In that instance, I would think we would want any rulemaking process to move quickly, to be able to bring aid to those in need.

As indicated, this is a question of national security and the protection of our people. We need swift responses to imminent threats to national security. We need to have flexibility for the Secretary of Homeland Security to make those decisions. H.R. 2804 was created under the guise of increasing transparency. I would offer to say that there are instances when all of us know that our security is crucial.

Mr. Chairman, I ask that my colleagues support this exemption for Homeland Security to protect America's homeland and national security.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of my amendment to H.R. 2804 that provides a common-sense exception to the ''All Economic Regulations are Transparent Act of 2014.''

H.R. 2804 makes numerous changes to the federal rule-making process, including:

1. requiring agencies to consider numerous new criteria when issuing rules, such as alternatives to rules proposals;
2. requiring agencies to review the ''indirect'' costs of proposed and existing rules;
3. giving the Small Business Administration expanded authority to intervene in the rule-making of other agencies; and
4. requiring federal agencies to file monthly reports on the status of their rule-making activities.

My amendment provides an exception to the ''All Economic Regulations are Transparent Act of 2014'' for rules made by the Secretary of Homeland Security or any consent decree or settlement made as a result of the rule. My amendment is simple in that it provides an exception for critical agency rules that the general safety and well-being of individuals in the United States.

Mr. Chair, Hurricane Rita, which was the fourth most powerful Atlantic storm in history made landfall with 120 mile per hour winds and had devastating consequences to Texans, many of whom were my constitutients. Without Homeland Security how do Americans get through hurricanes and tornadoes?

The ALERRT Act packages four measures, all of which are designed to stop, delay, or weaken new protections. The Regulatory Accountability Act (RAA) is the most far-reaching of these measures. It amends the Administrative Procedure Act, but goes far beyond establishing procedures for rulemaking. The RAA acts as a ''super mandate'' overriding requirements of landmark legislation such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act and Mine Safety and Health Act.

Homeland Security is one of the most preeminent concerns of the federal government. The increased need for national security following the attacks of September 11th has increased the demand for Homeland Security to find more effective means to preempt attacks against our nation. And that is why my colleagues should vote to exempt the Department of Homeland Security from this legislation today.

And Mr. Chair, I was pleased to meet with, Jeh Johnson the new Secretary, on Tuesday and he appeared before the Homeland Security Committee yesterday, and I am encouraged to see that he understands just how critical his mission is and the utter importance of being able to respond swiftly to address problems as they arise. Swift responses to imminent threats to national security allow the Department of Homeland Security to protect the

rights and interests of individuals in the United States. Unnecessary delays to rules set forth by the Department of Homeland Security can waste scarce resources that keep our nation safe as well as impede the regular operations of the agency.

What we have before us in H.R. 2804 is an unnecessary reporting burden for the Department of Homeland Security. The Regulatory Flexibility Act and Executive Order 12866 already requires agency status updates twice a year. H.R. 2804 requires monthly reporting, which would create additional difficulties for agency to produce requisite reports. H.R. 2804 requires the OIRA to issue an annual cumulative report even though this reporting is already part of existing laws, thus creating duplicative reporting mechanisms and wasting limited federal resources.

The additional reporting requirements create a delay on agency activity and waste valuable resources in creating extraneous and duplicative records. The bill also prematurely calls for agencies to provide cost estimates for proposed rules that are to be finalized in the following year. Executive Order 12866 does not require agencies to report full cost estimates, but rather makes cost-benefit information discretionary. Even though the rule requires the estimation of costs, it prohibits benefit calculations of agency rules.

Further, H.R. 2804 precludes rules from taking effect until the information required by the act is available on the Internet for at least six months. This provision of the bill severely limits agencies' abilities to respond to imminent threats of national security. The amendment would preclude such a delay in relation to Homeland Security rules, consent decrees, or settlements.

H.R. 2804 was created under the guise of increasing agency transparency and regulation, but in actuality, the bill serves as an impediment to the government's ability to implement national security protections with expedience. My amendment to H.R. 2804 is necessary to curb unnecessary delay, waste, and duplication and ensuring that the Department of Homeland Security is able to make haste—not waste.

I ask my colleagues to please support the Jackson Lee amendment.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, the amendment seeks to shield the Department of Homeland Security, a department in need of good government reform, from all of the government rulemaking reforms in this bill. We should not do that. The bill does not threaten needed regulation in the Department of Homeland Security's jurisdiction but simply ensures that DHS will avoid unnecessary regulation, issue smarter, less costly regulation when necessary, and not enter into sweetheart backroom deals for more regulation under the cloak of judicial orders. I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman very much, and we obviously have a great deal of mutual respect, I hope, but a great deal of disagreement on the intent and the impact of this legislation.

Let me say that Homeland Security has vast jurisdiction. Congress created it. In the course of that, it has a great deal of jurisdiction dealing with humanity and the necessity to help humanity. So in the crisis of dealing with issues of individuals who have been unfairly put in front of a deportation order who need to have the response of this agency, or the agency needs to correct some aspect of the many responsibilities that it has, from natural disaster to terrorism to ensuring the security of the border, the needs of Customs and Border Protection, the needs of ICE officers for regulatory schemes that will give them better tools to ensure the security of this Nation, I would argue that a 6-month delay, that 60 barriers being put in place of that regulatory scheme, does not give comfort to the American people that their homeland is secure. Give the Secretary of Homeland Security and his fellow Secretaries or Assistant Secretaries or Directors the responsibility and the leadership that they need to have to protect the homeland.

I would just offer to say that my amendment is common sense. It deals with consent orders and settlements that the Homeland Security Secretary is making in the course of making America safe. Please support the Jackson Lee amendment, commonsense security, protecting the homeland, and having us do the job we should be doing on behalf of the American people.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I do respect the concerns raised by the gentlewoman from Texas. The Department of Homeland Security has vast jurisdiction, however, and it is an agency cobbled together, a department cobbled together with authorities from a whole host of other areas, and they have not always made things work very effectively there. One of the things that they need is more discipline and guidance in terms of how regulations are written, and that is exactly what this legislation does.

The gentlewoman raises a legitimate concern with regard to the speed with which regulations can be issued in certain emergency circumstances. I would call her attention to section 653 of the legislation, which covers just those circumstances in which the President can take action swiftly because of an imminent threat to health or safety or other emergency. As a result of that, this amendment is not needed because it takes the Department completely out of the reforms provided in this bill. Therefore, I must continue my opposition to the amendment. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GOODLATTE. I am happy to yield to the gentlewoman.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman for his explanation. We have noted 653, and you are absolutely right. It thrusts that in the hands of the President of the United States, but I would argue that the Congress created the Department of Homeland Security with a Secretary to be able to be the first line of defense, and I would argue that it is important that we exempt the Secretary of the Department from that because of their number one responsibility, which is securing the homeland, and we live in a different climate.

I think the gentleman accepts the fact that terrorism has become franchised at this moment. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I ask individuals, again, to support the Jackson Lee amendment.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentlewoman. I am not persuaded that the Department of Homeland Security, especially with a provision that provides for emergency relief from any of the provisions of the bill, cannot be greatly benefited, and all those who have to deal with the Department of Homeland Security will not be greatly benefited, if the Department is operating more effectively and if the regulations they promulgate are more efficient and more effective and more addressed toward what really needs to be done to address problems and not simply adding to the regulatory burden that businesses and American citizens face. So I continue my opposition to the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 9 printed in House Report 113–361.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk as the designee of Mr. JOHNSON.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

In the table of contents of the bill, insert after item pertaining to section 405 the following:

TITLE V—EXCEPTION

Sec. 501. Exception.

Add, at the end of the bill, the following:

TITLE V—EXCEPTION

SEC. 501. EXCEPTION.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the provisions of this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall not apply in the case of a rule that the Director of the Office of Management and Budget determines would result in net job creation and

whose benefits exceeds its cost, or a consent decree or settlement agreement pertaining to such a rule. In the case of such a rule, consent decree, or settlement agreement, the provisions of law amended by this Act shall apply as though such amendments had not been made.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, as I indicated, I am moving this on behalf of Mr. JOHNSON. The amendment is simple. It would exclude from this bill any rule that would result in net job growth.

I ask that my colleagues support this commonsense amendment to promote job growth and strengthen the middle class. After all, the stated purpose of the ALERRT Act is to grow the economy and create jobs. Although this bill purports to grow the economy and create jobs, we cannot pretend that this bill's myopic focus on regulations will accomplish any of these goals.

I have profound concerns with the ALERRT Act. The bill would undermine the ability of agencies to protect the public interest. It is a continuation of the majority's obstructionist approach that led to the sequester and the shutdown of the Federal Government. The majority continues to rely on debunked and partisan studies that presuppose that regulations have harmful effects. Far from it. There is ample, bipartisan evidence that have found that regulations have a negligible effect on the economy and create jobs.

No one would argue that there is not a positive impact from the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, and all of the regulatory scheme that has provided for a safe workplace for our workers under OSHA, and those who protect the quality of life of Americans from sea to shining sea.

Leading scholars such as Wake Forest law professor Sidney Shapiro has testified that all of the available evidence contradicts the claim that regulatory uncertainty is deterring business investment. Bruce Bartlett, a senior policy analyst in the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations, has observed that regulatory uncertainty is the canard invented by Republicans that allows them to use current economic problems to pursue an agenda supported by the business community year in and year out. In other words, it is a simple case of political opportunism, not a serious effort to deal with high unemployment.

Nevertheless, the House Republican leadership continues to bulldoze its deregulatory agenda through Congress. This deregulatory train wreck threatens to send us back to the days before the Wall Street collapse, a financial catastrophe that could have been avoided by responsible policies. Instead of working together to come to a bipartisan solution and end sequestration, this Congress has continued an agenda to make life worse for American families. I urge all of my colleagues to support the Johnson amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I share and welcome the gentlewoman's concerns about the impacts of regulations on jobs, but I submit that the right way to address that concern is to join me in supporting the Rothfus-Barr amendment that would make sure that agencies do a much better job of identifying adverse job impacts before they impose them.

The gentlewoman's amendment, offered on behalf of the gentleman from Georgia, unfortunately would have the opposite effect; that is because it would give the executive branch a strong incentive to manipulate its jobs impact and cost-benefit analyses to avoid the requirements of the bill.

The amendment also puts the cart before the horse, offering carve-outs from the bill based on factors that cannot be determined adequately unless the important analytical requirements in the bill are applied in the first place.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, a few minutes ago I stood to the floor of the House and showed a picture that has been made by the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) of a long line of suit-wearing Americans looking for jobs. Yet this Congress, my friends on the other side of the aisle, have refused to pass extended unemployment insurance, emergency unemployment insurance. Yet they put legislation on the floor pretending to create opportunities for American workers. I can tell you what will create opportunities for American workers, and that is to extend the unemployment insurance, or in actuality, pass my legislation, H.R. 3888, that provides training for individuals for newly created job skills. Or, in fact, as so many of us have done, sign a discharge petition to raise the minimum wage. That is a story for creating jobs or lifting up the opportunities for the American people.

This amendment says simply, if you join us and you believe in job growth, if there is a regulatory scheme that in fact deals with job growth, then this is the amendment that you should support. And I would argue you should support an increase in the minimum wage, and today we should put on the floor of the House the extension of the unemployment insurance, emergency insurance for my constituents and Americans across America. The number is 1.3 million in 2013, rising to 2 million now, with no relief. There is no excuse. The other body had a bill that was paid for, and yet it was refused by Republican Senators in the other body.

I would simply ask that we work together to create job growth. This amendment will say to my good friends that if it creates jobs, then we should in fact support it, that particular regulatory regulation, and we should not subject it to this legislation.

With that, I ask for the support of this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1300

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I would reiterate that the right way to address the concern about the impact of regulations on jobs is to join me in supporting the Rothfus-Barr amendment that would make sure that agencies do a much better job identifying adverse job impacts before they impose them on the businesses and individuals that have to make the tough decisions to close businesses, like the family that manufactures bricks that we referred to yesterday that is looking to have to eliminate two-thirds of the jobs in their business because of repeated increased government regulations, making it less and less likely that they can grow their business, much less add jobs, and are facing the loss of jobs and possibly the loss of the business altogether.

The way to do this is to figure out the impact on jobs before you impose the regulation, and that is what the Rothfus-Barr amendment does. I support that. I oppose this, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 10 OFFERED BY MR. GEORGE MILLER OF CALIFORNIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 10 printed in House Report 113–361.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I offer amendment No. 10.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

In the table of contents of the bill, insert after item pertaining to section 405 the following:

TITLE V—EXCEPTION

Sec. 501. Exception.

Add, at the end of the bill, the following:

TITLE V—EXCEPTION

SEC. 501. EXCEPTION.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the provisions of this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall not apply in the case of a rule made by the Administrator of the Occupational Safety and

Health Administration to prevent combustible dust explosions and fires, or a consent decree or settlement agreement pertaining to such a rule. In the case of such a rule, consent decree, or settlement agreement, the provisions of law amended by this Act shall apply as though such amendments had not been made.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer an amendment to this misguided piece of legislation.

This bill would impose layers of red tape and erect new obstacles to protecting American lives.

Congress already has the power to disapprove any rule through the Congressional Review Act, as well as through appropriations bills and other legislation, if it disagrees with a regulation.

This new imposition of nearly 60 additional analytical and procedural requirements is a deliberate effort to impose a procedural choke hold on protecting American citizens.

One regulation that would be affected by this is a proposal by OSHA to prevent a litany of workplace fires and explosions that are caused by combustible dusts.

It has been abundantly clear for a decade that Federal regulatory action is needed to prevent combustible dust explosions and fires.

My amendment would prevent today's bill from getting in the way of this much-needed OSHA regulation, so that OSHA can continue its efforts to prevent combustible dust explosions and fires. This amendment is necessary to protect workers' lives.

In 2003, the Chemical Safety Board found that the existing protections to stop these explosions was grossly inadequate. A Board study has identified hundreds of combustible dust fires and explosions that have caused at least 119 fatalities and 718 injuries over a 15-year period.

The investigators are not alone in demanding action. Tammy Miser of Kentucky testified before Congress about her brother Shawn, who was killed in a metal dust fire at an aluminum wheel plant in Huntington, Indiana, in 2003. She told us that he was left lying there on a smoldering floor after the explosion, while aluminum dust burned through his flesh and muscle tissue; and each breath caused his internal organs to be burned even more.

Shawn wasn't the first to die at work this way, and he won't be the last. It has been more than 6 years since the Imperial Sugar explosion in Georgia that killed 14 workers. That explosion resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars in damages because an unchecked accumulation of sugar dust ignited and caused a chain of explosions, leveling the plant.

These workplace explosions have not stopped. More recently, three workers were killed when a combustible metal dust explosion ripped through the AL Solutions metal recycling factory near Weirton, West Virginia. Flames shot in all directions. Two brothers died from the heat and smoke inside the building. Another man made it out, but he suffered burns over most of his body. He died 4 days later in a Pittsburgh hospital, all because the factory lacked adequate controls to manage metal powders.

In another incident, five workers were killed in three separate events at a factory north of Nashville because an iron powder processing plant failed to abate repeated dust hazards. Each of the five left behind a wife and children. One had four children under 11. These widows have called for their government to protect them.

That is where OSHA comes in. The Chemical Safety Board has recently declared that OSHA's combustible dust rule is one of the most wanted safety protections.

In 2009, OSHA finally started working on a rule to reduce the risk of these explosions. The rulemaking will involve small business panels, risk assessments, public hearings, and an opportunity to comment.

Despite the clear need to move forward, this bill would give special interests new ways to block these vital protections.

The sad truth is that the underlying bill is nothing more than an effort to put the powerful above the lives and limbs of working families and their widows.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. First, let me be very clear to my good friend from California. I share his concern about the kinds of explosions that he is concerned about and want to see appropriate ways to deal with these problems through the regulatory process.

It is pretty clear that OSHA has done a pretty poor job of it thus far, and I believe that this legislation will help to improve the rulemaking process and create greater transparency, so that we will get to a resolution of what needs to be done and not do what does not need to be done, in the most effective way.

The amendment attempts to shield yet another agency in need of good government reform from all of the good government rulemaking reforms in the bill. The bill does not threaten needed regulation in OSHA's jurisdiction, but it simply assures that OSHA will avoid unnecessary regulation; issue smarter, less costly regulation when necessary; and not enter into sweetheart backroom deals for more regulation under the cloak of judicial orders.

Ironically, the amendment actually could slow down the progress of improving safety in the workplaces of concern. The whole point of the bill is to assure that regulation remains effective while imposing lower costs.

If employers could spend less money on equally effective OSHA dust regulations, then they would be free to invest in additional safety measures on their own; or, of course, they could use the money to hire more workers and pay higher wages.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

I would just say that OSHA has already undertaken these standards; but if this legislation passes, all of the processes and procedures that are in this underlying legislation would have to go first.

The fact is people are dying at work. They are dying at work because of the fact that they haven't been able to get this standard in place.

This is a very serious standard that directly relates to the lives of these workers in the workplace. To suggest now that they would have to go through this process, if this becomes the law, is just unacceptable when you consider the urgency of this matter.

When we took up this question of grain dust—grain dust explosions, which are some of the most powerful explosions that can take place—that look like a place has been hit by tons of TNT—that was killing workers, they have reduced the number of fatalities by 70 percent, and you rarely hear about grain explosions any longer.

But dust explosions from other sources continue to be the kind of problem that threatens workers on a daily basis when they report to work in these various industries where the standards are not adequate to protect the workers.

As I pointed out in my opening statement, across a number of different industries, that dust collection—whether it is iron or sugar or wheat dust—becomes a huge explosive device that continues to take the lives of workers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, in response to the gentleman from California, let me say that, with regard to the efforts that need to be undertaken when a regulatory process is already underway, is accommodated for in the bill in the new section 553(g), subsection 2(A):

When the agency for good cause, based upon evidence, finds (and incorporates the finding and a brief statement of reasons therefor in the rules issued) that compliance with subsection (c), (d), or (e) or requirements to render final determinations under subsection (f) of this section before the issuance of an interim rule is impracticable or contrary to the public interest, including

interests of national security, such subsections or requirements to render final determinations shall not apply to the agency's adoption of an interim rule.

So I would argue that this is going to improve and enhance the process, but it is also going to create more transparency; it is going to create more cost-effective rulemaking; and it is going to prevent lawsuits being brought—the so-called sue-and-settle lawsuits—where a friendly government agency is sued by an organization that wants something; and the settlement of the suit leaves out all the parties who are going to have to provide for it, have to pay for it, have the impact on their workers considered. They don't even get notice of that.

So all of these reforms are good reforms that make the regulatory process better.

I do not believe that it will be appropriate to adopt this amendment. I urge my colleagues to oppose it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 11 OFFERED BY MR. GEORGE MILLER OF CALIFORNIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 11 printed in House Report 113–361.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I offer amendment No. 11.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

In the table of contents of the bill, insert after item pertaining to section 405 the following:

TITLE V—EXCEPTION

Sec. 501. Exception.

Add, at the end of the bill, the following:

TITLE V—EXCEPTION

SEC. 501. EXCEPTION.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the provisions of this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall not apply in the case of a rule that has been recommended in writing by the Inspector General of a Federal agency, including but not limited to those which would improve protections for taxpayers, students, public and workplace safety and health, or increase effectiveness or efficiency of agency activities, or in the case of a consent decree or settlement agreement pertaining to such a rule. In the case of such a rule, consent decree, or settlement agreement, the provisions of law amended by this Act shall apply as though such amendments had not been made.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer an amendment that would exempt from this bill any regulations that have been recommended by the inspector general.

This amendment will improve protections for taxpayers and students, protect public and workplace safety and health, and otherwise increase the effectiveness or efficiency of agency activities.

Inspector generals are the taxpayers' independent watchdogs. They perform an investigative role that is above politics, seeking to find out what has gone wrong and what should be done to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government.

My amendment would ensure that IG recommendations will not be buried in mountains of red tape that this bill creates. For example, the Department of Labor's inspector general found that the Mine Safety and Health Administration had a regulation with gaping loopholes that allowed mine operators who habitually violated mine safety standards to easily evade sanctions and continue to operate unsafe mines.

Massey Energy expertly exploited these loopholes at its Upper Big Branch mine in West Virginia, Massey consistently putting coal production ahead of safety, with more than 684 mine safety violations in the 18 months prior to the tragic explosion in 2010 that killed 29 miners.

But the most powerful regulatory tool in MSHA's arsenal was not deployed. In fact, the inspector general found that the potentially lifesaving sanctions had never been used over a 32-year period. The price of that 32-year period was the miners' lives.

The inspector general's investigation found that the rule was, by design, set up to be gamed, so it was recommended that MSHA close the loopholes. MSHA then quickly adopted the new regulations that will prevent 1,800 miner injuries each decade.

Had today's bill been the law of the land, that lifesaving rule would be delayed for years; and had this bill's requirement requiring that agencies use the least-costly rule been the law, these dangerous loopholes could be left in place.

Mr. Chairman, after every mine tragedy, elected representatives mourn the dead and declare they will take action to make sure that such tragedies never happen again. Then Congress comes along and works overtime to pass legislation like this, which would delay or block the rules that can save hundreds of lives.

Mr. Chairman, at this time, I would like to yield my remaining 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Chairman, in addition to protecting workers, the inspector general's office also makes recommendations which call for new and better regulations to protect America's taxpayers.

The Department of Education provides more than $150 billion every year in aid to more than 15 million college students with grants and low-cost loans. An alarming audit issued just this past week by the Department of Education's IG found that we need to crack down on shysters and fraud rings related to long-distance education.

Despite the Department of Education's recent efforts to curb this fraud, the audit found that sophisticated criminals are able to scam Federal programs through false identities and phony attendance records.

The IG urged the Department to quickly create new rules to ensure that billions of dollars it offers in financial aid are not wasted on people who take advantage of our distance education programs and siphon off precious resources that students and families desperately need.

This bill would cripple and hamper that necessary work. The legislation before us would also hamper the DOE from moving forward with other inspector general recommendations to reduce student loan defaults, root out wasteful spending that would save taxpayers $1 billion, and strengthen the overall accountability of our Nation's higher education programs.

□ 1315

The bill's lengthy list of at least 60 additional procedures would add years to the rulemaking process and would significantly hamstring the Education Department's ability to adopt regulations that protect taxpayers and students in a timely manner. This amendment would ensure that this bill does not compromise the ability of agencies to follow up on IG recommendations and would protect taxpayers from waste, fraud, and abuse.

All who patted themselves on the back about the student loan bill last summer, you are crippling the ability of this country to help students and families pay for college, which we need as a Nation. Let's adopt the Miller amendment in order to protect the inspector general's integrity and independence to get good reforms to protect the taxpayers and students of America.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, when inspectors general find agency waste, fraud, and abuse and recommend that new regulations be issued or old regulations be modified, the natural instinct of the guilty agency is to try to evade the recommended corrections to its bad behavior. By shielding agencies from the bill's transparency and accountability requirements, the amendment would help them do just that. It

would further entrench the ability of recalcitrant agencies to shirk the recommendations of inspectors general and continue their habits of waste, fraud, and abuse.

Especially in these times of fiscal austerity, we must do everything we can to make sure that agencies pay heed to inspector general recommendations and purge all waste, fraud, and abuse from their operations. The ALERRT Act includes powerful tools to make them do just that.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I was assuming that when the gentleman was speaking about the effectiveness of the inspector general reports that he was going to join in support of the amendment. I guess I misunderstood that.

The point is this:

In the case that I cited, the inspector general came in and found out the agency wasn't using the powers that it had and that it needed additional powers for miners who were trying to avert their obligations under the safety laws of this Nation. Again, that is not an action that should be delayed. That is not a finding by one party or the other or by one group of people in the Congress or the other. That is the inspector general. He looked at the situation and said that this was leading to an increased likelihood of accidents and deaths on behalf of miners and that the rules had to be changed and that they had to be changed right away. I don't know why we would interrupt that process.

That is the point of this amendment. This Congress has a lot of trust, I believe, in the inspectors general, and we should not get in and make them run through a lot of hoops when urgency is the matter.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments printed in House Report 113–361 on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

Amendment No. 3 by Mr. ROTHFUS of Pennsylvania.

Amendment No. 7 by Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia.

Amendment No. 8 by Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas.

Amendment No. 9 by Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas.

Amendment No. 10 by Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.

Amendment No. 11 by Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote after the first vote in this series.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. ROTHFUS

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 249, noes 162, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 71]

AYES—249

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Enyart
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gallego
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Maffei
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Rahall
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Ruiz
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOES—162

Beatty
Becerra
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Edwards
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fudge
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—19

Bass
Blumenauer
Butterfield
Ellison
Frankel (FL)
Garamendi
Gosar
Johnson, Sam
McCarthy (NY)
Olson
Pastor (AZ)
Reed
Rice (SC)
Royce
Runyan
Rush
Thompson (MS)
Upton
Walz

□ 1346

Messrs. CROWLEY, GUTIERREZ and GARCIA changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Messrs. YOUNG of Alaska, DUFFY, MEADOWS, SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia and Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Chair, on roll-call No. 71, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. CONNOLLY

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 181, noes 235, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 72]

AYES—181

Barber
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Gabbard
Garamendi
Garcia
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—235

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallego
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Pastor (AZ)
Rice (SC)
Royce
Runyan
Rush
Upton

NOT VOTING—14

Bass
Blumenauer
Butterfield
Ellison
Fudge
Gosar
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)

□ 1353

Ms. BROWNLEY of California changed her vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 180, noes 232, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 73]

AYES—180

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)

Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—232

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—18

Bass
Blumenauer
Bucshon
Butterfield
Davis, Danny
Diaz-Balart
Ellison
Fudge
Gosar
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
Pastor (AZ)
Rice (SC)
Royce
Runyan
Rush
Upton
Waxman

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1357

Mrs. LOWEY changed her vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 179, noes 235, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 74]

AYES—179

Barber
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—235

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—16

Bass
Blumenauer
Butterfield
Davis, Danny
Ellison
Fudge
Gosar
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
Pastor (AZ)
Polis
Rice (SC)
Royce
Runyan
Rush
Upton

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1401

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 10 OFFERED BY MR. GEORGE MILLER OF CALIFORNIA

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 183, noes 229, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 75]

AYES—183

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reichert
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—229

Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—18

Aderholt
Barr
Bass
Blumenauer
Butterfield
Cleaver
Davis, Danny
Ellison
Fudge
Gosar
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
McHenry
Pastor (AZ)
Rice (SC)
Runyan
Rush
Upton

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1405

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. BARR. Mr. Chair, on rollcall No. 75 I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

AMENDMENT NO. 11 OFFERED BY MR. GEORGE MILLER OF CALIFORNIA

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 181, noes 232, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 76]

AYES—181

Barber
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—232

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cleaver
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—17

Bass
Blumenauer
Butterfield
Davis, Danny
Engel
Fudge
Gosar
Hinojosa
Huelskamp
Kaptur
McCarthy (NY)
Pastor (AZ)
Rice (SC)
Runyan
Rush
Stivers
Upton

□ 1410

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RIBBLE) having assumed the chair, Mr. YODER, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2804) to amend title 5, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to publish information about rules on the Internet, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 487, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment to the amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole?

If not, the question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Ms. ESTY. I am in its present form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Esty moves to recommit the bill H.R. 2804 to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith, with the following amendment:

Add, at the end of the bill, the following (and conform the table of contents accordingly):

TITLE V—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISION

SEC. 501. NO DELAY OF ANY REGULATION THAT SAVES TAX DOLLARS, HELPS SMALL BUSINESSES AND VETERANS, PREVENTS DISCRIMINATION, OR PROTECTS CONSUMERS.

This Act and the amendments made by this Act shall not apply in the case of any rule, consent decree, or settlement agreement that—

(1) saves tax dollars or provides refunds, rebates, or savings for taxpayers;

(2) provides assistance and regulatory relief for small businesses;

(3) expedites or settles cases involving veterans benefits;

(4) prevents discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, or any other protected category, or that provides pay equity for women; or

(5) protects the health and safety of consumers, seniors, and children, including ensuring—

(A) the safety of the food supply from salmonella and other food-borne illnesses; or

(B) a safe drinking water supply that is free from toxic substances and chemicals that can cause cancer.

Ms. ESTY (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

□ 1415

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Connecticut is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, let's be reasonable here. This bill before us is an ideological attempt to weaken and delay all regulations, even those that protect consumers and small businesses, help veterans, and keep our families safe. I think we can all agree, just as it is ridiculous to say that all regulations are good, it is also ridiculous to say that all regulations are bad.

I am the mother of three children, and I know how important regulations can be to keep our children safe. A few years ago, Congress passed a bill to strengthen standards on baby cribs. Regulations prohibited drop-side cribs and required all new cribs to have stronger mattress supports. And do you know why? To save lives. There were devastating instances of children suffocating and dying because of drop-side cribs. Clearly, this regulation is critical to our children's safety.

But, unfortunately, the bill before us today would delay the implementation of safety regulations like baby crib standards and safety regulations like those that prohibit the sale of contaminated food from China here in America like rat meat labeled as lamb in Shanghai and the Chinese chickens likely infected with bird flu. Americans have the right to know that the food they are feeding their families is safe, and that is why the bill before us today just doesn't make sense.

Delaying all regulations across the board and preventing the Federal Government from rapidly responding to situations, even when the American people are asking for safeguards, is dangerous and harmful.

This ideologically driven bill does not just harm Americans by derailing safety regulations; this bill would also weaken and delay regulations that are important to our economy, regulations that protect consumers and small businesses.

Folks, we are just 6 weeks away from when tax returns are due. Why would we want to pass a bill that may delay provisions that save taxpayers money? Why would we get in the way when taxpayers want their refunds and rebates returned quickly?

But not only that. This bill would delay regulations that would help ensure women receive equal pay for equal work. This bill would weaken regulations that could help protect small

businesses against predatory loans and hinder job growth. This bill would delay protections that could help ensure that workplace environments are safe for all workers. And this bill would delay our efforts to speed up veterans receiving their benefits.

And something that is particularly important to my State and my district, where folks are concerned about fatal accidents and service delays on the Metro-North railroad, this bill would delay the very regulations that will help ensure that Metro-North is safe and timely for commuters. On-time, safe rail service is critical to our State's economy, and this bill could jeopardize that. My district, Connecticut's economy, and our Nation's economy cannot afford this ideological, destructive bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am here today to offer an amendment, an amendment that will help make this bill work better for families and small businesses. I was sent to Congress to get things done, and I am working to eliminate and streamline unnecessary regulations and to help cut through red tape and save taxpayers money. At the same time, though, we know that smart regulations save money and save lives.

I hear all the time from people back home that Washington isn't working for them and that they are sick and tired of partisan gridlock. My constituents want Washington to be responsive to their needs and to get things done. And that is why I oppose this bill. It unnecessarily delays our ability to act swiftly and decisively. My amendment would work to make sure that smart regulations are not weakened or delayed—regulations that could save taxpayers money, that could help small businesses, that expedite veterans' benefits, that protect our families' safety and the safety of our food supply, and that could prevent pay discrimination just because you are a woman or because of your race or sexual orientation.

We were sent here to work together to help the American people, not to engage in an ideological battle. Let's do the right thing. Let's do the responsible thing. I ask all House Members to join with me to vote for this motion.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressmen HOLDING, COLLINS, and Subcommittee Chairman BACHUS for their hard work on this bill as well as committee staff on both sides of the aisle. Four bills combined into one and still under 100 pages will do much to reform, and in some cases eliminate, hundreds of thousands of pages of Federal Government regulations in the future.

Mr. Speaker, we are more than 5 years into the Obama administration. Real unemployment is still a massive problem in this country. America's labor force participation is at record lows. The nominal unemployment rate is down, but that is only because desperate Americans dying for work are abandoning the workforce in droves.

Everybody knows that the only real long-term solution is to restart the engines of economic growth in this country. If we could just somehow increase our growth rate by as little as 2 additional percentage points, things would begin to turn around. One way to do that is to pass the ALERRT Act.

The cost of Federal regulation today is estimated to be a staggering $1.86 trillion. That almost wipes out the $2 trillion this Nation's manufacturers have just produced, the first time in history we have hit that level in 1 year. There is our 2 percent growth right there, and more, gobbled up by the mind-boggling tide of tyrannical regulation flowing out of Washington.

If we could just cut our regulatory burdens by a portion, we could turn this economy right around. The ALERRT Act would do that. It promises real relief from our regulatory nightmare. If enacted, it would change night to day in terms of the level of regulatory costs Washington imposes on our economy, and it would do so without stopping one needed regulation from being issued.

How do I know? Because it says so right in the bill. Right on page 27, it says:

> The agency shall adopt the least costly rule considered during the rulemaking that meets relevant statutory objectives.

Take away a few key words and what does that say? The agency shall adopt the rule that meets statutory objectives.

So the rules will still be made, and statutory goals will still be met. But put the key words back in, and what happens? America starts to save hundreds of billions of dollars it doesn't need to spend, because the agency shall adopt the least costly rule that meets statutory objectives.

Do that over and over again, and that is real money that we will save, real money that can produce jobs for our constituents, real money that hardworking Americans can use to grow their businesses, all without stopping a single needed regulation from being issued.

My friends across the aisle say that won't happen. They say the bill will bring all good rulemaking to a screeching halt. My goodness, it is ObamaCare all over again. My friends across the aisle haven't read the bill. You have to read the bill to know what is in it. If you read the bill, you understand it. You see there on page 27, the agency shall adopt the rule that meets statutory objectives.

My friends, the people in my district and yours are smart. They can read the bill. They can tell that, although Chicken Little and the Boy Who Cried Wolf seem to want to talk about this bill, the sky is not falling and the wolf is not coming on account of this bill. What is coming on account of this bill is real relief for hardworking Americans and prosperity around the corner.

Vote against this motion to recommit. Vote for this bill. Take Americans' hard-earned dollars out of the hands of Washington's bureaucrats who want to flush it down the regulatory drain. Let it stay in the hands of workers and businessowners who know how to spend it wisely and well. Oppose the motion to recommit. Support the legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, this 5-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by a 5-minute vote on passage of the bill, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 187, noes 229, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 77]

AYES—187

Barber	Engel	Loebsack
Barrow (GA)	Enyart	Lofgren
Beatty	Eshoo	Lowenthal
Becerra	Esty	Lowey
Bera (CA)	Farr	Lujan Grisham (NM)
Bishop (GA)	Fattah	Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Bishop (NY)	Foster	Lynch
Bonamici	Frankel (FL)	Maffei
Brady (PA)	Gabbard	Maloney, Carolyn
Braley (IA)	Gallego	Maloney, Sean
Brown (FL)	Garamendi	Matheson
Brownley (CA)	Garcia	Matsui
Bustos	Grayson	McCollum
Capps	Green, Al	McDermott
Capuano	Green, Gene	McGovern
Cárdenas	Grijalva	McIntyre
Carney	Gutiérrez	McNerney
Carson (IN)	Hahn	Meeks
Cartwright	Hanabusa	Meng
Castor (FL)	Hastings (FL)	Michaud
Castro (TX)	Heck (WA)	Miller, George
Chu	Higgins	Moore
Cicilline	Himes	Moran
Clark (MA)	Holt	Murphy (FL)
Clarke (NY)	Honda	Nadler
Clay	Horsford	Napolitano
Cleaver	Hoyer	Neal
Clyburn	Huffman	Negrete McLeod
Cohen	Israel	Nolan
Connolly	Jackson Lee	O'Rourke
Conyers	Jeffries	Pallone
Cooper	Johnson (GA)	Pascrell
Courtney	Johnson, E. B.	Payne
Crowley	Kaptur	Pelosi
Cuellar	Keating	Perlmutter
Cummings	Kelly (IL)	Peters (CA)
Davis (CA)	Kennedy	Peters (MI)
DeFazio	Kildee	Pingree (ME)
DeGette	Kilmer	Pocan
Delaney	Kind	Polis
DeLauro	Kirkpatrick	Price (NC)
DelBene	Kuster	Quigley
Deutch	Langevin	Rahall
Dingell	Larsen (WA)	Rangel
Doggett	Larson (CT)	Richmond
Doyle	Lee (CA)	Roybal-Allard
Duckworth	Levin	
Edwards	Lewis	
Ellison	Lipinski	

Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—229

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—14

Bass
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Butterfield
Davis, Danny
Fudge
Gosar
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
Pastor (AZ)
Rice (SC)
Runyan
Rush
Upton

□ 1431

Mrs. WAGNER changed her vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Mr. GUTIERREZ changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 236, noes 179, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 78]

AYES—236

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOES—179

Barber
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—15

Bachus
Bass
Blumenauer
Butterfield
Costa
Davis, Danny
Fudge
Gosar
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
Pastor (AZ)
Rice (SC)
Runyan
Rush
Upton

□ 1438

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 2084, ALL ECONOMIC REGULATIONS ARE TRANSPARENT ACT OF 2014

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 2804, including corrections in spelling, punctuation, section and title numbering, cross-referencing, conforming amendments to the table of contents and short titles, and the insertion of appropriate headings.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBSTER). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION SAFETY AND SOUNDNESS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2013

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous material on H.R. 3193, the Consumer Financial Protection Safety and Soundness Improvement Act of 2013.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 475 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 3193.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RIBBLE) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1441

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 3193) to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to strengthen the review authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council of regulations issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, and for other purposes, with Mr. RIBBLE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, we are now into the sixth year of the Obama administration, and probably the two most common comments I hear from my constituents are ''I just can't make ends meet in this economy'' and ''Washington has become arrogant, unaccountable, and out of touch.'' At the apex of these sentiments, lies the newly minted Dodd-Frank government agency known as the CFPB. Although many have yet to hear of it, the CFPB is perhaps the single most powerful and least accountable Federal agency in all of Washington.

First, let's speak of its power. Mr. Chairman, when it comes to our credit cards, our auto loans, our mortgages, the CFPB has unbridled discretionary power not only to make them less available and more expensive, but to absolutely take them away.

What does an agency with this kind of power do? It imposes rule like the qualified mortgage rule, or QM for short. Mr. Chairman, what does QM do? According to Federal Reserve data, because of QM, roughly one-third of Black and Hispanic borrowers would not meet the requirements of a QM loan.

CoreLogic, which analyzes mortgage data, has said:

> Only half of today's mortgage originations meet QM requirements.

That is egregiously unfair to hardworking Americans.

One of my small town community bankers in east Texas told me recently:

> Because of QM, I can't tell you the number of times we have had to tell our good low-to-moderate income customers that we can no longer loan them money to purchase a home to live in.

Mr. Chairman, this is what an agency with too much discretionary power does. It can actually abuse consumers, taking away their homeownership opportunities. That is unfair.

Let's look at what happens to an agency that is not held accountable. Today, the CFPB is spending $145 million to renovate a $150 million headquarters building they don't even own. The renovation rate is three times the average Washington, D.C., luxury class A renovation rate. Well, what does $145 million buy?

Well, it is $461 per square foot in office renovations. Mr. Chairman, that is more per square foot than was spent to build the Trump World Tower. More than the Trump World Tower. At $461 per square foot, that was more money than it cost to build the Bellagio hotel and casino in Las Vegas, which at the time, I am told, was the most expensive hotel ever built. Mr. Chairman, this is more money to renovate a building they don't own than Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the single tallest skyscraper in the world. Ironically enough, the architectural firm which designed the Burj Khalifa in Dubai is the same world renowned architectural firm that the CFPB paid over $7 million to design their headquarter renovations.

Now, according to public documents, Mr. Chairman, some of the Bureau's renovations include ''a reflective carnelian granite water table'' that will ''lure in the curious passerby.'' Also for $145 million of hard-earned taxpayer money, the Bureau is buying ''a shady tree bosque'' to facilitate ''chance interactions in a removed place of rest and contemplation.'' I mean, I can't make this up, Mr. Chairman. This is how hard-earned money is being squandered. Here it is, the architectural drawings which have been filed publicly.

I have to tell you, Mr. Chairman, I have a lot of people in my district in east Texas who live in mobile homes. They can't afford carnelian granite water tables that apparently the CFPB is going to enjoy that my constituents have to pay for, and the only shady tree bosque to be found in east Texas in the Fifth District are those where hardworking ranchers work their cattle.

□ 1445

Instead of rest and contemplation to be enjoyed by CFPB's employees, because of such blatant waste, my constituents, instead of rest and contemplation, lay awake at night wondering how they are going to pay the bills and make ends meet.

Mr. Chairman, this is what an unaccountable Federal Government agency does. It squanders the people's money because it is not their own and they are not accountable to the people's representatives.

So that is why we are here today, Mr. Chairman. We are here to pass H.R. 3193, the Consumer Financial Freedom and Washington Accountability Act, whose primary author, Mr. DUFFY of Wisconsin, has done excellent work, along with many other members of our committee. This is a package, Mr. Chairman, of commonsense reforms designed to make the CFPB more accountable and more transparent to the American people.

This bill replaces the Bureau's single, unaccountable director with a bipartisan board. It puts the Bureau's employees—whose compensation and benefits average $178,521, it puts them on the civil service pay scale. It introduces a safety and soundness check on its regulations and gives the American people greater control over the massive, massive quantities of personal financial data that the Bureau is collecting and maintaining on them at this time.

Mr. Chairman, we do need consumer protection, but consumers just don't need to be protected from Wall Street; they need to be protected from Washington as well. H.R. 3193 will protect them from the CFPB, and the House should pass it without delay today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 3193, legislation that would gut the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, an agency that has been a critical and effective advocate for our Nation's consumers. Today's vote is just the latest chapter in a relentless Republican attack on consumer protection.

Since opening its doors in 2011, the CFPB has gone to bat for those who have been subject to the deceptive practices of unscrupulous financial institutions. Though it has been immensely successful, Republicans have tried to undercut it in every way possible.

Mr. Chairman, in just over 2 years, CFPB's enforcement actions have resulted in over $3 billion being directly refunded to more than 9.7 million consumers and servicemembers.

The CFPB has ensured that all consumers have fair and transparent access to consumer financial products and services. It has written important mortgage rules that prevent lenders from engaging in the risky and irresponsible practices that led to the collapse of the housing market and fueled the 2008 global financial crisis; and it continues to go after industries and institutions that, for years, have not been held accountable for abusive and deceptive practices.

The CFPB ensures that the tens of millions of consumers who interact with large consumer reporting agencies, debt collectors, payday lenders, and nonbanks originating mortgage loans have an advocate in their corner.

In fact, in fiscal year 2013, the CFPB was a party in 13 enforcement actions related to deceptive marketing, unlawful debt collection, discrimination on the basis of age, unlawful charging of fees, and fraudulent mortgage relief schemes, among other violations.

Since the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau opened its doors, more than 269,000 individual consumer complaints have been received, and it has stood up for our Nation's Active Duty military who so greatly serve us, returning more than $12.5 million to them under the Military Lending Act.

Just yesterday, CFPB announced a lawsuit against a large for-profit college chain, accusing it of preying on students by pushing them into high-cost loans, very likely to end in default.

But my friends on the other side of the aisle don't believe that we should have a consumer advocate in government. They would prefer that these unscrupulous actors continue to take advantage of consumers without interference.

The simple fact is that H.R. 3193 would accomplish this goal, obstructing the CFPB's ability to protect consumers from deceptive marketing, unlawful debt collection, lending discrimination, overcharge fees, and other illegal activity. The bill does so by undermining CFPB's leadership, ending its autonomy, and tying its funding to Congressional appropriations, among other ways.

In fact, Republicans have brought this bill to the floor claiming a cost savings, but they know that the only way a savings is realized is by slashing the budget of the CFPB, the sole agency charged with consumer financial protections.

But that is not all. The provisions included in this measure would eliminate the position of the CFPB director in favor of some five-member commission that would increase bureaucracy—encouraging, inviting—and encumber its ability to take action on behalf of consumers. It would water down the CFPB's rulemaking authority by lowering the bar for overturning its rules.

Many of the amendments offered today would make this bill even worse. For example, the measure offered by Congressman DESANTIS would repeal the Bureau's exclusive rulemaking authority, dispersing responsibility for protecting consumers among the same regulators who failed miserably in this task in the run-up to the financial crisis.

It is striking to listen to my friends on the opposite side of the aisle talk about the importance of consumer protection and then push a measure that is an obvious attempt to completely undermine and obstruct the CFPB's ability to protect consumers, students, seniors, and servicemembers.

If holding the Bureau accountable to its mission to protect American consumers truly is a Republican's goal, then why are we considering a bill which is strongly opposed by more than 100 organizations with long records of standing up for the interest of consumers?

I would urge my colleagues to oppose this damaging measure so the CFPB can continue its outstanding work.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I am happy to yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the distinguished chairman of our Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee and a real leader in preserving consumer opportunity and rights.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the chairman of our committee for his leadership and for yielding me time this afternoon.

I would also like to thank my colleagues Mr. DUFFY, Mr. BACHUS, and Mr. NEUGEBAUER for their leadership in drafting the components of this bill before us today.

As we have heard, the debate before us today is not new. We have been working for the past 3 years to enact commonsense structural reforms to the CFPB. During debate in the last Congress, our friends on the other side of the aisle said that it was premature to reform this burgeoning agency. They argued that it was too early to tell how the Bureau would operate.

Well, 2½ years later, this is what we know: The Bureau continues to be unresponsive to bipartisan requests for information about their operations. For example, last spring, the Bureau released guidance for indirect auto lending practices.

Over the last year, Republican and Democrat Members have requested information, both in person and in writing, about the data the Bureau used to support their guidance. Despite these requests, the Bureau refuses to provide substantive answers to the Members' questions.

Over the last year, Members—and I have in particular—expressed significant concern about the effect the CFPB's new rules will have on mortgage availability for low- to moderate-income borrowers. Despite this, the CFPB has moved forward with the rules.

We have also heard that the Bureau is spending over $100 million to renovate its headquarters. As we learned, the renovation per square foot will cost more than building the Trump World Tower and the Bellagio.

These examples are indicative of an agency that is unaccountable to Congress and to the American taxpayers. Moving the Bureau's leadership structure to a bipartisan commission will ensure that there is a diversity of opinion as the agency crafts new rules, no matter who the President is.

A more diverse leadership structure will result in more balanced rules that provide consumers with sufficient transparency to choose the financial products that best suits their needs.

We are also bringing greater accountability to this agency by putting the Bureau on the regular appropriations schedule. Budgetary control is a critical tool for this Congress, no matter who the President is, to ensure the actions of this agency truly benefits consumers.

I thank the sponsors for their hard work.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), ranking member on the Subcommittee on Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlelady for yielding and for her hard work on the Financial Services Committee.

I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 3193, which is a blatantly partisan assault on the CFPB and on American consumers.

I think it is telling that just 4 months after the first government shutdown in 17 years, the Republicans want to remove the CFPB's independent source of funding and subject it to Congress' deeply dysfunctional appropriations process.

It is telling because it exposes the true purpose of this bill. It is not to make the CFPB more accountable, but rather to undermine, defund, and hinder its ability to act to protect consumers in every possible way.

The dysfunction that led to last year's 16-day shutdown is exactly why we gave the CFPB an independent source of funding in Dodd-Frank. We wanted to insulate the CFPB from the political games and partisan brinksmanship that, unfortunately, became a staple of the appropriations process.

Another key reason for creating the CFPB was to make sure that we have at least one regulator whose sole purpose is protecting consumers. Prior to the financial crisis, consumer protection had, unfortunately, become an afterthought of the banking regulators whose primary mission was protecting the safety and soundness of the banks, but not consumers.

□ 1500

When Congress created the CFPB, the whole point was to create a regulator whose sole focus would be to protect consumers. The reason Congress did this was that, prior to the financial crisis, consumers were an afterthought, a secondary thought, a third thought, or usually not even thought about at all. So it was a huge step forward to have a department that was focused on protecting consumers from new products that were harmful and from innovations that were not tested that were harmful to the consumers and the economy as a whole, which led to the financial crisis.

This was a huge step forward for consumers when it was created. Unfortunately, this bill before us today is a huge step backwards because it would give the safety and soundness regulators more authority to veto the CFPB's consumer protections in the name of bank profits—just like in the old days. Let's remember that, in just its first 2½ years, the CFPB has already made huge strides on a number of important consumer protections—from new mortgage protections to credit cards to payday lending.

An independent source said the credit card bill of rights that was supported by the CFPB saves consumers $20 billion a year. That is a huge step forward for consumers, and the Bureau has been willing to make sensible changes when it has needed to. Last year, the Bureau adopted amendments to the CARD Act that would allow stay-at-home spouses to take out credit cards in their own names. This was a commonsense fix for an unintended problem for stay-at-home spouses who were creditworthy, and they made the decision so that they were able to get these credit cards. That is a huge step forward, and I worked with Mrs. CAPITO on it from across the aisle. The Bureau continues to work hard to develop consumer safeguards in rapidly growing areas, such as prepaid cards and overdraft protection, both of which many Members on both sides have a keen interest in seeing going forward.

In short, the CFPB's work has already made the lives of American consumers and our constituents better on a day-to-day basis. This bill would undermine these results, and it would weaken the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, so I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose the bill.

I would like to place in the RECORD independent organizations—literally well over 100—that are in support of the CFPB and that are in opposition to this bill. They are good government groups, credit groups, individual legislators, and local and State partners, all of whom are in opposition to the bill that undermines the work of the CFPB, which is there to protect consumers.

FOLLOWING ARE THE PARTNERS OF AMERICANS FOR FINANCIAL REFORM.

All the organizations support the overall principles of AFR and are working for an accountable, fair and secure financial system. Not all of these organizations work on all of the issues covered by the coalition or have signed on to every statement.

AARP; A New Way Forward; AFL-CIO; AFSCME; Alliance For Justice; American Income Life Insurance; American Sustainable Business Council; Americans for Democratic Action, Inc.; Americans United for Change; Campaign for America's Future; Campaign Money; Center for Digital Democracy; Center for Economic and Policy Research; Center for Economic Progress; Center for Media and Democracy; Center for Responsible Lending; Center for Justice and Democracy; Center of Concern; Center for Effective Government; Change to Win; Clean Yield Asset Management.

Coastal Enterprises Inc.; Color of Change; Common Cause; Communications Workers of America; Community Development Transportation Lending Services; Consumer Action; Consumer Association Council; Consumers for Auto Safety and Reliability; Consumer Federation of America; Consumer Watchdog; Consumers Union; Corporation for Enterprise Development; CREDO Mobile; CTW Investment Group; Demos; Economic Policy Institute; Essential Action; Green America; Greenlining Institute; Good Business International; HNMA Funding Company.

Home Actions; Housing Counseling Services; Home Defender's League; Information Press; Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy; Institute for Global Communications; Institute for Policy Studies: Global Economy Project; International Brotherhood of Teamsters; Institute of Women's Policy Research; Krull & Company; Laborers' International Union of North America; Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; Main Street Alliance; Move On; NAACP; NASCAT; National Association of Consumer Advocates; National Association of Neighborhoods; National Community Reinvestment Coalition; National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients); National Consumers League.

National Council of La Raza; National Council of Women's Organizations; National Fair Housing Alliance; National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions; National Housing Resource Center; National Housing Trust; National Housing Trust Community Development Fund; National NeighborWorks Association; National Nurses United; National People's Action; National Urban League; Next Step; OpenTheGovernment.org; Opportunity Finance Network; Partners for the Common Good; PICO National Network; Progress Now Action; Progressive States Network; Poverty and Race Research Action Council; Public Citizen; Sargent Shriver Center on Poverty Law.

SEIU; State Voices; Taxpayer's for Common Sense; The Association for Housing and Neighborhood Development; The Fuel Savers Club; The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; The Seminal; TICAS; U.S. Public Interest Research Group; UNITE HERE; United Food and Commercial Workers; United States Student Association; USAction; Veris Wealth Partners; Western States Center; We the People Now; Woodstock Institute; World Privacy Forum; UNET; Union Plus; Unitarian Universalist for a Just Economic Community.

List of State and Local Partners

Alaska PIRG; Arizona PIRG; Arizona Advocacy Network; Arizonans For Responsible Lending; Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development NY; Audubon Partnership for Economic Development LDC, New York NY; BAC Funding Consortium Inc., Miami FL; Beech Capital Venture Corporation, Philadelphia PA; California PIRG; California Reinvestment Coalition; Century Housing Corporation, Culver City CA; CHANGER NY; Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation (NY); Chicago Community Loan Fund, Chicago IL; Chicago Community Ventures, Chicago IL; Chicago Consumer Coalition; Citizen Potawatomi CDC, Shawnee OK; Colorado PIRG; Coalition on Homeless Housing in Ohio; Community Capital Fund, Bridgeport CT; Community Capital of Maryland, Baltimore MD; Community Development Financial Institution of the Tohono O'odham Nation, Sells AZ.

Community Redevelopment Loan and Investment Fund, Atlanta GA; Community Reinvestment Association of North Carolina; Community Resource Group, Fayetteville A; Connecticut PIRG; Consumer Assistance Council; Cooper Square Committee (NYC); Cooperative Fund of New England, Wilmington NC; Corporacion de Desarrollo Economico de Ceiba, Ceiba PR; Delta Foundation, Inc., Greenville MS; Economic Opportunity Fund (EOF), Philadelphia PA; Empire Justice Center NY; Empowering and Strengthening Ohio's People (ESOP), Cleveland OH; Enterprises, Inc., Berea KY; Fair Housing Contact Service OH; Federation of Appalachian Housing; Fitness and Praise Youth Development, Inc., Baton Rouge LA; Florida Consumer Action Network; Florida PIRG; Funding Partners for Housing Solutions, Ft. Collins CO; Georgia PIRG; Grow Iowa Foundation, Greenfield IA; Homewise, Inc., Santa Fe NM.

Idaho Nevada CDFI, Pocatello ID; Idaho Chapter, National Association of Social Workers; Illinois PIRG; Impact Capital, Seattle WA; Indiana PIRG; Iowa PIRG; Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement; JobStart Chautauqua, Inc., Mayville NY; La Casa Federal Credit Union, Newark NJ; Low Income Investment Fund, San Francisco CA; Long Island Housing Services NY; MaineStream Finance, Bangor ME; Maryland PIRG; Massachusetts Consumers' Coalition; MASSPIRG; Massachusetts Fair Housing Center; Michigan PIRG; Midland Community Development Corporation, Midland TX; Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation, Detroit Lakes MN; Mile High Community Loan Fund, Denver CO; Missouri PIRG; Mortgage Recovery Service Center of L.A.

Montana Community Development Corporation, Missoula MT; Montana PIRG; New Economy Project; New Hampshire PIRG; New Jersey Community Capital, Trenton NJ; New Jersey Citizen Action; New Jersey PIRG; New Mexico PIRG; New York PIRG; New York City Aids Housing Network; New Yorkers for Responsible Lending; NOAH Community Development Fund, Inc., Boston MA; Nonprofit Finance Fund, New York NY; Nonprofits Assistance Fund, Minneapolis M; North Carolina PIRG; Northside Community Development Fund, Pittsburgh PA; Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, Columbus OH; Ohio PIRG; OligarchyUSA; Oregon State PIRG; Our Oregon; PennPIRG; Piedmont Housing Alliance, Charlottesville VA; Michigan PIRG; Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, CO; Rhode Island PIRG.

Rural Community Assistance Corporation, West Sacramento CA; Rural Organizing

Project OR; San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority; Seattle Economic Development Fund; Community Capital Development; TexPIRG; The Fair Housing Council of Central New York; The Loan Fund, Albuquerque NM; Third Reconstruction Institute NC; Vermont PIRG; Village Capital Corporation, Cleveland OH; Virginia Citizens Consumer Council; Virginia Poverty Law Center; War on Poverty—Florida; WashPIRG; Westchester Residential Opportunities Inc.; Wigamig Owners Loan Fund, Inc., Lac du Flambeau WI; WISPIRG.

Small Businesses

Blu; Bowden-Gill Environmental; Community MedPAC; Diversified Environmental Planning; Hayden & Craig, PLLC; Mid City Animal Hospital, Phoenix AZ; UNET.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, it is now my honor to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), the distinguished majority leader, who has been a tireless advocate for consumer choice and freedom throughout this debate on this unaccountable Bureau and who has led our Congress' effort to bring bills to the floor to stop government abuse.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank both gentlemen from Texas for their leadership on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Consumer Financial Freedom and Washington Accountability Act.

Our constituents deserve an open government that can easily be held accountable. We in the House have got to be focused on reforming this government so we can create an America that works again. The Founders of our country created this democratic system to include a series of checks and balances to prevent any institution from becoming too powerful, and, today, it is as important as ever to keep those checks and balances strong.

Right now, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is an independent agency within the Federal Reserve System that is full of unelected bureaucrats who enjoy an unprecedented amount of power with a serious lack of accountability to any of the three branches of government.

American consumers should not have to fear Federal bureaucrats who can eliminate access to their credit options, collect information on their personal finances without their knowledge or consent, or limit the availability of a mortgage due to the onerous Qualified Mortgage rule that the CFPB put in place last month.

Working families who are struggling to make ends meet during these hard economic times should also not have to worry about their hard-earned tax dollars being spent so recklessly and irresponsibly by government agencies. We have recently learned that the Federal Reserve's inspector general opened up an investigation to find out why a renovation to the CFPB's headquarters skyrocketed from $55 million to $145 million in under 2 years. This reckless waste is one of the most dangerous kinds of government abuses. The American workers' pocketbooks are not Washington's ATM machine.

The bill before us today provides solutions to these problems with important structural changes that will place the levers of power in a bipartisan panel, as opposed to a single director, while subjecting the CFPB to the regular appropriations and oversight processes, guaranteeing more accountability.

This is an opportunity for us to show the American people that we are committed to restoring trust in government. By passing these commonsense reforms in a bipartisan fashion, we can hold Washington more accountable to the people we are supposed to protect. So let's pass this bill and take one step closer to stopping government abuse.

Again, I would like to thank Chairman HENSARLING, Chairman NEUGEBAUER, Representatives DUFFY, BACHUS, WESTMORELAND, and FINCHER, and the rest of the Financial Services Committee for their hard work on this issue. I urge my colleagues in the House to support this legislation so we can begin to make America work again for everybody.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts, Representative LYNCH, who is a member of the Financial Services Committee and who is the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and the Census.

Mr. LYNCH. I thank the gentlelady for yielding and for her work on behalf of American consumers.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3193, the so-called Consumer Financial Protection and Soundness Improvement Act.

Let's be clear about what my friends on the other side of the aisle are trying to do here today.

They would really like to completely repeal the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Many of the sponsors of this act are the ones who tried to defeat the creation and empowerment of the CFPB to begin with. To be mindful, this is the only financial regulator solely responsible for protecting American consumers from unfair, deceptive, and abusive financial products. My friends on the other side of the aisle would like to destroy it, so they are trying to pass off this ''death by a thousand cuts'' approach as improvements to the Bureau's structure.

This bill will bog down the consumer bureau in bureaucratic and congressional red tape. It will make it more difficult for the Bureau to seek out and retain qualified employees. It will also allow the companies that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is supposed to be regulating to have more information, better information—more accurate information, more extensive information—about consumers than the CFPB that is responsible for protecting them will have.

In sum, it will make the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau a second-class and ineffective regulator, sending the signal to bad actors in our financial markets that we are not really serious about consumer protections, and this bill will do nothing to make consumers safer.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting ''no'' on H.R. 3193.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I am now pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER), the chairman of the Housing and Insurance Subcommittee, who is a key coauthor of this bill, ensuring that the CFPB is accountable through the congressional appropriations process, and who is a real champion of preserving housing opportunities from Washington bureaucrats.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank Chairman HENSARLING.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is kind of interesting that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle seem to want to justify this ''spending gone wild'' agency, an agency that last year alone had a budget overreach of nearly $100 million.

That is the reason that I introduced title II of this bill, which really says two things: one, that we take this agency out of the Fed and make it a stand-alone entity; and two, that we put it on budget, a normal appropriations process, where Members of Congress can begin to sit down and look at the budget that is presented to them by the agency—how you are going to spend their money. Maybe we would have prevented some of these overreaches that happened.

I don't think that anybody thinks that government should just have an unlimited purse, and this is what this agency basically has. If they run out of money—spend too much money—they just reach over into the Fed and take that money out. No other agency that I know of in the government has that, and I think the hardworking American people and the hardworking people of the 19th District feel like agencies ought to come and bring their budgets, like in other areas of government, and explain and prove why they need that money.

Interestingly enough, the CFPB has 1,500 employees, 60 percent of them making over $100,000 and 5 percent of those making more than Cabinet secretaries. Mr. Chairman, again, we think there needs to be more accountability here.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. This agency can draw up to $500 million each year, really. In fact, some of the requests for transfer were done on small pieces of paper.

Can you imagine a three-line paragraph saying, ''Please send over $150 million. We have run out of money''?

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 3193 begins to bring the accountability that the American taxpayers not only deserve but desire.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Washington, Representative HECK, who is a

member of the Financial Services Committee and who has paid a lot of attention to this issue.

Mr. HECK of Washington. I thank the ranking member very much.

Mr. Chairman, I am from Washington State, and I am about to commit a sacrilege. We could have saved a lot of trees and a lot of time if we had had a one-sentence bill that simply said: ''End the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.''

We could have had an honest debate then about whether we should have any government agency with the mandate to protect consumers from deceptive financial marketing and abusive financial practices. We could have had a discussion about what the CFPB has accomplished thus far and whether it is accessible to Americans, whether its proposed streamlined forms are more effective at educating Americans, whether its rules are thoroughly researched and revised after comments from all sides. Instead, we are having a debate over reorganizing and defunding and subordinating and other matters of process and organization that are all, frankly, designed to kill CFPB by a thousand cuts.

I think the proposition here is fairly straightforward and remains a mystery to me. If one desires to do away with the CFPB, why not have the courage to introduce that bill straightforwardly?

Ordinarily, I don't assign motives or characterize intent on the part of people who advance legislation. The fact of the matter is many of those who are advocating for this bill's passage opposed the creation of the agency flat out. The fact of the matter is that a companion bill—granted, one not in this—even re-titled the agency and took the words ''consumer protection'' out. The fact of the matter is, if there were more credible arguments in support of this legislation, I think we would be a little more careful with the facts.

Here is a fact: there isn't a penny of taxpayer dollars that supports CFPB. It is fee-based. Here is a fact omitted: more than 60 percent of the costs associated with the alleged remodel budget, which is an estimate—a fact omitted—is associated with upgrading to code. Now, I know for another fact that the people who are making that argument do not want civil servants to occupy unsafe and unhealthy buildings.

□ 1515

But most importantly—this is the part that really gets me—we are going to spend a lot of time on this today and in committee, and we are going to pass it to the Senate, and we all know what its fate is going to be, right down into the ground. Well, that is fine. People have the right to make their point, but what is the opportunity cost of making that point in committee and on the floor? At least one of the opportunity costs is getting to work on actual regulatory relief.

We have several bipartisan bills for regulatory relief. Some form of the CLEAR Act, not all the Members on my side support it, but some do. We could actually get to work on regulatory relief if we would set aside our efforts for this messaging and exercise.

As for me, no matter what the form, I am going to vote ''no'' on any bill that kills the CFPB, any bill. I will vote ''no'' because of the work the CFPB does on behalf of my constituents.

I will vote to preserve the Office of Servicemember Affairs and the great work that Holly Petraeus is doing. They have a special mandate to protect the men and women in uniform. I have the privilege to represent Joint Base Lewis-McChord, tens of thousands of uniformed personnel. If you ever talk to anybody—I don't see how anybody who has a military base even near their district can support this legislation.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. WATERS. I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman.

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Chair, I don't see how anybody who has a military base anywhere near their district can support this legislation.

I will vote to protect the experts who are laying the groundwork for the first national consumer protection rules on payday loans and other short-term, high-interest loans. I will vote to defend the Bureau's work protecting students from high-interest-rate loans and creating a uniform set of borrower rights and protections for all student loans, public or private. If we really want a stable, predictable business environment, we wouldn't be going down this path.

At the end of the day, again, the proposition is very straightforward. If you support consumer protection, you will vote ''no'' on this legislation. If you oppose consumer protection, you will vote ''yes.'' But I entreat you, I plead with you, to please vote ''no.''

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 5 seconds to encourage the gentleman from Washington to read section 1017 of the Dodd-Frank Act, and he would discover that the CFPB is funded by the Federal Reserve, which happens to be taxpayer money.

Mr. Chairman, at this time I am happy to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER), the vice chairman of our Housing and Insurance Subcommittee.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Chairman, my colleagues have done a good job of listing some of the problems of CFPB. I would like to give you an example of some of the overreach of this new agency already.

A small community bank in my district, they purchased a small lending company. With that lending company comes the lease of the building that they are operating their office out of. The CFPB comes in and says the lease is $300 per month over the course of 9 months over what the rate should be for that area. They go in and tell the bank that they are going to fine them $107,000 for this lease, which is nothing the bank made. It doesn't impact consumers, yet they are fined $107,000. The bank eventually settles for $80—plus $30,000 in attorneys' fees.

Mr. Chairman, this is an example already of this new agency's overreach. It has got to stop. H.R. 3193 does that. I urge support for that bill.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chair, I am waiting for additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I am now pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT), the chairman of our Capital Markets and GSE Subcommittee.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Chairman, the Bureau of Financial Protection claims unlimited power to define and regulate every conceivable financial transaction in the country, and yet it claims to be unaccountable to no one. So I find it disturbing that the Bureau collects private credit card data on Americans and does so without the knowledge of those Americans. Its effort is so vast that the Bureau collects information on over 990 million credit card accounts.

According to Dr. Thomas Stratmann, Professor of Economics and Law at George Mason University:

> There are costs and potential harms to collecting and maintaining massive databases of personal financial information; including the potential for abuse, or violation of consumer privacy, and security concerns in the event of a data breach.

Mr. Chairman, the Bureau believes that actions must go unquestioned, and now it wants your credit card information, too. This legislation before us protects citizens by protecting and prohibiting the Bureau from collecting Americans' nonpublic personal financial information without first receiving the express permission of the consumer.

I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to respect the financial privacy of all Americans and support this legislation.

Ms. WATERS. I continue to reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased now to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY), the chairman of the Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Chair, I appreciate my colleagues for their leadership on this important legislation.

I rise in support of it to bring some balance to an otherwise unaccountable bureaucratic agency, perhaps the most powerful agency in government with the least amount of public accountability. It has no accountability to the administration, very little to Congress, and even less to the American people. As a result, it should come as no surprise that this Bureau has operated with less transparency and less concern for fiscal discipline than even a very low bar and low standard we hold for our Federal tax dollars.

Due to this lack of accountability, certain expenditures have been called into question; in fact, their building expenditures, which is a beautiful release of a $150 million plan to renovate a building that they are leasing. Now, it is a very rare thing and pretty silly in real estate to do an enormous upfit for a building that costs $153 million—that is the appraised value—and to put $150 million at $461 a square foot into that building. It makes no sense unless you understand that these are your tax dollars at work to build luxury a couple of blocks from the White House.

These buildings are just another example of why this agency needs to be held accountable to not just the American people and the taxpayers, but to the taxpaying public and those of us who care about having access to good financial products while protecting.

So that is why I support this legislation.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chair, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I am now happy to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. HURT), the vice chairman of our Capital Markets and GSE Subcommittee.

Mr. HURT. I thank the chairman for his leadership on this issue. I thank him for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, today I rise in support of the Consumer Financial Freedom and Washington Accountability Act.

As I travel across our Virginia's Fifth District, I continue to hear troubling stories about the impacts of the CFPB. I have heard from consumers, community banks, and credit unions about how the unchecked authority of the CFPB is restricting consumer choice, creating an atmosphere of economic uncertainty, and increasing costs.

Real consumer protection requires that we shift power from Washington bureaucrats to American consumers by providing access to competitive markets with choice, information, and accountability. This bill would help achieve that goal by adding much-needed oversight and transparency to this far-reaching new government agency without weakening consumer protection.

These bipartisan checks and balances will protect our community banks and credit unions who play a critical role in providing capital to our small businesses and working families. At a time when too many Americans remain out of work, it is critical that we continue to support policies that will help restore certainty to the marketplace, create jobs, and protect our consumers.

I urge support of this good bill.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON), the chief deputy whip who also serves on the Financial Services Committee and is cochair of the Progressive Caucus.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, let me thank our ranking member for the time.

I urge a ''no'' vote on H.R. 3193 today. It is a bad bill, and it is bad for consumers, bad for Americans.

As I listened to my colleagues, one of them mentioned the CFPB offers uncertainty. Well, here is some certainty for you. You cannot cheat consumers. That is certainty enough for me. Another one said, well, you know, the CFPB doesn't offer choice. Here is a choice. You can offer any product that is fair and transparent to consumers.

That is exactly what my friends on the other side of the aisle object to. They don't want average Americans to be able to get a financial services product that is fair, that is balanced, and that makes sense in the marketplace.

You have nothing to fear from the CFPB if you do not offer a product that is designed to bilk consumers. If you do, I can see why you might be quite upset at the activity of the CFPB.

The bottom line is this is a bad bill. It will set our country back, and in fact, I believe consumer protection is at the very heart of the recession that we just went through.

Now, of course, we have heard ad nauseam that it was the housing goals and it was the other sort of measures that caused the recession, but the fact is the recession was caused because large numbers of home buyers were bilked into mortgages that they couldn't afford, that were difficult to understand, with high pressure tactics and were incentivized, even to be guided and steered to products that were more high cost than the ones they qualified for.

Then we packaged these things into mortgage-backed securities that were unsound to begin with. The rating agencies said they were fine, took out a form of insurance on them, and then when the house of cards fell, the whole economy went with it.

Consumer protection is at the heart of the problem. Consumer protection is the solution to this problem, and so this effort to undermine the CFPB today under the guise of H.R. 3193 is wrong.

Mr. Chair, we are at a whose side are you on moment. Are you on the side of Mom and Pop, of the small business owner, of the consumer trying to get a house loan or other form of credit? Or are you on someone else's side who is not in favor of a fair product?

I have said to my community bankers, look, your opponents before the crash didn't have the regulator; now, everyone has one. The CFPB offers a level playing field for all. Now everybody offering mortgage products has a degree of accountability. This is good for the financial services sector, not bad.

Since the CFPB was created following the financial crisis, it has received, Mr. Chair, more than 250,000 consumer complaints. Mr. Chair, who are these 250,000 complaints supposed to be directed to but for an agency that is responsive to them? Who would my friends on the other side of the aisle have these people go to to try to get their problems solved? We know that they weren't being listened to before the CFPB.

Now that the CFPB exists, a quarter of a million complaints and untold numbers of complainants have come forward to say, Please help me. Half of these complaints have been in the mortgage servicing area alone. Of the 3,135 complaints from my own State of Minnesota, 1,320 have been related to mortgage issues. This bill threatens to turn off access to these consumers, and I will not stand silently by while they do this.

This is a bad bill.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

□ 1630

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, this is a bad bill. Among the CFPB's many accomplishments, they have refunded more than $3 billion—billion with a ''b''—to more than 9 million consumers. That is good fiscal stewardship.

Now, the CFPB oversees industries that previously were not regulated by the Federal government, including credit reporting agencies, nonbank mortgage providers, debt collection agencies and payday lenders. All of that consumer protection would end if this bad piece of legislation were to pass.

Say no, resoundingly. Vote ''no'' on this bill.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I am now pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. STUTZMAN).

Mr. STUTZMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Consumer Financial Freedom and Washington Accountability Act. I thank Congressman DUFFY and Chairman HENSARLING for their leadership on this issue.

The CFPB is disgracefully unaccountable to the American people. Richard Cordray and future directors of the Bureau are virtually unchecked by Congress and the President.

We have seen what happens when bureaucrats so powerful are left so unaccountable. In its 3 short years, the CFPB has burned through its budgets and riffled through the private financial data of millions of Americans.

Hoosiers deserve consumer protections, but they also deserve integrity and accountability. After talking with families, small businesses, community banks, and credit unions back home, I am proud to support the commonsense reforms before the House today.

Let's replace the CFPB's Director with a five-member commission to ensure healthy discussion and bring more seats to the table. Let's rein in the CFPB's budget so that the Members of Congress from both parties can protect their constituents. Let's prohibit government bureaucrats from using private personal information without the consumers' consent.

Mr. Chairman, let's protect and empower American consumers, not Washington bureaucrats.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, can I inquire whether the gentlelady has any more speakers?

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, we have one speaker on the way.

Mr. HENSARLING. We have plenty of speakers here, Mr. Chairman. I would be glad to lend the gentlelady a few if she needs some people to speak.

Otherwise, Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. MULVANEY).

Mr. MULVANEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 3193 which, amongst many other things, replaces the single Director with a five-member commission.

I would remind my friends across the aisle that this brings the bill into the original spirit of Dodd-Frank, which, when it left this House several years ago, had eventually a five-member commission. All we are trying to do is get back to that original intention.

Further, during the discussions in committee, we focused on the membership of that commission and how it would be a decent idea to have people who are on the commission who actually knew something about the industries that they were regulating.

For example, the CFPB regulates insured banks, non-depository financial institutions, credit unions, all of which are very unique. Wouldn't it be nice to actually have folks regulating those industries who knew something about them?

This is not rare in the world of regulation. The FDIC, which oversees State banks, has been required to have someone on its commission for years who actually has experience regulating State banks. It has not been a problem for the FDIC, and it would not be a problem for the CFPB.

We need to pass this bill for a variety of reasons but, first and foremost, we need to replace the single Director with a five-man commission, and for that, I hope that we pass the bill.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield an additional 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chairman, I thank the ranking member.

I only rise for one simple point, and that is to correct the RECORD when it comes to this claim that the CFPB engages in massive, excessive data collection of consumers' information. It is not true.

Anyone listening to this debate, Mr. Chairman, should know that the CFPB does not monitor the accounts of particular consumers and does not track the financial behavior or activities of any individual customer.

The CFPB is already prohibited by law from collecting personally identifiable information in the course of its market-monitoring responsibility. Although the Bureau does collect certain information as part of its responsibility to identify and monitor market trends and proactively address emerging consumer credit issues, this information is deliberately depersonalized and aggregated to ensure consumers' sensitive information is protected.

Now, this is critically important because speaker after speaker is trying to scare consumers into believing that somebody is looking at their personal data. It is not true. It is not true, and I think it is important for people listening to this debate to know that.

Requiring the Bureau to seek consent on an individual level in order for it to access aggregated or anonymous data is not only a hindrance to the CFPB's core mission of regulating the entities that offer consumer financial products or services, but it is a burdensome requirement and, of course, intended simply to slow down, gum up, undermine, and break down the institution itself.

It is not true. People's data is safe. Looking for aggregate trends and proactively addressing emerging problems, as would have been very helpful as we got closer to the financial foreclosure crisis just a few years ago, is what the CFPB is doing.

It is doing what it is supposed to do. It is doing it well, and I don't know why any fair-minded person would be against that.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds to say that the CFPB is building a database containing full credit report data on 53 million borrowers who took out mortgages since 1998. The project manager said: "It is easy to reverse-engineer and identify the people in our database."

CFPB has a credit card database of at least 991 million credit cards and approximately 136 million Americans. The Bureau is collecting a database of credit reports on 8.6 million Americans. They continue to collect personalized data from Americans without their permission. It is unacceptable.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROSS).

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Chairman, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is one of the largest Federal undertakings in recent history, created by Congress yet unaccountable to Congress. One man is tasked with oversight of essentially the entire financial services industry.

Director Cordray works hard for consumers, but no single individual can have sufficient expertise to make determinations that impact low-income families, community banks, mortgage lending, auto lending, credit card users and students.

A real estate lawyer in my district who represents clients who specialize in lending to low-income people, whose clients have a foreclosure rate of less than 5 percent, commented:

> The only way these folks can own a home is to finance the purchase from an unconventional source. My clients get financial information from the prospective buyers relating to their ability to pay, but it does not meet the thresholds established to qualify as a Qualified Mortgage.

This year, that lawyer advised all his clients to discontinue lending. This is the same story we are receiving from our community banks.

These are the results of an unaccountable agency with insular focus. H.R. 3193 would bring much-needed accountability and ensure that enough experts are at the decision table that American families are actually protected by Federal regulations, not harmed by unintended consequences, a situation we have seen all too often in recent months.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I would like to inquire how much time is remaining on each side.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas has 9½ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from California has 4½ minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER).

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Chair, I want to thank the chairman for yielding me time. I particularly want to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY) for his leadership on this important issue and for standing up on behalf of hardworking American families.

I rise today in support of H.R. 3193 and urge its passage by this House.

The Financial Services Committee has, on multiple occasions, asked the question "Who protects consumers from the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection?"

Unfortunately, the answer for the last 3½ years has been nobody. Today, this House has an opportunity to change that.

The underlying bill includes a number of provisions to ensure that the very basic principles of good government apply to the Bureau, and it puts an end to the special treatment granted to the Bureau under Dodd-Frank.

These are commonsense, pro-consumer provisions that will help protect hardworking American families and taxpayers from yet another Washington bureaucracy that thinks it knows what is in their best interest.

I urge the passage of this bill.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR).

Mr. BARR. Mr. Chairman, this legislation is about holding Washington accountable. The Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection is one of the most powerful and unaccountable agencies in the entire Federal Government. Unfortunately, the Bureau reaches deeply into the everyday lives of Kentuckians.

In following its partisan agenda, the Bureau makes it harder for small businesses on Main Street to get a loan to

grow their business. The Bureau makes it harder for families in Kentucky to obtain a mortgage to purchase a home, including for manufactured homes. The Bureau even makes it harder to get financing discounts that help Kentuckians purchase their car or truck.

The Bureau is so out of touch that it even regulates Bath County, in my district, one of the most rural counties in America, as ''non-rural.''

These concerns are not only voiced inside of Washington. Just last week I was in Powell County, and a small business owner raised his hand during my public event to talk about how the Bureau's rules are harming his ability to do business in his community.

This avalanche of red tape coming out of the Bureau is making life harder for millions of Americans, which is why we need to pass this legislation that will reform the Bureau in a way that reins in the misguided rules that stem from its partisan excesses and unaccountable culture.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY), the ranking member of the Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Government Operations.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, I thank my distinguished ranking member and my friend from California.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose this latest Republican assault on the CFPB. It is truly baffling to see my colleagues' continued attempts to undermine the only Federal regulator created to protect American consumers.

Contrary to the talking points of the other side, this mash-up of bills will only burden the CFPB with more bureaucracy, not less. For example, the bill would replace the Director, who has been on the job for just 6 months, after the Senate Republicans held up his confirmation for 2 years, with a cumbersome five-person commission.

The bill also seeks to take the CFPB out of the Federal Reserve and make it subject to annual congressional appropriations. My Republican colleagues claim this is to provide tougher oversight, but that is a ruse. They have already stated they would defund CFPB altogether if they could.

As ranking member of the House Oversight Subcommittee on Government Operations, I firmly believe in accountability, but I would note that Director Cordray has been before this Congress 46 times since CFPB was created. I would call that pretty responsive oversight.

After the 2008 Wall Street meltdown, safeguarding our financial system ought to be a primary concern, but this bill would, once again, place the interest of banks over those of consumers. As we saw during the financial crisis, innovation led to a wave of untested and sophisticated financial products, allowing dishonest actors to take advantage of many Americans.

Dodd-Frank, which my Republican friends fought against tooth-and-nail, remains Congress' sole substantive response to the greatest financial meltdown since the Great Depression.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle found it necessary not only to fight against any attempt at regulating Wall Street, but waged much of the battle against the CFPB itself. Republicans in the Senate waged a 700-day battle to prevent a confirmation of CFPB's Director—700 days.

In just a short amount of time, since his confirmation, CFPB has become an effective champion for all Americans. It has fielded more than 280,000 consumer complaints.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. WATERS. I yield 10 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. CONNOLLY. This bill is a bad idea. It is an anti-consumer bill. I urge my colleagues to vote against it.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

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Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Chairman, much more accountability and transparency is needed in Washington, especially at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The Bureau wields broad and unchecked power over our economy, from banks to businesses to anyone who uses credit or payment plans. Abuses of that power, enabled by a lack of accountability and transparency, harms families and businesses up and down Main Streets in Pennsylvania and across the Nation.

That is why I rise today in strong support of the Consumer Financial Freedom and Washington Accountability Act. Importantly, this commonsense legislation better protects consumers by prohibiting the Bureau from using personal and private financial information without their knowledge and consent.

It also makes the Bureau subject to the regular authorization and appropriations process. This increases the American people's ability to demand accountability through their elected representatives.

The legislation will also replace a single and unaccountable director with a bipartisan five-member commission and establish more reasonable thresholds for reviewing and repealing regulations.

These changes will help rein in the regulatory overreach coming from Washington, D.C., elites. It will ensure a diversity of viewpoints is represented whenever the Bureau makes decisions that will directly impact families and businesses across the Nation.

These very reasonable reforms will protect consumers and our Nation's financial system by providing for more rigorous oversight of the powerful and unaccountable Bureau.

I urge my colleagues to support this good-government legislation.

Ms. WATERS. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I am now especially pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY), who is the vice chairman of our Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee and the chief author of the legislation of which we debate today.

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman for all the work that he has put in on this consumer financial protection reform bill. This is really a bill about accountability and transparency.

As has been discussed today, the CFPB is collecting information on almost 1 billion credit cards—1 billion credit cards—which means if you are an American and you have a credit card, the CFPB is collecting and monitoring your transactions.

So what we have done is said: Listen, if you are here to protect a consumer, why don't you ask the consumer for permission and consent to take their information?

If we care about the American citizenry—if we care about consumers and don't care about Big Government and the information they have on us, let's give them the power. Let's ask them. That is all we do. Empower the American citizenry.

Again, let's empower Congress and the American people as well. When we don't fund agencies through this institution, we lose authority; we lose oversight.

Let's take that power and control back into Congress, and let's actually put the power back in the hands of the people; but if you empower the Fed to fund this agency, you have taken the control away from this institution. That is wrong.

One of the most important reform parts of this bill is meaningful to me because I come from rural America; and the way that the law is structured is that if a bad rule comes from the CFPB, it can be overturned.

You can go to FSOC and say: Listen, this rule is going to create systemic risk; meaning, it is going to have a negative impact on our economy. It should be overturned.

Now think about what kind of financial institutions can go to FSOC and say: This rule is bad; overturn it.

Is it the small community bank? Is it the credit union in rural America? Heck, no. But if you are a big Wall Street bank, you have been given a voice in the way my friends across the aisle have structured this law.

Big banks on Wall Street who created the crisis are given a voice to have rules from the CFPB overturned, but you have left the small banks and credit unions in my district voiceless to say: this rule is going to hurt us.

That is wrong.

Listen, we want to talk about protecting consumers, giving a voice to consumers, making sure Big Government isn't breathing down their backs.

Want to know who protects consumers and finance? Our credit unions,

our small community banks. And guess what? The Credit Union National Association, they endorse and support our bill. The National Association of Federal Credit Unions endorsed and support this bill. The Independent Community Bankers endorsed and support this bill.

This is the right thing to do. Let's empower Congress and empower the American people. Let's reform the CFPB and actually make it work.

Ms. WATERS. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I am now pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PITTENGER).

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Chairman, I thank Chairman HENSARLING for the time and for allowing me to speak on this important issue; and I also thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY) for his the leadership on this legislation.

This legislation is absolutely necessary to bring pragmatic reforms to CFPB. The CFPB needs transparency. It needs accountability. It needs privacy reforms.

The first main goal of this legislation is to replace the single all-powerful director with a five-person independent commission. This will allow for a healthy debate and to bring rules and regulations that are proposed at this agency.

It would put CFPB on a regular budgetary cycle with annual appropriations. This will shield the very American taxpayer from wasteful spending and allow Congress the proper oversight that this agency absolutely needs.

One of the key provisions of this bill prohibits CFPB from accessing, collecting, and analyzing the American people's personal financial data without their express permission.

In the wake of the regulation tsunami coming from D.C., it is time that Congress exercise its authority to help rein in government bureaucrats and help provide the clarity to business owners across the country.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. WATERS. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY).

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3193.

I am an automobile dealer, and my family has been in the business for 63 years.

CFPB is kind of interesting because what we have done now, we have absolutely abandoned the rulemaking process, and we have gone to another type of influencing people; and the relationship that car dealers have with their customers is sometimes to navigate a very difficult financial system to get their loans arranged.

But no, we want to do it a different way. We want to do it with guidance. Here is the way it kind of works. It is like the policeman walking his beat and pulling out his billy club and tapping it on his hand and saying: I strongly suggest you follow my guidance.

There is no oversight on this. This group of people are going to make decisions by not even consulting us, the people. We do represent the people, and I would like to think that we can come together once in a while to do what is in the best interest of the people that we represent, not a Republican issue, not a Democratic issue, but an American issue.

We have to do these things. Again, strong suggestions that you follow my guidance, as opposed to letting people sit down and negotiate themselves, that is not the way the American system works.

It never has, never will. It never should have happened. CFPB should have never come to the light of day.

Ms. WATERS. I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, I want to, once again, reiterate my strong opposition to this harmful legislation which will weaken the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, an agency created to protect consumers and defend them against bad actors and practices throughout our financial system.

Just in case we are losing sight of what this Bureau is all about, we have many citizens out there who are the victims of false advertising. People advertise something. They advertise a price. They advertise a product. They go to buy the product. It is not there. It costs more money.

Debt collectors, how many of our citizens have been harassed by debt collectors, calling them in the middle of the night, asking for information, and charging them with things they have never been involved in?

Don't forget those payday loans. Poor people run out of money, go to a payday lender, get charged 500 percent for a payday loan.

What about those private postsecondary schools where all of those students who are trying to get an education are forced into getting loans, are encouraged to get loans, get ripped off, don't learn anything, can't get a job?

What about those mortgage lenders who tricked all of those people into mortgage loans and they end up losing their homes? What about discrimination against the aged? What about what they did to our good men and women who served in different branches of the military for all of us and got ripped off by payday lenders?

This is what the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is all about. I don't know how anyone could think that we shouldn't have protection for our consumers. Our consumers are finding out that, finally, we have something.

They are calling our telephone number, (855) 411–2372, to get some help. They are going to our Web site, www.consumerfinance.gov. Over 289,000 citizens have gone to this www.consumerfinance.gov Web site. They have called this telephone number, (855) 411–2372, because, finally, they have a bureau that is paying attention to all of the rip-offs, all of the fraudulent advertising, all of the overcharging of fees, all of what they did not have protection from in the past.

We realized, at some point in time, that all of our regulatory agencies that were supposed to be paying attention were not. Now, we have protection.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

To protect consumers, you first need to make sure they have the power to consume; and under the Obama administration economic policies, tens of millions of our fellow citizens are either unemployed or underemployed. They don't have the income to consume. That is not consumer protection.

Part of the problem is the CFPB because true consumer protection, Mr. Chairman, empowers consumers in innovative, transparent, competitive markets; and it respects the intelligence and the dignity of the American citizen; and it preserves their economic liberty to choose the mortgages, the credit cards, and, yes, even the payday loans that they choose to consume.

But instead, Mr. Chairman, many of my friends on the other side of the aisle would love to take away ''In God we trust'' and put up there ''In government we trust.''

The American people are tired of unaccountable, arrogant Washington bureaucrats, the unaccountable, the unelected who are taking away their homeownership opportunities, taking away their credit cards, and insulting them by saying: I am from Washington. I am smarter than you. I am better than you. I know what is best.

It is time for us to pass the Consumer Financial Freedom and Washington Accountability Act; and I particularly thank Messrs. DUFFY, BACHUS, and NEUGEBAUER for authoring this key piece of legislation. I urge its passage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Chair, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), which is a cornerstone of the Dodd-Frank Act, has already proven invaluable in ensuring that financial products offered to American consumers comply with federal law and are not abusive or misleading.

The CFPB has brought transparency, accountability and clarity to our markets.

Because of the CFPB's work, our residential mortgage lending system is now governed by standards that cap the points and fees a lender may charge, limit risky loan products, and prohibit loans with terms longer than 30 years.

CFPB has also enacted new rules to end the abuses in the mortgage servicing process that were so common before the financial crisis. These rules require servicers to credit payments the day they are received and to respond to customer inquiries in a timely manner.

They also limit ''dual tracking'' to ensure borrowers are not foreclosed on while they wait to see if they qualify for a loan modification.

And through its enforcement actions, CFPB has already recovered approximately $3 billion for consumers who have been the victims of abuse. As of this month, the CFPB has received and is processing more than nine thousand complaints from residents of Maryland alone.

Unfortunately, rather than ensuring the CFPB has all of the resources it needs to help consumers, Republicans in the House have routinely sought to undermine the CFPB and the bill before us today simply continues that attack.

The only way to protect our constituents from entities that would take advantage of them is to vote against this bill and oppose all efforts to roll back the consumer protections enacted in the Dodd-Frank legislation.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong opposition to the Consumer Financial Protection Safety and Soundness Improvement Act, H.R. 3193.

As designed by Dodd-Frank, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—CFPB—is the only agency whose final rules can be overruled by a vote of other financial regulators.

This was explicitly included in Dodd-Frank to ensure that CFPB guidelines do not unduly jeopardize the safe functioning of the U.S. financial system.

However, the inaptly named H.R. 3193 is yet another transparent attempt by Members of the majority to weaken the authority of the only federal agency responsible for protecting consumers in their financial dealings.

If enacted, H.R. 3193 would not only broaden the ability to overturn CFPB rules, but would also lower the threshold required to do so.

This would make it more difficult for the CFPB to meet its mission of creating and enforcing federal consumer financial laws, and would be a significant step backward in the effort to improve oversight and supervision of our nation's financial institutions.

It is repugnant to me that after millions of Americans had their financial security imperiled by the predatory practices of mortgage lenders, originators and servicers, that Members of this House would consider this bill designed to weaken the one financial regulator focused on returning temperance to deals where there was once greed, and prudence to markets where there was previously ''irrational exuberance.''

I urge my colleagues to stand up for the American people by voting ''no'' on H.R. 3193.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, H.R. 3193 is a clear attempt to undermine the independence and effectiveness of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. As such, I oppose passage of this legislation.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) was created by the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Bill in response to widespread market abuses that helped precipitate the financial crisis and is the first ever independent watchdog charged with the sole task of protecting the financial lives of America's families. Since its inception, the CFPB has handled nearly 270,000 consumer complaints and secured more than $3 billion in relief for almost 10 million consumers through enforcement actions against bad actors who were violating the law. It has established important oversight for industries ranging from payday lenders to debt collectors to credit reporting agencies. And it has generally received high marks from industry leaders and consumer advocates alike for the openness and evenhandedness of its operations. Not surprisingly, the Senate confirmed the CFPB's first director Richard Cordray by a bipartisan vote of 66–34 in the summer of last year.

Rather than building on this track record of success, H.R. 3193 would weaken the CFPB by bureaucratizing its structure, placing additional constraints on its operations, slashing its funding and subjecting that funding to the political pressures of the annual appropriations process. If the majority really believed the annual appropriations process was necessary to ensure the proper oversight of our federal banking regulators, this legislation would be recommending similar treatment for the Federal Reserve, or the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency. It doesn't—which tells you all you need to know about the consistency of the conviction underlying this bill.

In my judgment, the CFPB is succeeding at its job of protecting consumers in a fair and transparent marketplace. Accordingly, I urge a no vote.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Chair, I would like to express my opposition to H.R. 3193, the Consumer Financial Protection Safety and Soundness Improvement Act of 2013. This legislation would strip essential mandates from an agency that was created to protect consumers from risky practices that caused the financial crisis.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has successfully refunded over $3 billion to consumers who were financially harmed by deceptive practices. The vital protections the CFPB provides must not be overlooked; without its oversight, consumers will be exposed to greater risk in financial markets.

Since its creation in 2011, the CFPB has collected over $80 million in civil penalties from financial institutions that harmed consumers. They also have handled more than 269,900 complaints from consumers. Thirty million consumers would not be subject to federal protections from improper debt collections if the CFPB did not exist.

Additionally, without the presence of the CFPB, twelve million consumers that use pay day lending would not be protected by federal supervision, and 200 million consumer credit reports would not be protected from unscrupulous behavior. The CFPB should be applauded for its efforts to end harmful practices in the marketplace. Rather than abrogate this successful agency, the CFPB should retain its current structure and mandate so that it can continue to be an exemplary model for other bank regulators.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113–36 modified by the amendment printed in part A of House Report 113–350. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 3193

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 ''Consumer Financial Freedom and Washington Accountability Act''.

SEC. 2. FINANCIAL PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Section 1011 of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 (12 U.S.C. 5491) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 1011. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FINANCIAL PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established an independent commission to be known as the 'Financial Product Safety Commission' (hereinafter referred to in this section as the 'Commission'), which shall regulate the offering and provision of consumer financial products or services under the Federal consumer financial laws. The Commission shall be considered an Executive agency, as defined in section 105 of title 5, United States Code. Except as otherwise provided expressly by law, all Federal laws dealing with public or Federal contracts, property, works, officers, employees, budgets, or funds, including the provisions of chapters 5 and 7 of title 5, shall apply to the exercise of the powers of the Commission.

''(b) AUTHORITY TO PRESCRIBE REGULATIONS.—The Commission may prescribe such regulations and issue such orders in accordance with this title as the Commission may determine to be necessary for carrying out this title and all other laws within the Commission's jurisdiction and shall exercise any authorities granted under this title and all other laws within the Commission's jurisdiction.

''(c) COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall be composed of the Vice Chairman for Supervision of the Federal Reserve System and 4 additional members who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, from among individuals who—

''(A) are citizens of the United States; and

''(B) have strong competencies and experiences related to consumer financial protection.

''(2) STAGGERING.—The members of the Commission appointed under paragraph (1) shall serve staggered terms, which initially shall be established by the President for terms of 1, 2, 4, and 5 years, respectively.

''(3) TERMS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Each member of the Commission appointed under paragraph (1), including the Chair, shall serve for a term of 5 years.

''(B) REMOVAL.—The President may remove any member of the Commission appointed under paragraph (1).

''(C) VACANCIES.—Any member of the Commission appointed under paragraph (1) appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term to which that member's predecessor was appointed (including the Chair) shall be appointed only for the remainder of the term.

''(D) CONTINUATION OF SERVICE.—Each member of the Commission appointed under paragraph (1) may continue to serve after the expiration of the term of office to which that member was appointed until a successor has been appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, except that a member may not continue to serve more than 1 year after the date on which that member's term would otherwise expire.

''(E) OTHER EMPLOYMENT PROHIBITED.—No member of the Commission appointed under paragraph (1) shall engage in any other business, vocation, or employment.

''(d) AFFILIATION.—With respect to members appointed pursuant to subsection (c)(1), not more than 2 shall be members of any one political party.

''(e) CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION.—

''(1) APPOINTMENT.—The Chair of the Commission shall be appointed by the President from among the members of the Commission appointed under subsection (c)(1).

''(2) AUTHORITY.—The Chair shall be the principal executive officer of the Commission, and shall exercise all of the executive and administrative functions of the Commission, including with respect to—

''(A) the appointment and supervision of personnel employed under the Commission (other than personnel employed regularly and full time in the immediate offices of members of the Commission other than the Chair);

''(B) the distribution of business among personnel appointed and supervised by the Chair and among administrative units of the Commission; and

''(C) the use and expenditure of funds.

''(3) LIMITATION.—In carrying out any of the Chair's functions under the provisions of this subsection the Chair shall be governed by general policies of the Commission and by such regulatory decisions, findings, and determinations as the Commission may by law be authorized to make.

''(4) REQUESTS OR ESTIMATES RELATED TO APPROPRIATIONS.—Requests or estimates for regular, supplemental, or deficiency appropriations on behalf of the Commission may not be submitted by the Chair without the prior approval of the Commission.

''(f) NO IMPAIRMENT BY REASON OF VACANCIES.—No vacancy in the members of the Commission shall impair the right of the remaining members of the Commission to exercise all the powers of the Commission. Three members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, except that if there are only 3 members serving on the Commission because of vacancies in the Commission, 2 members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. If there are only 2 members serving on the Commission because of vacancies in the Commission, 2 members shall constitute a quorum for the 6-month period beginning on the date of the vacancy which caused the number of Commission members to decline to 2.

''(g) SEAL.—The Commission shall have an official seal.

''(h) COMPENSATION.—

''(1) CHAIR.—The Chair shall receive compensation at the rate prescribed for level I of the Executive Schedule under section 5313 of title 5, United States Code.

''(2) OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.—The 3 other members of the Commission appointed under subsection (c)(1) shall each receive compensation at the rate prescribed for level II of the Executive Schedule under section 5314 of title 5, United States Code.

''(i) INITIAL QUORUM ESTABLISHED.—During any time period prior to the confirmation of at least two members of the Commission, one member of the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Following the confirmation of at least 2 additional commissioners, the quorum requirements of subsection (f) shall apply.

''(j) OFFICES.—The principal office of the Commission shall be in the District of Columbia. The Commission may establish regional offices of the Commission in order to carry out the responsibilities assigned to the Commission under the Federal consumer financial laws.''.

(b) BRINGING THE COMMISSION INTO THE REGULAR APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS.—Section 1017 of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 (12 U.S.C. 5497) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by amending the heading of such subsection to read as follows: ''BUDGET, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, AND AUDIT.—'';

(B) by striking paragraphs (1), (2), and (3);

(C) by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (1) and (2), respectively; and

(D) by striking subparagraphs (E) and (F) of paragraph (1), as so redesignated;

(2) by striking subsections (b) and (c);

(3) by redesignating subsections (d) and (e) as subsections (b) and (c), respectively; and

(4) in subsection (c), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) and inserting the following:

''(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this title $300,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 and 2015.''; and

(B) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (2).

(c) ENSURING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE COMMISSION.—The Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 is amended—

(1) in section 1012(c), (12 U.S.C. 5492 (c)) by striking paragraphs (2), (3), (4), and (5); and

(2) in section 1014(b), (12 U.S.C. 5494(b)) by striking ''Not fewer than 6 members shall be appointed upon the recommendation of the regional Federal Reserve Bank Presidents, on a rotating basis.''.

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION ACT OF 2010.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under subparagraph (B), the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 (12 U.S.C. 5481 et seq.) is amended—

(i) by striking ''Director of the'' each place such term appears, other than where such term is used to refer to a Director other than the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection;

(ii) by striking ''Director'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Financial Product Safety Commission'', other than where such term is used to refer to a Director other than the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection; and

(iii) in section 1002 (12 U.S.C. 5481), by striking paragraph (10).

(B) EXCEPTIONS.—The Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 is amended—

(i) in section 1012(c)(4) (12 U.S.C. 5492 (c) (4)), by striking ''Director'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Financial Product Safety Commission'';

(ii) in section 1013(c)(3) (12 U.S.C. 5493 (c) (3))—

(I) by striking ''Assistant Director of the Bureau for'' and inserting ''Head of the Office of''; and

(II) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''Assistant Director'' and inserting ''Head of the Office'';

(iii) in section 1013(g)(2) (12 U.S.C. 5493(g)(2))—

(I) by striking ''ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'' and inserting ''HEAD OF THE OFFICE''; and

(II) by striking ''an assistant director'' and inserting ''a Head of the Office of Financial Protection for Older Americans'';

(iv) in section 1016(a) (12 U.S.C. 5496(a)), by striking ''Director of the Bureau'' and inserting ''Chair of the Commission''; and

(v) in section 1066(a) (12 U.S.C. 5586(a)), by striking ''Director of the Bureau is'' and inserting ''first member of the Commission is''.

(2) DODD-FRANK WALL STREET REFORM AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT.—The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.) is amended—

(A) in the table of contents for such Act by amending the item relating to section 1011 to read as follows:

''Sec. 1011. Establishment of the Financial Product Safety Commission.'';

(B) in section 111(b)(1)(D) (12 U.S.C. 5321(b)(1)(D)), by striking ''Director'' and inserting ''Chair of the Financial Product Safety Commission''; and

(C) in section 1447 (12 U.S.C. 1701p-2), by striking ''Director of the Bureau'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Financial Product Safety Commission''.

(3) ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER ACT.—Section 920(a)(4)(C) of the Electronic Fund Transfer Act (15 U.S.C. 1693o–2(a)(4)(C)), as added by section 1075(a)(2) of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010, is amended by striking ''Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection'' and inserting ''Financial Product Safety Commission''.

(4) EXPEDITED FUNDS AVAILABILITY ACT.—The Expedited Funds Availability Act (12 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.), as amended by section 1086 of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010, is amended by striking ''Director of the Bureau'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Financial Product Safety Commission''.

(5) FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE ACT.—Section 2 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1812), as amended by section 336(a) of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, is amended by striking ''Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Chair of the Financial Product Safety Commission''.

(6) FEDERAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS EXAMINATION COUNCIL ACT OF 1978.—Section 1004(a)(4) of the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3303(a)(4)), as amended by section 1091 of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010, is amended by striking ''Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau'' and inserting ''Chair of the Financial Product Safety Commission''.

(7) FINANCIAL LITERACY AND EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT.—Section 513 of the Financial Literacy and Education Improvement Act (20 U.S.C. 9702), as amended by section 1013(d)(5) of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010, is amended by striking ''Director'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Chair of the Commission''.

(8) HOME MORTGAGE DISCLOSURE ACT OF 1975.—Section 307 of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975 (12 U.S.C. 2806), as amended by section 1094(6) of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010, is amended by striking ''Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Financial Product Safety Commission''.

(9) INTERSTATE LAND SALES FULL DISCLOSURE ACT.—The Interstate Land Sales Full Disclosure Act (15 U.S.C. 1701 et seq), as amended by section 1098A of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010, is amended—

(A) by amending section 1402(1) (15 U.S.C. 1701(1)) to read as follows:

''(1) 'Chair' means the Chair of the Financial Product Safety Commission;''; and

(B) in section 1416(a) (15 U.S.C. 1715(a)), by striking ''Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection'' and inserting ''Chair''.

(10) REAL ESTATE SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES ACT OF 1974.—Section 5 of the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 (12 U.S.C. 2604), as amended by section 1450 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, is amended—

(A) by striking ''The Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection (hereafter in this section referred to as the 'Director')'' and inserting ''The Financial Product Safety Commission''; and

(B) by striking ''Director'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Financial Product Safety Commission''.

(11) S.A.F.E. MORTGAGE LICENSING ACT OF 2008.—The S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 (12 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.), as amended by section 1100 of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010, is amended—

(A) by striking ''Director'' each place such term appears in headings and text, other than where such term is used in the context of the Director of the Office of Thrift Supervision, and

inserting ''Financial Product Safety Commission''; and

(B) in section 1503 (12 U.S.C. 5102), by striking paragraph (10).

(12) TITLE 44, UNITED STATES CODE.—Section 3513(c) of title 44, United States Code, as amended by section 1100D(b) of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010, is amended by striking ''Director of the Bureau'' and inserting ''Financial Product Safety Commission''.

(e) DEEMING OF NAMES.—

(1) BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION.—Any reference in a law, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection shall be deemed a reference to the Financial Product Safety Commission.

(2) DIRECTOR.—Any reference in a law, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection shall be deemed a reference to the Chair of the Financial Product Safety Commission.

SEC. 3. RATE OF PAY FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE FINANCIAL PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1013(a)(2) of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5493(a)(2)) is amended to read as follows:

''(2) COMPENSATION.—The rates of basic pay for all employees of the Financial Product Safety Commission shall be set and adjusted in accordance with the General Schedule set forth in section 5332 of title 5, United States Code.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to service by an employee of the Financial Product Safety Commission following the 90-day period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. CONSUMER RIGHT TO FINANCIAL PRIVACY.

(a) REQUIREMENT OF THE FINANCIAL PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION TO OBTAIN PERMISSION BEFORE COLLECTING NONPUBLIC PERSONAL INFORMATION.—

(1) REQUIRED NOTIFICATION AND PERMISSION.—Section 1022(c)(9)(A) of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5512(c)(9)(A)) is amended—

(A) by striking ''may not obtain from a covered person or service provider'' and inserting ''may not request, obtain, access, collect, use, retain, or disclose'';

(B) by striking ''personally identifiable financial'' and inserting ''nonpublic personal''; and

(C) by striking ''from the financial records'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''unless—

''(i) the Financial Product Safety Commission clearly and conspicuously discloses to the consumer, in writing or in an electronic form, what information will be requested, obtained, accessed, collected, used, retained, or disclosed; and

''(ii) before such information is requested, obtained, accessed, collected, used, retained, or disclosed, the consumer informs the Financial Product Safety Commission that such information may be requested, obtained, accessed, collected, used, retained, or disclosed.''.

(2) APPLICATION OF REQUIREMENT TO CONTRACTORS OF THE FINANCIAL PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION.—Section 1022(c)(9)(B) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 5512(c)(9)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

''(B) APPLICATION OF REQUIREMENT TO CONTRACTORS OF THE FINANCIAL PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION.—Subparagraph (A) shall apply to any person directed or engaged by the Financial Product Safety Commission to collect information to the extent such information is being collected on behalf of the Financial Product Safety Commission.''.

(3) DEFINITION OF NONPUBLIC PERSONAL INFORMATION.—Section 1022(c)(9) of such Act (12 U.S.C. 5512(c)(9)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C) DEFINITION OF NONPUBLIC PERSONAL INFORMATION.—In this paragraph, the term 'nonpublic personal information' has the meaning given the term in section 509 of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (15 U.S.C. 6809).''.

(b) REMOVAL OF EXEMPTION FOR THE FINANCIAL PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION FROM THE RIGHT TO FINANCIAL PRIVACY ACT.—Section 1113 of the Right to Financial Privacy Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3413) is amended by striking subsection (r).

SEC. 5. CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION SAFETY AND SOUNDNESS IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) COUNCIL VOTING PROCEDURE.—Section 1023(c)(3)(A) of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 (12 U.S.C. 5513(c)(3)(A)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''⅔'' and inserting ''a majority''; and

(2) by inserting before the period the following: '', excluding the Chair of the Financial Product Safety Commission''.

(b) REVIEW AUTHORITY OF THE COUNCIL.—Section 1023 of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 (12 U.S.C. 5513) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall''; and

(B) by striking ''regulation or provision would put the safety and soundness of the United States banking system or the stability of the financial system of the United States at risk'' and inserting ''regulation which is the subject of the petition is inconsistent with the safe and sound operations of United States financial institutions''; and

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (3)(B)(ii), by striking ''would put the safety and soundness of the United States banking system or the stability of the financial system of the United States at risk'' and inserting ''is inconsistent with the safe and sound operations of United States financial institutions'';

(B) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by striking subparagraph (B); and

(ii) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (B);

(C) by striking paragraph (5); and

(D) by redesignating paragraphs (6), (7), and (8) as paragraphs (5), (6), and (7), respectively.

(c) SAFETY AND SOUNDNESS CHECK.—Section 1022(b)(2)(A) of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 (12 U.S.C. 5512(b)(2)(A)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in clause (ii), by adding ''and'' at the end; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) the impact of such rule on the financial safety or soundness of an insured depository institution;''.

The CHAIR. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part B of House Report 113–350. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. RIGELL

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part B of House Report 113–350.

Mr. RIGELL. I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following new section:

SEC. 6. ANALYSIS OF REGULATIONS.

Section 1022 of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 (12 U.S.C. 5512) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e) ANALYSIS OF REGULATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Each time the Commission proposes a new rule or regulation, the Commission shall—

''(A) carry out an initial regulatory flexibility analysis for such proposed rule or regulation, which shall be carried out as closely as possible to those initial regulatory flexibility analyses required under section 603 of title 5, United States Code, but which shall analyze the financial impact of the proposed rule or regulation on covered persons, regardless of size; and

''(B) carry out an analysis of whether the proposed rule or regulation will impair the ability of individuals and small businesses to have access to credit.

''(2) REPORT.—The Commission shall issue a report to the Council on each analysis carried out under paragraph (1), and make such analysis available to the public.

''(3) USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES.—The Commission shall use existing resources to carry out the requirements of this subsection.''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 475, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. RIGELL) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. RIGELL. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank my friend and colleague from Texas, Chairman HENSARLING, and all of those who worked on this underlying legislation, H.R. 3193.

My amendment strengthens that legislation, and I really respect how it was crafted, the legislation that underlies my amendment. It really is much needed.

□ 1600

My amendment is focused on one of the most critical ingredients that is necessary for those that are trying to start a new business or to grow an existing business, and that is access to credit. Now, I offer my amendment based on my own real-world experience. It is about 22 years ago that I started my business, and I was able to start it and to grow it and to say these wonderful words to so many fellow Americans in Virginia's Second Congressional District, ''You are hired.'' I was able to say those words because one of the ingredients I had available to me was access to credit.

I offer my amendment today based, as well, on the clear, united, and truly rational voice that is being articulated by Virginia's Second Congressional District, and that is that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is truly and irrefutably, in their view and in mine, damaging and harming their ability to have access to credit.

Common ground is something that I come to work every day seeking to advance. I am convinced, absolutely, that it is here and it can be found. In fact, this gridlock that we so often experience truly is hurting our country. But

as I listen to my colleagues so often on the other side—and I have been up here and had the privilege of serving in this institution 3 years—quite frankly, when I hear statements like we don't care about consumers, I take offense at this. And I have listened to it for 3 years, and I think that it does a disservice to this House and to the American people to continually claim that we don't care about the American consumer or that we don't care about the environment or the poor or the aged. Indeed we do. And this represents my best judgment, and the best judgment of so many, that this underlying legislation in my particular amendment would help consumers. I am convinced of this.

What my amendment does is it requires the Bureau to simply do this: to consider and to calculate in a very careful way exactly how the impact—the adverse impact that these regulations that are being put forth by this organization—would affect credit. Now, indeed, isn't this common ground? It is really common sense. Before you take any action to do something, you ought to take a moment to consider what that action might do in inhibiting individual Americans and businesses from accessing credit.

I think it is critical, too, that we look at the organization itself. This is an organization that is really outside of the scope of accountability that we really should be requiring of each and every agency in the Federal Government. It is largely outside the accountability and the influence of Congress. And this is quite striking: it is largely out of the influence of the President. In a unique way, and I think in a harmful way, it is largely outside of the accountability of the court system.

Look, common sense will just tell you that is not a good idea for any agency to be outside of accountability. Each Member here is accountable to our own district. The actions that have been taken by this organization already, sure, we can find a few that have been helpful and I think ought to continue—taking care of our military and making sure that businesses operate in an ethical manner—but, overwhelmingly, what we are seeing is this: that the sum of all things is it is hurting the American consumer, and it is hurting our ability of fellow Americans to access credit. That is why I urge support for the underlying legislation and my amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MARCHANT). The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chair, I yield myself 3 minutes.

I rise in opposition to this amendment, and I will take a moment just to respond to the gentleman from Virginia who seemed a little bit disturbed that we would claim that they do not care about consumers. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, sir, and because of the way that the Republicans have opposed the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the manner in which we have described today that you have attempted to dismantle this Bureau, the way that you have tried to deny it having a strong Director, for all of those reasons, it is absolutely clear that you do not wish to have a Bureau that protects our consumers.

And so when we make these charges, we make them because we have proof. We have the information, we have the actions, and we have all that you have done to demonstrate that you really don't want a Bureau to protect the consumers of this country.

The fact is that Americans want banks to be regulated in order to prevent the kind of economic catastrophe that we are recovering from to this day. Because Republicans haven't been able to repeal the Dodd-Frank Act, you have focused on making it impossible for the agencies to enact the rules required by the Wall Street reform bill. Your new strategy is to prevent our regulators from functioning by saddling them with burdensome and duplicative cost-benefit requirements.

Let's take a moment to talk about the cost of the financial crisis. The United States Department of the Treasury measured the cost of the financial crisis at $19.2 trillion in loss of household wealth and 8.8 million in lost jobs. Communities of color were hit particularly hard, losing over 50 percent of their household wealth. Millions of borrowers have been foreclosed upon, and millions more remain underwater and struggling to stay in their homes to this day.

A report by the Government Accountability Office on the cost-benefit analysis of the Dodd-Frank Act stated:

> If the cost of a future crisis is expected to be in the trillions of dollars, then the act likely would need to reduce the probability of a future financial crisis by only a small percent for its expected benefit to equal the act's expected cost.

Beyond all of this, this amendment is a solution in search of a problem. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is already required to perform cost-benefit analysis on its rules and evaluate impacts on small businesses. The CFPB has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to minimizing the impact of its rules on small banking institutions and small businesses.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. RIGELL. Mr. Chairman, tell me how much time is remaining, please.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia has 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. RIGELL. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentlelady's remarks. I still hold the view that the sum of all things that I have heard in our district is that the Bureau is doing more harm than good.

I urge, again, my colleagues to vote for the underlying legislation and my amendment which would help protect individual Americans and businesses in their ability to seek credit, which is an essential part to keeping our economy growing and creating more jobs.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. RIGELL).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I ask for a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia will be postponed.

The Chair understands that amendment No. 2 will not be offered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. DESANTIS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in part B of House Report 113–350.

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Chair, I offer my amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 6. REPEAL OF EXCLUSIVE RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.

Section 1022(b) of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 (12 U.S.C. 5512(b)) is amended by striking paragraph (4).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 475, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Speaker, James Madison told us in the Federalist Papers:

> If men were angels, no government would be necessary. And if angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.

And so as I look at this agency which lacks all the traditional measures for constitutional accountability, I am reminded by that insight. The Founding Fathers understood human nature, and they understood that people in positions of power will eventually, at some point, abuse that power. That is just inherent in the nature of man, and so they built a government to have checks and balances.

As I look at this consumer financial protection agency, I am wowed by the amount of power that has been invested in this: very limited executive accountability, the CFPB Director is essentially the financial czar of the country, and no budget oversight by Congress. I know we are trying to change that in this bill, but Madison said that the most effectual check that we have in Congress is the power of the purse.

There is this huge amount of deference in terms of what judicial review

is allowed to be done. The courts are instructed to defer to the CFPB. The problem with that is that there are a lot of novel concepts in this bill. Terms are introduced that don't necessarily have a definition in other regulatory history, and the CFPB is basically going to be given carte blanche to go forward on that. And when asked about some of these terms, the CFPB Director said, well, you kind of figure it out when you see it, and it is a puzzle that we are putting together.

Well, that is not acceptable, and I think the American people need to have recourse to the courts. So what my amendment does is it reinstitutes judicial review, and it removes this excessive deference that has been granted to the CFPB.

I hear reports about all this data that is being collected on American citizens—credit card transactions and debit card transactions, millions of these things are being done. Are we just supposed to say that the people should have no recourse in case that is abused? We are just supposed to trust the CFPB in terms of how they use that data?

The bottom line is you have an agency that is combining legislative power, executive power, and judicial power. That is contrary to our constitutional structure and contrary to the separation of powers doctrine, and I don't think most Americans have confidence that some far, distant Bureau should just be left to their own devices and that somehow they will be able to make all these decisions better for individual Americans than they can make for themselves.

So I urge the adoption of my amendment, Mr. Chairman, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chair, I yield myself 3 minutes.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau was designed with one goal in mind: we were giving consumers a fair shake in the marketplace by making sure they finally had a regulator who was on their side. The CFPB is the only agency with the expertise and the mission to focus on developing trends in the consumer finance marketplace, identify abuses, and stop them before they lead borrowers into financial ruin.

Prior to the passage of the Dodd-Frank Act, consumer financial laws were supposed to be enforced by cooperation amongst all of the regulators. But as we now know all too well, safety and soundness concerns time and again trumped those of consumer protection, leading to the system where all of the regulators were responsible and none of them were accountable.

It was precisely this inattention to consumer protection that allowed the crisis to boil up under regulators' noses, leaving American families to foot the bill. Fortunately, Congress learned the lesson that strong protections for consumers are essential to maintaining a stable and sound economic foundation.

Upon passage of the Dodd-Frank Act, this House finally had put a cop on the beat with exclusive authority to issue sensible rules that protect every American. We are confident that the CFPB will continue to work diligently with prudential regulators to make sure their rules are consistent with the safe and sound operations of banks, ensuring that both rulemaking and enforcement authorities reside exclusively with the CFPB and will increase confidence in consumer markets and also ensure certainty for businesses and financial institutions.

Returning to the broken model that existed before the crisis just doesn't make good sense. So I would urge my colleagues to reject this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1615

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to adopt this amendment. The notion that somehow we are just going to put all this trust in the CFPB and why you can't have the ability to go into court and have the courts review some of their actions to me just doesn't cut it. I would much rather err on the side of having protections for the American people from government agencies that have too much power than err on the side of giving the agency an excessive amount of power and just hoping that they exercise that in a prudent fashion.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I ask my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on this amendment. I applaud the other Members who have been involved in crafting this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman and Members, we have had discussions with Members on the opposite side of the aisle about protection for our consumers. We have heard them tell us everything about people should have choices. They can go and hire their own lawyers, they can go into court. They can do all of these things. The fact of the matter is, government does have the responsibility to protect consumers. This is a government of laws and rules that we put together for businesses. We allow businesses to operate in certain ways, but we cannot allow them to run roughshod over consumers.

Like I said, prior to Dodd-Frank, that is, the reform, we had nobody looking out for consumers. We had our financial services agencies of government saying that their real job was for safety and soundness, not for consumer protection. So we have had news media, we have had nonprofit agencies, we have had groups getting together trying to address all of these abuses, all of these problems all by themselves. Well, guess what? Now we have a cop on the block. It is your government. This consumerfinance.gov Web site is there for all of our citizens. This telephone number, (855) 411–2372, is there for our consumers to call, and while you are calling the Bureau, call your elected officials also and ask them why they don't stand up for you, why they are on the floor of Congress advocating against your right to have protection from all of these kinds of abuses. Enough is enough.

Americans consumers are losing dollars every day because of crooks and schemes and thieves and on and on and on, and now you get rid of the very agency that would protect them from all of these schemes? I am so happy that we have reform. I am so happy that now the American people can rely on their government to come to their aid.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MS. MOORE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in part B of House Report 113–350.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 6. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) ''The Congress acknowledges and honors the tremendous work of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection in protecting and providing relief to consumers from instances of unfair, deceptive, and abusive practices in financial markets.

(2) The Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection has refunded over $3 billion to approximately 9.7 million victims of deceptive or abusive practices in financial markets since its inception.

(3) The Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection has continued to engage with consumers, industry, Congress, and other regulators to promulgate rules making U.S. financial markets the fairest, safest, and most robust in the world.

(4) Changes to the current management, oversight, or funding of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection would undermine the mission of the Bureau.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the Congress—

(1) acknowledges the meritorious work of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection; and

(2) supports the Bureau's ongoing mission by preserving the current management, oversight, and funding structure of the Bureau.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 475, the gentlewoman

from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wisconsin.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Chairman, my amendment is straightforward. It simply provides a sense of Congress that acknowledges the tremendous work done by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau as it was originally conceived in Dodd-Frank and how it has been operating to this point.

The agency, Mr. Chair, has refunded $3 billion to 9.7 million victims of unfair, deceptive, and abusive practices in financial markets. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has helped people, and fraud has been curtailed. The message has been sent to the next generation of financial hustlers that there is a dedicated cop on the beat in financial markets.

The singular and dedicated mission of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is to protect consumers of financial products from schemes, and it inspires trust in our markets that attracts capital and promotes allocations of that capital to productive, legitimate endeavors.

My amendment affirms that the current management, oversight, and funding source, as enshrined in Dodd-Frank, are the best way to preserve the integrity and independence of the agency, and to ensure that we don't return to the bad old days and bad old ways that put the ox in the ditch by creating the 2008 financial crisis and the $700 billion bailout.

Now, H.R. 3193 openly acknowledges that it would alter and neuter the agency's mission because H.R. 3193 would rename the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to the Financial Product Safety Commission, removing, Mr. Chairman, consumers from the equation, both in name and function. It would subject the agency's funding to protect consumers to the unwieldy appropriations process, sequester, defunding amendments, instead of the outside independent funding vis-a-vis these powerful financial institutions.

Now, whether intentional or not, Republicans, Mr. Chair, have shown their hand with the omission of consumers in H.R. 3193, and despite the euphemistic name of the bill as written, this bill would alter the mission and cripple the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau by focusing on protecting financial products rather than consumers. Whatever the intent, Mr. Chairman, consumers would be thrown under the bus by removing the cop from the Wall Street beat.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I find this to be a most curious amendment from the gentlelady from Wisconsin, and we do enjoy her participation on the committee, but it is a curious amendment because if it is accepted, and I believe the House is going to pass it, then it says the House is on record as saying we are going to do something but we just didn't feel really good about it. In other words, her amendment does nothing to the underlying bill except a sentiment that says we shouldn't have passed it in the first place. So it is a curious, curious amendment, Mr. Chairman.

I personally, and I don't think the House, want to be on record as saying that the CFPB has given us the fairest, safest, and most robust capital markets in the world. I have no doubt there are many good men and women who work there. They have done some important work. But fair? Fair, Mr. Chairman? An agency in the name of consumer protection that would deny one-third of current Black and Hispanic homeowners the opportunity to own a home? This is fair? It is just incredible.

We have brought this up several times in this debate, Mr. Chairman, and we hear crickets chirping on the other side of the aisle. Now if a private company did that, there would be riots in the street, but it is okay if government has a disparate impact on minorities. I don't know if that is fair. We have had testimony in our committee that literally half—half—of the mortgages today, according to CoreLogic, wouldn't qualify under the QM rule promulgated by the CFPB. I am not going to go on record saying that is fair; that it is somehow fair that half of Americans who otherwise would have qualified for a mortgage can no longer have it?

To say that somehow the current oversight is adequate to this agency, an agency that sets its own budget, an agency that is spending $145 million to renovate a $150 million building they don't even own, to give us a tree bosque, to give us granite water features? This is somehow a good use of the taxpayer money, a reflective carnelian granite water table, triple the renovation rate of class A luxury space in Washington?

If there was ever an agency, Mr. Chairman, that demands accountability to the American people, this is it. You do not protect consumers by taking away their rights, their freedoms, their ability to shop in competitive and transparent markets, and you do not protect them by taking away their income and spending it on a lavish palace for unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Chairman, I always enjoy the chairman of the Financial Services Committee and his lavish explanations.

I just want to clear up some of the confusion and bewilderment that he seems to be under with regard to minority and Latin borrowers. He has said over and over and over again, he has talked about and referred to the Qualified Mortgage standards under the new rules. The new standards have just taken place, and I think that minorities will find that 95 percent of the mortgages today will fall within the Qualified Mortgage standards.

Now having said that, I will just say that the chairman should look at something other than the PATH Act toward restoring the GSEs, if he is very concerned about minorities, and I would join him in that to be able to get mortgages.

I would say that to clear up his bewilderment here, I just want to congratulate the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau because it is a fact that they have supported the refund of $3 billion to 9.7 million victims of unfair practices.

I agree with him: the purpose of this bill and the reason that they won't accept this amendment is because they don't want to go on record that they support consumers over all of these very, very lucrative financial products that are out there, and they want no regulation, which is why we saw the 2008 meltdown, the no rules of the road. They want to return to the days when there was an ability to drive the economy over the cliff and to deceive consumers to the point that they could and would become victims. So I can understand the chairman's reluctance to accept this language.

Mr. Chairman, I enter into the RECORD our defense of our claims, and I yield back the balance of my time.

RESPONSE TO COREL OGIC ANALYSIS OF QUALIFIED MORTGAGE (QM) STANDARDS, CRL ISSUE BRIEF; FEBRUARY 20, 2013

The recently released CoreLogic report ''The Mortgage Market Impact of Qualified Mortgage Regulation'' has received a lot of attention due to its finding that 48 percent of the mortgage market would not qualify as a ''safe loan'' under new Qualified Mortgage (QM) guidelines.

Corelogic uses a ''waterfall'' analysis to estimate the proportion of 2010 mortgage originations that do not meet one or more of the QM criteria. While a waterfall approach is a reasonable methodology for estimating the proportion of recent originations that fall outside of QM standards, there are problems both with the specifics of CoreLogic's model and its assumptions about the expiration of the GSE exemption that significantly undercut the usefulness of its estimates of the impact of the QM rule.

Removes Loans with Credit Scores less than 640: As part of estimating the impact of QM, CoreLogic included a restriction on credit scores. Specifically, the waterfall analysis first removes loans with credit scores below 640 ''because they resemble subprime loans.'' In fact, five percent of originations are removed solely based on this criterion. This exclusion is not warranted because the QM guidelines do not place any restrictions on a borrower credit score.

Assumes that borrowers who received loan products with prohibited QM features would not be able to access QM-eligible loan products in the future: The other waterfall layers used to estimate the QM impact are: total debt-to-income (DTI) ratio over 43 percent; whether the loan was negatively amortizing, balloon or interest only; low- or no-documentation; and loan terms of greater than 30 years. These restrictions result in exclusions of 24 percent, 1 percent, 16 percent, and 2 percent respectively. Based on this analysis,

while it might be reasonable for the report to estimate that 43 percent of 2010 originations did not meet these new QM guidelines, it is not reasonable to infer that none of these borrowers could have received QM loans if the rule had been in place in 2010. While having a high DTI may be a difficult barrier that many borrowers cannot overcome, the disqualifying loan terms, such as negative amortization options or terms of greater than 30- years, can easily be avoided in most cases by simply

Re-structuring the loans into amortizing 30 year loans. Similarly, most borrowers who received no-doc or low-doc loans in 2010, the origination year analyzed in the report, likely could have documented their incomes. Therefore, the inference that none of the 19 percent of borrowers that had disqualifying loan products could have received QM loans is unwarranted.

Assumes the GSE exemption expires: As the report recognizes, most of the 24 percent of loans to borrowers with high DTIs are currently being made by GSEs or insured by FHA and these loans automatically qualify as QM under a temporary exemption (up to seven years). Indeed, the report acknowledges that the impact of the QM rule on loans currently being made would be'' minor''. Given the uncertainties concerning GSE reform and mortgage finance that will need to be resolved over the next seven years, it is not at all clear that the temporary exemption will in fact end in seven years.

[From the Housingwire, Oct. 28, 2013]

IT'S OKAY TO LEND OUTSIDE QM: CFPB DIRECTOR RICHARD CORDRAY

(By Kerri Ann Panchuk)

It's likely mortgage bankers attending the Mortgage Bankers Association 100th Annual Convention & Expo in Washington, D.C, eagerly awaited the arrival of Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Richard Cordray.

After all, the regulatory landscape stemming from the 2010 Dodd-Frank Act has left the lending industry shell-shocked by not only the CFPB's new enforcement authority, but by all the lending/servicing rules slated to take effect in January.

If bankers are worried about this new CFPB-era, Cordray told the crowd: Don't be.

In his speech, the CFPB director basically asserted that in many cases, non-qualified mortgages with the right underwriting are perfectly fine even if they fall outside the QM boundaries. This mirrors past statements in which Cordray said he doesn't anticipate an outbreak of QM-related litigation.

Where he stops short—or simply doesn't go—is in explaining how lenders know at the beginning of the origination cycle that what they've done outside QM in terms of underwriting is sufficient enough to protect them later on if someone were to perhaps raise an ability-to-repay claim.

Lawyers up for litigation love gray lines, but those wanting to prevent future ability-to-repay litigation are likely to prefer black and white rules. Cordray shows optimism around the idea that responsible lenders are still safe outside QM, but no specifics were given on how the CFPB would address non-QM lending decisions down the road if a default were to occur. Yet, he seems to be saying don't over worry as long as standards are in place.

And when it comes to the 3% points-and-fee threshold, Cordray has another strong viewpoint, saying ''though no data is available to model the precise impact of the three-percent threshold for points and fees mandated by the statute, that threshold is more than three times the average lender origination fees reported by Bankrate.com in its most recent annual survey, and our rule provides an even higher threshold for smaller loans.''

He added that the definition of a qualified mortgage already covers most of the loans made today. And even loans not covered by QM can still be generated as long as lenders use ''sound underwriting standards and routinely perform well over time,'' the director told the MBA crowd. Again, what does 'perform well over time' mean? That part is not as clear.

As an example, Cordray told the audience, he is aware of borrowers who may possess considerable other assets, but who remain stifled by high debt-to-income ratios that force them outside the QM standards. As long as lenders ensure the best underwriting standards, they should be fine, Cordray said.

''Lenders that haye long upheld such standards have little to fear from the ability-to-repay rule; the strong performance of their loans over time demonstrates the care they have taken in underwriting to ensure that borrowers have the ability to repay,'' Cordray added.

''Nothing about their traditional lending model has changed, and they should continue to offer the same kinds of mortgages to borrowers whom they evaluate as posing reasonable credit risk—whether or not they meet the criteria to be classified as qualified mortgages.''

Cordray further noted that lenders who refuse to lend outside QM will be at no greater risk, absent other factors, of facing fair lending allegations.

The CFPB director once again cited data from Mark Zandi, chief economist for Moody's Analytics, noting that 95% of the mortgages made today fall within the qualified mortgage standard.

''Some, such as CoreLogic, have put out much lower figures, but by their own admission, those figures were not intended to take account of the expanded definition of QM that will actually take effect in January but instead were offered as projections of a distant future when the temporary expansion expires,'' Cordray explained.

□ 1630

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I would just say to my friends on the other side of the aisle—and the gentlelady from Wisconsin, I would draw her attention to the Federal Reserve bulletin, November 2013, Volume 99, No. 4, page 37, that clearly shows, again, according to the Federal Reserve, that 34 percent of Blacks and 32 percent of Hispanics would not meet the new QM standard based upon the 43 percent debt-to-income requirement.

Now, this is Federal Reserve data. If the gentlelady or any other Member on the other side of the aisle wishes to refute this data from the Federal Reserve, they are certainly free to do so on their time.

But again, I am not going to go on record saying this is fair. I haven't heard anybody rebut what CoreLogic has said, that when fully implemented, half of today's mortgages would not qualify under the QM rule. This is not fair.

Mr. Chairman, somebody has to protect consumers from the CFPB. Consumers, yes, they have to be protected from Wall Street, but they have to be protected from Washington as well.

You do not protect consumers by having unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats in Washington whose average salary is over $175,000—salary and benefits—to somehow say: I am from Washington. I am smarter than you. I will decide whether or not you get a mortgage.

It is arrogant; it is unfair; it is abusive. It must stop. We should reject the gentlelady's amendment, and we should adopt the underlying legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Wisconsin will be postponed.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING) having assumed the chair, Mr. MARCHANT, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3193) to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to strengthen the review authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council of regulations issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 899, UNFUNDED MANDATES INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2013

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 492 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 492

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 899) to provide for additional safeguards with respect to imposing Federal mandates, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered

only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from North Carolina is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Resolution 492 provides for a structured rule providing for consideration of H.R. 899, the Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act.

Mr. Speaker, every year, bureaucrats in Washington impose thousands of regulatory mandates on local governments and small businesses. Those mandates can be costly, stretching city and State budgets and making it harder for American businesses to hire.

The Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act, H.R. 899, will ensure that the people who write these regulations in Washington know exactly what they are asking the American people to pay and whether the costs of compliance might make it harder for family businesses to meet payroll and stay afloat.

H.R. 899 will force Washington to think more carefully about regulatory costs before it passes them on to Americans. This bill is about transparency and accountability, and it is something Democrats and Republicans can all support.

In 1995, Congress passed the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, UMRA, legislation designed to prevent the Federal Government from imposing unfunded mandates onto State and local governments or private businesses without policymakers or the public knowing the costs of such policies.

UMRA's main objective was to force the Federal Government to estimate how much unfunded mandates would cost local governments and businesses and rein in out-of-control mandates.

UMRA ensured public awareness of the crushing financial burden of Federal mandates on employers and State and local governments. However, UMRA has not been amended since 1995, and some subtle changes are needed to preserve and improve on the act's initial purpose.

UMRA was a good bill, but over time, some shortcomings became apparent such that the Clinton and, later, Obama administrations had written executive orders to fix the loopholes within it.

As many of my colleagues can confirm, it takes a lot of creativity and hard work to pass legislation as a member of a minority party.

When Democrats gained control of Congress back in 2007, I sat down with my staff to think about legislative ideas that could gain sufficient bipartisan support to clear a Democrat Congress. This bill is the result of those efforts.

H.R. 899 has bipartisan DNA. It codifies those administrative fixes championed by Presidents Clinton and Obama and promotes good government accountability and transparency.

As a testament to this fact, the bill is cosponsored by three of my Democrat colleagues here in the House: Representatives MIKE MCINTYRE, COLLIN PETERSON, and LORETTA SANCHEZ.

I owe them a debt of gratitude for their efforts in promoting this commonsense bill.

I am especially grateful to Representative JAMES LANKFORD, a Republican cosponsor of this bill, who has worked tirelessly to promote its passage here in the House. We wouldn't be here today without his efforts.

A common refrain in this business is that nobody wants to see how the sausage is made, meaning that the process of drafting and passing legislation is so ugly that it would repulse people. In this case, I disagree.

I am extremely proud of this bill and extremely proud of the process by which it has been advanced in the House. It has been a pleasure to work with colleagues from both sides of the aisle on this measure, and I appreciate their support and counsel.

The Unfunded Mandates Reform and Transparency Act of 1995 was a model for bipartisanship, and my hope is that my bill leaves a similar legacy.

I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this rule and the underlying bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina, my friend, Ms. FOXX, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, we continue down this path of considering bills that are going nowhere. I sincerely wish my friends on the other side of the aisle would stop this Conservative merry-go-round.

The majority leader called this week ''stop government abuse week.'' Abuse? Really?

My friends on the other side of the aisle have continued to ignore the plight of middle class and working poor Americans, immigrants hoping for a better life for their families, and denying the undeniable impact of climate change, just to name a few.

This is even after shutting down the government for purely political purposes and playing a game of chicken with the debt limit; and yet, my Republican friends are calling routine government work ''abuse.'' That seems like a stretch to me.

Abuse is when underregulated industries spill unknown chemicals into the West Virginia water supply. Abuse is when coal ash pours into the waters of North Carolina, when Wall Street bankers crash our economy after taking advantage of underfunded and overworked regulators; that is exactly the kind of abuse that the government needs to stop.

You want to talk about abuse? Let's talk about today's measure.

This bill will not make the regulatory process more balanced or transparent. It will strangle it in red tape. It will not make rulemaking more fair. It will tip the scales in favor of businesses with the most resources.

Under this measure, improving access to health care and restraining the financial institutions that have unleashed havoc on our economy will become even more difficult.

It is nothing more than poorly disguised political fodder aimed at stymieing the executive branch's rulemaking power in favor of some corporate interests that run amuck on the environment and American workers.

Most egregious is the requirement for agencies to provide the private sector early consultation on major rules.

This would give well-funded industry an unfair advantage not afforded to the general public and other stakeholders like public interest, taxpayer, and environmental groups.

Clearly, the interest in amending UMRA only extends to certain privileged parties.

If my friends on the other side of the aisle want to see what happens when you allow private interests to run rampant without any government regulations, they need only look to the smog-filled skies above China.

This bill also politicizes independent agencies designed to protect the rights of hardworking Americans. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Securities Exchange Commission, National Labor Relations Board, Consumer Product Safety Commission, as well as the Federal Communications Commission—I might add they kind of left out the Federal Reserve for some reason I don't understand—but all of those other agencies will all have to answer to the whims of politics.

It also forces agencies to choose the cheapest regulatory option over the

best. This is legislating the answer to the same kind of question that a homeowner has to decide when hiring a contractor: Do you want it done cheap, or do you want it done right?

Look, I get it. I understand where we are in the Congressional cycle; but I think that it is unfortunate that my friends across the aisle would rather score political points and write bumper stickers than actually legislate.

While I think it is a good thing that most of these partisan measures will never go anywhere, I can't help but point out that we should be making better use of our limited time here.

We should be raising the minimum wage in order to give millions of hard-working Americans the pay they have earned.

Nearly 5 years have passed since the last increase in the Federal minimum wage.

□ 1645

Currently, a full-time minimum wage worker makes less than $16,000 per year, which is below the poverty line for a family of two or more.

This is unacceptable. It is time for Republicans to end their relentless obstruction and to join Democrats in an effort to provide for the middle class.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I really respect and appreciate my colleague from Florida, but there is nothing in this bill that would stop the development of rules and regulations by the executive branch, absolutely nothing. All we want to do is make sure that the cost of those rules and regulations is totally transparent.

Also, I appreciate my colleague's saying that we shouldn't be passing bumper sticker bills. We joked about this bill. The title for it, if you abbreviate it, is ''UMITA.'' That anagram hardly comes trippingly off the tongue, and it really wouldn't make much of a bumper sticker for us.

He also indicates that this bill is going to be dead on arrival in the Senate, so we should just give our attention to something else. I know my colleague knows this: the House of Representatives is mentioned very first in the Constitution. I believe the Founders intended for us to do our job and to do it well here. We shouldn't be thinking ''it is my way or the highway.'' This is a bill that has been cosponsored by Democrats, and I believe it will get a lot of Democrat votes. The logic from my colleague is that because this House is predominantly Republican that we should at the outset just acquiesce to the Democrat-led Senate or do nothing at all, but that is not how the legislative process works. There has to be a give and take.

I believe the House will pass this legislation tomorrow, and if the Senate wants to change it and send it back, fine—we will work it out—because that is our job, and that is the way it works, but I reject the notion that the Senate will not act on this bill. As I said, it is not a Republican bill; it is a bipartisan bill. It has Republican and Democrat cosponsors. My conversation with our Senate colleagues suggests this bill could clear the Senate and be signed into law by the President—this President.

Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that, last year, the President signed 76 laws—64 of those came from the House of Representatives and only 12 from the Senate, if I am accurate. If not, I will correct the RECORD. It is wrong for us to say we shouldn't be passing bills in the House because anything sponsored by a Republican will go nowhere in the Senate since the Democrats control it, because the evidence from last year, obviously, disproves that.

Mr. Speaker, since the 1995 passage of UMRA, experts across the political spectrum agree that the bill has led to the generation of important information about the potential impacts of mandates proposed in legislation and regulations. However, since its inception, there have been very few revisions to the law while various exclusions and exceptions have cropped up, creating loopholes limiting the act's coverage.

H.R. 899 builds on the success of UMRA by drawing upon executive orders enacted by the last two Democrat Presidents to close loopholes, streamline the cost-reporting process, and clarify the responsibilities of those in charge with complying with these requirements.

Independent regulatory agencies like the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the National Labor Relations Board, and the Federal Communications Commission are currently exempted from UMRA. H.R. 899 will require even these independent regulatory agencies to analyze the costs of their proposed mandates before they are imposed on the public.

H.R. 899 would also treat ''changes to conditions of grant aid'' as mandates, triggering an UMRA cost analysis. Legislation or regulations that force States or localities to make changes in order to qualify for Federal grant aid would no longer be exempt from scrutiny.

H.R. 899 will guarantee the public always has the opportunity to weigh in on regulations. Whereas UMRA only triggered cost analyses for regulations that were publicly announced through a ''notice of proposed rulemaking,'' this bill will require all regulations, whether a notice of proposed rulemaking was issued or not, to complete cost analyses.

H.R. 899 will also equip Congress and the American people with better tools to determine the true cost of regulations. Analyses required by H.R. 899 will have to factor in real-world consequences, such as lost business profits, costs passed on to consumers, and changed behavior costs when considering the bottom line impact of Federal mandates.

Finally, H.R. 899 will ensure government is held accountable for following these rules. If the requirements set forth by UMRA and UMITA are not met, a judicial stay may be placed upon regulations.

This legislation is purely about good government. It is about being open and honest about the cost of regulations.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I would advise my good friend from North Carolina that I have no further requests for time and that I am prepared to close or to reserve as she sees fit.

Mr. Speaker, does my colleague want me to go forward and close or does she want me to reserve?

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, we are not quite ready to close.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, according to a report issued by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, the number of economically significant rules in the pipeline, which are those that could cost $100 million or more annually, has increased by more than 137 percent over the past decade.

Section 12 of my bill responds to such concerns by requiring Federal agencies to conduct a retrospective analysis of an existing Federal regulation at the request of a committee chairman or ranking minority member. The retrospective analysis submitted to the requesting member and to Congress is to include:

One, a copy of the Federal regulation;

Two, the continued need for the Federal regulation;

Three, the nature of comments or complaints received concerning the Federal regulation;

Four, the extent to which the mandate may duplicate another Federal regulation;

Five, the degree to which technology or economic conditions have changed in the area affecting the Federal regulation;

Six, an analysis of the retrospective costs and benefits of the Federal regulation that considers studies done outside the government; and

Seven, the history of legal challenges to the Federal regulation.

Since the duty to promote public accountability and transparency in Federal regulatory policy is endless, this provision builds on the strengths of UMRA by helping ensure ongoing compliance with legislative intent.

This kind of ongoing monitoring, identified as a priority by section 5 of Executive Order 12866, issued by President Clinton, and by section 6 of Executive Order 13563, issued by President Obama, is critical for adapting to changing circumstances that shaped initial UMRA cost estimates.

This helps ensure a fresh look at regulations to make certain they remain

consistent with their initial purpose and have not become overly burdensome, outdated, or unnecessary. This is just one of many bipartisan initiatives contained in my bill that further underscores the need for my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, section 3 of my bill has received praise from State and local government advocacy groups as it would allow a committee chairman or ranking member to request that the Congressional Budget Office perform an assessment comparing the authorized level of funding in a bill or resolution to the prospective costs of carrying out any changes to a condition of Federal assistance being imposed on any respective participating State, local or tribal government.

The purpose of this provision is to highlight costs the Federal Government is passing along to State and local governments that would otherwise remain hidden but borne by taxpayers regardless of which governmental entity is taxing them.

CBO Director Douglas Holtz-Eakin's statement before the Committee on Government Reform on March 8, 2005, speaks further to this issue, saying:

According to UMRA, the conditions attached to most forms of Federal aid, including most grant programs, are not mandates. Yet complying with such conditions can sometimes be burdensome. In particular, States consider new conditions on existing grant programs to be duties not unlike mandates. Two often-cited examples of such conditions are the requirements for receiving Federal funding under the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Those laws require school districts to undertake many activities, including, respectively, designing and implementing Statewide achievement tests and preparing individualized education plans for disabled children, but only if they wish to receive certain Federal education grant funds.

In other words, these mandates escape UMRA's scrutiny because current law doesn't define this type of cost shifting as a ''mandate.'' My bill closes this loophole. The landmark Supreme Court decision, the National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius, hinged, in part, on this very issue.

Although the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion was not technically considered a ''mandate'' under UMRA, it required States to dramatically expand the program or risk losing all funding. For this reason, the Supreme Court ultimately deemed this provision unconstitutional.

Justice Roberts wrote that this portion of the Affordable Care Act violated the Constitution because:

Congress has no authority to order the States to regulate according to its instructions. Congress may offer the States grants and require the States to comply with accompanying conditions, but the States must have a genuine choice whether to accept the offer. The States were given no such choice in this case. They must either accept a basic change in the nature of Medicaid or risk losing all Medicaid funding.

In this way, the Affordable Care Act provides a contemporary, salient case study in how important it is for legislators and the public to have access to critical information concerning the costs of Federal decrees.

My bill will put this important information in the hands of Congress and the American people. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying bill.

With that, I would be prepared to close if the gentleman from Florida is prepared, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I thank the gentlelady.

I indicated I was prepared to close, but I have been advised that we need to occupy a little time as well. So I yield myself such time as I may consume, and we will try to be slow about it.

Mr. Speaker, in this particular legislation, the minority views that were developed allow, among other things, the following:

The Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act would be an assault on health, safety, and environmental protections. This legislation would erect new barriers to slow down the regulatory process, and it would give corporations an unfair advantage in the regulatory process;

Section 5 of the bill would repeal language that excludes independent regulatory agencies from the reporting requirements of the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act, with the exception of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve and the Federal Open Market Committee. I spoke to that earlier. I found that passage strange.

□ 1700

The Office of Management and Budget is responsible for overseeing the UMRA process. Since the independent agencies would be under the direction of OMB for purposes of UMRA compliance, this could compromise the independence of those agencies.

Section 7 of H.R. 899 would create a new point of order in the House of Representatives for legislation containing an unfunded mandate, making it more difficult to enact legislation.

Section 8 would incorporate a cost-benefit requirement from Executive Order 12866, but it would not include language from the same executive order directing agencies to perform these assessments to the extent feasible.

Section 10 would require agencies to provide impacted parties in the private sector—but not other stakeholders—with an advanced opportunity to provide input on proposed regulations. It would require agencies to conduct consultations with private sector businesses as early as possible, before the issuance of a notice of proposed rulemaking. Expanding this consultation requirement only to the private sector could allow businesses to have an advantage over other stakeholders, as I mentioned previously, such as taxpayers and environmental groups, with reference to the development of regulatory proposals.

During consideration of this bill by the committee, one of the Members offered an amendment that stated that any opportunities or rights afforded to a corporation under this section shall also be afforded to any interested individual. The amendment was rejected.

My good friend on the other side mentioned the fact that I pointed out that we continue to have one House legislation that goes nowhere in the Senate. And she pointed correctly to the fact—and I stand with her if it needs to be corrected—that there were 76 measures that reached the President's desk, and that 64 of them came out of the House of Representatives. Not knowing all of the statistical imperatives, my belief would be that of that 64 that came out of House of Representatives, a substantial number of them had companion legislation. I questioned whether or not this particular measure that we are addressing today has companion legislation in the Senate, and that is why I feel that it is not going to go anywhere.

Listen, one side is arguing that we need to start the 2014 election right now and don't do anything else that is going to allow for both bodies—it is true, as my colleague said, that the Constitution mentions the House of Representatives first, but it does not give the House of Representatives autonomy in the sense that they, and they alone, can pass legislation. So there is a requirement here that has not been being met, and that is that the Senate and House confer on matters of legislation and then offer it up to the executive branch.

We seem to have circumvented that process. And what we are doing, rather than pass, or at least address—I am fascinated by the fact that I don't believe my colleagues have the courage of their convictions. If we were to put a flood insurance measure on the floor not on suspension, I doubt very seriously that it would not pass. It will pass if it were to come to the floor that way.

I believe that if we offer up a reasonable minimum wage, I don't think anybody in this country can say that $16,000 for a family of two or more people is sufficient in order for them to be able to meet requisites having to do with food and rent alone, let alone educating their children or providing daycare.

I don't think anybody really is against those who paid into the employment system receiving unemployment compensation, and yet we find ourselves here repeatedly addressing a significant number of matters.

Someone wrote the other day, if they got a stain on their tie, it would be because of ObamaCare. My goodness gracious, people, we are a legislative body. We could be about the business of serious legislating. That kind of legislating would require, among other

things, not just bipartisan activity as this legislation has manifested itself as being bipartisan, but it would allow that we would really sit down and talk through the things that are needed in this country.

There is nobody around that doesn't believe that we have bridges that are in disrepair. I haven't found anyone that said that if we invested in infrastructure, that it would not create more jobs in this country. The people want us to do this, and not to do one-sided, one-way measures that are not going to go anywhere anytime soon.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I hear my colleague on the other side of the aisle. I frankly don't think there is much more serious legislation around here than this piece, as I said earlier. UMITA doesn't exactly come trippingly off the tongue, and it isn't the most scintillating legislation out there, but it has great bipartisan support, which is what my colleague said we should be doing. So I am curious about his going off talking about a lot of other things other than this.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, that multiple provisions in my bill, including sections 8 and 9, would codify general principles of good government embodied in President Clinton's Executive Order 12866 and President Obama's Executive Order 13563.

Section 8 closes a blatant, often exploited loophole inconsistent with legislative intent and the spirit of the law. Again, I think this legislation is doing exactly what the Congress should be doing, and that is sticking with legislative intent and making sure that we are looking after the fact that the laws we pass are adhered to.

Since title II of UMRA says that agencies must develop a written statement describing the effects of their regulations on State, local, and tribal governments, as well as the private sector, ''unless otherwise prohibited by law,'' some agencies have concluded that general statutory language limiting the consideration of economic costs in setting regulations ''prohibits'' them from preparing a written statement evaluating the non-cost elements.

Reasserting legislative intent, this section of my bill prevents this loophole from being exploited for purposes of ignoring UMRA requirements by clarifying that agencies must conduct UMRA analysis unless a law ''expressly'' prohibits them from doing so.

This simple wording change makes a world of difference by clarifying that agencies must conduct UMRA analyses unless a law ''expressly'' prohibits the disclosure.

Another way UMRA's cost disclosure requirements have been exploited by ambitious rulemakers is by deeming a proposal an emergency and thereby forgoing the notice of proposed rulemaking, or NPRM, process, which is the avenue through which the public weighs in on proposed regulation.

Without compromising the ability to issue mandates in emergency scenarios, section 9 of the underlining bill removes the perverse incentive for agencies to forego NPRMs by requiring them to fulfill UMRA cost disclosure requirements within 6 months of issuing the urgent decree.

Modest bipartisan provisions such as these highlight additional reasons for my colleague to support the rule and underlying bill.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time, but I am prepared to close if the gentleman from Florida is prepared.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I will insert in the RECORD the Statement of Administration Policy, and I will only lift one paragraph, and that is the last paragraph and sentence.

''H.R. 899 would unnecessarily add to the already robust analytical and procedural requirements of the rulemaking process. In particular, H.R. 899 would create needless grounds for judicial review, unduly slowing the regulatory process. In addition, it would add layers of procedural steps that would interfere with agency priority setting and compliance with statutory mandates.''

I guess, not surprisingly to my friends on the other side, ''If H.R. 899 were presented to the President, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.''

Mr. Speaker, contrary to my friend's favorite rhetoric, the free market does not solve all problems. Markets fail. We have seen that, have we not? Government is the actor of last resort when the market does not create the necessary incentives for businesses and individuals to protect the public good.

What is more, Federal regulations are not strangling the economy or preventing growth. In fact, it is quite the opposite.

As the Office of Management and Budget has reported, major Federal regulations issued over the last 10 years resulted in annual benefits from $193 billion to $800 billion, while costs are only between $57 billion to $84 billion.

It seems to me that an $84 billion investment with an $800 million return is not a bad thing.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I am going to offer an amendment to the rule to bring up legislation that would raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour and give at least 25 million Americans a well-deserved pay raise.

A business in the constituency that I serve did this on their own. Jaxson's Ice Cream Parlour in Dania Beach raised it because they said they feel the pain of the people that work with them and that they made a fair profit and wanted to share it with them.

The American people are calling for an economy that works for everyone, not just those at the top.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' and defeat the previous question. Vote ''no'' on the underlying bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 899—UNFUNDED MANDATES INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2013

(Rep. Foxx, R–NC, and 4 cosponsors, February 27, 2014)

The Administration is committed to ensuring that regulations are tailored to advance statutory goals in a manner that is efficient and cost-effective, and that minimizes uncertainty. By layering on additional, burdensome judicial review and other unnecessary changes to the regulatory process, H.R. 899, the Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act of 2013, would introduce needless uncertainty into agency decision-making and undermine the ability of agencies to provide critical public health and safety protections. Accordingly, the Administration strongly opposes House passage of H.R. 899.

When a Federal agency promulgates a regulation, the agency must adhere to the robust and well-understood procedural requirements of Federal law, including the Administrative Procedure Act, the Regulatory Flexibility Act, the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, the Paperwork Reduction Act, and the Congressional Review Act. In addition, for decades, agency rulemaking has been guided by executive orders issued and followed by administrations of both political parties. These require regulatory agencies to promulgate regulations upon a reasoned determination that the benefits justify the costs, to consider regulatory alternatives, and to promote regulatory flexibility.

The President's regulatory approach has been consistent throughout his Administration. We don't have to choose between protecting the health, welfare, and safety of Americans and promoting economic growth, job creation, competitiveness, and innovation—we can do both. To this end, Executive Order 13563 requires careful cost-benefit analysis, increased public participation, harmonization of rulemaking across agencies, and flexible regulatory approaches. Through executive orders and other presidential directives, agencies must ensure that they take into account the consequences of rulemaking on small businesses. And, through Executive Orders 13579 and 13610, the Administration has also taken important steps to promote systematic retrospective review of regulations by all agencies, including encouraging independent agencies to conduct such a review. Collectively, these requirements promote flexible, cost-effective regulation.

H.R. 899 would unnecessarily add to the already robust analytical and procedural requirements of the rulemaking process. In particular, H.R. 899 would create needless grounds for judicial review, unduly slowing the regulatory process. In addition, it would add layers of procedural steps that would interfere with agency priority setting and compliance with statutory mandates.

If H.R. 899 were presented to the President, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.

Ms. FOXX. I thank my colleague from Florida.

Mr. Speaker, as proud as I am of this legislation, I realize that its passage on Friday will not be front-page news.

I understand that ''Bipartisan Group of Lawmakers Band Together to Close Technical Loopholes in UMRA'' isn't exactly a riveting headline, but what we are doing here is important.

In Congress, we often focus our energy and attention on those issues that are most divisive and controversial. There are real substantive disagreements between the two parties and among the American people.

But Congress must do the hard things, and every now and then we get an opportunity to do something easy. This should be easy. The reforms in this bill are ''low hanging fruit.''

These are modest reforms supported by Republicans and Democrats alike. Some of these changes merely codify executive orders issued by the last two Democrat Presidents.

□ 1715

Some of my colleagues have suggestions for improvement and have offered amendments to this bill. Great. I welcome their suggestions. Those amendments will be discussed here tomorrow in an open and transparent process.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, every Democrat amendment that was submitted has been included in this rule.

I hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting this sensible legislation that will enhance transparency, accountability, and awareness of Federal mandates. I urge my colleagues to vote for this rule and the underlying bill.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, when the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform filed its report (H. Rept. 113–352, Part 1) to accompany H.R. 899 on February 14, 2014, it included an exchange of letters between the Chairman of the Committee on Rules and the Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The letter from Chairman Sessions was inadvertently dated February 11, 2013 and was intended to be dated February 11, 2014.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS of Florida is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 492 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS OF FLORIDA

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 2. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration 'of the bill (H.R. 1010) to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 3. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 1010.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption of the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 225, nays 192, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 79]

YEAS—225

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)

Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—192

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—13

Blumenauer
Davis, Danny
Gardner
Gosar
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
Pastor (AZ)
Rice (SC)
Runyan
Rush
Schwartz
Upton
Walden

□ 1743

Ms. BONAMICI and Messrs. NADLER and YARMUTH changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. POSEY, Mrs. LUMMIS, and Mr. ADERHOLT changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 227, noes 190, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 80]

AYES—227

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOES—190

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—13

Blumenauer
Davis, Danny
Gardner
Gosar
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
Pastor (AZ)
Rice (SC)
Runyan
Rush
Schwartz
Upton
Walden

□ 1750

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION SAFETY AND SOUNDNESS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEWART). Pursuant to House Resolution 475 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 3193.

Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) kindly take the chair.

□ 1752

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3193) to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to strengthen the review authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council of regulations issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, and for other purposes, with Mr. HOLDING (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole House rose earlier today, a request for a recorded vote on amendment No. 4 printed in part B of House Report 113–350 offered by the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) had been postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments printed in part B of House Report 113–350 on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

Amendment No. 1 by Mr. RIGELL of Virginia.

Amendment No. 3 by Mr. DESANTIS of Florida.

Amendment No. 4 by Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote in this series.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. RIGELL

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. RIGELL) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 250, noes 167, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 81]

AYES—250

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Maffei
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ruiz
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOES—167

Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—13

Blumenauer
Davis, Danny
Gardner
Gosar
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
Pastor (AZ)
Rice (SC)
Runyan
Rush
Schwartz
Upton
Walden

□ 1757

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Chair, on rollcall No. 79, 80, and 81, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. DESANTIS

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 227, noes 186, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 82]

AYES—227

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta

Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOES—186

Barber
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—17

Blumenauer
Davis, Danny
Gardner
Gosar
McCarthy (NY)
Mullin
Nolan
Pastor (AZ)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Runyan
Rush
Schock
Schwartz
Upton
Walden

□ 1801

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Chair, had I been present for rollcall vote No. 82, (on agreeing to the DeSantis amendment), I would have voted "no."

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MS. MOORE

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 181, noes 236, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 83]

AYES—181

Barber
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—236

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallego
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas

Luetkemeyer	Peterson	Shimkus
Lummis	Petri	Shuster
Maffei	Pittenger	Simpson
Marchant	Pitts	Smith (MO)
Marino	Poe (TX)	Smith (NE)
Massie	Pompeo	Smith (NJ)
Matheson	Posey	Smith (TX)
McAllister	Price (GA)	Southerland
McCarthy (CA)	Rahall	Stewart
McCaul	Reed	Stivers
McClintock	Reichert	Stockman
McHenry	Renacci	Stutzman
McKeon	Ribble	Terry
McKinley	Rigell	Thompson (PA)
McMorris Rodgers	Roby	Thornberry
Meadows	Roe (TN)	Tiberi
Meehan	Rogers (AL)	Tipton
Messer	Rogers (KY)	Turner
Mica	Rogers (MI)	Valadao
Miller (FL)	Rohrabacher	Wagner
Miller (MI)	Rokita	Walberg
Miller, Gary	Rooney	Walorski
Mullin	Ros-Lehtinen	Weber (TX)
Mulvaney	Roskam	Webster (FL)
Murphy (PA)	Ross	Wenstrup
Neugebauer	Rothfus	Westmoreland
Noem	Royce	Whitfield
Nugent	Ryan (WI)	Williams
Nunes	Salmon	Wilson (SC)
Nunnelee	Sanford	Wittman
Olson	Scalise	Wolf
Palazzo	Schock	Womack
Paulsen	Schrader	Woodall
Pearce	Schweikert	Yoder
Perry	Scott, Austin	Yoho
Peters (CA)	Sensenbrenner	Young (AK)
	Sessions	Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—13

Bachus	McCarthy (NY)	Schwartz
Blumenauer	Pastor (AZ)	Upton
Davis, Danny	Rice (SC)	Walden
Gardner	Runyan	
Gosar	Rush	

□ 1806

Ms. WATERS changed her vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

Mr. MAFFEI changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK) having assumed the chair, Mr. HOLDING, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3193) to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to strengthen the review authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council of regulations issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 475, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment to the amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole?

If not, the question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I am opposed to it in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Shea-Porter moves to recommit the bill H.R. 3193 to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 6. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION REGARDING DATA BREACHES, FINANCIAL FRAUD, AND PREDATORY LENDING.

Nothing in this Act, or the amendments made by this Act, may be construed as prohibiting the agency responsible for the regulation of consumer financial products and services pursuant to the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 from the following:

(1) In the case of a company that has had a data breach resulting in the release of financially sensitive personally identifiable information—

(A) consulting with the company about the breach,

(B) working with such company to identify seniors, service members, students, and other consumers affected by the breach, and

(C) providing those consumers with materials on the steps that should immediately be taken to protect themselves from financial fraud, including instructions for cancelling and replacing compromised credit cards, templates for requesting that fraudulent charges be removed from credit card bills and credit reports, and information on credit monitoring products,

so long as such company refunds the agency for the costs the agency incurs in providing such services.

(2) Monitoring and supervising payday lenders on or near military bases, in order to protect service members and their families from being targeted by predatory lenders that engage in unfair, deceptive, and abusive practices, or to undertake enforcement actions against predatory lenders to provide refunds and reimbursements to service members targeted and harmed by such practices.

(3) Investigating and enforcing sanctions related to fraud concerning fees for private student loans or for the usage of automatic teller machines (''ATMs'').

Ms. SHEA-PORTER (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

Mr. HENSARLING. I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk continued to read.

Mr. HENSARLING (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from New Hampshire is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill and will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, just a few years after a financial meltdown that crashed our economy and punished middle class families, some politicians here want to go back to the days when Wall Street wrote its own rules and consumers got the short end of the stick. We all know how that worked out. It brought a tremendous financial crisis.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau emerged out of the ashes of that financial disaster. Congress had learned a hard lesson: consumers needed a watchdog. That is what the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is all about. It is a watchdog for consumers. It stands up for people, including students, seniors, and veterans who are often targeted by predatory financial lenders with shady products. Why on earth would we want to hamper the CFPB?

In its short lifetime, the Bureau has secured more than $3 billion for nearly 10 million consumers, including members of the military. It has received more than 270,000 consumer complaints. It has taken action against any payday lenders and debt collectors who take unfair advantage of our Nation's consumers.

The CFPB is working to protect consumers from some of the worst abuses in the financial marketplace, but the bill we are considering today would undermine its work.

□ 1815

First, the bill changes the structure of the CFPB to a five-member commission instead of a single director. In a Congress that is so divided and dysfunctional, it is not fair to mire the Bureau in political gridlock and make it less able to carry out its mission.

Second, this bill would defund the CFPB. Under the guise of transparency, its opponents want to cripple the Bureau by tying it up in Congress. They say this will result in significant cost savings. If they don't fund it properly, of course it will end up in savings.

We would also save money on food inspection if we would only stop inspecting food, but that doesn't mean we would be better off. Defunding the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau comes at the expense of American consumers.

The bill also allows other bank regulators who failed to protect consumers to overrule the CFPB, and it cripples the Bureau's ability to oversee consumer financial markets.

Our constituents don't want us to weaken consumer protections. They actually want us to extend consumer protections to include protection of our personal data and information.

Today's motion to recommit builds on this work and makes sure that Congress is focused on consumer protection. This motion ensures that seniors, servicemembers, students, and other consumers affected by security breaches are promptly notified that their data has been compromised.

Even more importantly, it makes sure that consumers know what steps to take to recover from and how to prevent additional financial fraud. In the event of a personal data breach, companies need to do more than simply alert consumers that it happened. They need to work with the CFPB to inform consumers about how to remove fraudulent charges and monitor their credit going forward.

The motion also addresses a growing problem of predatory lenders targeting our servicemembers and their families. These lenders are taking advantage of loopholes in current law to profit from bad loans that have outrageous interest rates.

They take advantage of our servicemembers by obscuring these interest rates. Some lenders even target our servicemembers looking for home mortgages. This activity is reprehensible, and Congress should stop this activity.

Students are another population this motion would protect. For example, the CFPB recently started investigating campus financial products, such as school-issued debit cards that students use to access financial aid. These cards often have hidden fees, which can add up for students and families who are already struggling to pay for college.

What makes this even worse is that many college campuses don't have fee-free ATMs, so students are being hit with debit card fees and then hit again when they want to access that money. The CFPB needs to be able to make sure that banks aren't taking advantage of our students.

Mr. Speaker, this motion to recommit will make sure that we pass a bill that is fair to consumers, not just banks.

I urge all my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on these commonsense changes, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, first, I am just very pleased that our friends on the other side of the aisle actually found somebody to offer the MTR since they apparently, earlier today, were having trouble finding speakers to come to the floor and defend what is probably the most powerful and least accountable government agency in the history of the Republic.

It would be difficult to defend this agency; but let me first dispense with the motion to recommit.

Number one, as we read, this Dodd-Frank did not grant the CFPB power over data breaches, so this part of the MTR is irrelevant. The other portions are redundant.

Mr. Speaker, a more important point is: How can anybody come to the floor to defend an agency that is collecting such massive quantities of data? I find it somewhat ironic that the MTR seemingly is concerned about data breaches to a government agency that is collecting data on 53 million borrowers who took out mortgages since 1998.

The person in charge of the project has testified that it is easy to reverse-engineer the identities of 95 percent of these records. The CFPB, in their credit card database, is collecting at least data on 991 million credit cards held by roughly 60 percent of the adult U.S. population.

Where is the angst and the anxiety and the concern for the possible data breaches of CFPB? How about their consumer credit panel, where they are collecting the database of credit reports on 8.6 million Americans? I mean, it seems to be a contest between CFPB and NSA who can collect the most data on American citizens. Stay tuned on who wins that competition.

And then, Mr. Speaker, we have an agency that, notwithstanding its benign yet Orwellian title, is abusing consumer rights. We have already had the QM rule—Qualified Mortgage rule—promulgated where the Federal Reserve says one-third of Black and Hispanic homeowners can no longer qualify for their mortgages. Where is the outrage there?

CoreLogic, which is a firm that collects data in our mortgage market, has said: When fully implemented, this rule of this agency that is supposed to protect our consumers, half—half—of the mortgages would no longer qualify.

So no wonder Democrats were having trouble finding speakers to defend this.

And then last, but not least, an agency that has no accountability, that sets its own budget, notwithstanding the testimony of the head of the agency who said that he was not building a palace, yet they take $145 million of hard-earned taxpayer money to renovate a $150 million building they don't even own.

On a square-foot basis, Mr. Speaker, this is three times the average class A luxury renovation space in Washington, D.C. On a square-foot basis, it costs more for the CFPB to have their headquarters than it cost to build the Trump World Tower.

On a square-foot basis, it costs more to renovate their headquarters than it does to build the Bellagio Hotel and Casino, at the time the single most expensive hotel in America.

Mr. Speaker, on a square-foot basis, it cost more than the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, the single tallest building in the world, and there are similarities because the CFPB spent $7 million on the same world-renowned architectural firm to design their building.

Mr. Speaker, again, this is one of the most powerful and least accountable agencies in the history of the Republic. True consumer protection is about competitive, innovative transparent markets that respect the dignity and the liberty of every American citizen to buy the mortgage and get the credit card that they want that is best for them and their families.

Let's respect them. Let's hold accountable government. Let's dispense with the motion to recommit, and let's vote ''aye'' on the Commercial Financial Freedom and Washington Accountability Act.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, this 5-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by a 5-minute vote on the passage of the bill, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 194, noes 223, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 84]

AYES—194

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)

Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—223

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—13

Blumenauer
Davis, Danny
Fortenberry
Gosar
McCarthy (NY)
Pastor (AZ)
Rice (SC)
Runyan
Rush
Schwartz
Upton
Walden
Woodall

□ 1830

Mr. CÁRDENAS changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 232, noes 182, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 85]

AYES—232

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallego
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Petri
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Price (GA)
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOES—182

Barber
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Waters
Waxman
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—16

Blumenauer
Fortenberry
Gardner
Gosar
McCarthy (NY)
Pastor (AZ)
Pittenger
Posey
Rice (SC)
Runyan
Rush
Schwartz
Upton
Walden
Wasserman Schultz
Welch

□ 1839

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall vote No. 85, I was on the floor and voting in this

vote series. However, my "yes" vote was not recorded. My vote should be recorded as "yes."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 71 on the Rothfus amendment on H.R. 2804, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 72 on the Connolly amendment on H.R. 2804, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 73 on the Jackson Lee amendment on H.R. 2804, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 74 on the Jackson Lee amendment on H.R. 2804, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 75 on the Miller (CA) amendment on H.R. 2804, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 76 on the Miller (CA) amendment on H.R. 2804, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 77 on the Motion to Recommit with Instructions on H.R. 2804, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 78 on the passage of H.R. 2804, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 79 on Ordering the Previous Question on H.R. 492, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 80 on Adoption of the Rule on H.R. 492, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 81 on the Rigell amendment on H.R. 492, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 82 on the DeSantis amendment on H.R. 492, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 83 on the Moore (WI) amendment on H.R. 492, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 84 on the Motion to Recommit with Instructions on H.R. 492, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 85 on passage of H.R. 492, I am not recorded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 3729

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered to be the first sponsor of H.R. 3729, a bill originally introduced by Representative Andrews of New Jersey, for the purposes of adding cosponsors and requesting reprintings pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOYCE). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

CONGRATULATING PENN STATE UNIVERSITY'S PANHELLENIC DANCE MARATHON

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Pennsylvania State University IFC-Panhellenic Dance Marathon, otherwise known as ''THON,'' for another tremendous, record-breaking fundraising total in support of the fight against childhood cancer.

The largest student philanthropy in the world, THON is a yearlong fundraising effort where students work in numerous ways to raise money for the cause. The effort culminates with a final 46-hour event where over 700 students partake in a no-sitting, no-sleeping dance marathon, and thousands more cheer on their efforts. All proceeds from THON benefit the Four Diamonds Fund, an organization dedicated to battling childhood cancer.

This year, I had the honor of attending THON. The energy and enthusiasm from those in attendance was nothing short of breathtaking as the students went on to raise $13.3 million, surpassing the $12.4 million last year. Penn State has raised over $110 million in THON's history.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud Penn State alumnus, I want to thank all of the students and families for providing this outstanding emotional and financial support to the children, families, researchers, and the staff of the Four Diamonds Fund.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

(Mr. GARCIA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Black History Month.

I am humbled by leaders in my district, like Lawrence McClain, a pioneer who opened up Homestead to new settlement; Officer Clifford Hollis, the first African American police officer in Florida City and Homestead; as well as Chief Rolle, the first African American police chief.

There have been numerous historic accomplishments in my district thanks to people like Doris Ison and Colonel Hartley, who helped in health care and made a difference to African Americans in South Dade. We have also seen the torch of public service passed down from the late Reverend Ferguson and Senator Larcenia Bullard to Florida City Commissioner Avis Brown, Senator Dwight Bullard, Commissioner Moss, and longtime civic educator and activist, Rosemary Fuller.

We must always remember the great leaders who have come before us, marching forward as we fight for civil rights and equality for all.

HONORING RED LARSON ON HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY

(Mr. ROONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Speaker, tonight, I honor one of the most respected dairy leaders in the State of Florida, Red Larson, as he celebrates his 90th birthday.

In the 1930s, Red worked the local paper route, saving and investing his money until he could purchase his first dairy cow. By the time he graduated from high school, he owned six cows, rented eight more, and had 21 calves. After a half century of hard work, Red merged 37 dairies into the three that now make up Larson Dairy, Incorporated, which he and his two grandsons currently own and operate. Larson Dairy produces 120 million pounds of milk annually, making it one of the largest dairies in the United States. The Larson name is synonymous with Florida dairy.

Truly a constant source of knowledge and experience, Larson served on the USDA Dairy Advisory Committee, and he has been inducted into both the Dairy Hall of Fame and the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame.

I am honored to recognize Red Larson on his 90th birthday and to thank him for his longstanding dedication and contributions to the U.S. dairy industry.

□ 1845

NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS WEEK

(Mr. DEUTCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize National Eating Disorders Awareness Week. Approximately 30 million Americans battle eating disorders at some point in their lives. Eating disorders affect both women and men and span nearly every socioeconomic and racial demographic.

Yet, due to widespread stigma, those who struggle often struggle alone. Eating disorders are the most deadly form of mental illness. Between 10 and 20 percent of those suffering from anorexia do not survive their disease.

Indeed anorexia, binge eating, bulimia, and other eating disorders often lead to serious medical complications, including organ failure and heart disease.

Despite this grave threat to public health, our research, prevention, and treatment efforts remain shamefully underfunded.

This National Eating Disorders Awareness Week, I urge my colleagues to take action and to join me, cosponsor H.R. 2101, the Federal Response to Eliminating Eating Disorders Act. We can and we must do better.

IT IS TIME FOR WASHINGTON TO QUIT WASTING MONEY

(Mrs. HARTZLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, it is time for Washington to quit wasting money. A good place to start is to eliminate duplicative programs. Why should we pay twice for the same thing? We shouldn't.

Nonpartisan inspectors general found that management at Federal agencies wasted $67 billion by failing to implement cost-cutting recommendations. This is unacceptable.

We must take action to eliminate duplicative and wasteful government programs such as the duplicative USDA catfish inspection scheme I fought to eliminate. This program has spent $30 million of your money and hasn't inspected a single fish. This is just one example.

The people of this Nation deserve no less than a government that is transparent and wisely spends the hard-earned tax dollars of the people. I am proud to support legislation this week that addresses wasteful spending. It is time to rebuild trust with the American people and get government out of the way.

THE PEACE CORPS' 53RD ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Peace Corps Week and congratulate the Peace Corps for celebrating its 53rd anniversary this Saturday. The Peace Corps is doing great work around the world with 7,200 volunteers and trainees working on projects in 65 countries. Their work reaches every corner of the world.

However, none of this could be accomplished without the great volunteers. These volunteers come from all around our country, but from my home State in Minnesota and my district, we have got a pretty good track record of producing members. In fact, there are currently over 200 different Minnesotans volunteering in the Peace Corps, and 30 of those volunteers come from the Third District.

Last year, our State ranked seventh in producing these volunteers for the Peace Corps, and my district was actually one of the highest performing in the country.

Mr. Speaker, recently I had the chance to welcome, and also join, Acting Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet to come to Minnesota to participate in a recruiting event. I can tell you that after 53 years, the desire to volunteer for the Peace Corps is as strong as ever.

I would like to commend all the Peace Crops volunteers, both past and present, for their service.

UAW NLRB ELECTION AT CHATTANOOGA VOLKSWAGEN PLANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. POCAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Progressive Caucus. The Progressive Caucus wants to discuss with the American public issues that are important, that are timely, and that should be happening in this current Congress.

Tonight we are here to talk about a number of issues, one being the very important need to raise the minimum wage in this country.

Before we start that dialogue, we also want to talk about another issue that has happened just recently in this country and that has a little bit to do with my background growing up.

I grew up in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Kenosha, Wisconsin, was a company town. We had one very large employer, American Motors Company. We made Pacers and Gremlins and a bunch of cars that maybe were unique for their time and may be collectable now, but certainly stood out in history. But American Motors did something really amazing for the community I grew up in. We were able to grow up in a strong, middle class community. People had family-supporting wages. And the reason they had family-supporting wages is not only because of American Motors Company and later Renault and Chrysler, but also because of the United Autoworkers Union, a union that worked very collaboratively with the companies that were there in Kenosha and made sure that not only did people get a good, fair wage to support their families, but also they worked hard and they made sure those companies were profitable and delivered a very good quality product for the American people.

So, that was my experience growing up. My neighbors, my family, my friends all wound up having someone in their family working with American Motors Company or a company that fed into that, and we had good wages and people had a good chance to grow up in a middle class environment.

Unfortunately, all too often we see these attacks across the country on unions making it harder and harder for people who work for a company to have a voice in their company. What happened just 2 weeks ago was there was a union election at a Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee. They had an election that was conducted by the National Labor Relations Board where workers were deciding whether or not they were going to have a voice, collective voice in their workplace. They were deciding whether or not they were going to unionize and join the United Auto Workers.

There were two extraordinary things about this election: First, the company was neutral. The company had made the decision to stay out of the choice because, after all, this was a decision to be made by the workers. We have seen time and time again how employers can easily interfere with this choice by workers. After all, they write your paycheck; they can decide whether or not you get that promotion; they can fire you. So an employer can wield an immense and powerful influence over the workers who are trying to make a decision whether or not they want to unionize, and they can wield that power lawfully and sometimes they wield it unlawfully. In this case, the employer of Volkswagen said: You know what? This is the workers' decision. Let's leave it up to them.

That doesn't happen very often in this country. For that reason, the employer chose to embrace the notion that its employees had the freedom to choose. That happened in Chattanooga.

There is a second extraordinary thing that happened in this election, and that is, despite the fact that the employer was neutral, a free and fair election was still rendered impossible because of interference and threats from outside parties. What we saw here was unprecedented, and the shameful actions by outside parties interfered in a private decision by some 1,300 workers on whether or not they would organize for a better life.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Will the gentleman from Wisconsin yield?

Mr. POCAN. I yield, yes, absolutely, to Mr. MILLER from California.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding. I want to join you in your remarks in expressing outrage about the situation in Chattanooga.

In this case, these outside parties included both well-funded interest groups and publicly elected figures dead set on stopping the workers from joining the union. It wasn't enough for these outside parties to say publicly that they did not like unions. It wasn't enough for them to say publicly to the autoworkers, hey, we know what is best for you and your family, vote against the union. It wasn't enough for them to say we don't want unions to get a toehold on the south. No. They were not going to let the workers decide for themselves. They were angry with Volkswagen, who was officially neutral. They were angry that Volkswagen had a long track record of successfully working with labor unions through joint work councils that innovate and reduce company costs. They were angry that a majority of the workers actually signed cards saying they wanted the UAW to represent them.

They were afraid of what would happen if the NLRB election process was actually on the level.

In the end, free and fair union elections became their biggest fear. Imagine that. In the end, a free and fair election became their biggest fear. So they decided they couldn't let that happen. If Volkswagen wouldn't scuttle this election, then these outside officials would. They laid in wait, and on the eve of the election, they then launched their assault: a barrage of untrue and inflammatory statements, the kind that we see from union busters all the time, the kind that are designed to coerce, to scare, to intimidate, to bully, and to bully, and to bully hardworking auto plant workers into rejecting the union.

One of these third parties, an elected official, went to the press on the first day of the voting, the first day the workers had a chance to vote, and he said that he had been ''assured,'' if the workers vote against the union, Volkswagen would manufacture a new line of SUVs in Chattanooga. And lo and behold, what happened? This last-minute bombshell led to a press frenzy, banner headlines, a barrage of TV coverage, all reporting and repeating the threat that jobs in Chattanooga were now on the line with this vote. Never mind that the company denied it. Never mind that that elected official's claim wasn't true. As he said, he had been ''assured,'' the junior Senator from Tennessee said.

Mr. POCAN. I thank my friend from California.

What you said is worth repeating. Volkswagen put out a formal denial of the claim, making clear that there was absolutely no link between the vote and the placement of the SUV facility in Chattanooga, yet this elected official went out and did it again. He moved to discredit the company, astonishingly suggesting that the company was using old talking points, suggesting that he had the company's new secret talking points.

What happened here wasn't someone just expressing their view. What happened here was someone communicating a promise of benefits if workers voted one way, backed up by some mystery assurance. What happened here was someone communicating a thinly veiled threat that jobs would be lost if the workers voted another way, again backed up by some mysterious assurance.

The National Labor Relations Act is our Nation's premiere worker rights law. Like many of our civil rights laws, many heroic Americans in the last couple of generations gave their lives to secure the right to freely associate, to take considerate action to improve their lot collectively, to bargain collectively for better wages and better job security, for health care, for fair wages, and for a safe workplace.

These workers were all brave, and they did not give in to thugs and battles. This National Labor Relations Act outlaws bribes and threats in the midst of union elections. It does so for a reason. Those acts are not speech; they are more than speech. They render a free and fair election impossible.

In the case of UAW and Volkswagen in Chattanooga, since voting was already underway when the acts were committed, there was no opportunity to cure them. The votes were cast, and after 3 days the election was over. After an election, there are now three nonunionized Volkswagen plants in the world: one in Russia, one in China, and one in Chattanooga.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. On the last point the gentleman made, the reason these worker councils—why Volkswagen was neutral is that they had found these worker councils to help them lead this industry in innovation, to be one of the largest and most successful automobile companies in the world. And, in fact, they have used these worker councils in plants all around the world because that is the mechanism by which they have continued to be a leader and continued to have the growth that they have had and to have the products that they have had. And somehow—somehow—as you point out, in Russia and in China and now in Chattanooga, that motto is being rejected, not because Volkswagen rejected it, but because the election process was not allowed in China, it was not allowed in Russia, and was rigged and jimmied and obstructed by outside forces during that election in the United States.

□ 1900

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank the gentleman for taking this time.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you.

While we definitely want to make sure we are talking about all the issues that are important to this country, and minimum wage is one that we want to also talk about tonight, we wanted to take this time just to highlight what happened, this travesty two weeks ago, and we hope that this will be cured.

Outside officials, regardless of their perspective, shouldn't be involved in the election, but we want to make sure we are highlighting what happened, because that election was not fair.

Thank you very much, gentleman from California, for all your many years of service on this.

At this point, we would like to also discuss tonight something that is very important. The Democrats, this week, took on what sometimes is considered a very unique measure in this House, it is called a discharge petition, because we have been fighting for over a year to try to raise the minimum wage in this country.

There is a bill introduced by the gentleman from California and Senator HARKIN from Iowa that would raise the minimum wage to $10.10 within 3 years.

If we had kept up with inflation since 1968, the minimum wage right now would be something like $10.60.

Instead, we are at $7.25, and people can't get by. You certainly can't be in the middle class on that wage, and certainly it makes it hard to aspire to be in the middle class on that minimum wage.

We need to do everything we can to help lift that rising tide for everyone who gets that minimum wage because 16.5 million people will immediately get a pay increase, and another 8 million people will very likely get an increase because they are at that margin already and their wage will be lifted already.

These aren't numbers coming from the Democrats. These are numbers coming from the Congressional Budget Office, our nonpartisan entity that provides us facts and figures.

By giving the Nation a boost in the minimum wage, we help the economy, we help those who are in the middle class and aspiring to be in the middle class, and we can make this country a lot better for everyone trying to get by.

At this point I would like to yield to one of my colleagues from the State of Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT), one of my freshman colleagues who has also been the president of our freshman class.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Thank you, Mr. POCAN.

I want to say, at the outset, that I was impressed with the colloquy that you had with our colleague from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), and I wish to associate myself with those comments. They were very well-taken.

I, for one, and I know I speak on behalf of the entire Congressional Progressive Caucus, but I, for one, hope that the National Labor Relations Board revisits what happened in Chattanooga, because what we believe here in America is free and fair elections, and that includes labor union elections as well.

We are here to talk about raising the minimum wage, and it was only appropriate that Mr. MILLER from California was here with us this evening because he is one of the coauthors of H.R. 1010, the bill to raise the minimum wage to $10.10, a modest proposal, I should add.

But let me attempt to address this House. I know that there are those who think that everything that could be said about raising the minimum wage has already been said, but allow me to address this House as if nothing had been said about raising the minimum wage in this country to $10.10.

It is simply a matter of arithmetic. You know, if you just take what people were making at a minimum wage in the late 1960s in this country and put it on a cost index, a consumer price index, any kind of measure of inflation that has gone on since 1968, you see that, as my colleague and good friend from Wisconsin mentioned, it is well over $10.10 an hour. It is something like $10.60 an hour.

So this is indeed a modest proposal to turn the minimum wage up from the

mid-sevens to $10.10 an hour, and there are good, solid reasons we have in this country for doing this.

My fellow Members of the House, you have to remember what life is like for people who are making $7.25, $7.50, $7.75. People who are in that range are not bringing home enough money to make a living wage. They don't have enough money for the necessities of life.

People who are working full time—you have heard the expression ''the working poor,'' that is who we are talking about. These are the working poor.

Think about what our society has to do for the working poor. These are the people who have to take advantage of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the SNAP benefits. They used to be called food stamps.

These people don't make enough money, even though they work full time, to feed their families properly, so they resort to help from the SNAP program. Who pays for the SNAP program you might ask?

All of us do. U.S. taxpayers, John Q. Public pays for the SNAP program, so it is John Q. Public, not the employers of these people making the $7 per hour, not the employers paying for that, it is John Q. Taxpayer picking up the difference.

It is the taxpayers paying for the SNAP benefits for the workers who, although they are working full time, their employers are not paying them enough so that they can feed their families, give them the very basic necessities.

What else?

These are people that live in section 8 housing, low-income housing. Everybody knows that, the projects. That is where they live, the people who make minimum wage right now and try to feed and clothe and shelter their families on minimum wage in this country.

So who pays the supplemental amount to keep the section 8 housing program going?

It is us. It is John Q. Public, John Q. Taxpayer. It is the American taxpayers picking up the difference because not enough is being paid to these workers so that they can sustain their families. But that is not all.

What about Head Start?

These are families that can't afford to send their kids to preschool because when they are making minimum wage, they can't pay the minimal fee to send your kid to preschool.

So where do they go?

They go to Head Start. Head Start, a federally funded program.

Who pays for that?

You already know the answer. You do. It is the American taxpayer. It is John Q. Public paying for Head Start because we have got working families that don't make enough even to send their little kids to preschool.

What is the point of all of this?

The point is that these employers paying the minimum wage to these workers are paying so little that the American taxpayers have to step in and improve the lives of these people to such a basic level that they can feed them and clothe them and shelter them and give them the basic elemental education.

In other words, these employers are freeloaders. They are getting a free ride off of the American public because they are paying the minimum wage, which is in the sevens and it should be in the tens.

Listening to this debate, the owner of a small business might say, well, wait a minute. That means I have to lay people off because I only have so much money to pay my employees, so if you up the minimum wage to $10.10, I don't have as much money to pay each person, so I have to lay somebody off so I can pay the remaining people the $10.10 an hour.

That is a fallacy. It is a completely bogus argument, and let me tell you why: because that assumes that your business is a zero sum game. It is not.

To prove that, we need go back a century to a great American businessman, a self-made man, Henry Ford out of Dearborn, Michigan. What did he do?

He started one the greatest auto companies in the world. A central tenet of his business principles was that he was going to pay his workers a living wage, and he did.

They asked him, Mr. Ford, why are you paying your workers so much? You don't have to do this.

The answer is: I want my workers to be able to afford the things that I am building. If these people can't afford what I am building, then I don't have a market.

That is where the magic word comes in: customers. If you pay $10.10 to your employees, it is not just your employees getting that increase in wages, it is everybody else's employees. Everybody in America, instead of making in the sevens, they get up to $10.10, and all of a sudden they have a few more coins jingling in their pockets, and they might show up in your place of business.

You are making customers out of millions and millions and millions of Americans by paying them a working wage, a living wage, a wage that will enable them to become your customers.

So don't write off this argument, and don't fall for the same old argument that has been used, trotted out time and time again for why we shouldn't raise the minimum wage. If we here in America had believed and followed that argument, the minimum wage would still be $2.25 instead of what it is now.

So think of the customers you will get. This is why raising the minimum wage just to what we would raise it to to account for inflation since 1968 makes sense.

Mr. POCAN. Would the gentleman from Pennsylvania yield to a question?

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Certainly.

Mr. POCAN. So what you just said, talking about the buying power, putting that much money back into the economy, you know, I look at it this way. If you are someone who is making minimum wage and you get your wage increased to about $10.10, that extra money is not going to go into a savings account for something in the future. You are probably going to be buying things right now. You are going to buy a sofa maybe.

The average CEO now makes 354 times what the average worker makes. Back in the late eighties it was about a 40–1 ratio. Now it is 354 times.

When we put money into an average low-wage worker, that money goes immediately into the economy. They can buy a sofa.

But when the gains that we have had in this country have gone, largely, to the top executives, the top 1 percent, the top 1 and 2 percent, how many sofas can you buy at that rate? How does that affect the economy?

Do you have any idea how many sofas you think you could buy if you are a CEO to try to keep up with and help stimulate the economy?

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. If stacked end to end, how far into space would those sofas reach is the question.

It is a great point, Mr. POCAN. Of course, you know the answer. The answer is this: when we put that extra money in the pockets of the people who are making the minimum wage in this country, they don't put that money in their brokerage accounts just to languish and not help others in the economy. They plug that money right back into the American economy, and it turns into growth and it turns into jobs.

That is what we were doing in 1968 when our economy was humming along and we were the pride of the free world. That is what we need to do again.

We need to think about stimulating our economy the old fashioned American way, by paying American workers a living wage.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you very much again, gentleman. I appreciate it.

I would also like to yield some time to another one of my colleagues, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. NOLAN). He is a freshman, but a returning freshman from the State of Minnesota, my neighboring State, from the great iron ranges of Minnesota.

Mr. NOLAN. I want to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin, and I want to associate myself with your remarks and those of the gentleman from California regarding what has happened at Volkswagen and the importance of the union movement in this country.

If anyone wants to know where the economic success of the middle class in this country has come from, you just need to follow the union movement. As the union movement grew and strengthened, so did the middle class and jobs and opportunities, and as we have seen the decline in recent years, we have seen a similar decline in income and jobs and opportunities.

If anyone thinks for one moment that elections don't have consequences,

they need to take a look at their history.

I come from the Iron Range. We have got a lot of mining and steelworkers up there. Back in 1948, if you will allow me to just do a little history here, and leading up to that, the steelworkers union proposed contracts that would allow them to negotiate pensions and health care benefits, and wouldn't you know, the NLRB, in 1947, said, no, you can't do that. That is not okay. That is off the table. That is not a subject for negotiation.

Guess what?

Not many people had pension benefits and health care at the time.

Well, it became a big issue in the 1948 election, and Harry Truman, as we all know, won the election.

□ 1915

Well, guess what? He had the opportunity to appoint a number of people to the NLRB, and that issue was brought before the NLRB again. And guess what? This time, the NLRB ruled that, no, it is appropriate for unions to negotiate for pensions, to negotiate for health care benefits; and that is a result of an election contest and the union movement, coming together, was a genesis of a generation that had prosperity and opportunities—perhaps unparalleled—anywhere in the history of this country.

I have submitted, back when my generation entered into the employment market, if you were going to be a failure, you had to have a plan. There was just such an abundance of opportunities, and I am sometimes ashamed and embarrassed that my generation doesn't want to step up and do for this generation and the next generation what was done for us.

So I commend you for what you are doing here today, and I also want to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Pennsylvania. We could go on, and we could add more to the litany of the things that are causing the rest of us to subsidize the businesses in this country.

And I know about business. I spent the last 32 years of my life in business. I am a business guy. It breaks my heart to see working men and women having to go to the food shelves to get food to feed their family.

So I rise here tonight to talk about the minimum wage just briefly. You know, we hear about all these millions of new jobs that have been created in recent years. One of my constituents said to me the other day: You know, it is a darn good thing we have created millions of new jobs because a guy needs two or three of them to make a living.

Well, that is, in fact, what is happening; and it is of small comfort to someone who is working these minimum wage jobs to know that, if they can put two or three of them together, they can provide for their family, make the rent payment, the mortgage payment, buy the groceries and clothing for the kids; but you put in two or three jobs, there is no time left for the family.

A minimum wage increase is pro-family. It is pro-American. It is the foundation of what made this country the great country that it is.

Mr. Speaker, I hear all the time in my district, as I travel and stop at the cafes and the filling stations and the convenience stores, about these people that are working two and three jobs just to make ends meet, all because our minimum wage is simply not enough to take care of our families.

The lack of a decent and fair minimum wage is unfair to families. It is unfair to children. It is unfair to the elderly. It is unfair to the hardworking mothers and fathers, men and women in this country who go to work every day, providing the goods and services that we need so that we can continue on the path of the great Nation that we have been.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we raise this minimum wage. Where I come from, morality and ethics dictated. If someone is willing to go to work every day and every week and every month to provide essential goods and services for the rest of us and this Nation, they are entitled to a wage that would allow them to live with a modicum of comfort and dignity. That is what this is all about.

So, Mr. Speaker, let us vote on this issue. You know what the outcome will be. We will increase the minimum wage if we are given an opportunity to vote on it here in this House. I know there are plenty of Republicans and Democrats who will vote to do that. Let's restore democracy to this institution.

Let's allow this matter to be brought before the House. Let's have a vote on it. Let's give America a pay raise now. It is desperately needed.

I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN) and Members of the House.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. NOLAN, I think what you are referring to is exactly what the Democrats are doing this week. We are initiating a discharge petition. We need to get 218 Members of this House to sign that to force a vote.

The House leadership has refused to let us have a vote on giving America a pay raise; and because of that, we are taking what is generally a pretty unusual motion—in other words, to discharge—to actually get enough people to sign and say: we want to vote on this, so we can pass it.

And I completely agree with you, Mr. NOLAN. If we put this on the floor, it will pass, unless the Republican leadership doesn't allow us to get this up here.

So I thank you for all of your efforts, not only just to get people to sign the discharge petition, but for all of the middle class families of Iron Range, Minnesota.

Mr. NOLAN. Thank you.

Mr. POCAN. One of the things that we have talked about tonight is the value of why we want to increase the minimum wage, why it is going to put money into the economy right now. Again, this isn't the Democrats saying that. These are economic experts. These are some of the economists of the country.

The Economic Policy Institute has said that, if we raise the minimum wage, we would actually create 85,000 new jobs, in their calculation, within 3 years and put a $22 billion boost to the economy; and that means $500 million alone to the State of Wisconsin—$500 million to my State and $22 billion to the overall economy.

And what is more, you would lift 900,000 Americans out of poverty, according to the Congressional Budget Office. So we would lift people out of poverty, give people the ability to support their families and the ability to actually have a chance at living in the middle class.

Right now, on the minimum wage, your monthly gross salary is about $1,250. Now, how many of you think you could live paying your rent or mortgage, paying for groceries, paying for your utilities, paying for gas or a bus or however it is you get around?

Think about the bills you have. Could you live on $1,250 a month? And that is what the minimum wage is right now, less than the real value in current dollars that it was in 1968. It should be up to $10.74, I believe, if we kept up with inflation.

There are a lot of myths out there. You are going to hear people on the other side of the aisle say: well, this is all for teenagers. Why are we going to lift the wage?

The average person who receives minimum wage is 35 years old. What percentage of the people earning minimum wage are teenagers? Twelve percent. Again, that is not the Democrats saying that. The Congressional Budget Office, the nonpartisan agency we go to for numbers, says that.

So if we raise the minimum wage, we will lift 900,000 people out of poverty, directly support 24.5 million workers, about two-thirds of those people directly with an increase in wage at the minimum wage level and another third who are at the $10 level, who will also see a ripple effect of a boost in wages.

We will help the economy right now by putting that money into the economy in all the ways that were talked about tonight, and we know that this will not have a detrimental effect on the economy.

Now, some will say that it is going to cost jobs. I will tell you, in my State of Wisconsin, I spent 14 years in the legislature before I came to Congress; and every time we raised the minimum wage, there was an increase in jobs available. More people went into the workforce because we were actually offering a greater wage and people are given an incentive to get into the workforce.

There are studies that compare State by State, county by county, where one

had a minimum wage increase and one didn't; and there has been no ill effect in the county that did versus didn't, based on raising the minimum wage.

There are 600 economists, including seven Nobel economics prize winners, who agree that it will have no or negligible effect to the increase of jobs; but everyone agrees, it will help those people who are currently either living in poverty, working for minimum wage—two, three jobs to get by—or those who are just making above it and will see that ripple effect.

So there is no question, we need to give the workers of this country a pay raise. For all too long, we haven't done it. For all too long, we haven't kept up with inflation. You simply can't get by on roughly $15,000 a year. That $1,250 a month is impossible.

We are not talking about teenagers. We are talking about the average person being 35 years old, heads of households who are working one, two, maybe three part-time jobs just to get by.

So the Progressive Caucus is here tonight. And this is why we are talking not only about what happened at the union election in Chattanooga, but about raising the minimum wage.

The Democrats in this House have initiated a discharge petition to force a vote. Let us vote, Mr. Speaker. Let us vote on raising the minimum wage because if you let us vote, I know there are enough fair-minded Republicans that will join with the Democrats in this Chamber; and we will raise the minimum wage, but only if we are allowed to.

We are making every effort, and the Progressive Caucus will continue to do this. We were the ones who went and asked the President to raise it for people who get Federal contracts, and the President made that order. We are very happy the President did that.

But we are going to continue to push this in every way possible, so that people can live comfortably in the middle class and those who aspire to can get into the middle class.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I thank you for allowing the Progressive Caucus to have this time this evening, and I yield back the balance of my time.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) for 30 minutes.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, we are here today as part of the New Democratic Coalition Immigration Task Force, which I am proud to cochair along with my colleagues, Representative GARCIA and Representative CASTRO.

I am here to discuss immigration reform and what the path forward is for an issue that over 70 percent of the American people agree, an issue that right now threatens the security of this country, that continues to cost taxpayers money; but with the passage of a simple bill that already more than two-thirds of the Senate has supported would reduce our deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars, finally secure our border, restore the rule of law within our country, and ensure that, never again, will we have millions of people in this country here illegally.

More than a year ago, the New Democratic Coalition helped pave the way for immigration reform with the release of detailed principles on comprehensive immigration reform.

Our principles express support for commonsense reforms that reduce bureaucratic backlogs, reunite families, create jobs for Americans, and spur competitiveness.

In August, we issued a letter to Speaker JOHN BOEHNER, demanding that he introduce a comprehensive immigration reform bill; and if he failed to do so, we would introduce our own.

Well, no bill was forthcoming, so New Democratic Coalition members worked with a diverse group of colleagues on both sides of the aisle to introduce the House's only bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill, H.R. 15, last October.

Since then, we have met with countless stakeholders, from business owners to law enforcement to agriculture to the faith-based community, all who support moving the ball forward and support our bill, H.R. 15. Businesses, tech companies, faith leaders, and our voters are demanding action on fixing our broken immigration system.

Yet despite a level of consensus rarely seen in our country on an issue—and rarely seen in Washington on an issue—the loudest, most extreme voices on the other side of the aisle have thus far been successful in preventing this body from acting and solving a problem that the American people want solved.

One of my Republican colleagues even equated DREAMers—young de facto Americans who grew up in this country and know no other country and want nothing more than to pay taxes and contribute to make America better—one of my Republican colleagues compared DREAMers with drug mules, with disparaging remarks about the size of their calves; and he continues to refuse to apologize for his hateful comments.

These kinds of deplorable, intolerant remarks are dividing our country, but they should not divide this Chamber. They should not prevent a commonsense bill from coming forward.

House Republicans need to reject the offensive and unproductive rhetoric of some of their Members and finally show real leadership on immigration reform that a majority of Republican voters support.

The only floor vote that we have even had this entire legislative session on immigration was a vote to defund the Deferred Action program, to defund the docket program, a vote to deport DREAMers, to not allow DREAMers to get right with the law and get a provisional renewable working permit. Sadly, that amendment passed the House.

We were able to stop it. It didn't happen. The docket program continues. We encourage President Obama to extend the docket program.

But just to show the American people where Congress is and what the Republicans have done, the only immigration bill that they have even voted on was to deport DREAMers. The House majority can't continue to sit by and allow extremists to define their party.

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Now, the release of immigration principles by the Republicans on reform was a very positive first step, and we encourage the Republicans to work with Democrats to construct a bill based on these principles, many of which we believe are consistent with those of the New Democratic Coalition and consistent with H.R. 15. We are happy to look at new ideas built on the principles that we can establish together and a commitment to fix our broken immigration system.

But, again, our patience can't last forever. If there is continued Republican failure to bring a bill forward, we will have no option but to take out a discharge petition on the only bipartisan bill that exists. If the Speaker won't lead, I hope that the membership of this body will lead, take the agenda into our own hands, and allow a vote that will pass, a bill that will then pass the Senate and be signed by the President.

We are joined by a cochair on the New Dem Immigration Task Force, a leader in the fight to reform our immigration system, the Representative from Texas (Mr. CASTRO.)

I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Thank you, Congressman POLIS, and thank you for your leadership on the issue of comprehensive immigration reform.

I am proud to join you and Congressman GARCIA of Florida as cochairs of the New Dem Coalition advocating for comprehensive immigration reform. As you mentioned, there are very compelling moral and economic reasons for the United States Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform in the year 2014.

We know, for example, that there are a handful of American industries, four or five or six major American industries, that literally would not exist the way they do and would not be nearly as productive as they are but for immigrant labor—both legal and undocumented immigrant labor. For example, we know that about 40 percent of the tech businesses that have been started in Silicon Valley have been started by foreign-born persons, by immigrants. We know, for example, that with respect to the agricultural industry, they self-report that 50 percent of their workers are undocumented, which probably means that 75 percent of their workers are undocumented.

So, on everything from the high-tech industry to the agriculture industry, construction and other trades, we can appreciate, especially myself coming from the great State of Texas, that Texas does more trade than any other State in the Nation. It has the longest border with Mexico of any State in the Nation. We can appreciate the role that immigrants have played in our society and continue to play in our economy.

I want to share with you, Congressman, just a quick story of an immigrant that I met recently back home in San Antonio, because I know that over the course of this debate there has been a lot of divisiveness and some disparaging remarks that have been made about immigrants. The overwhelming majority of these folks are not people who come to America to do us any harm or to commit crimes. These are people who are fundamentally seeking a better life in the way that, throughout the generations, people have come here to this country.

A few months back, right around the time of the government shutdown, I went back home to San Antonio. I was home for about 36 hours, and my hair had gotten too long, so I decided to get a haircut. It was a Sunday, and the place that I usually go to was closed. So I drove around and I came to a strip mall. I was looking for a place that might be open.

I came across this place called J Cuts. I went inside and sat down. There was a woman who welcomed me into the chair, and she started telling me her story as she was cutting my hair. She told me the story of how she arrived in the United States. She said that she had come from Latin America I guess about 25 years ago, that she had come in a raft of inner tubes across the Rio Grande. She had ended up marrying—and I imagine, marrying an American citizen—and becoming a U.S. citizen.

This woman said that she worked for a few years cleaning houses and cleaning businesses. She had often been cheated out of money by her employers. She mentioned that one job that had promised her $1,000 turned into $100. After that, she worked at Fantastic Sams and Supercuts, a few haircutting chains, and that is how she learned how to speak English.

But the long and short of it is, eventually this woman, Ms. Gonzalez, came to own her own hair salon, became an entrepreneur, and was now employing other people. She said her brothers who also immigrated also were businessowners now.

So those are very promising and not atypical stories of immigrants who come here and are very productive members of our society and who have a lot to contribute.

It has been my hope throughout this debate that, in the rhetoric that comes out of the United States Congress, we will realize and acknowledge that immigrants play such an important role in the life of our Nation and that they always have, that this is a nation of immigrants and continues to be a nation of immigrants.

I would also say that there is a scarier day in America than a time when everybody wants to come here. The scarier day is a time when nobody wants to come here, and that is a day that we should truly be worried about.

Mr. POLIS. I thank the gentleman from Texas.

The strength of our Nation, a nation built on immigrants, is that the best, brightest, and hardest working from across the world want to move here. The countries that have a bigger problem today are those that are losing those people—not us, the country that stands to gain some of the best, most highly motivated and talented people from across the world, just as my great-grandparents came to these shores to make our country stronger. I know that, by working together, we can accomplish that.

Have you ever seen the unprecedented degree of coalition behind immigration reform? Have you ever seen agriculture, the faith-based community, and the business community—and labor and business together—on an issue in your time in public service or before? Have you ever seen that on an issue?

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. No. You raise an incredible point. I served 10 years, five terms in the Texas Legislature. This is my first term in Congress.

But consider this: Last year, in 2013, we had what was, on record, the least productive Congress in American history. Something like only 58 bills went to the President's desk. So you can imagine in this place there is a lot of gridlock. The wheels, essentially, in 2013 came to a halt.

But of all of the major issues, immigration reform is the one that had the most bipartisan support and the strongest support. And consider this for a second: I think it was sometime in the summer the President of the United States had a press conference over at the White House, and he had standing on either side of him the head of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the head of the AFL–CIO. Now, think about that for a second. How often do you have the head of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the head of the AFL–CIO standing next to each other agreeing on anything? But that is how deep and how profound the wide range of support is for comprehensive immigration reform.

And it is not just business and labor, it is people from throughout the political spectrum: the evangelical community that, quite honestly, has been fairly conservative, so the religious community and the social advocates who are ordinarily on the left. It has just been a wide array of people from throughout the political spectrum who have come out in support of comprehensive reform, which really begs the question of why Congress has not moved on this issue when, on the other side, there has been no organized opposition.

There has been a clear indication that a majority of Americans support comprehensive immigration reform, and so it has left a lot of Americans wondering why on Earth Congress can't pass comprehensive immigration reform.

Mr. POLIS. I think most Americans, like myself, are somewhat offended that we don't have the rule of law in this country. There are millions—10 million, 12 million. We don't even know how many people that are here illegally. We don't know where they are. We don't know what they are doing. It is a security risk. It is an economic risk. Are they paying taxes? There have been studies that show they pay some; they might not be paying others. We need to fix this.

I have gone to town halls in the most conservative part of my district, and I say, is there anyone here who thinks the immigration system is working great? I haven't met a single constituent who does. They want it fixed. They want to make sure that people are required to get right with the law and get in line behind people who did it the right way and are already in line for eventual green card or citizenship.

That is exactly what the bipartisan bill proposes. It provides a way that people can register with the law, mandatory workplace authentication to ensure that anybody who gets a job going forward has at least the provisional status that allows them to have that job. Only about under 10 percent—I think it is 8 or 9 percent—of companies in this country use E-Verify. We need to improve E-Verify. There is money to do that in the bill to make sure it is correct more often. And then, of course, we need to make it mandatory along with the route, of course, for the people that need to go to work the next day to have the provisional permit that they need to go to work the next day and get in line behind other Americans, other people that are in line for citizenship or a green card.

There are a lot of misperceptions out there about the bill. One thing that is important to talk about is that this bill that is being proposed, the bipartisan immigration reform, H.R. 15, as well as the Senate bill, don't confer citizenship on anybody. Zero people are made citizens under this bill. That is as it should be. You don't want to reward illegal behavior. What you want to do is say get right with the law, pay a fine, a penalty, you violated the law.

What should the penalty be? Pay that fine, register, and get right with the law. And do you know what? If you demonstrate that you have become a productive American, you learn English, you have a job, and you support your family, in 13 years, 12 years, 15 years, you can stand for American citizenship, take a test and eventually become an American citizen.

But no one should be rewarded for violating the law under this bill, and

no one is. What it does is it creates the line. What is so frustrating today is people say, ''Oh, why don't they get in line?'' when, in reality, there is no line. If you are a parent of an American child who is growing up here, there is no line for you to be gone for 20 years while your child is being raised without you. That doesn't make any sense. You have to create a way that we can do this within the system of law that is to the benefit of the American people, prevents people who don't have documentation from undermining wages for other Americans, makes sure that they can buy their own health care so that taxpayers aren't left on the hook for health care for people that can't even buy insurance if they wanted.

There are practical reasons that this saves money for the average American family. This helps push up wages for the average American family. It reduces our deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars. We could use that as a pay-for. We always look for ways—we could use that as a pay-for for a tax cut for the middle class. We could use it as a pay-for to fund universal preschool. We could use it as a pay-for to ensure that we have the military preparedness we need to meet the challenges of the 21st century or to honor our veterans who have served us in our recent conflicts.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. You bring up a wonderful point, which is that you have got—we have, in our Nation, 10 to 15 million people, undocumented immigrants, who essentially are off the radar that we can't account for. And so a large part of this bill is bringing those people out of the shadows and making sure that we can account for their activities, making sure that they are paying taxes and that they are able to purchase health care insurance.

Right now, as you know in Colorado, and certainly we know in Texas, when somebody shows up at a county hospital and they can't afford to pay for their services, their emergency services, all of us, as taxpayers, end up paying those bills, and that includes a lot of undocumented folks. And those services, of course, have to be provided. Everybody needs to be provided emergency services. So this would be a way to essentially bring them under the grid, understand who they are, and bring them into society's fold. Those are definitive benefits of the bill that we propose.

Mr. POLIS. Another sector it would be great for is the real estate industry and homes. Many immigrants who don't have their status currently are forced to rent, sometimes under the table. They would be able to finance and buy their own homes, helping to revitalize areas that have high vacancy rates and lots of foreclosures. We have areas in Colorado that continue to be hit by foreclosures. We would love to introduce new buyers to those markets and help ensure that families have good, stable homes to raise their American children in.

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Another thing that I think a lot of Americans don't realize is that in many cases the children of these families are American nationals. So you might have in one family two Americans, one person with a green card, and two that don't have paperwork. So what should the solution be? Should it be to send all of them to another country? Are you going to send an American citizen who has never even been to another country back to another country because they are an 8-year-old? Are you going to force them into the foster care system because you are just taking the parent?

This country is about family values. Immigration reform should unite families, and we should celebrate what is the backbone of our strength as a Nation, the American family.

We are joined by another leader in the battle to replace our broken immigration system with one that works for our country, the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS), and I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. I thank the distinguished member from Colorado.

I would like to explain a little bit about why I believe we have the greatest country on the planet. It is because people like my parents with only a first- and second-grade education, without much opportunity in the country that they were born and raised in, started a new life here in the United States of America, which gave me and my brothers and sisters, all 11 of us, more opportunities here in America than we could have had in my parents' home country.

Every day I am in this sacred Chamber serving the American people, I count my blessings. I personally know what comprehensive immigration reform can accomplish, not only for 11 million undocumented people who are already our neighbors and friends but for American businesses and the U.S. economy.

I mentioned about my mother and father with a first- and second-grade education and how their children got to go to college. We have doctoral degrees and master's degrees and bachelor's degrees. Every single one of our households pays more in taxes today than my parents ever made in gross income in any given year. I point that out because this country was founded on immigrants. It is that immigrant spirit that today is creating more jobs and American-born citizens. This is a country where people are given hope. This is a country where people come from other parts of the world, and they kiss the ground that they have arrived on and they love our country. They love this country. They love what they have made now their country, and they are contributors to what is great about this country, the greatest economy in the world.

House Republicans have a choice to make on immigration reform. Are they going to do what is right for Americans, or will they let anti-immigrant Members of this Congress, who absurdly call good students right here in America, the DREAMers, they call them drug mules, will they let these people be the messengers of their party about immigration reform?

That is why the Chamber of Commerce and more than 630 business organizations are urging us, Congress, to modernize our broken immigration system. We must create a less cumbersome path to legal immigration. Improving our outdated system will encourage long-term success. Comprehensive immigration reform will attract young foreign workers who will help reduce the deficit by as much as $1.2 trillion over the next 20 years. That improves America. They will help the economy grow by nearly 5 percent over the next 20 years. They will jump-start housing recovery, adding $68 billion every year to our American construction economy.

American wages will increase, and legal immigrants will add more than $100 billion in tax revenue to benefit all Americans.

Moreover, attracting the best and brightest talent abroad will cement America's competitiveness in the global economy for generations to come. We need to fix this broken immigration system. We need to stop sending these bright Ph.D.'s who come to love America, who get the degrees, and then we just send them home when they want to stay here and create a company that will employ American citizens, create wealth for American citizens right here on our soil.

Forty percent of Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or their children. Tech giants like Google, eBay, and Intel were founded by first- or second-generation Americans. These pioneering companies employ millions of Americans. Alongside American-born citizens, immigrants have spurred significant innovation and conducted critical research, pushing the United States forward.

I urge Congress to tackle the bureaucratic immigration backlog, reunite families, and supercharge the economy for all Americans. Comprehensive immigration reform must happen, and it must be done well, creating a modern system that is fair and efficient for everyone. A comprehensive immigration reform bill will require people who came here undocumented, yes, to pay fines; yes, to learn English; and will secure our borders even more than they are secured today. That is the kind of comprehensive immigration bill that I think every American wants to see happen. Unfortunately, the leadership of this House of Congress is unwilling to put that bill on the floor. That is why I am here today, to urge commonsense action on the floor of the United States Congress so we can do what is best for the economy of the United States of America, and that is to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

Mr. POLIS. I thank the gentleman from California, who has been a tremendous leader in the fight to fix our broken immigration system, for his heartfelt comments.

I wanted to quote from last week a Wall Street Journal op-ed that criticized the Republicans' failure to act. It is not every day that The Wall Street Journal criticizes Republicans with harsh words. It is kind of one of those ''man bites dog'' stories, but they didn't mince words. The Wall Street Journal wrote:

> Republicans have killed immigration reform for now, but a recent study shows in the real economy it is needed. The irony is that many Republicans who support handouts to farmers oppose reforms that wouldn't cost taxpayers a dime and would help the economy.

So rather than help farmers succeed in the private sector by hiring employees they want, the Republicans are seeking to keep them on the public dole, giving them taxpayer money rather than allowing them to operate in the marketplace and sell their products at the market.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found that the Senate comprehensive bill, which H.R. 15 is based on, would raise wages for Americans by $470 billion, create an average of 120,000 jobs for American citizens, and increase the growth of our GDP by 3.3 percent.

Polls continue to show that vast majorities of the American people support immigration reform—Republicans, Independents, Democrats, every demographic, every State supports immigration reform. Congress' failure to act is becoming inexcusable. Look, if the Republican majority puts together a bill based on the principles they laid out, let's have a floor discussion, and let's get something done. If they fail to fill the promising words of those principles with an actual bill, then we will take the only bipartisan bill we have, H.R. 15, and file to discharge it. What does that mean? That is the only way that the membership of the House of Representatives can bring a bill to the floor without the Speaker's blessing. We would love to work through the Speaker. We challenge the Speaker to lead. We applaud, and our new Dem coalition put out a statement applauding the immigration principle, saying we can find common ground and pass a bill. But there needs to be a bill. If there is not, let's move forward with the one we have, which would pass tomorrow on the floor of the House.

I am honored to yield to a leader in the fight to reform immigration, a cochair of the New Democratic Coalition Immigration Task Force, my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GARCIA).

Mr. GARCIA. I thank the gentleman from Colorado.

There should be no question by now that immigration reform is good for America, and Americans want immigration reform. Nearly 80 percent of Americans agree, and up to 70 percent of Republicans support reform with a pathway to citizenship. The issue is not simply about justice and fairness. It is about ensuring America's economic prosperity.

In Florida alone, legalizing all the currently undocumented immigrants would generate $1.3 billion of new tax revenue and create 97,000 new jobs.

Mr. Speaker, fixing our broken immigration system will help small businesses expand, foster innovation, increase productivity, raise wages, and help create thousands of jobs. Comprehensive immigration reform makes all Americans better, makes our country richer, and makes opportunity for all.

Mr. Speaker, one of the great tragedies of some countries is they fail to realize what they are truly good at. If there is something that America is better at than any other Nation, it is making Americans. Throughout the history of this great Nation, generation after generation, we have made new Americans better Americans and a greater America.

The statement Mr. POLIS mentioned earlier referring to DREAMers as drug mules was ludicrous, but doubling down on those remarks was downright appalling. You know, the gentleman from Iowa not only offends DREAMers, offends the undocumented, he offends all Americans. In defending this statement, claims have been made that detractors only criticize the choice of language, and then he goes further by saying those who attack him simply won't engage on the facts.

Well, yes, the choice of words is offensive, and as the son of an immigrant, I am offended, but the claims are also patently false. They shouldn't be an excuse for not moving immigration reform.

I want to thank my colleagues tonight, and I want to thank the Speaker for the time. The time has come to pass immigration reform. The opportunity is now. Let us not wait. It hurts our country.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. UPTON (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of illness.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2431. An act to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System.

A BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on February 27, 2014, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 2431. To reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 56 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, February 28, 2014, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4832. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Pesticides; Satisfaction of Data Requirements; Procedures to Ensure Protection of Data Submitters' Rights [EPA-HQ-OPP-2009-0456; FRL-9904-32] (RIN: 2070-AJ58) received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4833. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 13-176, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4834. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 13-187, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4835. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 13-188, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4836. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting extension of the waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, Pub. L. 107-511, with respect to assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4837. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 13-186, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4838. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting decisions pursuant to the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4839. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting memorandum of justification; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4840. A letter from the Vice President, Office of External Affairs, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Regulatory Flexibility Act certification for proposed amendments to OPIC's Freedom of Information Act regulations; Privacy Act regulations; and Touhy regulations received February 6, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4841. A letter from the Chief, Branch of Permits and Regulations, Division of Migratory Bird Management, Department of the

Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Migratory Bird Hunting; Revision of Language for Approval of Nontoxic Shot for Use in Waterfowl Hunting [Docket No.: FWS-R9-MB-2011-0077; FF09M21200-134-FXMB1231099BPP0] (RIN: 1018-AY59) received February 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4842. A letter from the Acting Chief, Branch of Listing, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Threatened Status for Eriogonum codium (Umtanum Desert Buckwheat) and Physaria douglasii subsp. tuplashensis (White Bluffs Bladderpod) and Designation of Critical Habitat [Docket Nos.: FWS-R1-ES-2012-0017; FWS-R1-ES-2013-0012] (RIN: 1018-AX72; 1018-AZ54) received February 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4843. A letter from the Chief, Branch of Endangered Species Listing, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Chromolaena frustrata (Cape Sable Thoroughwort) [Docket No.: FWS-R4-ES-2013-0029] (RIN: 1018-AZ51) received February 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4844. A letter from the Acting Chief, Branch of Listing, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Arctostaphylos franciscana (Franciscan Manzanita) [Docket No.: FWS-R8-ES-2012-0067; 4500030114] (RIN: 1018-AY63) received February 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4845. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Pacific Island Fisheries; 2014 Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures [Docket No.: 131028907-4042-02] (RIN: 0648-XC954) received February 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4846. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Tanner Crab Area Closure in the Gulf of Alaska and Gear Modification Requirements for the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea Groundfish Fisheries [Docket No.: 120405263-3999-02] (RIN: 0648-BB76) received February 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4847. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Inseason Adjustment to the 2014 Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Pollock, Atka Mackerel, and Pacific Cod Total Allowable Catch Amounts [Docket No.: 121018563-3148-02] (RIN: 0648-XD060] received January 29, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4848. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Commercial Quota Harvested for the State of New Jersey [Docket No.: 111220786-1781-01] (RIN: 0648-XD030) received February 11, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4849. A letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer, Little League Baseball, transmitting the Annual Report of Little League Baseball, Incorporated for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 1084(b); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. GOODLATTE: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 2641. A bill to provide for improved coordination of agency actions in the preparation and adoption of environmental documents for permitting determinations, and for other purposes (Rept. 113–363, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Natural Resources discharged from further consideration. H.R. 2641 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mrs. NEGRETE McLEOD:

H.R. 4104. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the 7.5 percent threshold for the medical expense deduction for people 65 or older; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. McDERMOTT (for himself, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. KILMER, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Mr. SMITH of Washington):

H.R. 4105. A bill to establish a Maritime Goods Movement User Fee and provide grants for international maritime cargo improvements and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BARR (for himself and Mr. BERA of California):

H.R. 4106. A bill to provide for the development and dissemination of clinical practice guidelines and the establishment of a right of removal to Federal courts for defendants in medical malpractice actions involving a Federal payor, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. McGOVERN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Ms. SPEIER):

H.R. 4107. A bill to reduce the number of nuclear-armed submarines operated by the Navy, to prohibit the development of a new long-range penetrating bomber aircraft, to prohibit the procurement of new intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. JACKSON LEE (for herself, Mr. VARGAS, and Ms. CLARKE of New York):

H.R. 4108. A bill to establish a grant program for nebulizers in elementary and secondary schools; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CAPUANO (for himself, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MAFFEI, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. OWENS, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. GRIMM, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. FATTAH, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. NORTON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. ENYART, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. McGOVERN, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. RUIZ, and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut):

H.R. 4109. A bill to require the President to designate a legal public holiday to be known as National First Responders Day; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. JACKSON LEE (for herself, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. VEASEY, and Mr. GARCIA):

H.R. 4110. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit to encourage private employers to hire veterans, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the reasonable efforts an employer may make under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act with respect to hiring veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 4111. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to implement various reforms to the social security disability insurance program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. JACKSON LEE (for herself, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. HONDA, Ms. MOORE, and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida):

H.R. 4112. A bill to require that activities carried out by the United States in South Sudan relating to governance, reconstruction and development, and refugee relief and assistance will support the basic human rights of women and women's participation and leadership in these areas; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. McNERNEY:

H.R. 4113. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to direct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to consider projects involving rural communities in the selection of alternative water source projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. McNERNEY (for himself and Mr. GARAMENDI):

H.R. 4114. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit for property certified by the Environmental Protection Agency under the WaterSense program; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. NOLAN (for himself, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. RIBBLE, and Mr. PETERSON):

H.R. 4115. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to temporarily waive certain vehicle weight limits for covered logging vehicles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4116. A bill to direct the Librarian of Congress to obtain a stained glass panel depicting the seal of the District of Columbia and install the panel among the stained glass panels depicting the seals of States which overlook the Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. RANGEL:

H.R. 4117. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the earned income tax credit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana (for himself, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. LANCE, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. PASCRELL, and Mr. MCCAUL):

H. Res. 493. A resolution expressing support for the designation of February 28, 2014, as ''Rare Disease Day''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD:

H.R. 4104.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution

By Mr. MCDERMOTT:

H.R. 4105.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 4106.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

Article III, Section 1

Article III, Section 2, Clause 1

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 4107.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1.

By Ms. JACKSON LEE:

H.R. 4108.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CAPUANO:

H.R. 4109.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1; and Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. JACKSON LEE:

H.R. 4110.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1, 3, and 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 4111.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

''. . . and provide for the . . . general welfare of the United States . . .''

''. . . to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers . . .''

This legislation seeks to reform the Social Security Disability Insurance program. Therefore, it will affect the general welfare of the United States.

By Ms. JACKSON LEE:

H.R. 4112.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1, 3, and 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MCNERNEY:

H.R. 4113.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MCNERNEY:

H.R. 4114.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. NOLAN:

H.R. 4115.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

The clause states that the United States Congress shall have power ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4116.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. RANGEL:

H.R. 4117.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article XVI of the Constitution—Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes . . .

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 15: Mr. COOPER.

H.R. 20: Mr. BUTTERFIELD and Ms. TSONGAS.

H.R. 24: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. COLE, and Mr. THORNBERRY.

H.R. 139: Mr. DELANEY and Mr. CARNEY.

H.R. 140: Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.

H.R. 184: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.

H.R. 279: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 365: Ms. BASS.

H.R. 460: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.

H.R. 515: Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 522: Mr. ROKITA, Mr. WENSTRUP, and Mr. PITTENGER.

H.R. 562: Mr. TIERNEY.

H.R. 647: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. RUSH, and Ms. JENKINS.

H.R. 654: Mr. LATHAM.

H.R. 683: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 713: Mr. STIVERS.

H.R. 719: Mr. REED.

H.R. 741: Mr. BRIDENSTINE.

H.R. 792: Mr. DUFFY, Mr. COURTNEY, and Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 855: Mr. LANKFORD.

H.R. 871: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 872: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 873: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 920: Mr. LANKFORD and Mr. NUNES.

H.R. 946: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 997: Mr. FINCHER, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, and Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.

H.R. 1020: Mr. GARCIA.

H.R. 1084: Ms. BASS, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. MOORE, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.

H.R. 1091: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri and Mr. LATHAM.

H.R. 1108: Mr. WILLIAMS.

H.R. 1199: Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 1249: Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. JOYCE, and Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 1250: Mr. SIRES and Mr. KEATING.

H.R. 1286: Mr. CROWLEY.

H.R. 1292: Mr. OLSON.

H.R. 1343: Mr. ELLISON and Mr. RICHMOND.

H.R. 1461: Mr. ROHRABACHER and Mr. SANFORD.

H.R. 1462: Mr. GIBSON.

H.R. 1473: Mr. OLSON.

H.R. 1518: Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 1528: Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, and Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 1563: Mr. STIVERS.

H.R. 1565: Mr. VISCLOSKY.

H.R. 1593: Mr. FOSTER, Mr. PIERLUISI, and Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 1597: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.

H.R. 1599: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 1694: Mr. PITTENGER.

H.R. 1708: Mrs. HARTZLER.

H.R. 1726: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. OLSON, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. COHEN, Mr. HORSFORD, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SPEIER, and Ms. TITUS.

H.R. 1750: Mr. HALL, Mr. WALDEN, and Mr. REED.

H.R. 1775: Mr. SIRES.

H.R. 1784: Mr. TERRY.

H.R. 1837: Mr. DINGELL.

H.R. 1843: Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 1845: Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 1852: Mr. GIBSON.

H.R. 1915: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 1953: Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 1962: Mr. O'ROURKE.

H.R. 1979: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 2066: Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 2084: Mr. CLEAVER and Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 2139: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 2160: Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 2247: Mr. HANNA.

H.R. 2315: Mr. SCHRADER.

H.R. 2364: Mr. DOGGETT.

H.R. 2368: Mr. CONNOLLY.

H.R. 2387: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Mr. TONKO.

H.R. 2520: Mr. FARR.

H.R. 2536: Mr. HECK of Nevada.

H.R. 2538: Mrs. BUSTOS and Mr. PITTENGER.

H.R. 2548: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.

H.R. 2607: Ms. ESHOO and Mr. WALZ.

H.R. 2643: Mr. LOWENTHAL and Mr. GERLACH.
H.R. 2783: Mr. BARROW of Georgia.
H.R. 2788: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 2847: Mr. GIBSON.
H.R. 2854: Mr. OLSON.
H.R. 2918: Mr. CONNOLLY and Mr. COLLINS of New York.
H.R. 2939: Ms. DELAURO, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Mr. BROUN of Georgia.
H.R. 2959: Mr. SHUSTER, Mrs. ELLMERS, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, and Mrs. WALORSKI.
H.R. 2996: Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. TIBERI, and Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 3086: Mr. GOSAR, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. GIBSON, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. PITTENGER, and Mr. PAULSEN.
H.R. 3116: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 3155: Mr. KLINE.
H.R. 3168: Mr. OLSON.
H.R. 3189: Mr. GARDNER.
H.R. 3211: Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, and Mr. BENISHEK.
H.R. 3305: Mr. SALMON.
H.R. 3318: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 3335: Mr. RIBBLE and Mr. HANNA.
H.R. 3344: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 3361: Mr. TONKO.
H.R. 3441: Mr. VISCLOSKY.
H.R. 3461: Ms. ESHOO, Ms. LOFGREN, and Ms. BASS.
H.R. 3467: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 3469: Mrs. BLACKBURN and Mr. BUCSHON.
H.R. 3482: Mr. YODER.
H.R. 3494: Ms. BONAMICI and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 3505: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. LATTA, and Ms. BASS.
H.R. 3508: Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 3529: Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 3530: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3544: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York.
H.R. 3546: Ms. TSONGAS and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 3593: Mr. LAMBORN.
H.R. 3619: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 3620: Mr. CÁRDENAS.
H.R. 3629: Mr. BROUN of Georgia.
H.R. 3635: Mr. WOLF.
H.R. 3643: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 3657: Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 3658: Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 3663: Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 3670: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DELANEY, and Ms. EDWARDS.
H.R. 3673: Mr. SHIMKUS and Mr. MICHAUD.
H.R. 3698: Mr. DEFAZIO and Mr. SALMON.
H.R. 3712: Mr. CROWLEY and Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 3723: Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.
H.R. 3781: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 3793: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3824: Mr. SCHNEIDER.
H.R. 3850: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 3859: Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 3870: Mr. LEVIN and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.
H.R. 3872: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 3877: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 3892: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 3895: Mr. MEADOWS.
H.R. 3921: Mr. LEWIS and Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 3930: Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. COOK, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. FUDGE, and Mr. BACHUS.
H.R. 3978: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. ENYART, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 3982: Mr. O'ROURKE and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3986: Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 3997: Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. PETERSON, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
H.R. 4006: Mr. BROUN of Georgia.
H.R. 4008: Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, and Mr. OLSON.
H.R. 4012: Mr. FINCHER, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. MCHENRY.
H.R. 4031: Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. KLINE, Mr. BARROW of Georgia, Mr. STEWART, and Mr. SALMON.
H.R. 4056: Ms. SCHWARTZ.
H.R. 4064: Mr. OLSON, Mr. FLORES, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. SALMON, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. ISSA, Mr. JOYCE, and Mr. BISHOP of Utah.
H.R. 4069: Mr. GARDNER and Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.
H.R. 4076: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. JONES, Mr. HANNA, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. KLINE, and Mr. NOLAN.
H. Con. Res. 16: Mr. RAHALL, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mrs. WALORSKI, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. CARTER, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, and Mr. BUCSHON.
H. Con. Res. 70: Ms. TSONGAS, Ms. MENG, and Mr. MICHAUD.
H. Res. 36: Mrs. MILLER of Michigan.
H. Res. 109: Ms. BORDALLO.
H. Res. 112: Mr. SMITH of Texas.
H. Res. 190: Ms. BROWN of Florida.
H. Res. 356: Mr. STIVERS.
H. Res. 418: Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA.
H. Res. 422: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.
H. Res. 425: Mr. LATTA.
H. Res. 456: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. HARRIS, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H. Res. 476: Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. SHUSTER, and Mr. LATTA.
H. Res. 479: Mr. SCHIFF.
H. Res. 480: Mr. MORAN.
H. Res. 488: Mr. ROYCE, Mr. SOUTHERLAND, and Mr. POE of Texas.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII, petitions and papers were laid on the Clerk's desk and referred as follows:

70. The SPEAKER presented a petition of the City of Wilton Manors, Florida, relative to Resolution No. 2013–0114 urging the State Administration and Florida Legislature to support the regulation and licensing of Recovery Residences and Sober Houses throughout the State; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

71. Also, a petition of the Town of Dover, New Jersey, relative to Resolution 269–2013 urging the Congress to invest additional federal dollars in maintaining the highways and improving the transportation infrastructure in the State of New Jersey; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2014 No. 33

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we find joy in obeying Your commands. With all our hearts, we thank You for Your guidance that keeps us on the road of abundant living. Today, make our lawmakers instruments of Your providence, measuring up to the challenges of these momentous times. As they seek to honor Your great Name, transform their common days into transfiguring and redemptive moments. Cleanse the fountains of their hearts from all that defiles, making them fit vessels to be used for Your honor. Guide today's deliberations, debates, and decisions.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 27, 2014.

To the Senate:

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

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SCHATZ thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 309, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 309, S. 1086, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for one hour. The majority will control the first half and the Republicans the final half.

Following morning business the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1982, the veterans benefits bill.

I filed cloture on the substitute amendment and the underlying bill. As a result the filing deadline for first-degree amendments is 10:30 this morning and for second-degree amendments it is 1:30 p.m.

At 2 p.m. there will be a series of votes in relation to the veterans bill. We also expect to consider the nomination of Michael Connor to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior today.

PROTECTING VETERANS

Mr. President, there are lots of issues on which Democrats and Republicans will always disagree. That is OK. But, historically, Democrats and Republicans have been able to agree on one issue: Congress should do everything in its power to protect those who risk their lives to protect our country.

I had hoped this work period would be more bipartisan; that the Senate could tackle issues and would be able to stop the political games we have seen so often from the minority.

That is why I scheduled floor time for a bill to expand health care and job training for veterans of the Armed Forces—a very, very comprehensive bill, worked on by the Veterans Affairs' Committee, led by Senator SANDERS. The bill is loaded, as Senator SANDERS and I discussed yesterday in detail, with Republican provisions that he put in the bill.

Democrats and Republicans alike should be able to support this bill, which is sponsored, as I have indicated, by Senator SANDERS from Vermont.

Democrats were even willing to work with our Republican colleagues to consider relevant amendments to this legislation. So it was disappointing—but, sadly, not surprising—when Republicans almost immediately injected base partisan politics into a debate over a bill that should—should—be bipartisan, insisting on an unrelated amendment on Iran that they knew would kill the bill.

I do not know what they say to the 26 veterans groups. Millions of veterans really supported this bill and did everything they could to help the chairman of the committee, the junior Senator from Vermont, to move this bill forward. But they did it on an unrelated amendment on Iran that they knew would kill the bill. I do not know all the reasons, but we had a number of speeches, especially one from Dr. COBURN, the junior Senator from Oklahoma, who came to the floor and had questions about the bill.

I did not agree with all of his assertions, but he has a right to dispute

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

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what is in the bill, and he wanted to offer amendments to the bill. We agreed he should be able to offer amendments to the bill, but the Republicans, I guess, are in turmoil internally and did not want him to be able to offer any amendments that they may have to vote for or vote against, so they figured the way to do it is to just kill the bill.

I hope all the veterans groups have witnessed this contortion the Republicans have done to defeat this bill—because it will be defeated. That was their aim from the very beginning.

Like our support for veterans, the Senate's Iran sanctions policy has historically been solidly bipartisan. The idea of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon is unthinkable. Democrats and Republicans always worked together on this policy. Iran should not have nuclear capability. We all agree on that—I hope so at least. I know on this side of the aisle we do. But it seems Republicans are trying to erase that history and politicize an issue that has historically been above partisanship.

They are trying now—the Republicans—to mislead the American public by saying that a bipartisan majority supports moving forward with new sanctions right now. Of course, it is wrong. Absolutely, of course, it is wrong.

In fact, many Senators, including some who have cosponsored the new sanctions bill, believe we should not move forward with the bill at this time or on this important bill for veterans. It should not be used as an effort to kill this veterans bill.

But in addition to that, 10 committee chairs wrote a letter to me saying: Do not do anything now. They are some of the biggest supporters of Israel there are. But we also have Israel's strongest supporter, AIPAC, also agreeing it is not the time now to bring a sanctions package to the floor. AIPAC was unequivocal in its request for a delay on additional sanctions. In fact, this is what they said: ''Stopping the Iranian nuclear program should rest on bipartisan support and . . . there should not be a vote at this time on the measure.''

Many veterans groups have also come out against including the Iran amendment on this bill, including virtually every veterans organization but especially the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, consisting of millions and millions of veterans. We also have the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America saying: Do not do it at this time. We need help. We, the veterans, need help. This legislation would give us that help. Here is specifically what the American Legion said:

> Sanctions against Iran have no place in a U.S. Senate debate over legislation that aims to expand health care, education opportunities, employment and other benefits for veterans.

But Iran should make no mistake. We know that. If they fail to comply with the current interim agreement or fail to make progress toward a comprehensive agreement eliminating their nuclear weapons development efforts, Congress will act without hesitation to pass additional sanctions. We have said that time and time again.

That decision will be made in the interest of our national security, not on a partisan ploy. There is too much at stake to play politics with our Nation's Iran policy. Likewise, Republicans should stop putting American veterans at risk and help Democrats pass this crucial legislation.

Shame on the Republicans for bringing base politics into a bill to help the veterans. I have learned that the Republicans here in the Senate have many different ways of saying no, but, as always, it is just plain obstruction, I am sorry to say, again, on a bill to help millions of veterans.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

THE IRS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today is an important day. It is the last day of the so-called comment period when Americans can officially register their opinions on the IRS's latest effort to suppress free speech. So far, nearly 100,000 comments have come through—100,000. Nearly every one I have seen is opposed.

Just to put things in perspective, that is basically the largest number of comments ever—ever—for a rule like this. Even the head of the IRS said he saw more comments on this proposal than ever before ''on any regulation,'' and that was 70,000 comments ago; 70,000 comments ago the Commissioner of the IRS said this was the most comments he had seen on any regulation.

So people are certainly making their voices heard—and loudly—and the message they are broadcasting is pretty clear: Leave the First Amendment alone. Leave it alone. Get out of the censorship and harassment business. Stick to the job you are actually supposed to be doing.

Let's be clear. The folks who are logging opinions like these run straight across the political spectrum.

Labor unions are upset. Business organizations are upset. Civil liberties activists are upset. Taxpayer groups are upset. Grassroots groups right across the political map are upset at what they view as an assault on their First Amendment rights. All you have to do is read their own words.

One group of primarily left-leaning First Amendment advocates said the new regulation would ''impose serious burdens on free speech and hinder the democratic processes it serves.''

An official with the ACLU described the IRS's proposed regulation as creating ''the worst of all worlds.'' The proposal, he wrote, could ''seriously chill legitimate issue advocacy from nonprofits on [both] the right and left,'' and would ''disproportionately affect small, poor nonprofits that cannot afford the legal counsel to guarantee compliance. . . . ''

Here is what one labor union had to say:

> Given the history of misuse and abuse of the IRS' immense powers in the not-so-distant past, it is disappointing and disturbing that this fundamental principle has been forgotten and that this . . . [regulation] is the IRS' proposed response to its recent missteps.

So left, right, center—folks understand what a threat this rule poses to the most cherished of civil liberties.

They also realize that a group the administration favors today could easily become a group the IRS targets tomorrow. That is why this fight is so important, why it is so inappropriate to hand this kind of power to any administration. I do not care what party the President is in. That is why I, along with several of my colleagues, recently sent a letter to the new Commissioner of the IRS explaining in some detail why the agency's proposal was such a bad idea, a terrible idea.

In that letter we also reminded the Commissioner of something else: The ball is in his court on this one. The ball is in his court. He could stop this rule tomorrow. And given the comments he made about restoring integrity to the IRS when the Senate voted to confirm him, that is exactly what we expect of him. In fact, that was essentially the mandate on which he was confirmed.

So here is the choice before him. This is the choice the Commissioner of the IRS has. He can either fulfill that mandate to the American people by restoring integrity to an agency they no longer trust, he can be a hero and say no to those who are pressuring him to crack down on the First Amendment rights of ordinary citizens—that is what the IRS Commissioner told Richard Nixon. He said: I am not going to cooperate with your efforts to target your enemies—or he can serve political masters over in the White House, and he can implement regulations that would erode our most fundamental civil liberties, regulations that would almost certainly lead to the harassment of conservative groups today and, quite possibly, the harassment of left-leaning groups in the future. In fact, a recent letter Representative CAMP received from the Treasury Department appears to suggest that unions in particular have a lot to fear from this proposal.

So, look. Now is the time to act. America's free speech advocates are standing with one voice. Thousands upon thousands made their voices heard in the opinion process. I suspect millions more are right there with them in spirit. Some who oppose this rule picked the President in the last election. Some voted for his opponent. Some may have even cast a ballot for another person entirely. But what unites us is our love of the liberties that have allowed Americans to disagree civilly for centuries.

Commissioner Koskinen, do the right thing. Stop this regulation.

IRAN

Later today the Senate will vote on the motions related to S. 1982, a bill

that was not considered in committee, that greatly expands spending without any realistic offset and would vastly overwhelm the Veterans' Administration health care system. It is shameful that Senate Democrats would seek to score political points by rushing to the floor a bill which the committee did not consider and which could otherwise have been handled in a bipartisan manner through the regular order.

Unfortunately, it has become standard practice around here for the majority to pursue partisan legislation in a sort of ''take it or leave it'' manner, so it is unsurprising that nobody other than the majority leader and the committee chairman have been allowed the opportunity to amend the bill. Senators on both sides have been shut out of the legislative process. For example, we cannot even vote on the ranking member's veterans amendment—legislation I support—which will not add to the deficit. I am a cosponsor of this legislation, which provides full COLA restoration for servicemembers entering the military in 2014, provides advanced appropriations for VA mandatory accounts, improves services and benefits for victims of military sexual trauma, enhances benefits for survivors and dependents of disabled veterans, encourages the hiring of veterans, and, unlike the Sanders bill, is fully paid for.

As for the Iran sanctions language in the Burr amendment, as I noted yesterday, there is significant disagreement between the President and many Members from both parties in both the House and the Senate concerning the best way to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

The Iranian regime has carried out its best attempt at a charm offensive to forestall not only the implementation but the legislative consideration of even tougher sanctions should the regime fail to fulfill its commitments according to November's interim agreement.

The interim agreement included a Joint Plan of Action, agreed to by Iran. According to that Joint Plan of Action, the U.S. administration, acting consistent with the respective roles of the President and the Congress, will refrain from imposing new nuclear-related sanctions. The agreement is spelled out clearly to the Iranians: Acting consistent with our respective roles. The Iranians can read the plain language and understand that this Congress did not agree to renounce additional sanctions. We did not agree to do that. Yet the majority leader is determined not to allow a single vote on the Kirk-Menendez bill, which could be fully debated by this body prior to a vote. We will not have that debate, apparently, nor will we vote on any amendments related to the bill before us.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted in speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Mexico.

VETERANS LEGISLATION

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, lest we forget, more than 30,000 brave Americans are still serving in harm's way in Afghanistan. Hundreds of thousands of men and women in uniform are serving around the world. They all volunteered. In return for their volunteerism, we made a number of promises. The ability to maintain the strongest and most dedicated military force in the world depends on our Nation's ability to keep those promises.

I am a proud cosponsor of the legislation being debated this week, S. 1982, which is perhaps the most significant veterans legislation to come before Congress in many years. This legislation has the strong support of virtually every veterans organization in the country, including the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the Vietnam Veterans of America, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. These organizations support the bill because it renews our promise to our veterans.

I am very fortunate to represent the State of New Mexico, which has one of the highest rates of military volunteerism in the Nation. New Mexico, a small State of 2 million people, is home to more than 170,000 veterans, and 2,000 New Mexicans endured the Bataan Death March during World War II.

New Mexico is home to many of our Nation's finest military installations: Kirtland Air Force Base, the Air Force's sixth largest base, with over 100 partners and a strategic role in ensuring our Nation's safe, secure, and reliable nuclear weapons complex; Cannon Air Force Base, the fastest growing Air Force base in the country, leading the fight in special operations; Holloman Air Force Base, an indispensable Air Force base with unparalleled airspace now and into the future; and White Sands Missile Range, the largest military installation in the Nation, with a testing and training environment that is unmatched anywhere in the world.

Additionally, New Mexico's National Guard employs roughly 3,800 full-time and part-time military personnel.

Collectively, there are 18,000 military personnel serving today in New Mexico. Volunteerism is not simply a career choice for New Mexicans; it is a way of life. It is ingrained in our State's rich history of putting community and country first.

The bill before us today renews our promise to all of them and to all of those who are willing to lay down their lives for their country. It provides benefits to all generations of veterans and their families, and it eliminates the cost-of-living adjustment penalty on military retirees.

The legislation incorporates bills and ideas from both Democrats and Republicans to address the disability claims backlog, including one of my own. Across New Mexico I have heard from too many veterans who are frustrated with the delays they experience in receiving their disability benefits.

Last June Senator HELLER of Nevada and I introduced the Veterans Benefits Claims Faster Filing Act, which requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that every veteran is informed of the vast differences in times for processing compensation claims when filing a fully developed claim versus a non-fully developed paper claim.

It takes, on average, 113 days for veterans to receive a final disability rating if they file a fully developed claim online. Compare that to over a year if they file a non-fully developed paper claim. Filing claims online through the Fully Developed Claims Program accelerates turnaround time and makes processing more efficient. Doing so also provides an additional year of retroactive benefits as an incentive to veterans who file a fully developed claim.

The Faster Filing Act and other legislative efforts represent a collective effort to reduce the backlog and ensure that our veterans receive the benefits they have earned.

I am also proud to have cosponsored legislation introduced by my colleague from Alaska Senator BEGICH to provide advanced appropriations for all—all—VA spending accounts. This would ensure that veterans receive uninterrupted access to the benefits they have earned, even in the midst of a government shutdown such as the one that so irresponsibly occurred last fall. It is unacceptable that veterans would fall victim to the partisan politics of a government shutdown. The legislation today includes a fix to ensure that never happens again.

The bill also helps put veterans back to work. It reauthorizes a 2-year extension for the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program, which retrains unemployed veterans for high-demand occupations. It requires the VA to establish a 3-year program to provide young veterans under 30 the opportunity to serve in an internship that would pair veterans with private sector employers so they can gain civilian work experience.

The bill expands the VA's successful caregivers program to provide caregiver benefits to veterans of all generations, in a similar manner as post-9/11 veterans.

America's service men and women consider our Nation's principles important enough to defend them against all enemies and at any cost. They volunteer to do so. But volunteerism only works if we fulfill our promises. Few sacrifices are as selfless as those our military men and women make in defense of this Nation. We owe them more than a debt of gratitude; we owe them action in both our words and our deeds. This bill backs our word with action. It fulfills our promises. I hope we see it pass this week.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, on Tuesday I came to the floor to talk about one issue that we are rarely divided on in this building; that is, our duty to keep the promises we have made to provide not only care but opportunity to all those who have honorably served in our Nation's Armed Forces.

The comprehensive veterans legislation that is now before us is really the test for many Members of Congress. Can we all put politics aside for the good of our Nation's veterans to keep that promise? Can we show these heroes that despite our differences, we will work as diligently toward getting them the benefits and care they have earned as they worked for our Nation?

Now, unfortunately, some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are indicating they would now prefer to put politics over promises, under the guise of an alternative to this bill. Given what we have seen recently on other bills—supported, by the way, by a majority of Americans—we should not be surprised, but I truly did think and hope this bill would be a different story because it contains ideas from both Democrats and Republicans and because this is an issue which has historically united this body and because we have all pledged to do whatever it takes on behalf of our veterans.

So once again where we are today is that some of our colleagues have decided to use unrelated issues to sour this entire effort for our veterans and their families who stand to benefit the most from this comprehensive legislation we are offering.

With their alternative bill they have now proposed to strip away life-changing programs for veterans who are looking to take the skills they learned on the battlefield to the boardroom. With this alternative, they have decided to halt the expansion of opportunities for our caregivers who are integral to the health and well-being of some of our most vulnerable heroes.

But among these and many other examples of the Republican effort to derail this landmark legislation, there is one issue I find most egregious; that is, their shameful opposition to provide our catastrophically wounded heroes with access to reproductive services they so desperately need to start a family.

This shouldn't be a political issue. This is about giving veterans who have sacrificed everything every option we have to help them fulfill a simple dream of starting a family.

As we all know, our men and women in uniform have become increasingly susceptible to reproductive, spinal, and traumatic brain injuries due to the changing weapons of war. But as we know, thanks to modern medicine, many of these servicemembers are being kept alive and they are returning home. In fact, as of the new year, there are 2,348 servicemembers who are living with reproductive, urinary or pelvic injuries as a result of this war. Similar to so many of our veterans, these men and women come home and want to return to their lives. They want to find employment and, importantly, they want to start a family.

Yet what they find when they go to the VA is that the fertility services that are available don't meet their extremely complex needs. In fact, veterans who suffer from these injuries find that the VA is specifically barred from providing more advanced assisted reproductive techniques such as IVF. They are told, despite the fact that they have made such an extreme sacrifice for all of us, we cannot provide them with the medical services they need simply to start a family.

These are families such as SSG Matt Keil and his wife Tracy. Despite returning home from Iraq as a quadriplegic, Staff Sergeant Keil and Tracy started talking about exploring the possibility of starting a family together, but because his injuries prevented him from having children naturally, Tracy turned to the VA and began to explore her options for fertility treatments. But because of that VA ban they were told no and turned away. They were out of options, and the Keils decided this was important enough to them that they were willing to pay out-of-pocket, out of their own pockets, for IVF treatment in the private sector to the tune of $32,000 per round of treatment.

Thankfully, Staff Sergeant Keil and Tracy welcomed twins Matthew and Faith into the world after only one round of treatment.

Tracy said after their birth:

> The day we had our children something changed in both of us. This is exactly what we had always wanted, our dreams had arrived.
>
> The VA, Congress and the American people have said countless times that they want to do everything they can to support my husband or make him feel whole again and this is your chance.
>
> Having a family is exactly what we needed to feel whole again. Please help us make these changes so that other families can share in this experience.

Tracy and Matt aren't alone. There are many men and women out there who share this common thread of a desperate desire to fulfill their dream of starting a family, only to find that the catastrophic wounds they sustained while defending our country are now preventing them from seeing that dream through.

It shouldn't be that way. Unfortunately, Republicans are indicating they will not join us today in overturning this absurd and antiquated ban. Apparently, they would rather our Nation's heroes spend tens of thousands of dollars of their own money in the private sector to get the advanced reproductive treatments they need to start a family. They don't see the problem in letting our veterans' marriages dissolve because of the stress of infertility, in combination of course with the stress of readjusting to life after such a severe injury, driving relationships to a breaking point.

Any servicemember who sustains this type of extremely serious injury deserves a lot more. We came very close actually to making this bill a reality in the last Congress. In fact, Tracy Keil, whom I just talked about, watched from the gallery when we unanimously passed this legislation—unanimously.

But I am, once again, imploring Republicans to stand and explain to our men and women in uniform—who I know are paying very close attention to this debate—why they now want to turn their backs on the catastrophic, reproductive wounds that have become a signature of these wars.

Only yesterday I spoke to a crowded room of heroes from Disabled American Veterans and told them the heartbreaking story of the Keil family that I just shared and why this legislation is so important. If their cheers and applause are any indication, I would say they wholeheartedly agree our women veterans deserve this, our male veterans deserve this, and certainly our military families deserve this.

I am on the floor to ask my colleagues a simple question: Are you willing to tell those brave men and women who didn't ask those questions when they were put in harm's way that you are going to let politics get in the way of our commitment to them?

The catastrophic wounds we have seen from injuries in Iraq and Afghanistan have meant that our veterans' dreams to start a family have been put on hold because of the tremendous cost of IVF services. We believe that is a cost of war, and we believe the VA absolutely should cover it, and it is unacceptable to let unrelated issues stand in the way.

Even the major veterans service organizations and their leaders have said to us that issues such as the Iran sanctions—that the other side wants to offer—have no place in this comprehensive veterans legislation, people such as American Legion Commander Daniel Dellinger, who said: ''Iran is a serious issue that Congress needs to address, but it cannot be tied to S. 1982, which is extremely important as our nation prepares to welcome millions of U.S. military servicemen and women home from war,'' or IAVA founder and CEO Paul Rieckhoff, who called this

comprehensive legislation ''a game changer that will change the trajectory for millions of veterans for decades to come.''

As serious and as timely as they may be, unrelated issues such as Iran sanctions are just calculated attempts to dismantle our bipartisan effort to expand health care, education opportunities, employment, and benefits for our Nation's heroes. We can't allow our commitment to them to lapse or get caught up in separate issues of political grandstanding.

I thank the Senator from Vermont and all of his staff for their tireless work on this comprehensive legislation they have brought to the floor. I truly hope our colleagues will reconsider opposing this commonsense and important step to give those who have sacrificed everything the reproductive treatments they need to start a family.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, may I inquire how much time remains for the Democrats during morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Twelve minutes remain.

Mr. KAINE. I ask unanimous consent to use the remainder of the Democrats' time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection.

SYRIA

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise this morning to speak about the widening dimensions of the slaughter in Syria. A country of 23 million people, a proud country, is being transformed before our eyes into skeletons, refugees, and ghosts.

Three million Syrians have fled to neighboring countries. That number will likely exceed 4 million by the end of the year. Nearly 7 million Syrians are refugees within their own country, driven from their homes by the atrocities of the Assad regime. More than 130,000 innocent people have lost their lives during the 3-year civil war. We are witnessing one of the greatest humanitarian crises since World War II, and it can be stopped.

Last summer my Committee on Armed Services colleague Senator ANGUS KING of Maine and I visited Turkey and Jordan to explore the dimension of the refugee crisis in both of those nations. We visited refugee camps and talked to government leaders and NGOs about the damaged lives and the stressed communities that result from this unprecedented displacement of Syrians.

Last week the Senator from Maine and I visited Lebanon to see the scale of the Syrian crisis in that country. In a country of only slightly more than 4 million people, there are already over 1 million Syrian refugees who have fled into Lebanon over the last 3 years, one in four. Think of the scale of that refugee crisis. If we were to receive in the United States war refugees at that scale, it would be 75 to 80 million people, nearly one in four.

In Lebanon last week we met with government leaders, NGOs, and the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees. What we learned is staggering. The Lebanese people have been unbelievably resilient and welcoming, almost beyond the point of belief. The water and health infrastructure of that Nation is strained to the breaking point.

The Lebanese economy, already fragile, is teetering. Schools in Lebanon now operate on double shifts with Lebanese children in the morning and refugee children in the afternoon, accommodating tens of thousands of refugee children, with more coming every day.

The decision by the Lebanese terrorist militia Hezbollah to go all in to support the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad has led to a wave of extremist bombings against Hezbollah-connected sites and leaders within Lebanon in which many civilians are casualties. Senator KING and I witnessed a bombing in downtown Beirut while we were there, seeing it miles away. Many in our group saw the explosion, saw the smoke rise. We felt certain that our meetings would be canceled that day, but one of the most grim aspects of our trip is a bombing, a suicide bombing that killed 5 people and injured nearly 100, caused no one to change their daily routine. That is what life is in Lebanon largely because of the Syrian civil war.

The crisis extends beyond Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. Refugees are streaming into nearby Iraq by the thousands—30,000 in 1 day in August—exacerbating the deterioration of that country's stability and drawing it deeper into sectarian conflict.

This photo is on the Iraq border with Syria, and we see these refugees stretching into the distance in the hills beyond. This is what is happening with all of the neighboring countries to Syria.

The United States is the largest provider of assistance to the refugees who have fled outside of Syria. We have provided $1.3 billion in aid thus far, $340 million in Lebanon alone, but getting relief into Syria is the next challenge.

The conditions in Syria are even worse than the conditions I described in Lebanon. Nearly 7 million Syrians are displaced within their own country, more than 9 million Syrians need humanitarian aid, but they have not been able to receive basic humanitarian aid, food, and medicine due to the actions of the Bashar al-Assad regime and also due to the complicity of the regime's patron, Russia.

The denial of humanitarian aid is a war crime, pure and simple. Thousands are dying of starvation. Cases of tuberculosis, polio, typhoid, and other diseases are expanding at an exponential rate. None of this is an accident. The Assad regime is using forced starvation and forced sieges as a weapon to destroy the Syrian people.

Last month I met in the Senate with Syrians who had survived the chemical weapons attacks carried out by the Assad regime in August of 2013. They described in gruesome detail what they and their families, many young children, endured in August. But the most shocking moment of the interview came when a 22-year-old survivor, who had fled Syria through Lebanon, said if she had to pick, she would rather die a death because of chemical weapons than be hit by a barrel bomb or starved to death because death by chemical weapons would be quicker.

In recent weeks nothing has epitomized the brutality of the regime more than the use of these barrel bombs. The bombs are crude weapons. They are simple oil drums that are filled with shrapnel and explosives. Helicopters often deliver the weapons, and helicopters often hover over neighborhoods for minutes to just scare everyone who knows what is coming. The barrel bombs drop. They explode shrapnel and level neighborhoods.

This is an example of a neighborhood in Aleppo. At one point hundreds were killed when barrel bombs were dropped on Aleppo earlier this month. We see the size and scope of the devastation and see families and their children fleeing the area in the aftermath of a barrel bomb, and this is going on every day in Syria. Secretary Kerry has rightly called these barrel bomb attacks unacceptable and barbaric.

The primary architect of these crimes is Bashar Assad, but he has a patron who funds and supports what he does and who has the ability to stop the atrocities. Russia is Assad's principal support, and since the start of the Syrian civil war Russia has shown it is complicit in these war crimes. But it is also capable of stopping them.

In the United Nations Russia has used its veto power and threat of veto on the Security Council numerous times to block international action to help the Syrian people. Three of these vetoes were used to block basic humanitarian aid. What possible reason could any civilized nation have to deny war victims food and medical supplies?

But Russia has shown it can be persuaded or shamed into taking action to promote the basic safety of the Syrian citizens. In August, with the threat of U.S. military action to punish the Assad regime for use of chemical weapons against its own civilians, Russia realized it could no longer be the sole global apologist for this atrocity. So it persuaded Syria to admit to the crime, acknowledge the existence of a stockpile, and commit to the complete destruction of these inhumane weapons. While that process has been slow, the weaponry has not been used since Russia realized the world would not tolerate such a clear violation of international law.

Similarly, after repeatedly blocking U.N. action to deliver humanitarian aid in Syria, Russia decided, in the midst of the Sochi Olympics, it could

no longer stand in the way of basic humanitarian aid. The eyes of the world were on it and it knew it could no longer be seen as the sole obstacle blocking people from receiving food and medicine. So it finally agreed to U.N. Security Council Resolution 2139 calling for the provision of humanitarian aid inside Syria.

When Russia could no longer comfortably block progress, when the eyes of the world were on it in the middle of the Olympics last week, it finally joined with the rest of the world in calling on Syria to allow aid to its people. In the aftermath of that resolution, the real test lies ahead, because those were words on paper and now we must see whether the aid will be delivered.

This is the situation in Syria today. This is a recent photo from a suburb of Damascus that has been under siege by the Assad regime without access to food and basic medical care. Witness this photo. Look at the destruction; look at the rubble; look at the throng of hungry people stretching to oblivion in the distance. See the hunger in their faces and bodies, and look at the questions in their eyes. It is incumbent upon the Syrian regime to allow unhindered access of humanitarian aid to all Syrians. Opposition groups have that same obligation.

In conclusion, let me say a final word about Russian responsibility to respond to these poor Syrian people. When the Russian Government and its people see this picture, it should remind them of their own history. During the siege of Leningrad during World War II, the Nazis deliberately used these same techniques and tactics—forced starvation and siege—as a tactic of war to cause horrible deprivation to the Russian population of that city. Russians should look in the eyes of these victims of intentional starvation and grapple with their responsibility to them.

Russia can cause the Assad regime, just as it did in August, to open access so these people can have food and medicine. Russia has finally agreed to words on paper at the U.N., but the world will watch the actions of this nation.

One final thought. When Senator KING and I were traveling last week in the Middle East, we went to other countries as well. In one country, where we are engaged in a back-and-forth over the provision of U.S. military assistance, where we are raising what we think are legitimate questions about some democracy reforms this nation needs to undertake if we are to be better and better partners, a leader of that nation said to me: If the United States won't provide assistance, then we will find a way to make Russia our partner.

Well, to anyone who thinks making Russia your partner is a good thing, you ought to look at this photo too, because this is what has become of Syria choosing Russia as its principal partner. Is this the kind of partner you want?

We must keep the spotlight on these atrocities; we must keep the spotlight on Assad's responsibility; we must keep the spotlight on Russia's complicity to bring an end to these atrocities and work with other nations to find a resolution to the Syrian civil war.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, first of all, I want to say I am glad Senator KAINE has been here talking about this important issue today—the tragedy of Syria, the tragedy of the barrel bombs, this hideous way to kill people where you fly over with helicopters and first terrorize people who are wondering where you are going to drop these weapons, and then basically shove them out the side door of a helicopter, and the Russian complicity in this.

We are seeing even today that Russia is beginning to flex its muscles as it relates to the people of Ukraine. I had the Prime Minister from Georgia in to see me on Monday, and of course the day the Olympics were over the Russians were there the next day, more aggressively, partitioning off that part of Georgia they have seized in the last couple of years, the same argument they could easily try to make in Ukraine.

Ukraine, of the Soviet satellite states, is the one that has potentially the most future positive impact on Russia, if they could get it back. The countries of the West, the countries of the European Union, and the United States should be aggressively uniting and trying to reinforce the desire for people in Ukraine to want to have economic freedom and want to have personal freedom, and sending the strongest possible message against those who work against that, whether they are in Russia or whether they were complicit in the activities of Ukraine.

With this sudden moving around of Russian troops today, unannounced until just the last few hours that they would be maneuvering, it is usually no coincidence the Russians are moving troops around at a time of crisis on their borders. We should be very vigilant in sending the message of freedom, the message of supporting people who want freedom.

My concern about Syria is that our policy hasn't worked there either and, frankly, our policy hasn't worked in such a way that it makes it hard for us now to say there will be consequences for Russia if something happens in Ukraine. We need to be sure the world knows, when the United States talks about consequences, that there will be consequences, they will be meaningful, they will be certain, and that things such as are happening in Syria can't be allowed to continue, and worse things, such as those happening in Ukraine, can't be allowed to happen.

HEALTH CARE

I came to the floor today to talk about health care again. I heard the leader's comments over the weekend—Senator REID's comments—where he is referring to the President's health care plan. He said: There are plenty of horror stories being told. Then Senator REID said: They are, all of them, untrue. All of them are untrue.

I don't think anybody has come to the floor more frequently than I have in the last 2 months, 3 months, 10 weeks. I believe I have been coming to the floor every week, the 10 weeks we were in session, with stories from Missourians. We call them. We talk to them about it. We say: Senator BLUNT is going to the floor and he is going to talk about what you have talked to us about. He would like to mention your first name, where you are from, but if you don't want him to do that, he won't do that. In virtually every case, they say: We told you these stories because we want other people to know. We want people to know how we are being affected by the President's health care bill.

They seem to have plenty of facts backing them up, way beyond Senator REID's assertion that all of them are untrue. They are not all untrue. In fact, I have every reason to believe they are all true, and there are many more stories out there to be told.

Today I wanted to talk about the changes in Medicare Advantage and I had to have some discussion with our team, and they asked: Well, how many of these stories are you not going to tell this week if you just tell the stories about Medicare Advantage? If you are in agreement with Senator REID's view of the world, I guess you think the active imagination of Missourians is running wild, because they are contacting our office constantly telling us about higher premiums, higher deductibles, insurance they used to have that worked and insurance that doesn't work, and it doesn't work because the Federal Government, without thinking through the goal of trying to be sure more people had access to insurance, didn't think about all of the unintended consequences.

The latest broken promise—I am afraid it won't be the last; I wish it would be the last broken promise, but it won't be the last, I suspect—relates to the 15 million people in America who have Medicare Advantage—something they liked and something they are not going to be able to have, in many cases, the way they used to have it. This is another application of that promise of if you like your insurance, you can keep it. Well, all the 15 million Americans who have Medicare Advantage, many of them, are going to find they can't keep it. And before this is over, all of them may find out they can't keep it.

The President's health care plan has already cut hundreds of billions of dollars from Medicare—not to save Medicare but to fund the new program. Everybody knows Medicare is one of the

great challenges we have going forward. How are we going to maintain Medicare? Only in Washington would you be able to get by with saying: Medicare is in real trouble, so let's cut it to start another program. This is the only place in America you wouldn't be laughed off the city council dais or off the legislative floor if you said: We have this one program that is in big trouble. We are not going to do anything to reform it, we are just going to cut it so we can start another program. Yet that is what has happened here.

We have already cut Medicare by $300 billion—that is Medicare Advantage—and on top of this cut to Medicare Advantage we now see that plans are being changed, and they are being changed in significant ways.

Why did we have Medicare Advantage for States such as mine—the State of Missouri—with lots of rural areas, lots of rural hospitals, without always having competitive health care providers? Medicare Advantage provided the competition. It was that competition that made Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D work and made them work at much less cost than anybody had anticipated. The marketplace works if you focus on a competitive marketplace rather than trying to run health care to be sure there is competition out there. That is what Medicare Advantage did. In our State, 1 out of 4 people on Medicare is on Medicare Advantage—237,000 Missourians on Medicare Advantage.

On February 14, I joined my colleagues in urging CMS not to make any more cuts to Medicare Advantage. There were 40 of us who signed that letter, and 19 of the 40 Senators who signed that letter were Democrats, with 21 Republicans. So there is a pretty bipartisan sense that something must be happening out there to hurt these programs. That is true, not untrue.

Why would we continue to do that? I don't know. So I have joined the Republican leaders in a letter this week calling on Secretary Sebelius to stop moving forward with these misguided policies that do things that impact people on Medicare Advantage; that do things that impact people who had health insurance with a deductible they could afford but now no longer have.

The administration's proposals continue once again to contradict the promise that if you had health care you liked, you could keep your health care policy; that if you had doctors you liked, you could keep your doctors. More and more people are seeing that is not true.

These many stories I have heard I firmly believe to be true, not untrue, no matter what the majority leader of the Senate might have said. Let me share a few of those today as I move toward the conclusion of what I want to talk about today.

Darcie from Kansas City, MO, is a registered nurse and works with Medicare patients daily. She sees firsthand the effect the rising expenses on Medicare Advantage are having on people she deals with. This is a quote from her letter:

> Our seniors and other Medicare Advantage members should not, as they already do, have to make choices between paying for medicines and other healthcare related expenses or food or housing expenses.
>
> I hope you are able to see the bigger picture, as I do, as a 30-year-old professional nurse who is on the frontlines each and every day taking care of these individuals and their families.

This sounds truthful to me.

Edward and his wife, from Saint Peters, MO, live on a fixed income. He said:

> My wife and I are retired seniors living on a fixed income. I have Medicare Advantage, which is provided by Mercy—a Missouri based health insurance company. I am told I will lose coverage next year due to ObamaCare cuts. Why must the cost of ObamaCare—which Missourians did not want—be paid by cuts to seniors? Please change the ObamaCare law to leave Medicare Advantage alone.

Again, 19 Democrats and 21 Republicans signed a letter last week asking the same question. This letter didn't even say: Go back and reverse what you have done. Just stop making these cuts being made right now.

Ronald from Raytown, MO, says his copay has increased as a result of the administration's cuts to Medicare Advantage plans.

> Please protect our Medicare Advantage plans. As you know, Medicare is presently underfunded. I do not appreciate those that permit Obama to willfully take [hundreds of billions of] dollars that we seniors have paid into Medicare and use those monies to fund ObamaCare. I am counting on you to protect our Medicare Advantage plans and realize that the less government involvement in our Medicare Advantage plans, the more efficient the plan. As a result of ObamaCare, my copay has increased.

My guess is Ronald knows whether or not his copay has increased. In speaking with him, I am certainly persuaded that the facts he is presenting—like the other people we are talking about today—are absolutely true.

Jennifer from Blue Springs, MO, says:

> My husband and I are both on Medicare already . . . the co-pays for our ''Medicare Advantage'' plans have doubled and, in some cases, tripled from 2013 to 2014 . . . [and that is why I'm responding with a nightmare story].

The other thing Jennifer said is she and her husband are retired. They are musicians, and they had a business where they would go to nursing homes and play gospel music just for their expenses. She points out that because of the increased health care costs, nursing homes no longer have room in their budget for something that is entertaining, such as live gospel music. The reverberations of what happens when the government decides that the government is better prepared to manage not just Medicare and Medicaid—as if we didn't have enough challenges already—but 16 percent or 17 percent of the economy are seen out there every day.

I certainly believe there have to be some people who are benefiting from this, but the numbers don't suggest that the overall benefit is nearly as good as the overall damage: people losing insurance at greater numbers than people getting insurance; premiums going up more than going down; deductibles rising.

It would be nice for those who supported this to convince people that all these stories are untrue, but I think too many people have true stories to tell for their neighbors and their friends not to realize what is happening because of this government interference with a health care system that was working instead of doing the handful of things we could have done to make the best health care system in the world work better. They were there. They were offered. The President knew they were there. That is not the course we followed, and the course we are following is not leading to a place where most Americans want to be.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, may I inquire what the order is in morning business relative to time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 15 minutes remaining on the Republican side.

IRAN

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I appreciate this opportunity to come to the floor to speak about a different subject but one which is imminent and necessary for us to consider; that is, the current Iranian sanctions issue.

Back in 2007, when Iran had ''only'' about 700 centrifuges spinning to enrich uranium, we—and by ''we,'' I mean nearly the entire international community—determined that the behavior by the Iranian regime was simply too dangerous to tolerate. The U.N. Security Council began the process of passing a series of resolutions demanding that Iran stop enriching uranium entirely. The United States, led by many here in the Senate, began the very careful and painstaking process of amassing an international coalition to back increasingly tough sanctions, all aimed explicitly at forcing the Iranian regime to end enrichment activities.

The reason for this was because we believed a nuclear weapons-capable or -armed Iran posed an imminent threat not just to the Middle East but to the world community. That was the consensus agreed to by the world community and supported by resolution after resolution from the Security Council of the United Nations and by proclamations by not only our country but by countries around the world.

The entire effort had, for some years, been devoted entirely to ending uranium enrichment activities. The consensus was that nuclear weapon possession or capability posed unacceptable

consequences. Now that goal is nowhere in sight. Neither the interim agreement currently being employed, nor the administration, nor any of the negotiating partners even refer to these resolutions or this multiyear strategy of achieving the objective we set out to accomplish. The objective was that Iran would cease enrichment of uranium, which could be used to achieve nuclear weapons capability. This goal has suddenly been totally abandoned.

The current interim agreement explicitly concedes to the Iranians their right to continue enrichment activities with only meager limitations, all of which can be reversed by the mullahs in Iran in an instant. The mullahs in Iran boast publicly of this great negotiating victory for them, which goes against everything we have been trying to do for the past 6 or 7 years.

It seems unassailable that Iran came to the negotiating table at long last directly as a consequence of the hardship that was achieved by these international economic sanctions that were imposed on this regime. They resisted coming to the negotiating table until these sanctions really started to hit home.

But what is equally clear is that the regime wants sanctions relief and has sought this interim deal to accomplish it—and unfortunately, we have given it to them. And what do we get in return? What we get in return is having negotiated away our very core purpose for doing this in the first place. Instead of using our leverage to continue the progress we had made to bring Iran to cease uranium enrichment, we blunted our very best leverage and our very best tool. Instead of pressing our long-term advantage, we have begun to relieve the pressure on Iran to cease their efforts to gain nuclear weapon capability. And why have we abandoned our goal to stop uranium enrichment? Because the Iranian negotiating team has told us they would never tolerate an end to their long, expensive path to an enrichment industry.

So here is my central conviction on this matter: If those on the other side of the table tell us in advance that our long-held conviction and purpose is asking too much, instead of meekly complying with their request, then we must increase pressure until they change their minds, not abandon our own goal because it is perceived as too tough.

So what have we bought with this interim agreement? According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, of which I used to be a part, the main practical consequence of this claimed ''freezing'' is that the time Iran now needs to produce a critical mass of highly enriched uranium—20 kilograms—with current centrifuges has gone from an estimated 59 days to 63 days. What did we gain from the agreement? Four days—four days longer that it will take Iran, once they flip the switch, to get highly enriched uranium, which allows them nuclear capability.

It seems clear that among Iran's principal objectives now is to break apart the strong international consensus we have worked so hard over so many years to forge. Prospects for Iran to do so look pretty darned good. Clearly Iran has not lived up to what they agreed to do or what we asked them to do. But there seems to be no prospect in place for our returning to sanctions unless the Senate, on a bipartisan basis—and there is bipartisan support for this—is able to impose the next round of sanctions should this interim agreement not achieve its objectives. Yet we are currently being blocked from bringing this legislation to the floor.

I repeat: This is bipartisan legislation led by Senator MENENDEZ of New Jersey and those who have been actively engaged and involved. But now we are being asked to stand down. We are not even given a chance to exercise our vote on this, which we are attempting to add to the pending legislation here. Again, delay, delay, delay is putting us in a position of essentially conceding to the Iranians what they want and giving them the opportunity to continue to pursue their quest for nuclear weapons capability.

Obviously, for them, it is just fine if they can turn the protracted uncertainty and gradual sanctions relief into a series of lesser agreements. But for us, more interim agreements will mean our allies will become accustomed to these gradual changes and the increasing commerce in Iranian oil. They will become less inclined to again reverse course almost regardless of Iranian actions. Following that prolonged process, we confront a stronger Iran but a weaker international coalition opposed to Iranian nuclear ambitions. Iranian ambitions and capabilities will grow, our efforts to halt the Iranian quest for nuclear capability will diminish, and we will then be left with a choice of containing or taking military action against a nuclear-capable, if not nuclear-armed, Iran.

The President has said repeatedly that ''containment'' is not an option. It is not for me either. Since he also said military force is an option, it seems clear to me this current course is more likely to bring us to that stark point than to a negotiated settlement.

We must be determined to do what we can in the Senate to prevent us from reaching that point. Not only must we refocus our government and other friendly governments on the need to eliminate Iran's nuclear infrastructure in any final agreement—no matter how difficult that might be—we must also oppose Iran's likely intentions to prolong the negotiation process intended to continue to weaken our coalition.

The Nuclear Weapons Free Iran Act that I have cosponsored will give us great leverage in doing that. It will make it clear that the Senate will not support playing Iran's game any longer than we already have.

I deeply regret that we are not being given the opportunity to debate this issue before the American people and among ourselves, that we are not allowed to have a vote in the Senate as to whether our current policy that this administration is pursuing is the right policy to achieve the goal which we all agreed to.

The last four Presidents—two Democrats and two Republicans—have declaratively said: A nuclear-capable Iran is unacceptable. President Obama has stated that over and over. Yet here we are engaged in a process that advances that prospect.

We are put at a disadvantage, and we are giving away the one tool that has brought Iran to the negotiating table. They have trumpeted publicly about how they have outsmarted us and outnegotiated us and achieved what they wanted to achieve and diminished our opportunity to achieve what the world community wants to achieve. We will rue the day that we almost had Iran to the point where we could have achieved our goal but stepped back and conceded to their promise and commitment to continue to enrich, to continue to add centrifuges, and to continue their pursuit of nuclear weapons capability.

If Iran is armed with nuclear weapons, it will pose unimaginable consequences to us. There has been total agreement on that among the world's Nations. Yet here we stand at the moment of decision—right when we, in a sense, had them where we wanted to get them, and we conceded that.

I deeply regret that we have not been able to move forward with these additional sanctions to be employed if—in this first interim agreement—Iran does not live up to the objectives and goals which we have demanded.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

COMPREHENSIVE VETERANS HEALTH AND BENEFITS AND MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY RESTORATION ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1982, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to Proceed to Calendar No. 301 (S. 1982) a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid (for Sanders) amendment no. 2747, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid amendment no. 2766 (to amendment no. 2747), to change the enactment date.

Reid motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with instructions, Reid Amendment no. 2767, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment no. 2768 (to (the instructions of the motion to commit) amendment no. 2767), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment no. 2769 (to amendment no. 2768), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I am thrilled that we are here at this moment debating benefits for our veterans. Our veterans have stood up for America by fighting for us overseas, and when they come home we need to be standing up for them. Over time we have come to recognize that there are a number of shortfalls in the way we address our benefits for veterans that need to be corrected, and that is what this bill is all about.

Yesterday we had a motion to close debate on whether to debate this bill, and that was successful, so here we are at this moment. Let's recognize that America has been at war for more than 12 years, that more than 6,000 Americans have lost their lives in service to our country, that more than 50,000 Americans have been wounded in combat.

At some point 2½ million Americans have left their homes and their families to serve their country in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of these men and women have served more than 1 deployment, and 400,000 men and women have served more than 3 deployments. They have gone back to the theater of war repeatedly, with sacrifices on a personal level, sacrifices for their family and sacrifices for their health. They have gone into perilous situations on behalf of our Nation. Today we need to make sure the benefits promised are there, and where the benefits are insufficient, that they are improved.

I am hearing there is a possibility there may be an effort today to block this bill—this bill on behalf of our veterans. I certainly hope that will not be the case. How can we explain that the ongoing partisan politics that have so poisoned and paralyzed our Nation are more important than addressing the benefits of our veterans—our service men and our service women—who have fought for our country. Today is not a day for partisan politics. It is a day for keeping faith with those who have served our Nation.

I will address a particular provision that is in this bill today. The bill takes on many issues, one of which is to work very hard to shorten and eliminate the big lag in time that occurs when our veterans apply for benefits. Benefits delayed are, for a period of time, benefits denied. The Department of Veterans Services has made progress with more progress to come. This bill will make a difference in eliminating the backlog and will address the needs of our veterans in a timely fashion, and timeliness is very important.

There is another provision in this bill that I particularly want to emphasize because it comes out of conversations that occurred 6 years ago when I was talking to folks about running for the Senate. People in Oregon said: We need to take care of our Gold Star families—our families who are striving and struggling to be on their feet after they have lost a servicemember in combat. This is a challenge, of course, for the children and it is a challenge for the spouses.

A veteran brought up the fact that we needed to provide much better educational benefits. I am very pleased to have a bipartisan sponsor, Senator HELLER of Nevada, because there is nothing about helping our veterans that should be a partisan issue. There is nothing about addressing the needs of our Gold Star families who have lost a member of the family in combat that should be a partisan issue.

Mr. Robert Thornhill, a veteran, talked to me in 2008, right before I came to this Chamber, about this issue of educationed benefits for the children and for the spouses. When the primary wage earner for a family is struck down in battle, the rest of the family needs a lot of help regaining their feet, and that means educational opportunities for the children. But let's not forget that the spouse who has to take over major financial responsibilities also needs educational benefits.

Shortly before I came here, the post-9/11 GI bill went into effect creating the Machine Gunnery Sergeant Fry Scholarship. That scholarship fulfilled the vision that Robert Thornhill and I had talked about, and it went even further to include housing and book stipends and support for attendance at private universities, but it only did so for the children of the fallen.

Mr. Thornhill followed up with me. He noted that we need to take on and extend these benefits to spouses as well. Over the long term children need help going to college, but in the short term spouses often have to be retrained to adopt their new role as the major breadwinner for the family.

For several years I have been advocating that we fulfill this vision of taking care of the educational opportunity issues for our Gold Star families. Education is a powerful tool to rebuild a family's financial foundation, but it has to be affordable.

There is a provision in this bill that Mr. Thornhill championed, a provision that is fundamental to fairness for our spouses of those who have fallen, and it is a provision that is fundamental to the future success of our Gold Star families.

This provision—this Spouses of Heroes Education Act—is one element among a number that our Committee on Veterans' Affairs has so ably assembled to address shortfalls in the programs that assist those who have stood for our country.

Let us not forget what we are working to do: to keep faith with those who have served our country. Let us set aside the petty, partisan, poisonous games and let's hold the faith and keep our veterans in mind.

Let's get this bill done. Let's get it to conference with the House. Let's get it to the Oval Office. Let us keep faith with those who have stood for our country.

I thank the Presiding Officer. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I am delighted the Senate is talking about our veterans. I am disappointed the bill before us did not go through the entire committee process. I am grateful that Senator BURR, the ranking member, has brought forward a side-by-side bill which I wish to discuss for a moment. I am particularly glad the Burr bill brings up the Iran sanctions issue. I know the administration has kind of backed away from the sanctions because of some things that have happened recently and does not want a sanctions bill to pass the Senate.

I have followed closely what has happened in the Middle East. I recall back to 1979 when Georgians were held hostage in the American Embassy in Tehran for 444 days. I have a lot of experience with that part of the world and I think there are some things of which we should be reminded.

This bill, the Burr bill that includes the veterans' benefits, also includes nuclear weapons sanctions on Iran and most of the provisions of the Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act. In particular, three things included are important to note.

No. 1, it reimposes existing sanctions suspended under the interim agreement if Iran cheats on its commitment, drags its feet in negotiations, or threatens the West with long-range missiles or terrorism.

No. 2, it ensures the final agreement must require Iran to dismantle its illicit nuclear infrastructure to prevent Iran from being able to produce nuclear weapons.

No. 3, it threatens to impose additional economic sanctions in the future should Iran cheat on its commitment or fail to agree to the final deal that dismantles its nuclear infrastructure.

I have watched the television set. I have seen the international reports. I have listened to what the Iranians are saying since we have had this interim agreement, and here is what it says: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani pledged that under no circumstances—and that is a direct quote—would Iran agree to dismantle a single centrifuge in a final nuclear agreement.

This is what he is saying now and we are talking about getting to a final agreement months from now.

Second, during Iran's national day celebrations in which American flags were burned, Rouhani declared: ''We will permanently continue to progress our nuclear technology.''

Third, former Iranian top nuclear negotiator Hossein Mousavian told Iranian media in a recent interview that the Islamic Republic will never—I underscore never—agree to dismantle portions of its nuclear infrastructure.

Iran nuclear negotiator Majid Takhte Ravanchi reiterated Iran would not accept the closure of ''any of its nuclear sites.''

Next, an Iran official on February 12 set aside the idea of potentially altering a nuclear reactor so that other nations would fear the production of atomic bomb fuel.

Finally, Iran will determine its needs regarding uranium enrichment on its own, the country's chief nuclear scientist said on February 25, and will not—and I underscore not—accept foreign powers dictating its enrichment policy.

Iran is advancing its nuclear ballistics testing system and it has fired nuclear missiles to test its capability. Iran has deployed two ships in the Atlantic as a show of force on the United States of America. They continue in every way possible to be a surrogate fighter in Syria, empowering the Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza, and they continue to cause the disturbances throughout the Middle East.

Why should we not as a Congress of the United States, in talking about our veterans, include within that talk a clear shot across the bow to the Iranians that America will not stand for them laughing at us or poking their finger in our face when we talk about a nuclear-free Iran?

We do not need a nuclear armed Iran in the Middle East for a plethora of reasons. Most importantly, if they get one, there will be a nuclear arms race in a very unstable part of the world. It is the home of terrorism. It is the home of the biggest fear the United States of America has, and our best ally, Israel, lies in the path of Iranian resistance. So it is important the sanctions be reinstated and that we have conditions on the Iranians so that if they violate their promises or they look the other way on their commitments or they do what they are saying on their own national television networks today, they understand there will be a consequence to their actions.

I remember 1979. I remember when ''Nightline'' became a television show because for 444 days Americans were held hostage in Tehran. I remember that just the day before President Reagan was sworn in as President of the United States, President Carter finally negotiated a release of the hostages in Iran, for one simple reason: Iran knew that once President Carter was out of office and President Reagan came into office, he would follow through on what he said, and that is he would do whatever it took to free the hostages.

There is only one thing the Iranians understand. They understand someone who will fight and stand up to them, someone who will take them on, and somebody who will not settle for their looking the other way on the agreement they made. It is critical and important the Senate of the United States send a clear message to the Iranians that we will not be lied to, we will not be misled, and we expect them to live up to the commitments they have promised to live up to. If they don't, there will be consequences for their actions.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are already pointing out that the economy of Iran is now improving, with the interim agreement we currently have. We have no certainty on a final agreement that is coming in the next few months. We have no certainty the Iranians are going to do what they say they are going to do anyway. If we sit here passively saying it will be all right, if we don't let them know there will be conditions if they violate the sanctions, if we don't let them know we mean business, then America will have turned its back on the most dangerous enemy we have, and that is the enemy of terrorism and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

I appreciate our veterans and the sacrifice they have made to try and free us from terrorism. I appreciate the volunteers who have sacrificed their sacred treasure and their families and their own personal blood and their own personal life trying to defend America and liberate the people of Iraq and the people of Afghanistan. I don't want us to turn and leave the Middle East. I want to let the Middle East know, and its biggest ogre, the Nation of Iran, that we will not stand for a nuclear weapon in Iran. If they continue to try and progress toward that, there will be sanctions that will be crippling. America will not turn its back on Iran; we will stand toe to toe with them and say this will not stand.

I commend Senator BURR for his leadership in including that in this portion of the veterans bill, as well as those members of the Foreign Relations Committee and the other 57 Members of the Senate who have signed the Iran sanctions bill. It is my hope and plea that sometime in the weeks ahead, before the Iranians think we have no teeth left at all, that we will do the right thing on the floor of the U.S. Senate and enhance the conditions of sanctions against the Nation of Iran if they lie to us or fail to keep the promises they have made in the interim agreement and the ultimate permanent agreement we make.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. 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. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we have a lot of challenges before this Nation and this Congress. I believe the most critical challenge is how we handle financial matters that have been entrusted to us, how we handle the budget and spend the debt we are approving in America, and are we able—do we have the will, do we have the integrity—to stand up and put this Nation on a sound fiscal path.

I would note to all my colleagues that the week before last before the Budget Committee, our own Congressional Budget Office Director Mr. Doug Elmendorf repeated once again—which is absolutely accepted by virtually every economist in America—this country remains on an unsustainable debt course. This is an unsustainable path we are on. He indicated and said flatly we could, indeed, face a fiscal crisis, something like 2007, perhaps, something like Greece, because our debt is so large and growing at such a pace. We have never been here before. We are in the red zone on the tachometer. We are in the danger area, and we need to get out of it.

So I would say to my colleagues, isn't this true? Does anybody doubt it? Does anybody deny it? Then why don't we respond in an appropriate way?

I was shocked, deeply disappointed, amazed, and saddened that this headline appeared earlier in the week in the Washington Post. This is what it said: ''With 2015 budget request, Obama will call for an end to era of austerity.''

What does this mean? Every Member of this Congress knows what it means. It means the President of the United States is no longer interested in fiscal responsibility. He is saying: We no longer need to tighten our belt. He is saying he is going to attack anybody who suggests more spending is bad. He is going to say that he is going into this election with the idea that he is going to promise, promise, promise more and more spending, more debt, and he is not concerned about it. That is what it means. I am not exaggerating. I think every Member of this body knows exactly what that signal was.

So we will see the budget. It will be out next Tuesday, and we will have a hearing in the Budget Committee, of which I am the ranking Republican, on Wednesday. But I suspect and am confident it will do just like his last two budgets. It would increase spending $1 trillion above the amount of spending we agreed to in 2011 and reaffirmed essentially with the Ryan-Murray bill that he signed about 2 months ago into law.

We cannot do this. This is how we destroy a country, how we weaken an economy. I cannot—I do not have words to express it.

I will say one more point. Economists are telling us that our economic growth today is below what it otherwise would be because of the size of the debt this country faces right now—not in the future, right now. It is a wet blanket on economic growth. The Rogoff-Reinhart study talks about the slower growth, and we have consistently seen projections for growth not being met.

Director Elmendorf, in his testimony—I asked him about it 2 years ago. He predicted 2013 would allow us to see 4.6-percent economic growth. It came in at 1.9 percent—a stunning miss, well below. Below 2-percent growth means you are not creating jobs, you are not creating wealth, you are basically stagnant with an increasing population.

We need to be at 4.6 percent. We need some of that kind of growth. One reason we are not is bigger government, more taxes, more regulations, and more debt.

We are not going to get out of it until we get off that path.

So now we have a veterans bill before us. Nobody, I do not believe, is more committed to veterans in this body than I have been, and so many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle want to do the right thing for veterans. But it is an audacious thing we are seeing here today.

Let's review some of the history.

Two months ago, every Senate Democrat—every Senate Democrat—voted for a bill to cut military pensions for our soldiers, our military retirees, and even our disabled veterans. It was in their bill.

Senate Democrats then blocked—not once but twice—my efforts, other Republican efforts to restore those cuts by closing a tax credit loophole for illegal immigrants.

Mr. President, I see my colleague and friend, Senator SANDERS, in the Chamber. I am going to get to the point. I will do it now because I know he has a busy agenda, and I think I know how the script will all play out.

I say to Senator SANDERS and colleagues, the pending measure before us today, S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014—which is a good title for a bill—would cause the aggregate level of budget authority and outlays for fiscal year 2014, deemed pursuant to section 111 of Public Law 113–67, to be exceeded. Therefore, I raise a point of order under section 311(a)(2) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Alabama for accommodating my schedule. I will have more to say on this issue later this afternoon. But let me at this point simply say: Mr. President, pursuant to section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and the waiver provisions of applicable budget resolutions, I move to waive all applicable sections of that act and applicable budget resolutions for purposes of the pending bill, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Well, Mr. President, reclaiming the floor, now you have it in stark clarity. This bill proposes to spend more than we agreed to spend passing the Ryan-Murray Act a few weeks ago. President Obama signed it 2 months ago. The ink is hardly dry on it, and here we have another bill to raise that, to raise the spending again. And it will not be the only one. We are going to see bill after bill after bill, and it is part of the President's strategy.

What is it? The era of austerity is over. He signed Ryan-Murray. He signed the Budget Control Act. But he had no intention of complying with it. He will not support enforcement of it. That is a failure of leadership of a monumental proportion. It is a stunning event.

I do not know why we have a Congress, why we pass laws that say we are only going to spend so much money and then we waltz in, just a few weeks later, and spend billions more than we agreed to. And, oh, we will just waive the budget we just passed. Oh, this is important. But everybody knew when we passed the limits on spending that there were going to be important bills.

I am actually shocked, even by Senate and congressional standards, how blasé this body has been about these laws. I thought at least people would pretend to honor them. There is no pretense here. And it is a failure of responsibility in this body if such spending were to pass.

So our colleagues voted to cut the retirement pay of veterans, which I opposed and Republicans opposed. That was already in law—a commitment we made to military people that if they served 20 years, they get this retirement benefit.

They waltzed in to save $6 billion, supposedly, and they were going to reduce their pension benefits. I did not feel, No. 1, it was necessary. There were other ways to save money. And I felt we had ways to save the money in a different way and offered legislation to that effect. So the attempts to fix it were blocked twice.

What was in the Ryan-Murray bill was fiscally responsible—bad policy but responsible fiscally. This bill is not. This bill increases, creates new veterans programs, new spending for veterans, and it is not paid for in any way. It is all borrowed money. We are already in debt, so when we enter and commit ourselves to additional obligations above what we have agreed to, every penny of that is borrowed, every penny of that will add to the debt of our country.

This bill busts the caps we agreed to. These are caps we all voted for—or at least our colleagues did, the Democratic colleagues, because I did not vote for the Ryan-Murray bill. I thought it eroded the Budget Control Act more than I wanted it to and it raised the caps. But it kept them in place. It eased pressure in several areas where the shoe was pinching badly. It eased that pressure. But that is not enough now? We have to have more?

It is using the veterans as a political tool, in my view. I do not think our veterans want their programs to be enhanced if every penny of money that is going to enhance those programs is added to the debt of the United States of America.

This is eight times at least since the Budget Control Act was passed that we have seen efforts to bust it. So our military men and women who worked tirelessly, selflessly, for the good of this country, have always put duty first. Shouldn't we put duty first?

This massive Federal budget of ours is filled with waste, filled with projects that cannot be defended intellectually. It was our duty to get rid of wasteful pet projects and do the right thing for our veterans.

I say to my colleagues, for example, you could have closed the tax credit loophole for illegal immigrants that is costing America billions of dollars. The cut to the veterans pension was about $6 billion over 10 years. Annually, according to the President's own inspector general at his own Department of Treasury, we are losing $4 billion a year in improper tax credit payments to illegal aliens. Why don't we fix that? The inspector general asked that we fix that. It would save $20 billion over 10 years. No, sir. What do they tell us? We are not doing anything on immigration.

Well, the first thing you should do to create a lawful system of immigration in America is to quit rewarding people financially who come illegally. That is the first thing. For Heaven's sakes, what is wrong with that? Is that immoral?

We had an instance in which there was a trailer, I believe in Indiana. A number of people lived there. No children. They claimed 19 children and got refunds from the United States of America of $30,000—all of which were not proper, none of which were proper.

That is what the inspector general was talking about. You are not entitled to come to America illegally—have children in some other country—and then demand that we give you a tax credit, which is the equivalent of a direct check from the U.S. Treasury. A tax credit is not a deduction. It is a check from the U.S. Treasury.

But, oh no, we will not even discuss that. That is a nonstarter. So it looks like politics trumps helping veterans. So if we had had a plan to fix the veterans retirement, that could have all worked together on a good basis. Here we have now another veterans bill that is not going to work. Are there no programs, are there no spending plans out

there that could not be trimmed, eliminated or reconfigured that could help us honor the commitments we have made to our veterans? There surely are. Lots of them. We have seen a lot of them offered.

So I challenge any of our colleagues, Senate Democrats, to come to the floor and name one program they are willing to terminate in order to help fund our veterans adequately. Come down and let's hear it. There is a circling of the wagons in this administration. What did the President mean when he said: The era of austerity is over, as the Washington Post reported? What did me mean? He meant that we are not cutting anything else. He meant that he is going to propose, as he has in the past, new spending programs, not fewer spending.

We can't even get amendments up on this legislation. The majority leader has filled the tree. He will not allow us even to vote on alternative proposals. We cannot have an honest debate in this Chamber over how to legitimately and responsibly meet the needs of veterans or any other group, it appears. So really, in effect, the majority leader and his caucus will not allow votes on proposals. He will not allow our veterans to have a vote really. As long as that is the case, you have got no right to proceed with this legislation, in my opinion.

So to those who come to the floor and attack Republicans, saying we do not care about veterans, I will issue this challenge: Tell your leader—because he cannot function without your support—tell your leader to let us offer some amendments. Let us offer some offsets that would help pay for this. Tell your leader to let this Chamber work its will in the Constitutional and historic way.

If you do not, it is clear that your goal is to create a misleading headline and not do what is right for veterans. One more thing, because Congress has refused to live within its means, interest on our debt is surging, unbelievably so. It will crowd out this kind of spending, defense spending, education spending, highway spending, throughout our whole government.

Let me draw your attention to this chart. This is what Director Elmendorf told us 2 weeks ago—last week—in his testimony before the Budget Committee on the budget of the United States of America. He told us that the interest we pay this date, this past year, was $230 billion.

The savings from reducing veterans' retirement over 10 years was $6 billion. The Federal highway bill for 1 year is approximately $40 billion. The amount of money we spend on education is around $100 billion. That is all of those programs that we spend it on. The amount of money we spend on the Defense Department is about $500 billion.

So last year, we spent $230 billion on interest. When we borrow money, we go into debt. We borrow the money. People loan us the money. We give them Treasury bills, with interest. Look at this chart. This year, 2013, it is $230 billion. Look at the increase Director Elmendorf told us we can expect over the next 10 years. In 2024, 10 years from now, colleagues, interest on the debt will be $870 billion in 1 year.

How many good projects are going to have their programs cut to just pay the interest on the debt? It is the fastest growing item in the United States budget. What do we have? We want to do something for veterans a few weeks after we agree to limit spending. We come right in with a bill to waive the budget limit, spend above that, borrow every penny of that money, and increase this interest and debt situation.

The Director did not count that. His calculations assume we honor the Budget Control Act and the Ryan-Murray spending limit. He assumes we are honoring what is in law. But what do we have? A motion to waive. Spend above that limit. This whole reckless spending is what Admiral Mullen meant when he said: The greatest threat to America's security is our deficit, our debt. It is going to crowd out other spending. It threatens our economic viability, our growth potential, and it actually places us at risk for some financial crisis in the years to come.

Our voters deserve better. Look at how they tend to maneuver this legislation. It is so absurd sometimes. We should laugh about it if it were not so serious. It is serious. The Sanders bill, the veterans bill—we are being told we must vote for it or they will accuse us of being unkind and unsupportive and unsympathetic to our veterans. That day is over. We are not going to be intimidated on this. We are going to do the right thing for veterans and America.

This bill would exceed the spending limit for the current fiscal year that Congress and the President agreed to just 3 months ago. Initially—it gets worse in the outer years—it would clearly add another $260 million in mandatory spending and authorize another $182 million this year, fiscal year 2014, which we are already in—$182 million. It gets worse.

So we agreed in 2011, August of 2011, to set certain spending limits. The President signed that. Both Houses of Congress voted for it. Come January, the President of the United States, who signed that bill, laid forth his budget, which would increase spending $1 trillion over the limits that we agreed to in August. So less than 6 months later, he was coming back before Congress completely ignoring the will, the established law, the Budget Control Act limitations on spending that he agreed to.

He actually bragged about it. This is no way to get our country on a sound financial path. It is not any way to do it. Let me point out one more thing. They say that we are cutting spending, that this is austerity, that America is cutting its spending. Look at this chart. It is just a simple chart.

In 2007, before we had the fiscal crisis, we were spending about $2.6 trillion in that year. In 2011, right before we signed this August Budget Control Act agreement to limit the growth of spending—only the growth. It did not limit spending. It limited growth. We were spending about $3.5 trillion. The CBO baseline projects that in 2015, that is the year we are working on now, trying to prepare our budget and so forth, we are going to spend even more than we spent then.

So the spending is going up. We made a few adjustments to curtail the growth in spending, which is good, but really not enough to get us on a sound path. The reason I assure you that we are not on a sound path, as this chart shows that, is the interest we are going to be paying over 10 years. This is last year, 2013. This is what they tell us we are going to be paying in interest in 2024. It goes up every single year. We are on an unsustainable path. You can't get something for nothing. Julie Andrews tells us: Nothing comes from nothing. Nothing ever could. It can't.

So I am flabbergasted really. The most disappointing thing to me is I know now what we are going to see in the President's budget come next Tuesday. Any hint at belt tightening is going to be gone. We are going to see proposals for massive increases in spending. Oh, not spending, investments. That is what we are going to see.

But we do not have the money. We do not have to damage America. We do not have to destroy our country. This is what we agreed to now. It shows continual growth. Under the Budget Control Act, we are going to see growth in spending every year. There is no reduction in spending. It is going to grow every year for the next 10 years. It will not grow quite as fast, as if we did not have a Budget Control Act.

It looks like, if we continue to have efforts to waive the budget and just spend above that, it will be even worse than this. The growth will be even greater.

I want to share one point, and I will wrap up. The bill also relies on a budget gimmick. It claims that it has got some pay-for, that it is not all borrowed money. It claims this pay-for. It is really a gimmick that every honest observer who has commented on it has just mocked it. It is the OCO gimmick. The bill proposes to reduce Overseas Contingency Operations programs used to combat terrorism worldwide, Iraq and Afghanistan, our OCO, Overseas Contingency Operations.

Every penny of that is borrowed. It is not in the regular budget. It is spent above that as emergency spending, war spending. That is how it has been done. For good or ill, that is the way it is done. At least while I am troubled by the President's policies with regard to Iraq and Afghanistan, the costs are coming down. They are projected to come down every year until we basically eliminate those costs.

It claims that reducing the amount of money we borrow to fund the war and support our military is somehow now available to spend on whatever the project of the day is. Today it is veterans. It will be something else tomorrow. They have tried this before. It is ludicrous. It is like claiming credit today for the end of Vietnam. We are not borrowing money to fight the war in Vietnam, so we can spend that money.

This is how a great Nation goes broke. They want to do this to the tune of $18 billion. That is what it is going to take to fund Senator SANDERS' bill. The problem is, the money was never going to be spent at this rate. It is not a real savings. Every piece of legislation that the majority has tried to move since January has exceeded the levels that we reached in the December agreement: unemployment insurance, the farm bill, flood insurance, and now the veterans bill. All of them spend above what we agreed to.

Colleagues, these measures represent critical needs. I know we want to do something about all of them, and acknowledge that people have suffered and are suffering under the policies that promised to do so much good but have not.

The solution is not to abandon fiscal discipline. The solution is not to breach the agreements we reached only a few weeks ago to have some modest limitation on the growth of Federal spending.

This approach has been widely derided as a gimmick. The Congressional Budget Office says this is not real money that can be spent. Of course it is not.

Mr. Elmendorf followed up with a letter to Congressman PAUL RYAN. Budget director Mr. Elmendorf wrote:

> Establishing caps on discretionary appropriations in the future would not affect spending under current law and would not offset changes in direct spending or revenues. Further, appropriations for war-related activities have declined in recent years and may decline further as military operations in Afghanistan wind down. Caps on OCO appropriations that are lower than baseline projections might simply reflect policy decisions that have already been made and that would be realized even without such funding constraints. Moreover, if policymakers believed national security required appropriations above the capped amounts in future years, they would almost certainly provide emergency operations that would not, under current law, be counted against the caps.

It points out that this is an unacceptable way to count money.

Experts on the Federal budget have said the same. Maya MacGuineas, a capable observer with the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, said:

> Using the war gimmick to offset other costs or to count toward deficit reduction would send a message to the American public and our investors that we are not serious about controlling the debt. In fact, it would send the message that not only are we not serious, but we are going to try to trick everyone that we're actually doing something productive on the deficit. That's the height of irresponsibility.

Maya MacGuineas—respected on both sides of the aisle, a person committed to getting this Nation to fiscal responsibility—is from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. She said that last November.

So we are not going to go for this. We are not going to waive the budget in this fashion. It is not going to pass, and it should have been known beforehand when Senator SANDERS and Senator REID sought to push this bill through that it was never going to pass because there are enough Senators in this body who have enough strength of will to honor the commitment we made a few weeks ago in the Ryan-Murray legislation. We are not going to use some bogus gimmick to justify busting the budget. The deal is over, nada. It is not going to happen. And I will defend my commitment to veterans and seeing that they are treated fairly in this country.

There are a lot of positive things we need to be doing in America. This is certainly not one them. We need to figure out how to run this government on the spending increases to which we have already agreed. In fact, we need to reduce those increases more than we have.

Otherwise, we are placing at risk our economy today, job creation today, and the future of our children.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. I rise this morning to speak about two issues. The first will be on the matter that is before us, the veterans legislation.

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on this legislation. I commend the work of Chairman SANDERS and others who have brought us to this point. We know we have a challenge ahead of us to pass this legislation.

The good news is that these issues are bipartisan. Both parties have a real concern about what happens to our veterans and what happens to our veterans' families. We often have different pathways to get there, but I do think we have a bipartisan concern.

Perhaps it is appropriate to start with a reflection on what I think our obligation is as Members of the Senate, but it is our obligation as citizens as well.

Years ago I heard it expressed—we often express it by using the word ''worthy.'' When we consider what our veterans have done for us, it is important that we express gratitude in so many different ways. Sometimes that is one-on-one expressing to a veteran: We appreciate your service. And when there is a parade or another demonstration of public support for our veterans, that is important.

But the question we have to ask ourselves both as elected officials and as citizens is the following: Are we doing everything we can to prove ourselves worthy of the valor of our veterans? The answer to that question—depending on what year it is or depending on what time period it is, we will get different answers to that question.

Most of the time we like to believe that the Congress is worthy of the valor of those veterans, that we are doing everything we can to help them. But we have to be honest with ourselves and say that there are substantial periods of time when this body and the other body—both the Senate and the House—have not been worthy of the valor of our veterans because we haven't done enough to help veterans and their families.

We hope, we pray this can be one of those moments when we prove ourselves worthy of the valor of those veterans who served their country. They didn't ask the price; they didn't put down conditions; they just served their country, and they asked us to enact legislation and policy that is commensurate with the sacrifice and the commitment they made to their country. It is about keeping promises, and I hope we can be in one of those moments right now.

As many across the country know, the bill improves VA health care coverage. It reauthorizes important job-training programs for unemployed veterans and provides instate tuition assistance benefits for all post-9/11 veterans through the GI bill.

We know that when we look at the unemployment data, some of the highest percentages for any sector or category are post-9/11 veterans—a much higher unemployment rate than the overall unemployment rate and an even higher unemployment rate than all of their fellow veterans.

In this case, for this bill, hundreds of people across Pennsylvania have reached out to my office, urging that the Senate pass this bill. It has the support from various veterans service organizations, including the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the American Legion, and the VFW, just to name a few.

I wish to address a couple of provisions in the bill, ones that are particularly significant to Pennsylvania and some of the work we have been doing.

The VA health care system in Pittsburgh had a terrible tragedy not too long ago where several veterans lost their lives while in the care of the VA health care system. There was a Legionnaires' outbreak. Legionella was the problem in the water system, and that terrible tragedy was obviously a devastating loss for those families. Not only the city of Pittsburgh but all of southwestern Pennsylvania was affected. We are thinking of them today when we reflect upon some of the provisions in this bill.

Veterans and their loved ones need to feel confident and secure in the care they receive at all health care facilities. The failures—and there is no other way to describe them—that occurred at the VA in southwestern Pennsylvania surrounding this outbreak of Legionnaires' disease is, in a

word, unacceptable. Frankly, that is not a strong enough word to express the outrage I know people felt across southwestern Pennsylvania and beyond, so I worked and it led to the introduction of legislation. Portions of what we worked on are included in this bill, and we are very pleased about that.

Specifically, the bill requires the VA to implement local and State reporting requirements of infectious diseases. The bill also requires that the VA develop performance measures to assess whether the veterans integrated service networks and medical centers are complying with these requirements. We are pleased that is part of the legislation.

Mr. President, I wish to highlight a part of the legislation that is very important to me.

Fortunately, it includes the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz Act, which Senator TOOMEY and I introduced last year. The bill renames the VA medical center on Woodland Avenue in Philadelphia after Corporal Crescenz. He was the city of Philadelphia's only Medal of Honor recipient from the Vietnam war. I will give a description of why he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his service in Vietnam. We know it is the highest honor that can be granted to any soldier.

In this case, for his actions in Vietnam on November 20, 1968, his Medal of Honor citation states that he gave his life when he ''left the relative safety of his own position, seized a nearby machine gun and, with complete disregard for his safety, charged 100 meters up a slope toward the enemy's bunkers which he effectively silenced. . . . As a direct result of his heroic actions, his company was able to maneuver freely with minimal danger and to complete its mission, defeating the enemy.''

We are grateful that his family will have some measure of peace of mind that his sacrifice and his service are remembered.

I thank Chairman SANDERS for including this in the bill, and I know Senator TOOMEY joins me in that note of gratitude.

(The further remarks of Mr. CASEY are printed in the RECORD under ''Morning Business.)

Mr. CASEY. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I come to floor today as a cosponsor of the legislation that is being considered now in the Senate, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014.

The package of reforms included in this bill will help provide our Nation's veterans, to whom we owe so much, more job opportunities, greater health care access, improved educational programs, and increased oversight of the disability claims backlog, which is a real challenge that so many of our veterans are facing.

I thank the leadership of Senator SANDERS, who chairs the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. This bill includes provisions that have been sponsored by both Republicans and Democrats in the Senate, which is why more than 20 veterans service organizations have endorsed the legislation, including the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

As the heroes of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan return home, they deserve our utmost gratitude and appreciation. Many of our returning veterans served multiple tours of duty, sacrificing so much to protect this Nation. They deserve nothing less than access to the best health care, the best education, and the best opportunities for employment.

Medical care for injured servicemembers is at the heart of the VA's mission. We have a basic responsibility to care for the men and women injured while protecting this country. This legislation addresses one of the most common requests from our veterans: expanded access to the VA's dental care program.

I was meeting with some folks recently who told me one of the biggest reasons our men and women serving in the military on Active Duty are not able to be deployed overseas is because they do not have some of the basic dental care they need. Anyone who has suffered from dental issues knows it can be completely debilitating. So simply put: Veterans should not have to suffer because of a lack of capacity to support this basic medical need.

The bill also contains provisions that will help expand treatment options for young men and women who have sustained major injuries that may prevent them from starting a family. Starting a family is one of the most rewarding joys of life, and we should do everything possible to make sure our military men and women are able to overcome any reproductive challenges they may face.

Access to mental health care and counseling, both for our returning service men and women and their families, is also critically important. When our brave heroes deal with these kinds of health issues, their families are also affected. This legislation would expand mental health resources available to veterans and their family members.

One of the most significant reforms that is included in this legislation is moving the entire Department of Veterans Affairs to an advanced appropriations cycle. This means that Congress would pay the VA's bills 1 year in advance, making it absolutely certain there will be no gaps in funding for veterans programs.

Several years ago Congress moved the Veterans Health Administration to a 1-year advanced appropriation. The intent was to provide increased budget certainty and protection for the hospitals, community clinics, and other health care providers taking care of our wounded veterans. By funding the Veterans Health Administration in advance, Congress made sure that budget delays would no longer affect veterans health care. But the rest of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including the Veterans Benefits Administration, does not receive that advanced appropriation. That means during last year's government shutdown veterans were at risk of not receiving their disability payments, and some personnel involved in decreasing the disability claims backlog were not working. Veterans should not have to wait longer or be put at risk of losing their benefits because of political disagreements here in Congress, and this bill will ensure that will not happen again in the future.

As I have talked with New Hampshire veterans over the past year, this advanced appropriations process has consistently been one of their top requests. I am very glad to see it is included.

The bill also takes important steps to help create job opportunities for veterans. It reauthorizes parts of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, including a joint program between the VA and the Department of Labor which provides 12 months of training for high-demand occupations to unemployed veterans. So far, this program has provided job retraining benefits to more than 50,000 eligible veterans.

The legislation also includes programs which help veterans train for new careers and identify and apply for existing job openings. It will award grants for hiring veterans as first responders and would cut redtape for veterans seeking licenses for skills they have developed during their military service.

We should do all we can to get our veterans in the workforce. There are far too many veterans, particularly post-9/11 vets, who have not been able to get jobs and are experiencing so many of the unfortunate consequences of being out of the workforce.

This is why I have filed amendments to this bill which will create new tax incentives for businesses to hire veterans, and will make it more affordable and easier for veteran-owned small businesses to participate in Small Business Administration loan programs.

I have also filed amendments to address the backlog at the Board of Veterans Appeals, which is one of the really unfortunate situations we have for our veterans. We have veterans in New Hampshire who have been waiting up to 4 years to have their appeals heard before the board.

Finally, another amendment I filed to the bill is in memory of my friend

Charlie Morgan. Charlie was a member of the New Hampshire National Guard 197th Fires Brigade. After the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, she became one of the first servicemembers in the country to come forward and talk about the challenges of keeping her family and her private life secret while she served in the military.

What also prompted Charlie to come forward was, in addition to those challenges, she was also dealing with breast cancer. Sadly, we lost Charlie last year to breast cancer. She was just 48 years old.

I met Charlie while she was serving as a chief warrant officer in the New Hampshire National Guard, but she had actually enlisted in the Army in 1982. After serving on active duty, Charlie joined the Kentucky National Guard in 1992, because that is where she was living then. But shortly after the 9/11 attacks, she joined the 197th Fires Brigade of the New Hampshire National Guard.

I have said it before and I will say it again today: There is a very special place in this Nation's history for those who step forward to defend this country and protect the very same freedoms denied to them out of uniform. Charlie Morgan never gave up the fight for her civil rights, and neither will we.

My amendment is cosponsored by Senators MARK UDALL, BLUMENTHAL, GILLIBRAND, and the Presiding Officer, Senator BALDWIN. It ensures that all veterans and their families—no matter where they live, no matter their sexual orientation—get the benefits they have earned by putting their lives on the line for our country.

My bill passed the Veterans' Affairs Committee last July by a voice vote. I hope, first of all, we will get an amendment process on this veterans bill which allows me and so many of my colleagues to offer relevant amendments which I think would improve the bill we are hoping to consider. I hope my colleagues will support all of my amendments but particularly this important Charlie Morgan amendment because our veterans deserve nothing less.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I rise today to talk about the Iran sanctions legislation, but first I want to talk about the veterans legislation we are on, and why it is so important that we include the Iran sanctions provision.

I believe we all want to make sure we take care of our veterans. We will have on the floor two bills today which deal with our veterans, one offered by Senator SANDERS of Vermont and another offered by Senator RICHARD BURR of North Carolina.

I am asking the majority leader to allow an open process so we can craft a good bill for our veterans. This means allowing amendments. This means allowing a vote on both bills. I believe that with an open process—with an open amendment process, by allowing votes as I have described—we can in fact build the kind of bipartisan support, the kind of bipartisan consensus we need to pass this legislation. There are provisions in the bills which I think have broad bipartisan support, which is why it is so important we have this open process.

One such provision which can help us build that kind of bipartisan support is the Iran sanctions provision in the legislation. It is sponsored by Democratic Senator BOB MENENDEZ of New Jersey and also Republican Senator MARK KIRK of Illinois, and it is cosponsored by 57 other Senators, including myself. So we are talking about a piece of legislation within the Burr bill which has 59 Senators cosponsoring the legislation.

If this legislation is put on the floor included as part of the Burr bill, it is pretty much guaranteed we can pass it. It has 59 cosponsors. If we pick up one more vote, we pass the bill. It is good for our veterans and it is also very important for our national security.

Let me talk about the Iran sanction provision for a minute.

Right now the Obama administration is trying to negotiate an agreement with Iran to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, and while the administration is negotiating, Iran continues to develop its nuclear weapon. While President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry negotiate with President Hassan Rouhani, Iran continues to build a nuclear bomb. While the administration and our Secretary of State talk with our allies in Europe about the negotiations with Iran, the Supreme Leader and Iran continue to build a nuclear bomb.

The reality is the only thing which has brought Iran to the negotiating table is sanctions and only continuing those sanctions will get them to stop building a bomb. The sanctions should be reinstated, and they should not be lifted until, one, Iran agrees they will not build a bomb, and we have an open, verifiable transparent process to make certain they are not doing so.

Sanctions take time to work. The sanctions we applied more than 1 year ago—particularly the Kirk-Menendez banking sanctions—have had a real impact on Iran's economy. I bring a background as a banker to my work experience, both as a Governor for 10 years, and my work experience here in the Senate. The reality is that the Kirk-Menendez banking sanctions have been extremely effective. It is a well-crafted piece of bipartisan legislation which passed this body overwhelmingly, which is really effective. The reason it is so effective is because it prevents any company, any country which wants to do business with the U.S. banking system—and countries and companies worldwide have to be able to transact with the U.S. banking system, but they are not allowed to transact with our banking system if they also do business with Iran.

If Iran can't sell its oil because it can't get paid for its oil, they are in a very tough situation. Not only do they not have the resources or the funds to build a bomb, their administration—the regime—does not have the money to operate their country. So we not only prevent them from building a bomb, but we put the regime itself at risk if they continue to build a bomb. That is why the Kirk-Menendez sanctions—those banking sanctions—have been so effective. But they work over time. They work over time.

When the sanctions are lifted, the relief is immediate, the relief is immediate because now Iran can sell and get payment for their oil. They can purchase what they need, not only to continue to build a bomb but to keep their country and keep the regime in power.

When we are talking about sanctions and negotiating an agreement to get them to stop building a bomb, it is important that we have a process that is open, transparent, and verifiable. We need to know that they have stopped building the bomb and are dismantling their nuclear weapons enterprise.

It is very important to understand that sanctions work over time, but when sanctions are lifted, the relief is immediate. That is why we cannot lift sanctions while we negotiate the agreement. We have to get Iran to stop first and give us a process to verify that, in fact, they have stopped before we can lift those sanctions.

We have the opportunity in this body right here, right now, today, to address that problem. It is incredibly important that we do address this issue. We have 59 sponsors on the legislation. We are one short. If you put it up for a vote, we will have well more than 60 votes. If we impose those sanctions now, we will tell Iran: You stop, and we make them stop. That is the option before us today. That is what we need to do.

If we don't do it, what are our options? A military strike? That is the last option. That is what we don't want to have to do. We don't want to have to do a military strike to take out their bomb-making capability. But if we don't act and reimpose those sanctions, that is the option that is left.

Today we have a choice. I ask that we be allowed to vote on the Burr legislation, that we be allowed to vote on amendments, and that we be allowed to vote to reimpose sanctions on Iran.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following the

disposition of S. 1982, the veterans benefits bill, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 561, Michael L. Connor, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior, that there be 2 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form, and that all other provisions of the previous order remain in effect.

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

The Senator from Montana.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. WALSH. Madam President, in Montana we have a long history of being represented by true statesmen—larger-than-life figures such as Senator Mike Mansfield. These men always served us well, while at the same time defending Montana's principles and freedoms. These statesmen never took their privileges for granted, and they always had the courage to put their differences aside to do what is right for our country. At a time when privilege seems to be gaining on principle, I pledge to find the same courage to do what is right.

Senator Mansfield called Butte, MT, home. Born and raised in Butte, I was brought up with a great deal of respect for Senator Mike Mansfield. It is a tremendous honor for me to stand today where he stood so many years ago and pledge to you and the people of Montana that I will take responsibility for my actions and that I will have the courage to do what is right no matter what the consequences.

Of course, I would not be where I am today without the love and support of my wonderful family. My wife of 29 years, Janet, who is here today, our sons Michael and Taylor, our daughter-in-law April, and our 9-month-old granddaughter Kennedy have stood by my side through every challenge life has handed us.

Last week, while at home, I traveled across Montana as Montana's newest Senator. I had an opportunity to talk to a lot of Montanans who believe we need more courage in Washington, and I tend to agree.

As a public servant, I have sworn an oath to protect and defend Montanans, our Nation, and our Constitution.

I am no stranger to answering the call to serve. I spent 33 years in the Montana National Guard where I served for 9 of those years as an enlisted man before becoming an officer.

I also had the honor of leading over 700 of Montana's finest young men and women into combat in Iraq. It was the largest deployment of Montana's soldiers and airmen since World War II.

In August of 2008, Governor Brian Schweitzer asked me to serve as the adjutant general of the Montana National Guard, and I was truly honored by the opportunity to continue serving our State and our Nation.

I am also extremely proud of my oldest son Michael who is now 28 and is following in my path of public service. He is currently serving in the National Guard and is deployed to the Middle East as a C–12 pilot and a Black Hawk medivac pilot.

Throughout my many years of service, and now with my son's service, ensuring our veterans and their families have access to the services and benefits they have earned is a responsibility I take very seriously and very personally.

I recently met with student veterans at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT, where I heard from young men and women who are concerned about their mounting student debt. I also heard from veterans from all across Montana about their frustrations with the long delays in processing disability benefit claims. I have heard from veterans from across the State who are frustrated with the distances they have to travel to receive care. These failings on behalf of our veterans and their families cause me grave concern. We must, and I will, fight for them every day I am serving in the Senate.

The face of modern war has changed and the VA must keep up with the changing times. Medical care must include robust mental health benefits, and it must also include proper screenings to help mitigate the effect of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries. As a military commander, I also know firsthand what the unseen injuries have done to America's heroes and their families. We can and we must do better.

The oath I have taken is one I take very seriously. It is an honor, it is a privilege, and a great responsibility that I will work tirelessly to fulfill.

To honor their service and sacrifice, we must welcome our heroes home and help them during their transition from active duty back into civilian life. I know how difficult that transition can be. I have experienced it firsthand, I have witnessed it, and I will take responsibility to improve it.

On these and other issues facing our State and our country, I look forward to working with my friend and colleague Senator JON TESTER to solve problems not only for our veterans but for all Montanans.

Last week JON and I traveled the State. We heard from members of the Little Shell Tribal Council about the importance of Federal recognition and ways to help Indian-owned businesses grow and create jobs. We heard from tribal nations across Montana about the Land Buy-Back Cooperative Agreement Program within the Department of Interior. I made a commitment to Montana's tribal leaders that I would work hard to make sure the Federal Government is being responsive and working to move this program forward in a way that works for our sovereign tribal nations.

We also had the opportunity to speak with business owners in Miles City and Wolf Point, MT, who are working hard to grow jobs while at the same time dealing with infrastructure challenges caused by the oil boom in eastern Montana. My job is to bring their voices to the Senate.

One additional issue I heard loudly and clearly from every corner of Montana is that our government is not doing enough to protect our civil liberties. As I have throughout my career, I will continue to fight to protect our civil liberties, our freedoms, and our Montana values. We must do what it takes to protect our Nation and the freedom we enjoy—something I have dedicated my life to. But we must, and we can, do it without trampling on the rights we have fought so hard for.

Bulk data collection with no transparency, whether by the government or by private corporations, is unacceptable. That is why during my first week in the Senate, I signed on to a bipartisan bill that is an important first step in this fight.

I have also heard loudly and clearly from Montanans that our national debt is unacceptable. Washington has a spending problem that we must get under control. There is no better example of privileges gaining on our principles. Responsibly cutting our debt and wasteful spending is one of my top priorities as a Senator, just as it was as Montana's lieutenant governor working alongside Governor Steve Bullock.

Congress needs the courage to cut spending without doing it on the backs of our veterans, our children, or our seniors. Almost everyone I talked to in Montana told me where they see waste in government, and they all have specific examples. We need to find the courage to stand up to special interests and cut that wasteful spending. But we must not do it on the backs of our most vulnerable citizens.

Having served for 33 years in the military, I am confident we can make the Defense budget more efficient while at the same time enhancing programs that grow our economy and protect our children and seniors.

We should start by reducing waste in contracting and procurement. Today we spend millions to have contract security guards check IDs at our bases rather than servicemembers, but no one is any safer. I take responsibility to fix this.

It is a privilege to be chosen to serve on the Agriculture Committee. I am the only member of Montana's delegation to sit on the agriculture committee. This committee is so important to Montana where our No. 1 industry is agriculture. From livestock disaster assistance to crop insurance, commonsense forest reforms, I look forward to making sure the farm bill works and works efficiently for Montana's farmers and ranchers.

I also look forward to serving on the commerce committee where I will focus on transportation, energy, rural telecommunications, and tourism. Tourism is Montana's second largest sector. It not only contributes to our State's economy, but also helps preserve the outdoor heritage that makes Montana such a slice of heaven.

I will bring Montana courage to the Senate where I will fight on behalf of the people of Montana to protect Social Security and Medicare in my new role on the aging committee. I am also prepared to help fix some of Washington's problems while serving on the rules committee.

I know I only just joined this distinguished body, but I also know there is very real work to be done to get our country on the right track again. Beginning on day one, I rolled up my sleeves and started working. My purpose here is to have the courage to do what is right for the people of Montana, our veterans, and the United States of America.

Thank you for this amazing opportunity and may God bless the United States of America.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

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

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

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I rise today to commemorate a very special day in Texas history, and I would say in American history. This is a day that inspires pride and gratitude in my State. I rise to commemorate Texas Independence Day, which is celebrated on March 2, this Sunday.

I will read a letter that was written 178 years ago from behind the walls of an old Spanish mission that is now in San Antonio, TX. It is known as the Alamo. It is a letter written by 26-year-old Lieutenant Colonel William Barret Travis. In doing so, I am carrying on a tradition started by the late Senator John Tower, who represented Texas in this body for more than two decades. This tradition was later upheld by his successor, Senator Phil Gramm, and thereafter by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. It is a tremendous honor that this privilege has now fallen to me.

On February 24, 1836, with his position under siege and outnumbered nearly 10 to 1 by the forces of the Mexican dictator Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, Travis penned the following letter:

> To the People of Texas and all Americans in the World:
>
> Fellow citizens and compatriots—
>
> I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and I have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion. Otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken.
>
> I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls.
>
> I shall never surrender or retreat.
>
> Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism and everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all dispatch.
>
> The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days.
>
> If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself for as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country.
>
> Victory or death.
>
> Signed: William Barret Travis.

As we have since learned, in the battle that ensued, all 189 defenders of the Alamo gave their lives. But they did not die in vain.

The Battle of the Alamo bought precious time for the Texas revolutionaries, allowing General Sam Houston to maneuver his army into position for a decisive victory in the battle of San Jacinto. With this victory Texas became a sovereign nation and an independent republic.

For nine years the Republic of Texas thrived, as I said, as a separate nation. Then, in 1845, it agreed to join the United States as the 28th State.

Many of the Texas patriots who fought in the revolution went on to serve in the Congress. I am honored to hold the seat originally held by then-General Sam Houston but later the president of the republic and U.S. Senator for Texas. More broadly, I am honored to have the opportunity to serve 26 million Americans that call Texas home because of the sacrifices made by these brave patriots 178 years ago.

May we always remember the Alamo, and may God continue to bless Texas and these United States.

IRS INTRUSION

Madam President, I will spend the rest of my time on a separate topic about which many Americans are greatly concerned, and I am one of them.

It has been more than nine months since we first found out that the IRS was deliberately targeting certain political organizations for their political beliefs. At first, the Obama administration acknowledged that any abuse by the IRS was unacceptable. But then, in subsequent days and months, it has tried to play down the scandal and blame it on a few rogue operators in the Cincinnati Field Office. Yet the more we have learned, the more we realize the abuses involved significant coordination with the IRS headquarters here in Washington, DC.

Because of these abuses, millions of Americans now worry that the Internal Revenue Service and their own Federal Government have been corrupted, and we have become more like a banana republic. This damage to the public confidence and the public trust is immeasurable, and much of the damage may end up being irreversible.

Of course, the right response when the administration and Congress learned of these abuses would have been to clean house at the agency and give the American people ironclad assurances this would never, ever happen again. Of course, the right response would have been accountability, firing people, and strong support for congressional investigations on a bipartisan basis and the adoption of new safeguards against potential future abuses.

Instead, we have seen that the investigations, most notably led in the House of Representatives, have been met with whitewash, and there have been active efforts to prevent Congress from actually uncovering the full story. That is a shameful response, and it is dishonest. Unfortunately, it is about to get worse.

The Obama IRS is now proposing a new political speech rule that would force many 501(c)(4), or grassroots organizations, to dramatically change their activities or else form formal political action committees. If the groups are forced to register as political outfits, they will be subject to new campaign finance rules, which, of course, may be the whole point.

As the Wall Street Journal noted earlier this week:

> The purpose of this disclosure is to set up donors as political targets for boycotts and intimidation so that the costs of participating in politics will be too steep.

I might note the Supreme Court of the United States addressed this concern in a very important case decades ago, NAACP v. Alabama, where they held that under the First Amendment to the Constitution, the NAACP was not required to disclose its membership list because, at the time, sadly, they were worried about intimidation and targeting of their members. So the Supreme Court of the United States said that under the First Amendment of the Constitution and the freedom of association included there, the NAACP did not need to disclose its membership list because of this bona fide threat.

These are not contrived concerns today. Back in 2012, donors to the Mitt Romney presidential campaign found themselves publicly attacked and slandered for daring to support Governor Romney and participating in the political process. For that matter, something even more sinister happened to one Idaho businessman by the name of Frank VanderSloot. In April of 2012, Mr. VanderSloot was one of 8 Romney donors who were condemned by an Obama campaign Web site and called ''less than reputable.'' Shortly thereafter, a Democratic opposition researcher began searching for Mr. VanderSloot's divorce records. Meanwhile, the IRS decided to audit 2 years worth of tax filings for Mr. VanderSloot and the Labor Department announced a separate audit of the workers employed on his cattle ranch. Coincidence? I suspect Mr. VanderSloot was targeted because of his political activities. It was a deeply troubling question in 2012, and it is even more troubling today, given all we have learned about the IRS targeting since that time.

I offer as my next example the experience of one of my constituents, Catherine Engelbrecht in Houston, TX. Ms. Engelbrecht is a Texas businesswoman

who founded both the King Street Patriots and an organization called True the Vote. She was mainly concerned about the integrity of the ballot and training people to participate in the process and express themselves more effectively through that process. But she found herself targeted by multiple Federal agencies, including the IRS, the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and OSHA, none of which had ever contacted her family's businesses before her involvement in grassroots activism. As Ms. Engelbrecht recently told a House committee investigating:

> We had never been audited, we had never been investigated, but all that changed upon submitting applications for the nonprofit statuses of True the Vote and King Street Patriots. Since that filing in 2010, my private businesses, my nonprofit organizations, and family have been subjected to more than 15 instances of audit or inquiry by federal agencies.

Make no mistake. The proposed IRS rule would make it even harder for people such as Ms. Engelbrecht to participate in the political process—something that is her constitutional right—and it would strongly discourage other similarly interested and concerned citizens from exercising their rights. In other words, it would strike at the very heart of self government, and at the very heart of the American democracy.

The IRS was meant to be a tax collection agency, period—not to be the police of political speech and political activity. But now we know, after the Affordable Care Act was passed—now more commonly called ObamaCare—we now know the IRS is in charge of enforcing ObamaCare by collecting the penalties for people who don't buy government-approved health insurance. But, still, that is apparently not enough of a job for the IRS, even though the work they are already doing they are not doing very well. With this now 501(c)(4) rule, the IRS would effectively become a campaign finance regulator.

As the advocates for this rule are aware, we already have an agency responsible for enforcing campaign finance rules. It is called, strangely enough, the Federal Election Commission, and it is a strictly bipartisan institution, as it should be. If the President and my friends across the aisle want to change campaign finance laws, they should either draft legislation or make their case to the Federal agency that has the jurisdiction to deal with them: The election commissioners at the Federal Election Commission. But turning the IRS into a de facto arm of the FEC is just more political overreach, and it is going to be ripe for abuse. Indeed, not only would the proposed 501(c)(4) rule further distract the IRS from its core mission, it would trample the First Amendment, intimidate people from exercising their rights of free speech, and it would weaken our participatory democracy.

I also note the rule would not cover the political activities of some other tax-exempt organizations. I am sure this was just an oversight. Labor unions are exempted. So why, if the Treasury is proposing this rule—why, if this is going to be given to the IRS—would we carve out some of the largest donors and participants in the political process in America today, which is organized labor? Not for reasons of fairness, I suppose but, rather, because the proponents of this rule basically want to tilt the scale in their favor, once again, and they want to suppress the speech and the political activity of people they disagree with—which is un-American.

Not surprisingly, the IRS has received tens of thousands of comments on the rule, and most of these comments have been critical. This morning in the Senate Judiciary Committee, my colleague Senator CRUZ read a comment from the American Civil Liberties Union that was critical of this rule. I don't agree with a lot of the policies of the American Civil Liberties Union, but they are absolutely right in this instance. Given the tremendous importance of this issue, including the potential consequences and damage to First Amendment rights, we need to make sure this rule is not implemented as proposed. I urge all of my constituents in Texas and all Americans and everyone within the sound of my voice to continue making their voices heard and to continue to urge President Obama and the IRS commissioner to stop this dangerous IRS power grab.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I come to the floor today in support of S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014.

I believe we must keep the promises we have made to our veterans. We can do this by giving them the same quality of service they gave us, and by providing them with the care they deserve. That is why I support this bipartisan bill.

The bill contains a number of provisions that will improve the lives of the men and women in uniform and our veterans by:

> Restoring the full cost-of-living adjustment for all military retirees;
>
> Reforming the system for processing veteran's disability claims to reduce the existing backlog;
>
> Providing in-State tuition assistance for post 9/11 veterans pursuing a college degree;
>
> Expanding programs designed to help veterans find a job;
>
> Requiring new services for survivors of sexual assault: and
>
> Improving health care services related to mental health, traumatic brain injury and other conditions.

In addition to supporting this bill, as the Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I have put money in the Federal checkbook to improve the veteran's health care system so that wounded and disabled warriors get the care and benefits they need. I have worked to ensure veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, or a Traumatic Brain Injury, TBI, receive better diagnosis and treatment through the Defense Department and the VA.

I have also led the charge to reduce the backlog in processing veteran's disability claims. I brought Secretary Shinseki to Baltimore to create a sense of urgency to end the backlog by 2015. I used my power as Chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee to convene a hearing with the top brass in the military and members of the Committee to identify challenges and get moving on solutions. I cut across agencies to break down smokestacks and developed a 10-point Checklist for Change enacted as part of the FY2014 Omnibus Appropriations bill. This plan includes better funding, better technology, better training and better oversight of the VA.

We made a sacred commitment to honor those who served by giving them the benefits they've earned. This legislation is a significant step in the right direction, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, the Veterans Benefits Act, S. 1982, purports to place caps on future years' expenditures for Overseas Contingency Operations, ''OCO'', ostensibly to pay-for the added expenditures authorized by the bill.

OCO is an emergency expenditure. Therefore, it does not count against the statutory budget caps. How much OCO, if any, will be needed in any given year is a determination made year by year in an appropriations bill and can only be made in that year, when we know what national security contingencies our military will actually face.

If OCO caps could be used to pay for this bill, there would not be a need to waive the budget points of order against the bill. So, my vote to waive budget points of order is not a vote to use OCO caps as an offset, because they cannot be so used. Instead, my vote is a vote in favor of the worthwhile expenditures for veterans' benefits that S. 1982 authorizes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MERKLEY). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs' Committee, I want to thank many people for helping me bring forth the legislation we are going to be voting on this afternoon.

I thank those people who have come down to the floor to speak on behalf of our veterans. That includes Majority Leader REID, who has been so helpful throughout, Senators MURRAY, BLUMENTHAL, HEINRICH, PRYOR, DURBIN, MERKLEY, WALSH, SHAHEEN, and CASEY. I suspect I have left out some Members.

I thank my entire staff at the Veterans Affairs' Committee—Steve Robertson, Dahlia Melendrez, Travis Murphy, Kathryn Monet, Kathryn Van Haste, Elizabeth Austin, Carlos Fuentes, Ann Vallandingham, Rebecca

Thoman, Jason Dean, Shannon Jackson, Shanna Lawrie, and Rafael Anderson—for their help on this effort.

I thank the 28 cosponsors of this important legislation. I will not read their names. They know who they are, and I thank them very, very much.

As I indicated earlier, this legislation is not BERNIE SANDERS' legislation. This is legislation that, by and large, comes from the hearts and souls of the veterans of this country.

As chairman of the committee, I thought it was my obligation to listen to what the veterans of our country were saying about their problems and their needs and how we might go forward, and that is what I and others on the committee did. We listened. That is the reason why this legislation is being supported by virtually every veterans organization in the United States of America, representing millions and millions of veterans. I thank them for their support—and not only for their support but for their help in crafting this legislation: the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Wounded Warrior Project, Gold Star Wives, Student Veterans of America, Air Force Sergeants Association, American Ex-Prisoners of War, Association of the United States Navy, Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, National Guard Association of the United States, Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, Fleet Reserve Association, Marine Corps League, Marine Corps Reserve Association, Military Officers of America Association, Military Order of the Purple Heart, National Association of Uniformed Services, Non Commissioned Officers Association, Retired Enlisted Association, American Military Retirees Association, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, National Association of State Veterans Homes, and many other veterans organizations. Thank you very much for your support for this legislation.

It is no secret that Congress today is extremely partisan and to a significant degree dysfunctional. That is why the approval rating of Congress is somewhere around 15 percent. There are problems facing the American people, and we cannot address those problems. The American people are profoundly disgusted with what we do and, in fact, with what we do not do.

I had hoped from the bottom of my heart that at least on this issue—the need to protect and defend the veterans of this country and their families, others who have given so much to us—we could rise above the day-to-day rancor and the party politics we see here on this floor almost every single day.

We will, in fact, see within a short while whether we will rise to the occasion, whether we will, in fact, stand with the veterans of this country, or whether once again we are going to succumb to the same-old, same-old politics that we see almost every day.

Let me very briefly touch upon some of the objections my Republican colleagues have made to this bill. Some of them—not a whole lot, by the way, but some have come to the floor and they have objected to this bill. So let me respond to some of their concerns.

Some of my Republican colleagues have said they cannot vote for this bill because they could not get the opportunity to offer an amendment on the Iran sanctions situation.

Mr. President, you know what. The issue of Iran sanctions is an important issue, but it has nothing to do with the needs of veterans. In case people do not understand it, this is a comprehensive veterans bill, and while Iran sanctions may be important, they have nothing to do with what we are discussing today. That is not just my opinion. Far more importantly, we have the opinion of the largest veterans organization in this country, which represents over 2 million veterans, and that is the American Legion. Here is what Daniel M. Dellinger, the national commander of the American Legion, said just yesterday on this issue:

> Iran is a serious issue that Congress needs to address, but it cannot be tied to S. 1982—

This veterans legislation—

> which is extremely important as our nation prepares to welcome millions of U.S. military servicemen and women home from war. This comprehensive bill aims to help veterans find good jobs, get the health care they need and make in-state tuition rates applicable to all who are using their GI Bill benefits. This legislation is about supporting veterans, pure and simple. The Senate can debate various aspects of it, and that's understandable, but it cannot lose focus on the matter at hand: helping military personnel make the transition to veteran life and ensuring that those who served their nation in uniform receive the benefits they earned and deserve. We can deal with Iran—or any other issue unrelated specifically to veterans—with separate legislation.

That is Mr. Dellinger, the national commander of the largest veterans organization in this country. I thank him very much because he is exactly right, and he reflects what the overwhelming majority of the American people believe: Deal with the issue at hand.

But it is not just the American Legion I want to thank. The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America tweeted the other day:

> The Senate should not get distracted while debating & voting on the vets bill. Iran sanctions, Obamacare, etc. aren't relevant to S. 1982.

They are absolutely right. Let's talk about veterans' needs.

Now, some other Republican colleagues, in objecting to this bill, have said they cannot vote for it because it is not bipartisan enough and it has not been fully marked up in committee.

Well, that is not quite true. Almost all of the provisions in this bill did come out of the committee. In fact, two of the major components of this bill—two separate omnibus bills—were passed by a unanimous vote. You cannot get much more bipartisan than when you have two major provisions in a bill passing with all Republicans and Democrats voting for it. That is pretty bipartisan where I come from.

Furthermore, this legislation contains a number of provisions authored and supported by Republican members of the Veterans Affairs' Committee. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, there are 26 separate provisions that Republican members have authored or cosponsored.

This legislation also includes two key provisions that were passed in a bipartisan way by the Republican House of Representatives. With almost unanimous votes, the House passed a provision that we have in this legislation that would authorize the VA to enter into 27 major medical facility leases in 18 States and Puerto Rico. In other words, this was a new provision that I did add to this bill, was not discussed in committee but, in fact, has overwhelming bipartisan support. The second provision we added to the bill not discussed in committee also passed the House with broad support, and that deals with the very important issue of ensuring that veterans can take full advantage of the post-9/11 GI bill and get instate tuition in the State in which they currently live.

So to as great a degree as possible I have tried to make this bill a bipartisan bill. That is where we are.

Now, other Republicans have come to the floor and they have objected to this bill because they argue that by expanding VA health care to veterans currently not eligible for it—veterans who in some cases are trying to get by on $28,000, $30,000 a year in this tough economy; and it is true, we do expand VA health care to those veterans who do not have a whole lot of money—the Republicans who object say, well, that would open the floodgates for millions or tens of millions—I think somebody said 22 million veterans—every veteran in America would be eligible for VA health care, that the health care system would be swamped and health care, especially for those most in need, would deteriorate because so many people came into the system.

As I mentioned yesterday, this is absolutely untrue. No new veteran would be added into VA health care until the VA had the infrastructure to accommodate those new veterans. So we are not opening the door for millions of new veterans—not true—and, as currently is the case, those with service-connected disabilities would continue to get the highest priority service, as they currently do and which, in my view, should always be the case. Those who were injured in war are the top priority, and those folks must always be the top priority, and that is certainly the case in this legislation.

Then last but not least there is the objection that we are going to be dealing with in about 45 minutes—the vote

we will be having—and that is that some of my colleagues basically say: Senator SANDERS, this bill is just too expensive and we just cannot afford to pass it. This bill costs $21 billion—that is a lot of money, I do not deny it—and that is just too much money, and we cannot afford to pass this bill, which helps millions of veterans.

I want to respond to that point in two ways. First, I want to address it from an inside-the-beltway, more technical perspective, and then I want to talk to the American people about the cost of war and what we can afford and what we cannot afford.

In terms of the funding of this bill, the Congressional Budget Office—the nonpartisan scorekeeper—has estimated that mandatory spending in this bill will total $2.88 billion over the next 10 years—$2.88 billion. All of this mandatory spending is completely offset. Let me repeat that. All of this mandatory spending is completely offset, not by OCO funds, but through more than $4.2 billion in actual savings from the programs within the jurisdiction of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. As a result, CBO has determined that overall mandatory spending in this bill will be reduced—will be reduced—by more than $1.3 billion.

That is what the CBO said. In addition, this bill authorizes $18.3 billion in discretionary spending. We have 4.2 in mandatory, more than offset, and then we have 18.3 billion in discretionary spending over the next 5 years.

As the Presiding Officer knows, there is no rule in the Senate that an authorization of funding has to be offset. That is what the Committee on Veterans' Affairs is. We are an authorizing committee. We are not an appropriations committee. In essence, the discretionary spending provisions in this legislation are just recommendations on how much additional funding we believe is needed for our Nation's veterans. It will be up to future legislation in the Appropriations Committee, as is always the case, to approve or disapprove of these recommendations.

In other words, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, an authorizing committee, has made a recommendation. The final word, as is always the case when we spend money, rests with the Appropriations Committee. The discretionary spending authorized under this bill is, in fact, paid for by using savings from winding down the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, otherwise known as the OCO fund.

Again, these are recommendations. The Appropriations Committee has the final word. CBO estimates that spending for Overseas Contingency Operations will total a little over $1 trillion over the next decade. Spending as a result of this legislation to improve the lives of millions of our veterans will be less than 2 percent of that $1 trillion. So anybody who comes down to the floor and says this bill is going to take away from the needs of our men and women in Afghanistan or elsewhere is simply inaccurate.

One trillion dollars is what is in the fund for the next 10 years. We spend less than $20 billion of that fund. Some people say, well, yes, that is fine. But OCO funding has to go into ammunition, it has to go into planes, it has to go into tanks. That is where it goes.

That is not quite the case. Let me give you an example of how we have spent past overseas contingency operation funds.

Since 2005, the Defense Department has used OCO funding for childcare centers, for hospitals, for traumatic brain injury research, for equipment, and schools. In 2010, $50 million of OCO funds were used for the Guam Improvement Enterprise Fund. To my mind, if we can use money for the Guam Improvement Enterprise Fund—I do not know much about that—I do believe we should be able to use some of the OCO funds to protect the needs of men and women who made enormous sacrifices defending our country.

Last year OCO funds were allocated to a number of countries around the world: Egypt, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Somalia, South Sudan, and many other countries.

This year $28 million in OCO funding is being used for the TRICARE health care program. In other words, we are using a tiny percentage, less than 2 percent of the funds in the OCO fund, to protect veterans. We have seen over the years OCO funding used in a whole lot of other areas.

I happen to believe that what we are trying to do with OCO funds falls well within the definition of what that fund is supposed to be used for. If we are supposed to be using that fund for military purposes, then we take care of the military personnel who served our country—totally legitimate, totally consistent.

That is kind of the technical, inside-the-beltway explanation for why I think the funding mechanism we have chosen and the approach we have taken is legitimate. But let me get actually to the far more important reason as to why this bill should be passed and it should be paid for; that is, very simply, this bill in a small way attempts to pay back and help veterans and their families for the enormous sacrifices they have made for this country, sacrifices which in the deepest sense can never, ever be fully paid back.

This is what this bill does. This bill helps Members of Congress, on Memorial Day or Veterans Day, when they go out and they meet with veterans and their families, that if a Member of Congress, Member of the Senate bumps into a young veteran who is in a wheelchair, who because of a war-related injury is unable to have a baby and start a family that he or she wanted, some of those injuries, maybe the spinal cord, some of them may have taken place in the genital region, but for whatever reason—we have over 2,000 veterans in this country today who are unable to naturally have babies. Many of them want families. If a Member of the Senate wants to look that veteran in the eyes and say to him or her that they think we cannot afford to help that individual who sacrificed so much for this country have a family, well go do that. Tell that individual that you think we cannot afford to help him or her, but when you do that, I hope you will also tell him why you voted to give $1 trillion in tax breaks to the top 2 percent at a time when the wealthiest people in this country are doing phenomenally well. Virtually all of my Republican colleagues thought it was appropriate to provide huge tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires.

So when you speak to that young veteran who can no longer have a child and you are going to explain why we cannot afford to help that family, tell them it was OK to vote for tax breaks for the Koch brothers or the Walton family, but we do not have enough money to help them start a family.

If you as a Senator see a 70-year-old woman or 75-year-old woman pushing a wheelchair for a veteran who lost his legs in Vietnam, tell that woman, have the courage, have the honesty to tell that woman we cannot extend the caregiver benefits to her that we have, quite appropriately, for the post-9/11 veterans. Tell that woman who may be taking care of that disabled vet 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, who lives under enormous stress, that we do not have the resources to help her with a modest stipend; we do not have the resources as the U.S. Government to maybe have a nurse come in once a week to relieve her. We do not have the resources to give her some technical help for herself, for her husband. Explain to her that we cannot afford to do that.

But then in the same breath, if you please, explain how you can support a situation where one out of four corporations in this country does not pay a nickel in Federal income taxes. It is OK for General Electric, some of the largest corporations in the world in a given year, not to pay a penny in Federal income tax, but we somehow do not have the money to give a little bit of help to a 70-, 75-year-old wife who is working 24/7 to give support to their loved ones.

I say to my follow Senators: If you happen to meet a veteran who is trying to get by on $28,000, $30,000, $35,000 a year, and you notice that the teeth in his mouth are rotting, if you notice that person may not have health insurance, one of the million veterans in this country who have no health insurance, I want you to go up to that veteran and have the courage, the honesty, to tell them that you believe the United States of America does not have the money to take care of his needs, to get him VA health care, to help him fix his teeth.

But explain to him why you may have voted for more than $100 billion in tax breaks for the wealthiest three-tenths of 1 percent because you think we should repeal the estate tax that only applies to the wealthiest three-

tenths of 1 percent, the wealthiest of the wealthy. You are prepared to vote, and virtually all Republicans are, to give millionaire and billionaire families, the wealthiest of the wealthy, the top three-tenths of 1 percent, $100 billion in tax breaks, but we are not prepared, we supposedly do not have the money to get VA health care for someone making $28,000, $30,000 or dental care for someone whose teeth are rotting in his mouth.

You go explain that. Have the honesty, the courage, guys, to say: Yes, tax breaks for billionaires, but we do not have the resources to get you into VA health care. I want you to explain to a young woman who left the military, maybe broken in spirit because she was raped or sexually assaulted while in the military, tell her America does not have the resources to get her, through the VA, the proper care she needs to get her life back together after her sexual assault. Tell her that.

If you happen to meet a young man who was eligible for the post-9/11 GI bill, who today cannot afford to go to college where he lives because he is not eligible for in-state tuition and there is a gap between what the GI education bill pays and what is required in the State he is living in of $10,000, he cannot afford it, cannot go to college, explain to him that we do not have the money to help him.

If you bump into an old veteran—we have heard some discussion in the last couple of days that the VA lacks adequate health care facilities, we do not have enough around the country. This legislation that we are voting on right now, that in fact was already passed in the House, provides for the VA to enter into leases for 27 medical facilities all across this country in 18 different States.

Tell him, tell that 70-year-old veteran or the 80-year-old veteran who wants access to primary health care near where he lives that we do not have the resources to provide that primary care, but we can spend billions of dollars rebuilding the infrastructure in Afghanistan, where most of that money is stolen by a corrupt leadership.

Maybe, colleagues, one of you will see a young veteran, one of hundreds of thousands of veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan who are dealing with PTSD or traumatic brain injury or maybe it is a young man who has come back who just cannot find a job in this very tough economy. Go up to him and say: Yes, tax breaks for the rich are great; corporations not paying taxes, that is OK, but I do not believe we should be providing help to you.

The bottom line is what we believe in. It is not just speeches we give on Memorial Day and on Veterans Day. I know my colleagues give great speeches.

The question is, and the more important issue is, not your fine rhetoric, but are you prepared to vote for programs that help human beings in need. Speeches are great, but action is better and far more important.

This is about who we are as a people. It is about what our priorities are. In my view, at the very top of our priority list has to be to protect and defend those people who protect and defend us, those people who have given much more than we can ever repay.

There are gold star wives who want to go to college, and we allow that in this bill. They lost their husbands. They are trying to take care of their kids. They want a new shot at life. They need a college education. We say they should have that. I don't think that is asking too much.

Enough of the rhetoric, enough of the speeches, enough about how everybody loves the veterans. Now is the time for action. I implore all of my colleagues to overcome this vote, to give us the votes that we need to go forward to protect those who have protected us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. I ask unanimous consent for Senator MCCAIN, Senator AYOTTE, and me to engage in a colloquy for approximately 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mr. GRAHAM. My colleagues will be here in a moment. I will start. Thank you for recognizing me.

Senator MCCAIN has arrived.

The time has come, colleagues, for us as a body to provide some oversight that is missing when it comes to the death of four Americans at the Benghazi consulate on September 11, 2012. I will try not to get emotional.

The bottom line is all of us very much appreciate those who serve in harm's way in the State Department and in the military. When bad things happen that can cost someone their life, that is sometimes the consequence of service.

But when the system breaks down, it is utter and complete failure, nothing responsible happens to those who allow the failure, and when we really don't know the truth about how the system has failed, then they have died in a fashion that is unacceptable.

I am urging my colleague, the Democratic leader, to form a joint select committee of the relevant committees, the Armed Services Committee, the intelligence committee, the Foreign Relations Committee, and any other committee that is relevant, to get to the bottom of what happened in Benghazi.

I have come to conclude that this issue is not going away. It will not die out because four Americans lost their lives.

We have compiled an event timeline that I think does the following. The story told by Susan Rice and the President himself shortly after the attack on September 16, and for a couple of weeks later, has absolutely collapsed. It is not credible. It is a fabrication. It was a manipulation of the intel 7 weeks before an election, and I think it is abundantly clear that the information coming from Libya never suggested there was a protest and identified this as a terrorist attack from the very beginning. On September 16, 5 days after the attack U.N. ambassador Susan Rice assured the Nation that the consulate was substantially, significantly, and strongly secured.

There is absolutely nothing in the talking points about that. Clearly that was not the case. Why did she say that?

Her story about a protest caused by a hateful video being the most likely cause of the attack is not based on any facts or any reporting from Libya. We will walk through the timeline, but the head of the CIA in Libya on September 15 sent a message, an email, a cable, to the No. 2, Mike Morell, in the CIA in Washington, saying this was not—not—a protest that escalated into an attack.

That story line about a protest was misleading. It was false, it was politically motivated, in my view. The No. 2 at the CIA, Mike Morell—his testimony before the House and the Senate is highly suspect. He testified on November 14 or 15, 2012, to the Senate and House intelligence committees.

There was one episode where Mr. Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence said: He did not know who changed the famous talking points. The talking points originally identified Al Qaeda as being involved, identified this as a terrorist attack and were completely changed in the protest story line, not mentioning Al Qaeda at all.

Mike Morell, in May of 2013, admitted to changing the talking points. But when Director Clapper said: We don't know who changed the talking points. Mike Morell was sitting right by him and never said a word.

About 10 days later, Susan Rice asked to meet with me, Senator MCCAIN, and Senator AYOTTE to explain her side of the story. This was November 24 or 25; I can't remember the date. But Mike Morell accompanied her, and we had a meeting in the classified portion of the Capitol, the secure portion of the Capitol.

One of the first questions I asked Mr. Morell was: Who changed the talking points?

He said: We believe the FBI changed the talking points.

Senator MCCAIN asked him: Why did the CIA not know about the contents of the FBI interviews of the survivors on September 15, 16, and 17? Why didn't the CIA pick up a phone and call the FBI agents interviewing the Benghazi survivors in Germany on the September 15, 16, and 17, days after the attack?

Mike Morell said: The FBI basically would not share that information because it was an ongoing criminal investigation.

My mouth dropped. When the meeting was over I ran back to my office, called the FBI, and reported to them that the No. 2, the acting director at that time, Mike Morell, has claimed

that your agency, the FBI, changed its talking points, deleting all references to terrorism and Al Qaeda.

They went ballistic. They also denied that their agents ever withheld information from the CIA because it was an ongoing investigation. The FBI literally went ballistic on the phone. Hours later we got a call from the CIA saying the acting director misspoke: We may have changed the talking points, but we don't know why.

In light of this, it is now time for a joint select committee to be formed. How can we get to the bottom of the truth of what happened in Benghazi if no one has ever talked to Susan Rice about why she said what she said. Now is the time to recall Mike Morell to ask him questions about the validity of his testimony, the accuracy of his testimony to Congress.

There are a lot of people who think this is no big deal, apparently, particularly in the Congress on the other side. There are a lot of Americans who feel as if their government has not been straightforward and honest with them about what happened in Benghazi.

The role of the Congress is to provide oversight. I will conclude with this thought. When the war in Iraq was going fully, when Abu Ghraib became a disaster, when Guantanamo Bay tactics became exposed and they were outside of our values, Senator MCCAIN and I joined with Democrats to get to the bottom of it. After 9/11, the Bush administration originally did not want the 9/11 Commission to be formed.

Senator MCCAIN and Senator LIEBERMAN led the charge. We are doing no more now than we did then. We just need willing partners.

I cannot say to any family member or anyone who served our Nation in harm's way that we know the truth about what happened in Benghazi at this stage.

I can say this. We know what was told to us as a nation does not hold any water, and we know that people have manipulated the facts 7 weeks before an election.

I am still not comfortable with the fact that nobody could provide help to these people for over 9 hours. Before the attack, not one person who allowed the security to deteriorate to the point of where it became a death trap in Benghazi, to the point it became a death trap—not one person—has been fired. That is unacceptable.

With that, I will turn it over to my colleague Senator MCCAIN and eventually Senator AYOTTE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with the Senator from South Carolina and the Senator from New Hampshire, who are on the floor.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. My colleague from South Carolina laid out many of the salient facts according to how they transpired and didn't transpire.

I will go forward a bit to last Sunday where on ''Meet the Press,'' Ambassador Rice was asked by David Gregory:

> When you were last here, Ambassador Rice, it was an eventful morning on the story of Benghazi and the horrible attack on our compound there. We haven't seen you in a while. As you look back at your involvement in all of that, do you have any regrets?
>
> David, no. Because what I said to you that morning, and what I did every day since, was to share the best information that we had at the time.

The Senator from South Carolina has just outlined the fact that the information he had at the time was drastically different from that which was articulated that Sunday morning following the attack on our embassy and the death of four great Americans. So it was not the information that we had at the time.

Then she said:

> And that information turned out, in some respects, not to be 100% correct. But the notion that somehow I or anybody else in the administration misled the American people is patently false.

The American people were misled. They were misled because she said, right after the attack, on ''Face the Nation,'' that it was ''based on the best information we have to date''—I quote from her statement back then, a few days after the attack—but based on the best information of what their assessment is:

> What happened in Benghazi was in fact initially a spontaneous reaction to what had just transpired hours before in Cairo, almost a copycat of the demonstrations against our facility in Cairo, prompted by the video.

We know now for sure, and we knew then, before Ambassador Rice went on that Sunday show, that it was not because as the Senator from South Carolina just pointed out, the station chief sent a message immediately following saying that this was not—repeat, not—a spontaneous demonstration. I will submit that for the record.

Somehow we have Ambassador Rice saying this was a hateful video that sparked this demonstration. It says: Whether there were Al Qaeda affiliates, whether they were Libyan-based extremists, is one of the things we have to determine. But, again, she said: Sparked by this hateful video. There was no involvement of the hateful video.

I hate to quote myself, but I was on that same program, and immediately after she spoke I said:

> Most people don't bring rocket-propelled grenades and heavy weapons to a demonstration. That was an act of terror and for anyone to disagree with that fundamental fact I think is really ignorant on the facts.

We know now that we now have facts that she was absolutely wrong. Of course, the question also remains what in the world was Susan Rice doing speaking that morning? What was she doing there? She had nothing to do with it. She was the Ambassador to the United Nations. And Secretary Clinton was ''exhausted,'' I believe was the rationale given why she wasn't on every Sunday morning show.

So the fact is we knew at the time Susan Rice said—and this is what it really was all about. It was all about a Presidential campaign and the narrative of bin Laden is dead, al-Qaeda is on the run, because then Susan Rice, in response to Bob Schieffer, said: President Obama said, when he was running for President, that he would refocus our efforts and attentions on Al-Qaeda. Then she said—get this—we have decimated Al-Qaeda; Osama bin Laden is gone. He also said we would end the war in Iraq responsibly. We have done that.

Is there anybody here who thinks the war in Iraq has been ended responsibly?

He has protected civilians in Libya, and Qadhafi is gone.

Obviously, we have not decimated Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaida is not on the run. In fact, Al-Qaeda is increasing everywhere across the Middle East and North Africa. Anybody who believes when the black flags of Al-Qaeda are flying over the city of Fallujah, where 96 brave Americans, marines and soldiers died, and 600 were wounded, that things were ''ended in Iraq responsibly,'' obviously that is not the case.

I think we have to understand the timing of all this. It was all part of a Presidential campaign. The President of the United States, in debate with Mitt Romney, said: Oh, I called it an act of terror. He didn't call it an act of terror. He didn't. In fact, 10 days later, at the U.N., he was still talking about hateful videos that sparked spontaneous demonstrations. The American people were badly misled.

I yield for my colleague from New Hampshire.

Mr. GRAHAM. Perhaps the Senator from New Hampshire could walk us through some of the reasons we now know the story line of a protest caused by a video doesn't hold water.

Ms. AYOTTE. I thank the Senator from South Carolina and the Senator from Arizona for everything they have done on this important issue and to get to the truth.

Frankly, I will quote the Senator from Arizona from last weekend, when he was asked what Ambassador Susan Rice said on ''Meet the Press,'' because I agree with his sentiment: I am speechless.

I am speechless because when Ambassador Rice was asked on ''Meet the Press,'' do you have any regrets about what you said on every single Sunday show on September 16 of 2012, she said she didn't have any regrets. She said: What I said to you that morning, and what I did every day since, is to share the best information we had at the time. The information I provided, which I explained to you, was what we had at the moment.

Actually, that is not the full picture and the information they had at the moment. That is why I think the word ''speechless'' applies. The fact she would have no regrets about misleading the American people is deeply

troubling. Because we know that immediately after he heard about the attacks, GEN Carter Ham, who was the commander of U.S. Africa Command at the time, told Secretary of Defense Panetta this was a terrorist attack. In fact, Secretary Panetta testified before the Armed Services Committee, as did the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman Dempsey, they knew at the time it was a terrorist attack.

But apparently, when Ambassador Rice went on to tell the story about this being the result of a hateful and heinous video and protest that started in Cairo, she missed that testimony and this incredibly important information held by key security leaders in our government.

We also know on September 12, 4 days before she appeared on the Sunday shows, the day after the attacks, according to testimony given before the House Oversight and Governmental Reform Committee given last May, Beth Jones, who was then the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, sent an email on behalf of our government to the Libyan Ambassador in Washington, DC, which said the following:

> The group that conducted the attacks, Ansar al-Sharia, is affiliated with Islamic terrorists.

This was 4 days before Ambassador Rice went on all the Sunday shows and said this was in response to a hateful and offensive video.

That was not the case.

Let's go further. This wasn't the best information they had at the time. This raises questions as well about the role of Mike Morell, who at the time was the Deputy CIA Director. I was part of the meeting with Mike Morell and Ambassador Rice at the time, and one of the things I learned in that briefing also troubled me a great deal about the representation Ambassador Rice made on those Sunday shows, including her statement that she has no regrets, apparently, and the claim they had the best information at the time.

One of the things that goes out is called the Presidential daily brief. In fact, Ambassador Rice had a very important position in our government at the time. I still wonder why she was the person who was sent out on every Sunday show with regard to the attacks on our consulate in Benghazi, but the daily intelligence briefing at the time actually contained references to the potential involvement of Al-Qaeda in these attacks. Yet somehow, when she went on the Sunday shows, she felt she could make the statement that Al-Qaeda has been decimated and then blamed the attacks on our consulate on this hateful video, further contradicting the information we had at the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's 20 minutes has expired.

Ms. AYOTTE. I ask unanimous consent for 1 minute to wrap up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. AYOTTE. I thank the Chair.

I will defer to my colleagues, but the bottom line is this: We are speechless by what Ambassador Rice said last Sunday. We need to have her testimony before the Congress to get to the bottom of why these misrepresentations were made. Mr. Morell needs to be brought back before the Congress, and ultimately we need a select committee.

I defer to my colleague from South Carolina to wrap up.

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank my colleagues.

Now is the time for us to move forward to set the stage for a vote; is that correct?

Well, I will say, No. 1, as to the amendment of Senator BURR, it takes care of veterans similar to what Senator SANDERS is proposing, but it pays for it in a more responsible way. Unlike the proposal of Senator SANDERS, we have an additional element in the Burr amendment that not only takes care of veterans but it deals with a national security imperative, which is the Iran sanctions legislation. This is bipartisan in nature, with 59 cosponsors, including 17 Democrats. This would reimpose sanctions at the end of the 6-month negotiating period if we do not have an acceptable outcome regarding the Iranian nuclear program; we need to dismantle the reactor, remove the uranium, and stop enrichment.

That is the goal of the Iran sanctions legislation, and I am very pleased Senator BURR would bring that before the body. I am urging my colleagues to allow us to vote on Iran sanctions. The sanctions are literally crumbling.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All Republican time has expired.

Mr. GRAHAM. With that, I understand Senator BURR and others on our side have filed an amendment which would impose additional sanctions against the Government of Iran if it violates the interim agreement with the United States, and I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending motion so I may offer amendment No. 2752.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SANDERS. Reserving the right to object, I do find it interesting that, in the midst of this important debate about the needs of our veterans, my Republican colleagues are on the floor of the Senate and have virtually nothing to say about veterans.

This bill is not about Benghazi. This veterans bill is not about Iran sanctions, it is not about Hillary Clinton. It is about protecting the needs of our veterans. So the amendment of Senator BURR does not go anywhere near as far as we need to go in terms of veterans issues. It brings the Iran sanctions issue into a debate where it should not be brought.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. GRAHAM. In addition to Burr amendment No. 2752, there are many amendments on our side of the aisle waiting to be offered.

Parliamentary inquiry: Is it correct that no Senator is permitted to offer an amendment to this bill while the majority leader's amendments and motions are pending?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. GRAHAM. In addition to the Burr amendment No. 2752, there are many amendments on our side of the aisle waiting in the queue to be offered.

Further parliamentary inquiry: If a motion to table the Reid motion to commit is successful, would there be an opportunity to offer a motion to commit the bill to the Veterans' Affairs Committee to be reported back as a fully amendable bill with the Iran sanctions bill included?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If the motion to table is agreed to, there would be an opportunity for Senators to offer another motion to recommit with instructions to which the Senator's amendment could be offered.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, in order to offer amendment No. 2752, the Iran sanctions amendment, I move to table the pending Reid motion to commit and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

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

The result was announced—yeas 44, nays 52, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 45 Leg.]

YEAS—44

Alexander	Enzi	McConnell
Ayotte	Fischer	Moran
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Chambliss	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Scott
Coburn	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Collins	Johanns	Thune
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Cornyn	Kirk	Vitter
Crapo	Lee	Wicker
Cruz	McCain	

NAYS—52

Baldwin	Cardin	Hagan
Begich	Carper	Harkin
Bennet	Casey	Heinrich
Blumenthal	Coons	Heitkamp
Booker	Donnelly	Hirono
Boxer	Durbin	Johnson (SD)
Brown	Feinstein	Kaine
Cantwell	Franken	King

Klobuchar
Landrieu
Leahy
Levin
Manchin
Markey
McCaskill
Menendez
Merkley
Mikulski
Murphy
Murray
Pryor
Reed
Reid
Rockefeller
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Tester
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Walsh
Warner
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Gillibrand
Murkowski
Nelson
Stabenow

The motion was rejected.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be 2 minutes equally divided in the usual form prior to the vote on the motion to waive; further, that the remaining votes in this sequence be 10 minute votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Chair hears none, and it so ordered.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, this budget point of order we are now going to vote on tells us in a very significant way who we are as a people. If you vote for this budget point of order, you are saying that in this great country we do not have the resources to help our veterans with their health care, education, and to be able to deal with sexual assault. We need to help older veterans get the nursing care and build new medical facilities that they desperately need.

I personally—and I have to say this honestly—have a hard time understanding how anyone can vote for tax breaks for billionaires, millionaires, and large corporations and then say we don't have the resources to protect our veterans. We should not be supporting this point of order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, my only wish is that we had been on the Senate floor debating reforms within the system so we could fulfill and keep the promises we made to our veterans who are currently in that system.

I yield back the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) would have voted ''nay.''

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 46 Leg.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin
Begich
Bennet
Blumenthal
Booker
Boxer
Brown
Cantwell
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Coons
Donnelly
Durbin
Feinstein
Franken
Gillibrand
Hagan
Harkin
Heinrich
Heitkamp
Heller
Hirono
Johnson (SD)
Kaine
King
Klobuchar
Landrieu
Leahy
Levin
Manchin
Markey
McCaskill
Menendez
Merkley
Mikulski
Moran
Murphy
Murray
Pryor
Reed
Reid
Rockefeller
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Stabenow
Tester
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Walsh
Warner
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—41

Alexander
Ayotte
Barrasso
Blunt
Boozman
Burr
Chambliss
Coats
Coburn
Cochran
Collins
Corker
Cornyn
Crapo
Cruz
Enzi
Fischer
Flake
Graham
Grassley
Hatch
Hoeven
Inhofe
Isakson
Johanns
Johnson (WI)
Kirk
Lee
McCain
McConnell
Paul
Portman
Risch
Roberts
Rubio
Scott
Sessions
Shelby
Thune
Toomey
Vitter

NOT VOTING—3

Murkowski
Nelson
Wicker

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 56, the nays are 41. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected. The point of order is sustained, and under section 312 of the Congressional Budget Act the bill is recommitted to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MICHAEL L. CONNOR TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

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

The bill clerk read the nomination of Michael L. Connor, of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Michael L. Connor, of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior?

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

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

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 47 Ex.]

YEAS—97

Alexander
Ayotte
Baldwin
Barrasso
Begich
Bennet
Blumenthal
Blunt
Booker
Boozman
Boxer
Brown
Burr
Cantwell
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Chambliss
Coats
Cochran
Collins
Coons
Corker
Cornyn
Crapo
Cruz
Donnelly
Durbin
Enzi
Feinstein
Fischer
Flake
Franken
Gillibrand
Graham
Grassley
Hagan
Harkin
Hatch
Heinrich
Heitkamp
Heller
Hirono
Hoeven
Inhofe
Isakson
Johanns
Johnson (SD)
Johnson (WI)
Kaine
King
Kirk
Klobuchar
Landrieu
Leahy
Lee
Levin
Manchin
Markey
McCain
McCaskill
McConnell
Menendez
Merkley
Mikulski
Moran
Murphy
Murray
Paul
Portman
Pryor
Reed
Reid
Risch
Roberts
Rockefeller
Rubio
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Scott
Sessions
Shaheen
Shelby
Stabenow
Tester
Thune
Toomey
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Vitter
Walsh
Warner
Warren
Whitehouse
Wicker
Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Coburn
Murkowski
Nelson

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid on the table.

The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I would like to speak about an issue, but first I would like to yield to the minority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2011

Mr. MCCONNELL. I am here in support of what our colleague from Arizona is going to be talking about shortly. It is basically this. We have a White House that is busily at work trying to quiet the voices of those who oppose them by doing the following: They are proposing a new regulation directed at 501(c)(4) organizations that have been active for over 50 years in expressing themselves about the issues of the day in our country. This regulation actually predates the IRS abuses we saw during the 2012 election.

I have spoken a number of times—including a couple of major speeches at one of the think tanks here in town—about what a threat it is to citizens when the heavy hand of the IRS comes down on them because they speak up against policies of the government.

This regulation that Senator FLAKE is going to speak about here in a few minutes that we would like to see delayed for a year has generated 120,000 comments. I would say to my friend from Arizona that I am told there has been no regulation in the history of the IRS that has even approached 120,000 comments. Is that the understanding of the Senator from Arizona?

Mr. FLAKE. That is. In fact, to give some kind of scale here, the Keystone Pipeline, which has been extremely controversial for months and months, has generated about 7,000 comments—7,000 comments for an issue such as that. This has generated north of 100,000.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I think it is reasonable to assume that the reason for that is there are groups out there all across America, on the right, on the left, and in the center who have taken a look at this new regulation and understand that it is the Federal Government using the heavy hand of the IRS to try to shut them up, to make it impossible for them to criticize the government or people like the Senator from Arizona and myself. It is none of the business of the government to be quieting the voices of the American people.

I know our Democratic friends are upset because some conservative groups have been very active. I do not recall the same sense of outrage over the last 50 years when groups on the left were actively involved.

I would say to my friend from Arizona, since these comments are coming from all over, it appears, does it not, that there is a lot of collateral damage here, that the administration may have wanted to target their enemies, but they are hitting some of their friends as well?

Mr. FLAKE. That is correct. Many of the organizations that have sounded alarm bells here are organizations such as the ACLU, the Sierra Club, and others, social welfare organizations that advocate for policy as well, that are concerned that this goes too far.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The final thing I would say to my friend from Arizona is that we have a new Commissioner of the IRS. He has an opportunity, does he not, to clean up an agency that is already in a lot of trouble because of the IRS scandals, because of the new responsibilities they have been given to enforce ObamaCare? This is an agency in trouble already before it wades into a political thicket such as this, particularly when it appears as if this whole regulation really originated at the White House, not at the IRS.

I am reminded that the Commissioner of the IRS during the Nixon administration was asked by the White House to help target President Nixon's enemies, and the Commissioner of the IRS said: No. No.

I wonder if my friend from Arizona agrees with me that the appropriate response from the new Commissioner of the IRS—responsible for cleaning up this troubled agency—to the White House ought to be, no, I am not going to participate in your effort to quiet the voices of your political foes.

Mr. FLAKE. I would certainly agree. If the IRS wants to establish or re-establish credibility that has been lost, then the Commissioner should say to the White House: I will act independently here.

To go forward with this rule, after what has gone on, would simply be going in the other direction and would be seen—and I think justifiably so—to be working hand in glove with the White House to stifle free speech.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I commend the Senator from Arizona for his leadership on this very important issue. I do not think there is anything more important to our democracy than First Amendment freedom of speech. The last thing an agency whose principal responsibility is to collect revenue for the Federal Government—the last thing an agency like that needs to be involved in is quieting the voices of the critics of this administration—or any other administration, for that matter.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. I thank the Senator from Kentucky. I certainly echo his comments. I do rise today to urge the Senate to pass legislation to prevent the IRS from trampling on free speech rights, particularly those of 501(c)(4) organizations.

The Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act—it is a mouthful, I know—is sponsored by Senator ROBERTS from Kansas and myself. It would prohibit for 1 year the finalization of a proposed IRS regulation that would specifically limit the advocacy and educational activities of these groups.

This bill would also prevent additional targeting of 501(c)(4) organizations by restoring the IRS standards and definitions that were in place before the agency started targeting conservative groups back in 2010.

Last spring we learned that the IRS was targeting conservative groups applying for 501(c)(4) tax-exempt status, thanks to a report by the agency's inspector general. Since this discovery several IRS employees, including the Acting Commissioner, have resigned. Investigations by the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Department of Justice are ongoing.

Nevertheless, on November 29 the IRS published a proposed rule that would restrict the activities of 501(c)(4) organizations, limit their speech, and curtail their civic participation. This rule singles out the same groups that were previously targeted by the IRS and threatens to limit their participation in a host of advocacy and educational activities, even nonpartisan voter registration and education drives. These activities have a clear role in promoting civic engagement and social welfare, which is the precise purpose for which 501(c)(4) organizations are structured.

Unfortunately, this proposed rule would suppress these organizations' voices by forcing them to quit these activities or be shut down.

While this administration may be focused on quieting its conservative critics, even liberal groups have denounced the rule and called attention to the detrimental impact on free speech by organizations of all ideologies. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, this rule ''will produce the same structural issues at the IRS that led to the use of inappropriate criteria in the selection of various charitable and social welfare groups for undue scrutiny.''

In response to the Obama administration's claim that these tax groups have become confusing in the aftermath of a Citizens United decision, Nan Aron of the Alliance for Justice Action Campaign has commented that 501(c)(4) organizations ''weren't invented in the last election cycle; they've been around for generations. Their purpose isn't to hide donors, it's to advance policies.''

Even the Sierra Club has hammered the IRS rule.

As of this morning, I believe it is at least 94,000 comments the minority leader mentioned, and it may be north of 100,000 now, on the proposed rule have been submitted. This marks the largest number of comments ever submitted to any rulemaking. Let me repeat that. This is the largest number of comments ever submitted to any rulemaking.

As I said before, to put it in perspective, the Keystone Pipeline proposed rule we have heard so much about has registered just over 7,000 comments. That is compared to somewhere near 100,000 comments here. Clearly the public sees through this administration's veiled attempt to quash free speech and to shut down opposition to its priorities.

Yesterday the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed this same legislation, identical legislation in the House, by a vote of 243–176. Already, this legislation in the Senate has 40 Senate cosponsors. It clearly deserves the consideration and support of the full Senate.

However, this legislation has not been permitted to come up for debate in the full Senate. Earlier today Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee voted to oppose it, stalling further consideration. I suppose the veto threat issued by the President may have had something to do with that. This veto threat is unfortunate. It is clearly a disproportionate response to legislation aimed at protecting free speech rights of conservatives and liberals alike.

This bill is simple. It only suspends new IRS rulemaking related to 501(c)(4)s until the ongoing investigations are completed. It simply suspends for 1 year. That is prudent and necessary.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of free speech rights by these groups by approving this legislation to prevent the finalization of the IRS's rule or any other that seeks to continue to target groups based on ideology.

Madam President, with that, I ask unanimous consent that the Finance Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 2011, that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WYDEN. Reserving the right to object, Madam Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. This bill is clearly within the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee, because it changes the Tax Code. For many months before I became the Chair of the committee, the Finance Committee staff, on a bipartisan basis, worked very hard and very comprehensively in a thoughtful way to address this issue, interviewing 28 IRS employees and reviewing approximately 500,000 pages of documents.

It is my hope—and again, I have been the Chair of the committee for only a little bit over 1 week—it is my hope and expectation that our report will be ready for release next month or in early April.

The Finance Committee, as I have indicated, is the committee of jurisdiction. It has the technical resources, the expertise, and experience to best fashion the appropriate remedies. My view is these matters are simply too important to be handled on the floor without the opportunity for the Finance Committee to address these issues, examine them in hearings, and to have meaningful debate.

The Senator from Arizona believes that the new rules from the IRS are not fair because they limit the public debate. I want to indicate to him and to our colleagues that I don't take a back seat to anybody in terms of promoting public debate. Free speech and fair treatment for all Americans—all Americans—in the political process is absolutely central to what I believe government ought to be all about.

I have tried, with our colleague from Alaska, Senator MURKOWSKI, to show that even in these difficult, polarizing political times, the parties can come together. Senator MURKOWSKI puts it very well in terms of what the future ought to be all about. It truly embodies our campaign disclosure bill—which, I would mention, is the first bipartisan campaign finance bill in the Senate since the days of McCain-Feingold.

Senator MURKOWSKI says it best when she says that what she wants, with respect to the rules for political debate in this country, is the ''even-steven'' rule. She wants to make sure the same principles that apply to the NRA apply to the Sierra Club, so that all Americans, in the course of political debates, are treated fairly. Also, we both believe that shining a light on the dark money that pulses through the American political system is not going to inhibit free speech. To the contrary, it is going to enhance the public's right to know about who is behind the political ads that bombard them during the political season without accountability or transparency.

I agree with Justice Scalia when he said:

> Requiring people to stand up in public for their political acts fosters civic courage, without which democracy is doomed.

So there are two reasons for my objection. First, the Finance Committee is the committee of jurisdiction that ought to have the opportunity to address these questions, and I want to assure my friend from Arizona—whom I have worked with many times on issues—that having just become the Chair, I intend to work very expeditiously on this matter, particularly with Senator HATCH.

Second, I point out to my colleagues on the floor there is a bipartisan opportunity in the days ahead to address many of these issues. It is embodied very eloquently by Senator MURKOWSKI, who says: If we are going to be serious about promoting the widest possible debate in this country and treating everyone fairly, we do it in accord with that even-steven principle.

For those reasons, I object at this time to the unanimous consent request.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. If I could, I want to respond to a few of the Senator's items.

The Senator is correct, it falls under the Finance Committee's jurisdiction. That is part of the reason why I bring this forward. The Finance Committee is undergoing an investigation that is not yet complete, so I think it would be prudent to forestall the implementation of new rules by the IRS while the Finance Committee investigation is ongoing. I think we all agree we shouldn't move forward on imprecise or incomplete information. That is why we are simply saying we are not proposing a rule, we are saying simply delay the new rule until investigations can be completed.

Also, with regard to the issue of fairness, I should note that this applies to 501(c)(4) organizations, nonprofit organizations. There are other organizations that are also nonprofit but are not included in this proposed rulemaking—for example, labor unions. They offer, under a nonprofit status as well, a 501(c)(5). They are not included here.

The Senator correctly says we should be concerned about fairness for all groups that are under this kind of nonprofit umbrella. That is concerning to a lot of people as well, because those organized under 501(c)(4) status are targeted here when those organized under (c)(5) status are not, when they have some of the same restrictions on what they can do. So we would be imposing new rulemaking and new rules on some organizations and not others. That is one concern and another reason to forestall new rulemaking until we have more complete information about what is going on at the IRS.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. MURRAY. I come to the floor this afternoon to take some time to talk about a law this Chamber passed in 2009. I wish to talk a little bit about what it means to serve in this body, what our responsibilities are, and why our constituents sent us here in the first place.

I have served in the Senate for more than 20 years and I have seen my share of controversial legislation. I have seen Democratic bills that Republicans couldn't stand; I have seen Democratic bills that Democrats wouldn't vote for; and I have seen bills that pretty much everybody opposed. But what I have seen in the last 4 years since the Affordable Care Act was passed by Congress and signed by the President is something new altogether.

Since the day that law passed, I have seen some of my Republican colleagues set reason, and some of their basic duties as public officials, completely aside, all in opposition of a law that means millions of Americans have access to affordable, quality health insurance they couldn't get before. It is a law that means millions of young people, many of them fresh out of college, are able to stay on their families' insurance plans. It is a law that says it is illegal for insurance companies to charge women more money just because they are women. It is a law that has provided millions of Americans with access to free preventive screenings and health care such as colonoscopies, mammograms, and flu shots. It is a law that says if you are an American and you have a preexisting condition, it is illegal for an insurance company to turn you away.

Since 2009, I have seen some of my colleagues simply refuse to acknowledge those facts about the law. I have watched them time and time again not listen to or hear stories of people in their own States whose lives have been changed by the Affordable Care Act and others who simply need access to get the benefits that are theirs. Some of my colleagues have even passed laws that make it harder to get covered under the Affordable Care Act.

One of our responsibilities as Senators, as public servants, is to help our

constituents access the Federal benefits that are available to them, particularly when it comes to health care. That might mean, perhaps, putting someone in touch with a navigator to help make sure they are getting the most affordable health insurance plan. It may be helping them become aware of an enrollment event in their State where they can learn how to get covered.

But our responsibilities don't end there. We also have to have an open, honest discussion about what the Affordable Care Act means for our constituents and talk about ways to improve it.

Instead, what we have seen is some of our colleagues who have spent the better part of 4 years try to turn this law into a bogeyman and trying to score cheap political points on an issue that can literally mean the difference between life and death.

I can understand why some of our colleagues disagree with parts of this law, and I have heard from some people who had challenges, honestly. We have to look and say can we fix this in a way that makes it work better for you. But what I can't understand is why anyone elected to Congress would decide to simply ignore real-life stories of their own constituents whose lives were changed the day this law took effect.

I can't understand why anyone would ignore an opportunity to make this law better, because that is not why we were sent here. We were sent here to listen to our constituents and fight to make sure our laws work for them.

I want to give some examples from my home State of Washington about people whose lives have been changed by the Affordable Care Act, people whose stories have been pretty much ignored in Washington, DC. I know later this afternoon several of my colleagues will be doing the same thing, so I hope everybody can turn off Fox News for a little while, not listen to Rush Limbaugh, and listen to some real stories of real live Americans who have been impacted by this law. I encourage them to go home and listen to some of the men and women in their own States, because the stories I am going to share are not unique.

I will start with the story of Susan Wellman from Bellingham, WA. She is self-employed and has had to pay for individual health insurance. Every year she has watched her health care costs rise higher and higher. It reached the point where she was paying $300 monthly premiums with an $8,000 deductible. All were what she described as ''paying for nothing.'' So as soon as she could, Susan got access to health care through our Washington State exchange, and she was so happy to have that chance. She spoke on the phone with a real-live person, and she was able to sign up for an affordable plan in just a few minutes. Now Susan is on a plan that costs her $125 a month instead of $300—$125 instead of $300—and it is a plan that has a $2,000 deductible, not an $8,000 deductible, and she says it actually pays for things.

Guess what. She can now afford to go to a doctor not just in the case of an emergency but for a physical or a mammogram that could save her life, not to mention thousands of dollars in health care costs. That kind of preventive care is good for Susan, and it is good for her family. It is also good for this country because when more people have access to preventive care, it makes health care cheaper for every single one of us.

Another person I have heard from whose life was changed by the affordable health care act is a man named Don Davis. He is 59 years old, and he actually goes by ''Reverend Don.'' He is a pastor in Seattle, and he is also a volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club. As the pastor of his church, he doesn't get any health care through his job. He doesn't even have a salary. That meant for a long time that Reverend Don didn't have health insurance. So when he was hospitalized back in 2008 for severe headaches, he was only able to receive an MRI through charity care. That MRI showed that Reverend Don had several brain tumors, but when the doctors wanted to do more testing and provide more care, he didn't have the insurance to pay for that. This is a man who has asked for nothing in life, who woke up every day willing to give to others, but he couldn't get the basic care he needed when he got sick.

Reverend Don is healthy today. He is serving his community. Because of the Affordable Care Act, he now also has health insurance. He signed up with a navigator at the local YWCA. Now, if he gets a headache, he can afford to go to the doctor. So because of the Affordable Care Act, Reverend Don can afford to dedicate his life to people in his community and he doesn't need to worry that the cost of the health care he needs might be denied him.

Finally, I want to talk about a couple in Bellingham, WA, named Rod Burton and Sarah Hill. Rod is one of millions of Americans who have had the utterly maddening experience of being denied insurance because of a preexisting condition. In Rod's case his preexisting condition was a congenital heart defect. Under our old system Rod was deemed uninsurable by most insurance plans from the moment he was born. So for a long time Rod found himself forced into purely catastrophic insurance with a very high premium that wouldn't cover much of anything. That changed for him with the Affordable Care Act.

Despite his heart defect, Rod was able to get a plan that covers him and his wife, and they found out they were eligible for tax credits to help pay for it. So today both Rod and Sarah are covered through a silver plan with lower premiums than the plan that only covered Rod if the worst happened.

I know we have a number of other colleagues who are here to speak, and I note some of them are here to tell stories from their own States, but I would like to note that I only told three stories today of people who are benefiting from the Affordable Care Act. These are only 3 people among the 400,000 others in my home State of Washington who have now signed up for care through the exchange, Washington Healthplanfinder, and they are only 3 people among the 4 million people who have signed up across the country. For the most part, their stories are not unique. Millions of other Americans face the same kind of health care problems they do. It is time that we stop ignoring that reality. It is time that we do our job and help our constituents get the health care coverage they deserve and can now get under this law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

IRS 501(C)(4) REGULATIONS

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I understand Senator SCHUMER wants to speak in a little while, so I will try to hurry my remarks as quickly as I can.

I rise today to speak once again on the proposed IRS regulations targeting grassroots 501(c)(4) organizations. I have already come to the floor to discuss this issue, and I expect I will be here several more times in the coming months as these proposed rules continue to move through the regulatory pipeline at the IRS.

The public comment period for these proposed regulations ends today. As of this morning, the IRS had received over 100,000 comments on this proposal, the vast majority of them negative. This is an all-time record. In fact, the number is more than five times greater than the previous record for comments on a proposed IRS regulation. By contrast, the Keystone XL Pipeline—another item of enormous public interest—received just over 7,000 comments.

With all this public attention, the obvious question is, Why? Why has this proposal generated so much criticism from the American people? I think the answer is quite simple: The American people see this proposal for what it is—an attempt to silence this administration's critics and keep them on the sidelines of the democratic process.

I would like to take a few minutes to describe in detail just what this regulation does.

Under the Internal Revenue Code, a 501(c)(4) organization is a nonprofit organization, the exempt purpose of which is the ''promotion of social welfare.'' The phrase ''promotion of social welfare'' has long been defined as ''promoting in some way the common good and general welfare of the people of the community'' or ''bringing about civic betterments and social improvements.''

Such organizations may engage in political activity for or against candidates for public office so long as their primary activity falls under the category of promoting social welfare.

Under current regulations, activities such as voter registration or ''get out

the vote'' drives are correctly treated as promoting social welfare, just like the distribution of voter guidelines outlining candidates' positions on issues that are, in the view of the organization, important to the public.

The proposed regulations would recategorize these types of candidate-neutral activities as not consistent with the exempt purpose of promoting social welfare. This is important because over the past few days, in an effort to justify these regulations, the administration has communicated to Members of Congress that they are not banning these types of activities; they are just putting them in different categories. But lost in their justifications are some important distinctions. It is easy to get lost in the weeds, which is probably what the administration is hoping for. So let's break this down.

Traditionally speaking, in order to keep their tax exemption, 501(c)(4) organizations have had to limit their involvement in ''political activities'' to around 49 percent or less of their overall activities. In other words, they can be directly involved in the political process so long as the majority of their activities are devoted to social welfare.

What this proposed regulation would do is redefine the parameters of what is considered political activity, moving a number of activities from the social welfare category to the political category. As I said, under this regulation, simply stating where candidates for public office stand on issues important to a specific 501(c)(4) organization would be considered political activity. In fact, even mentioning a candidate's name in a communication within a specified period before an election—even if the communication does not say whether the organization supports or opposes the candidate—would be considered political activity. As I mentioned, the same could be said for voter registration drives or ''get out the vote'' initiatives even if the efforts are obviously and legitimately nonpartisan.

Basically, this proposed regulation would instantly categorize so much run-of-the-mill behavior as partisan political activity that many existing 501(c)(4) grassroots organizations would have to stop promoting their causes altogether. And that is precisely what the administration wants. They do not want 501(c)(4)s educating the public on the issues of the day or telling voters where candidates stand on political issues. Sure, they are fine with these groups promoting social welfare so long as that promotion does not include criticism of this administration or its policies that are harmful to the general welfare of their communities.

It would be one thing if the IRS was an agency with clean hands when it came to dealing with critics of this administration. But, as we have seen, that is simply not the case. Indeed, over the last few years we have seen a record of harassment and intimidation of conservative groups applying to the IRS for tax-exempt status. The agency is under investigation in three separate congressional committees for its actions in the run up to the 2010 and 2012 elections.

Put simply, the credibility and the political independence of the IRS are very much in question. A reasonable person would think that, rather than further damaging the IRS's reputation, the administration would instead focus on rebuilding it in the aftermath of the targeting scandal. Sadly, there don't appear to be too many reasonable people working in the Obama administration, at least not when it comes to this set of issues.

We need to call this what it is: an affront to free speech and the right of all American citizens to participate in the democratic process. This is an attempt by the administration to marginalize its critics and silence them altogether.

Republicans have been very vocal in our opposition to this proposed regulation. We have spoken out in a variety of venues. But make no mistake, it is not just Republicans and conservatives who oppose this new rule. A number of left-leaning organizations have spoken out against it as well. The ACLU, for example, submitted a scathing comment letter to the IRS arguing that the proposed regulation would ''produce the same structural issues at the IRS that led to the use of inappropriate criteria in the selection of various charitable and social welfare groups for unfair scrutiny.'' The ACLU argued further that social welfare groups should be free to participate in the political process because that kind of participation ''is at the heart of our representative democracy. To the extent it influences voters, it does so by promoting an informed citizenry.'' We have seen similar comments from groups such as the Sierra Club. Leaders of labor unions have also publicly weighed in about the overly broad nature of the proposed regulation.

Put simply, when you have a proposal that is drawing unanimous opposition from Republicans in Congress and is being criticized by the ACLU and Big Labor, there is a pretty decent chance it is not good policy. Quite frankly, that characterization is probably too charitable for this particular proposal.

This proposed regulation needs to be stopped in its tracks. Yesterday the House of Representatives passed legislation that would do just that. If enacted, the House bill would delay the implementation of the proposal for one year. I am an original cosponsor of the Senate companion bill to this legislation, which was introduced by Senators FLAKE and ROBERTS.

Sadly, I think I know where my colleagues on the other side of the aisle stand on this issue, and I expect those of us here in the Senate who support the right of all Americans to participate in the political process are likely to be disappointed with regard to this particular legislative effort. Still, even if this legislation dies here in the Senate, that will not be the end of the line.

Earlier this month, when I came to the floor to talk about this issue, I called on IRS Commissioner Koskinen to use his authority to block these regulations. I expect him to do so. When questioned about this proposal, he has consistently deferred, usually saying he was not the Commissioner when it was drafted and published. Fine. But he is the Commissioner now, and now that he is the Commissioner, he is in a position to stop the proposed regulation from going final and acquiring the force of law. This proposal cannot take effect unless Commissioner Koskinen personally approves and signs the final regulation clearance package. That being the case, I call on him today to do the right thing—to not sign it when it reaches his desk. In fact, he ought to decry it for what it is.

In an ideal world, the administration would simply withdraw this proposal and leave this issue alone. However, we are not living in such a world. That being the case, if the administration continues its effort to push through this proposed rule, the IRS Commissioner can and should use his authority to stop it from taking effect. After all, that is one reason Congress gives the IRS Commissioner a 5-year term. The Commissioner is supposed to be free from political pressure when making decisions and implementing our Nation's tax laws.

In light of that fact, I want to implore Commissioner Koskinen to use the power he has been granted to restore the IRS's credibility and make it clear to the American people that his agency, the IRS, will no longer be used as simply another political arm of this or any future administration. I hope he will do so because it is the right thing to do, and I am calling on him to do it.

I have faith in Commissioner Koskinen. I believe he is an honest man. I don't think he has any other choice but to stop these obnoxious regulations which people from the left to the right consider to be breaches of free speech and are wrong.

I yield the floor.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, over the next several months the Affordable Care Act is going to become less important as a Republican campaign issue because more and more Americans—from young adults all the way through seniors—are going to realize the benefits it has to offer. It is happening already.

Every day there are more positive stories about people getting cheaper coverage, better coverage or coverage for the first time. Let me say, in my State of New York the initial rollout of ACA has been a big success. We didn't have the problems of a Web site because we did our own, and because we have a lot of competition, as was intended on the exchanges, people are getting very good offers and a large number of people are getting their costs reduced.

I will tell one story. A friend of mine goes to a hairdresser in a conservative neighborhood in New York. The person who owns the beauty shop is very conservative, and when the ACA first rolled out she was very upset. She said: Look. I have looked at that Web site. I am a nice person. I pay for health care for my eight employees. It is going to cost me hundreds of dollars more for each employee. I don't even know if I can afford to stay in business. That person talked to all of her friends, I think she blogged on her Web site, and talked all about it.

I spoke to my friend a few weeks ago. Guess what. This same person actually got health care on the New York Web site which reduced the cost of health care for employees by a couple of hundred dollars each. She was very happy. Of course, I asked my friend to make sure she puts that on her Web site and tells all of her conservative friends about that.

But this story is going to be repeated over and over. There are going to be millions of seniors who realize they can get a free checkup and keep their health good. There are going to be millions of young people who realize they can continue their health care and stay on their parents' health insurance from age 21 to 26. Millions of people are going to find out that either, God forbid, someone in their family or someone in a family they know has a preexisting condition, and now they can get health care. Millions of businesses are going to see the cost of health care is actually going up at a much smaller rate than they are used to. So all these good things will start mounting and the positives about ACA will grow in the public's mind and eventually I believe it will catch up in the Senate and the House. Then something else too will happen and that is this: Lots of people who are not affected directly by ACA have had fear put into their souls. They listen to the rightwing talk radio and they hear: Oh, they may lose all their health care or their costs will go way up. But what they are finding is it is not happening.

I met a firefighter who works for New York City—not a volunteer firefighter—a few months ago. He said: I know ObamaCare is going to kill me. It is going to greatly reduce the health care I am getting as a New York City firefighter.

They get very good health care and they should. They are risking their lives for us. He said: It is going to happen, I hear, in the new year, January 1, 2014.

I saw the firefighter a few weeks ago, and he said to me: Hey, I still have my health care and nothing changed. Well, of course nothing changed. All the horror stories which have been launched by so many on the rightwing talk radio and those who just hate ObamaCare, whether it works or not, are starting to fade.

So we are seeing two things happen at once: We are seeing the positives increase and the negatives decrease and we are seeing it particularly with senior citizens. Because the doughnut hole is filled, millions of our senior citizens are spending much less on prescription drugs than they had to. It is a huge benefit to them. Since ACA was enacted, more than 7 million seniors and people with disabilities have saved $9 billion. That is a huge amount of money. To seniors, many of whom are on fixed incomes, that is dramatic savings for them.

Something else is happening to our seniors. They are getting free checkups. That does two things. First, it saves money out of their own pockets but, second, it reduces our health care costs because we all know an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Free checkups are that prevention we need. It will not only save the seniors but save our system billions and billions of dollars in the years and decades to come. Somebody who finds a growth on their skin and gets it removed before it becomes cancerous, somebody who might get a colonoscopy, a mammogram or a prostate exam and is saved from prostate cancer—all that is going to happen.

So the bottom line is very simple: People are learning the positives of ACA. The Web site is being improved. More people are signing up. In my State of New York alone, more than 250,000 people with Medicare saved $246 million on prescription drugs. The numbers are higher when we count up to today because that was only the first 10 months, through November 1 of 2013. The benefits are all over the place.

One other thing. This is not our subject of the week, but I think we have to keep mentioning it. We are reducing the budget deficit through the ACA. I know our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are very careful about the budget deficit. Good. They should be. Health care costs are declining and declining significantly. Some is due to the recession, but almost every expert says much is due to the ACA.

National health care expenditures, for instance, in 2012 grew by 3.7 percent, meaning that the growth from 2009 to 2012 was the slowest since government collected this information in the 1960s. The percentage of health care spending for the first time actually shrunk from 17.3 to 17.2. At the same time, the solvency of Medicare's hospital insurance fund increased and costs declined. So this is great news.

The bottom line: I know our colleagues on the other side of the aisle think they hit political goals when they attack the ACA and call for its repeal, but the American people don't want repeal. Secondly, as we move on in time the positives of ACA will become more apparent, the negatives people perceive of ACA will decline, and I believe by November this issue will not be the political gold mine our colleagues think it is.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I thank Senator SCHUMER for his great leadership on this issue and his strong words.

I am pleased to join with my colleagues on the floor to speak about the positive impacts of the Affordable Care Act and the impact it is having on our Nation's health and particularly the health of our seniors.

We have all heard about the benefits of the Affordable Care Act in terms of increasing coverage: Over 4 million people have already signed up for the affordable private health insurance through the State and Federal exchanges, millions more have signed up for Medicaid coverage, and millions more young people are now able to stay on their parents' insurance policies until they are 26—and the numbers are growing.

But as important as these figures are, the Affordable Care Act isn't just about expanding coverage for the uninsured. It is also about improving the quality of care and the quality of coverage for all Americans, including our seniors.

Seniors in this country rely on the Medicare Program—and they should rely on the Medicare Program—because Medicare respects a promise that we made as a country to ensure that people who contribute to the program during their working years will have their health care needs taken care of after the age of 65. We have a duty to keep that promise, and we need to build on that promise.

To keep the promise of Medicare, we have to make sure the program stays afloat. The Affordable Care Act does this by improving the quality of care, by coordinating care, and by better delivering under Medicare so we reduce waste in the program and we use Medicare dollars in a way that improves health outcomes for our seniors.

The Republicans have a very different approach to Medicare solvency. They want to reduce benefits, they want to increase premiums and copays so it is harder for seniors to afford to go to a doctor, and they even want to end Medicare's guaranteed benefits entirely by turning it into a voucher system. Think about that: lower benefits, charge more, and end Medicare as we know it.

These approaches are wrong. They do not reflect our values, and they also don't reflect good policy because cutting Medicare benefits will not stop seniors from having heart attacks, it will not stop seniors from getting sick. It will just push them into emergency rooms and private insurance systems—which is more expensive and less efficient than Medicare—or, worse, it will prevent them entirely from getting the medical care they need.

Fortunately, the Republican vision is not the law of the land. The Affordable Care Act is the law of the land, and it is already showing progress in improving the solvency of Medicare and the quality of care for our seniors.

We can already see how the accountable care organizations created under the Affordable Care Act are saving money. The pioneer accountable care organizations—five of which are now operating in Massachusetts—have already saved Medicare nearly $147 million while continuing to deliver high-quality care. New standards for hospital reimbursements have reduced the number of people who need to be readmitted, meaning that for seniors 130,000 fewer Medicare beneficiaries had to check back into a hospital last year.

Thanks to these and other changes, the Medicare trust fund will be solvent for nearly 10 years longer than was projected before we passed the Affordable Care Act. The results are clear. When it comes to our seniors, the Affordable Care Act is saving money and saving lives.

But the Affordable Care Act does more. It builds on the promise of Medicare by improving prevention coverage and reducing actual out-of-pockets for our seniors. Last year over 70 percent of seniors—25.4 million people in Medicare—visited their doctor and received a preventive service, such as a critical colonoscopy or a lifesaving mammogram. They received it for free because of the Affordable Care Act. Despite high drug prices, the average senior in America saved an average of $1,200 on their prescription drugs in 2013 because of the Affordable Care Act closing the doughnut hole in Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. The Affordable Care Act has made these changes—reducing the cost for seniors, expanding benefits and reducing wasteful spending at the same time that we have improved the solvency of Medicare.

When I hear Republicans talk about repealing the Affordable Care Act, I wonder what alternative universe they are living in. In this real world there should be no confusion about what repealing the Affordable Care Act would actually mean for our seniors: higher costs for prescription drugs, higher costs for preventive services, reduced benefits, and a Medicare program that would go bankrupt nearly 10 years sooner.

The Affordable Care Act is working to help seniors with their expenses and to keep the costs of health care down. We need to improve and build on the progress the law has made and not argue over tearing it down. This should not be about politics. This should be about keeping the promise we made to our seniors. It is about building on that promise, and I will continue to fight for that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleagues—Senator WARREN, Senator SCHUMER, and Senator MURRAY—joining us on the floor today. I think we will be joined by Senator STABENOW in a few moments. I also appreciate that they were at an event we did yesterday in which we were kicking off the Affordable Care Works Campaign. The campaign is designed to tell what has been untold for much of the last 6 months, which is the increasing good news about the millions of Americans for which the Affordable Care Act is working and, indeed for many of them, changing their lives.

An announcement was made this week that 4 million Americans have now signed up for the private health care exchanges. There are now over 10 million Americans all across the country who now have insurance today that didn't have it prior to the passage of the law either because of these private exchanges or increased eligibility of Medicaid or the law's provision that young men and women under the age of 26 can stay on their parents' insurance. Over 10 million people all across the country now have access to insurance that they didn't have before we passed this law.

As Senator SCHUMER said, there is even more good news because we now know that the second promise of the act, that it was going to reduce the deficit, is true as well. CBO tells us that from the 10-year period covering the enactment of the law to a decade later, we are going to save about $1.2 trillion beyond what we initially estimated.

At current trajectories, we are going to be $250 billion under CBO's initial estimate for Federal health care expenditures on an annual basis. That is a big savings to the American taxpayers. When you combine that with the millions of Americans who have coverage, you can see how the Affordable Care Act is working.

There is still work to do. There will be debates on the floor of the Senate about ways in which we can change and fix the Affordable Care Act. Because we are reordering one-sixth of the American economy, there is no doubt there will be bumps along the road, and no doubt there will be places where we can find bipartisan agreements on how we can fix the act to make it work even better.

The answer from our Republican colleagues has been pretty simple so far. It has been to simply repeal the law. They say they want to repeal and replace it, but we have yet to see any evidence of that replacement. I think when the Presiding Officer and I served together in the House of Representatives, we probably witnessed about 30 or 40 different votes to repeal all or part of the Affordable Care Act, and never once was there a vote to replace that act.

The American people don't want this bill repealed so we can go back to the days when the insurance companies ran our health care. They don't want to go back to the days when the 10 million Americans who have insurance are uninsured. They want this act to be implemented. They want it to be perfected. They want us to work to make it better. But they are understanding day by day that the Affordable Care Act is working.

Specifically for seniors there are some pretty unique benefits, many of which have been glossed over. At the outset of the implementation of this act, some pretty important things happened—sometimes while people weren't even looking.

First, the doughnut hole was cut in half almost overnight. The first year anybody who was in the doughnut hole got a $250 rebate check. The second year, their drugs—when they were in the doughnut hole—got cut by 50 percent. By the end of this decade, the doughnut hole will be completely eliminated.

The average savings for a senior, as Senator STABENOW will talk about, has been $1,200. People often don't know that is because of the Affordable Care Act. When you go in and your drugs all of a sudden cost 50 percent less than they did, there is no stamp on that bill that says courtesy of the Affordable Care Act.

The fact is that without the Affordable Care Act, seniors—over the course of the last 3 years—would have spent $9 billion more on drugs than they have. The number is so big that it is kind of hard to fathom. The Affordable Care Act has saved seniors $9 billion, an average of $1,200 per senior.

On top of that, when seniors go in to get their annual checkup or for a cancer screening or tobacco cessation program, those preventive health care visits are now free. Twenty-five million seniors have access to those programs all across the country.

In my State of Connecticut, 76,000 people with Medicare have taken advantage of free annual wellness visits under the health care law. So we are seeing tremendous benefits for seniors all across the country. This is not just about the doughnut hole or preventive health care.

In 2012, the Medicare Part B deductible dropped by $22 to $140. That is the first time in the history of Medicare that the Medicare Part B deductible has actually been reduced thanks to the efficiencies that are being garnered in the Medicare Part B program by the health care law.

Second, Medicare Advantage plans now can't charge more than Medicaid for things like chemotherapy, skilled nursing, and other specialized services, which results in saving thousands of dollars for seniors.

In the first 3 years of the Affordable Care Act, Medicare recovered $15 billion in fraudulent payments under Medicare because of new tools designed to root out fraud and waste and abuse in the Affordable Care Act. Older Americans who have not yet reached Medicare age are saving money because the act reduced the amount of discrimination in premiums against older Americans by saying that insurance companies can't charge older workers more than three times what they charged younger workers.

For seniors, in particular, we are trying to make it clear that some of the

unnoticed benefits, such as the fact that nobody is asking you for a copay when you go in for a Medicare checkup and that you are saving money every time you go into the pharmacy—that didn't happen magically. That didn't happen because of Republican health care policies. It happened because of the Affordable Care Act.

Finally, before I turn it over to my colleague Senator STABENOW, I want to address some of the mythology we have been hearing on the floor of the Senate in the past few days about Medicare Advantage.

There is no doubt that there were reductions in the payment from the Federal Government to the Medicare Advantage plans in the Affordable Care Act. Why? Because we were overcompensating private health care companies for running the Medicare Advantage plan. We were giving them 13 percent more than it cost Medicare itself to run the Medicare program. That just doesn't make a lot of sense.

Private companies were telling us they could do things for the same price or less than the Federal Government. In this case we were paying Medicare private insurers a lot more than it costs Medicare to run the program. So we decided to eliminate that subsidy.

Guess what. The news has been pretty remarkable. In fact, 30 percent more seniors are on Medicare Advantage plans today than when we passed the law, and premiums under Medicare Advantage have come down by 10 percent during that time. More people are on Medicare Advantage plans, there are less costs in premiums, and the average Medicare participant has 18 different plans to choose from.

All of this apocalyptic talk about what was going to happen when we passed the Affordable Care Act with respect to Medicare Advantage and all this new apocalyptic talk about what will happen when the subsidies get further reduced has not come true. We now have cheaper Medicare Advantage plans, more seniors on them, and plenty of across-the-board availability.

I am really pleased to have been joined here by about a half dozen of our colleagues to tell the story about what the ACA has meant for seniors.

We are going to come to the floor every week. We are going to stand with patients and consumers every week to talk about the benefits for seniors, cancer patients, women, and taxpayers all in an effort to try to prove to the American people what millions of Americans are finding out, and that is that the Affordable Care Act works.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first I thank the Senator from Connecticut for his advocacy for seniors, children, families, and small businesses to have access to affordable and quality health insurance. He has been a powerful voice on this issue.

I also congratulate his State of Connecticut and the Governor of Connecticut for all of their hard work. I know they are doing a great job on their insurance pool—the health care exchange which is providing more affordable health insurance for the citizens in Connecticut.

I thank the Senator for his leadership.

I also rise today to talk about the fact that millions of American families today have access to more affordable health care. Seniors, children, small businesses, and others are getting the opportunity to have the health care they are paying for and know they can get the health care they need even if they have a preexisting condition because of the Affordable Care Act.

I will take a few moments to talk about what this means for our senior citizens—for people on Medicare. Obviously, Medicare is a great American success story and something that I strongly support, as do my colleagues who are speaking today.

As part of health care reform, we wanted to strengthen Medicare for the future. We protect the guaranteed benefits under Medicare. We have shored up the program so that the trust fund is now solvent until 2026 and will be so going forward as other savings occur over the long run. It is working because of some very tangible work we have done to put more money in the pockets of our senior citizens and to create the opportunity for them to have access to affordable health care.

I often think about the letters and emails I have received from people in Michigan prior to our passing health care reform and the kinds of stories that people told me all the time before we strengthened Medicare.

I will read one letter from a senior citizen from Warren, MI, who wrote to me a letter prior to health care reform talking about the gap in coverage in prescription drugs. Under Medicare Part-D, you are covered to a certain point, and then there is a gap and you get no help. Then if your prescription drug costs are very high, it kicks in again. Some people call that the doughnut hole. It is a gap in coverage.

A senior from Warren told me this:

> I cannot afford all of my costly drugs so I have to stop taking one of them (the least risky one) and have to scrounge free samples from my doctor's office for another while paying high retail prices for the other two.

That was before we passed health reform. Now on average in our country, seniors have $1,200 more in their pocket since we passed health care reform which helps them with their prescription drug costs. Why? Because we are closing that gap. That gap is going to go away. There is going to be no more cliff, no more doughnut hole, and no more gap in coverage. Right now seniors across the country are saving, on average, $1,200, which is more money back in their pocket.

When we think about it in big terms, there are more than 7.3 million seniors and people with disabilities who are on Medicare who found themselves in that gap in coverage, and the health care reform law—in the big picture—has saved them about $9 billion—on average $1,200 for an individual, but all total so far about $9 billion. That is $9 billion more available to seniors, which puts money back in their pocket—to do what? Well, to pay the rent, to pay the electric bill. In a State such as Michigan, to pay the high heating bills because of the winter we have been having; to put gas in the car. Maybe it is to do something fun with the grandkids and pay for that birthday present. Maybe it is doing something else that is needed. Whatever it is, the idea is the average person who is retired and on Medicare has over $1,000 back in their pocket now because of health reform and what we have been able to do to strengthen Medicare. It is a great thing.

The problem is that is what Republicans want to take away. That is what they want to take away. That is what will be taken away if it is repealed; if one of the over 40 different repeal votes were actually to happen, and what the House of Representatives has already done.

Let me share another letter from Mary Ann from Rockford who wrote last fall to say she is sick of the efforts to repeal health care reform. She says:

> The Affordable Care Act has already helped millions of seniors like myself. From free preventive services to lower-cost prescription drugs, we're saving money.

We are saving money.

Let me talk about another area where seniors are saving money, and that is the annual checkup. We always want folks to have the annual checkup. That checkup used to have copays and deductibles. Today, under Medicare, because of health reform, when a senior walks into a doctor's office, how much are they paying for that annual checkup? Zero. Zero, because of health reform. We don't want any seniors to feel they can't get that checkup, they can't get the mammogram they need, they can't get that lovely colonoscopy we all look forward to getting. We don't want our seniors to feel they can't get any other kinds of preventive care or cancer screens or flu shots, or whatever it is, because of the copays or deductibles. Today the cost of that checkup for preventive services is zero. If health reform is repealed, that is repealed. That is what folks who want repeal are doing; it is what they want to take away.

So I join with my colleagues who feel strongly that we need to make sure we are keeping in place those positives that are making a real difference in the lives of senior citizens, of children, of families. If there are areas going forward that need to be fixed, we need to fix them, and we will. But we certainly do not want to go back to the days when seniors are spending $1,200 more out of their pocket for their medicine, on average, or when they are paying for the cost of an annual checkup that is absolutely critical they get for their

life going forward. I am proud to stand with colleagues saying let's talk together about how we make sure things work going forward, but let's not go back to the time when all of these important services and protections were not in place.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

FREE SPEECH

Mr. ROBERTS. Thank you, Mr. President. I come to the floor today to also speak about ObamaCare. But before I do so, I feel the need to address some comments made on the floor of the Senate yesterday that, sadly, I find to be extremely distasteful.

Yesterday, two prominent citizens were called unpatriotic merely because they have engaged—legally, I must say—in their First Amendment right to participate in the political process. I was saddened, I was dismayed, and I was discouraged to see the floor of the Senate used as a venue for such campaign-related attacks.

In order to further their own agenda, it has become commonplace for my colleagues—especially across the aisle—to suppress the free speech and rights of certain people and organizations. These are simply people with whom they do not agree and who have had the audacity to hold views different from this administration.

Make no mistake, this is all part of a coordinated plan. I call it shaping the battlefield to tamp down—maybe that is not the right word; make that suppress—political opponents in the runup to the general election as of this fall.

We have seen repeatedly since the Citizens United decision of 2010 Members of this body trying to rein in conservative groups' ability to participate in the political process. This campaign is a direct attack, I believe, on the rights of these organizations. This campaign created an environment in which the Internal Revenue Service found it necessary and possible to single out conservative organizations for extra scrutiny. And this has made it impossible for conservative groups to participate in the last two elections, and now they are at it again in 2014. There is a short phrase which describes this, and I think it is ''abuse of power.''

This is all troubling and shocking enough, but now we have a very direct personal attack against a Kansas company whose political views some find very objectionable. What I find even more offensive is declaring on the floor the opposing views make them ''liars.'' Our Constitution grants every American the fundamental right to engage in the political process, and these folks have done so, fully within the bounds of the law.

Nothing Charles and David Koch have done or are doing is illegal. Their participation, their statements, their work is very far from un-American. Quite the opposite. It is the essence of what it means to be an American. Nothing is more fundamental to our Constitution, our way of governing, than the freedom of speech.

We should be focused on our role and responsibility of governing to make things better for the American people and not using the Senate floor to further any political agenda by making personal attacks on private citizens.

That brings me to what I came here to discuss today.

(The remarks of Mr. ROBERTS pertaining to the introduction of S. 2064 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. President. It is good to see my long-time friend from Massachusetts in the Presiding Officer's chair.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

VETERANS BENEFITS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, President Kennedy, from the Presiding Officer's home State said, if I could paraphrase a bit: A nation reveals itself not only by the men and women it produces but also by the men and women it honors, the men and women it remembers.

It is our duty to take care of those who served in uniform. Today, this Nation has revealed itself, and the image is shameful. This body failed to consider the important veterans legislation of this Congress—the most important veterans legislation of this Congress: the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014.

I sit on the Senate Veterans Affairs' Committee. I am the first Senator from my State ever to sit on that committee for a full term. I consider that an honor. I consider it a privilege to serve those who served us in this Nation.

I have worked alongside Republicans and Democrats, as has Chairman SANDERS and Ranking Member BURR. We have produced good legislation here. Next to the post-9/11 GI bill, which Senator Webb worked on 4 or 5 years ago, it is the most important advancement in veterans legislation and assistance to our Nation's veterans at my time in the Senate. That is the good news.

The bad news is this debate has been about politics, not about veterans. Again, people in Washington want to score political points by filibuster, by obstruction, by blocking good bipartisan legislation, supported by a whole panoply of veterans organizations and community groups.

There are those who have concerns who want to add to this bill, concerns that are not related to veterans. To hold up this bill with something unrelated to veterans is unconscionable.

Whether you are in Marblehead, MA, or Mansfield, OH, we all have heard our constituents say: Why do they attach these unrelated things to legislation instead of voting them up or down on their merits? That is what people want to do here. Those who want to filibuster this bill are the people who want to add things to the bill that have nothing to do with serving our veterans.

This legislation by itself improves vital programs to honor our commitment to those who served in uniform and for those who care for our veterans. Whether it is a community-based outpatient clinic in Zanesville or Chillicothe or Springfield, whether it is a VA center in Dayton or Chillicothe or Cleveland, we care about those who care for our veterans, many of whom are veterans themselves, and we take care of those veterans.

This corrects errors in programs and benefits and, as I said, has widespread support in the veterans community. The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America all support this legislation.

I will not go through a lot of the details we have discussed before that Senator SANDERS brought to the floor, but I want to talk about a couple.

This bill renews our VOW to Hire Heroes Act by reauthorizing provisions such as the VRAP, the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program. This program retrains unemployed veterans for high-demand occupations.

I traveled across Ohio throughout 2012 spreading the word about VRAP, encouraging our veterans to apply. Ohio veterans applied in larger numbers than our State's population would suggest because of the outreach of so many in encouraging people to sign up for VRAP.

I met veterans such as Everett Chambers in Cleveland, who used VRAP funds to get retrained as an electrical engineering technician at Cuyahoga Community College, or Tri-C.

I remember meeting a veteran in Youngstown who went back to school because of VRAP and got the opportunity to work at a health care center in information technology.

We know VRAP works. It helps our veterans get back to work. It lowers the unacceptably high unemployment rate for recently separated servicemembers who have so much to offer employers.

This program is aimed for those veterans who are a little bit older who are no longer eligible for the GI bill and those veterans who have been out of the service for a while. But it does not stop there. It adds other important improvements in education benefits, in reproductive health, in the delivery of care and benefits to veterans who experienced sexual trauma while serving in the military.

Too many Members in this body will say they support the programs in this bill but that finding the money to do so is not possible. So they are for the bill,

they say, until they are not. Well, there is a disconnect between what they say and what they do. Those same elected leaders—those same elected leaders who say: I am for this bill, but we can't pay for it, so we can't pass it—those same people want to give tax breaks to companies that take jobs and factories overseas when we say we cannot find the money to provide a caregiver the support he needs to care for his wife, a veteran. We fight a decade-long war in Afghanistan that goes unpaid for and we cannot find the resources to ensure the very people who fought that war will be cared for.

It would be a little more simple than that. When a company closes down in Springfield, or Springfield, MA, and moves to Wuhan, China, or Shihan, China, they can deduct the cost of the plant shutdown in one of the Springfields and they can deduct the cost of building the new plant in Wuhan, China. That is a loophole we could close. It would mean more companies would stay in Springfield, OH, or Springfield, MA, helping our communities, helping our tax base, and it would mean those companies would not be deducting that move and that money could then be used for these veterans programs. But no, they say: We can't find the money.

It is important to end this filibuster and pass this bill.

BUYING GOVERNMENT

Mr. President, I heard my friend from Kansas talk about what he calls the personal attacks on two I believe he said great Americans, but Americans nonetheless, which they are, and prominent businesspeople in Kansas and around the country.

These two Americans—and this is not personal to me—these two Americans have spent millions of dollars trying to defeat me, as they have tried to defeat a number of people in this Chamber who think government has a role in preserving Medicare and government should provide funds for Head Start and government should give tax breaks to low-income people, not just rich people, and government should play a role, as the Presiding Officer has, in a cleaner environment and deal with climate change. But I disagree with these two Americans. I do not personally dislike them or personally know them. But I do know they have spent millions of dollars in ads, millions of dollars in an unprecedented way—they and a small number of people—to try to hijack our political system.

People are sick and tired, first, of the TV ads; second, of the lies in the TV ads; and, third, that there are people—a few billionaires—who are trying to buy elections in this country, billionaires who are looking for tax breaks for themselves, billionaires who are looking for the opportunity to weaken environmental laws, billionaires who want to kill the union movement in this country.

I want to read from one editorial that was printed in, I believe, Roll Call or The Hill newspaper talking about some of these ads. Here is what this editorial said:

> Were this an ad for Stainmaster carpet, a Koch product— Koch, this is the family, the brothers—
>
> Were this an ad for Stainmaster carpet, a Koch product, Federal Trade Commission guidelines would require the ad to ''conspicuously disclose that the persons in such advertisements are not actual consumers.'' Moreover, the FTC would require them to either demonstrate that these results of ObamaCare are typical or make clear in the ad that they are not.
>
> Needless to say, the ad meets none of these requirements, thereby conforming to the legal definition of false advertising.

That tells you a lot. I rest my case in just those terms. It is never personal. It should never be. It is whom you fight for in this body and what you fight against. But there are people in this country who think they can buy our government. We have seen that throughout our history. We have seen the oil companies try to do everything they can to at least if not buy government take a long-term lease. We saw the robber barons 100 years ago, including one from my State, Mark Hanna, who used to try to control the legislature. They used to say that he wore President McKinley like a watchfob when he was Governor of Ohio.

So we have seen this in the past. We have never seen it in such an incredibly big way as we have seen it in the last few election cycles.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. President, I want to speak about the minimum wage, something this Chamber, frankly, needs to do. The Presiding Officer in his time in the House saw, as I did, a number of Members of Congress who would vote to raise their own pay but then vote against a minimum-wage increase, which I find morally inconsistent or worse. But let me make a couple comments about that.

In 1991, the average price of gas was $1.15 a gallon, a loaf of bread around 70 cents, a dozen eggs about $1. The tipped minimum wage—that is the minimum wage for people who work in a diner who get tips, people who push a wheelchair in an airport who rely on tips, a valet, someone who does nail manicures, people who work in jobs where they are receiving tips—the minimum wage in 1991 for those workers at the local diner or the local airport was $2.13 an hour—in 1991.

Today, the average price of gas is $3.30 a gallon; a loaf of bread costs $1.35, more or less; eggs are about $2. The tipped minimum wage is still $2.13. Its value has fallen by 36 percent in real terms. Think about that—$2.13 an hour.

Americans who work hard and take responsibility should be able to take care of their families. That is why I support the Fair Minimum Wage Act, which would raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour in three 95-cent increments and then provide annual cost-of-living increases linked to changes in the cost of living. The bill would also gradually raise the Federal minimum wage for tipped workers at the diner, the valet, the person doing the manicure from $2.13 an hour to 70 percent of the regular minimum wage.

In 1980 the minimum wage for tipped workers was 60 percent of the regular minimum wage. It is now less than 30 percent of the regular minimum wage. In Canada the minimum wage in Ontario is $11; the tipped minimum wage is $8.90. The United States is the only industrialized nation in the world—except for Canada—where a large number of workers must depend on tips for a large share of their income. So in Canada the tipped minimum wage is only slightly less than the minimum wage. In the United States it is less than 30 percent of the minimum wage. In the rest of the world it is 100 percent of the minimum wage.

Interestingly, servers in the United States, people who work at diners or restaurants in the United States—when a European comes across the ocean and eats at a restaurant in Cleveland or in Cincinnati, the European will usually leave a really small tip because they are not used to tipping. The American worker relies on those tips for any kind of a decent wage.

Ohio's current tipped minimum wage is a little higher; it is $3.98. That is still not enough. These are men and women who have bills to pay and families to support.

Most tipped workers do not work at fine dining establishments where the average bill is $50, $60, or $70, so someone is making pretty good money on tips. A server in a high-class restaurant, an expensive restaurant, can make hundreds of dollars in a night. But for a server who works in a diner where four people come in, get coffee, spend an hour there, and have a bill of $6, the tip might be $1. That person has worked for an hour. They are not getting to the minimum wage with the tipped wage, and, often, neither is the valet or the person at the airport who is getting someone off the plane and pushing their wheelchair to their connecting flight. They often do not even receive tips because so often the person in the wheelchair never thinks about it, does not know that these are tipped workers, that they are only making $2, $3, or $4 an hour. They are working hard.

We work hard for the money we make. We are very well paid here. It is a privilege to serve in the Senate. But when you think about those workers who are working very hard, their minimum wage is $2.13 an hour. There is something not right about that.

One more point. The Center for American Progress completed an analysis of 20 years' worth of minimum wage increases in States across the country. They conclude that there is no clear evidence that the minimum wage leads to further job loss during periods of high unemployment.

The opponents of raising the minimum wage say that it is going to

cause price increases and that there are going to be layoffs. But what is interesting is that every time there is a minimum wage bill we are debating, the opponents say: You know, these businesses are going to have to raise their prices or lay people off to pay the minimum wage. But when an executive gets a $1 million bonus, when a CEO gets paid $12 million and gets a raise to $16 million the next year, I never hear them say: Boy, they are going to have to lay people off to pay those executive salaries. It is only when it is low-wage workers that my friends on that side of the aisle stand and say: This is going to hurt business. This is going to hurt commerce. This is going to hurt employment.

Their arguments are weak. Their arguments are, in many cases, a bit hardhearted. I wish my colleagues would do what Pope Francis said. Recently, Pope Francis exhorted his parish priests to go out and smell like the flock; go out among your parishioners and listen to them and try to understand their lives and try to live like them.

Well, a lot of those parishioners are minimum wage workers or slightly above minimum wage. Smelling like the flock might help some of my colleagues come to the conclusion that raising the minimum wage is important to do, is humane, is right for our country.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

THE UKRAINE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to share with my colleagues the tragic events that unfolded these past few weeks in the Ukraine. Ukraine is an incredibly important country. The recent events are tragic, the result of a corrupt government and loss of life.

I remember the Orange Revolution that took place in Ukraine, starting in November 2004, ending in January 2005. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians took to that protest to protest the corrupt election. They did it in a peaceful way.

They not only got the attention of the people of Ukraine but the attention of the world. As a result of that peaceful revolution, the government stood for new elections, free and fair elections. Democratic leadership was elected, and all of us thought the future for Ukraine was very positive.

I was in Kiev not long after that Orange Revolution. I had a chance to talk to people who were involved, and I talked to the new leaders. I saw that sense of hope that Ukraine at long last would be an independent country without the domination of any other country and that the proud people would have a country that would respect their rights, that would transition into full membership in Europe and provide the greatest hope for future generations.

They started moving in that direction. As the Presiding Officer knows, there were agreements with Europe on immigration. They have been involved in military operations in close conjunction with NATO. Ukraine was and is an important partner of the United States and for Europe.

Then Victor Yanukovych came into power for a second time. Mr. Yanukovych took the country in a different direction. He was a corrupt leader. He had a close involvement with Russia.

Today there is some hope. The Parliament has brought in a new interim government. Presidential elections are now scheduled for May 25. But there are certain matters that are still very much in doubt. In the Crimea, which is a part of the Ukraine which has a large Russian population, it is unclear as to what is happening there. Pro-Russian sympathizers have taken over government buildings. It is not clear of Russia's involvement.

It is critically important that the international community have access to what is happening in the Crimea and make it clear that Russia must allow the Ukraine to control its own destiny. It is time for the international community to mobilize its resources to assist Ukraine's transition to a democratic, secure, and prosperous country.

The people of Ukraine have had an incredibly difficult history and over the last century have been subjected to two World Wars, 70 years of Soviet domination, including Stalin's genocidal famine.

Our assistance at this time will be a concrete manifestation that we do indeed stand by the people of Ukraine as they manifest their historic choice for freedom and democracy. Moreover, we need to help Ukraine succeed to realize the vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

That is our desire and that is the desire of the people of Ukraine. They are moving on the right path. They critically need our help and that of the international community to make sure Russia does not try to dominate this country; that its desire to become part of Europe is realized; that free and fair elections can take place, and the rights of their people can be respected by their government.

Yesterday I heard from Swiss President and OSCE Chair-in-Office Burkhalter and welcomed his engagement and the important role the OSCE can play in Ukraine.

As a member of the Commission, I had the honor of chairing the Helsinki Commission, which is our implementing arm to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. A Foreign Minister from one of the member states usually acts as our Chair-in-Office, and this year Mr. Burkhalter is not only the Foreign Minister of Switzerland, he is also the President of Switzerland. He is the person responsible for the direction of the organization. We had a hearing with him and Ukraine took a good part of our discussions.

The guiding principles of the OSCE is if they are going to have a prosperous country, if they are going to have a secure country, they have to have a country that respects the rights of its citizens. Respecting the rights of its citizens means they are entitled to good governance. They are entitled to a country that does not depend upon corruption in order to finance its way of life. Those are the principles of the OSCE. A country with good governance, respect for human rights, that takes on corruption, is a country in which there will be economic prosperity and a country which will enjoy security. That has been our chief function, to try to help other countries.

The meeting yesterday underscored the importance OSCE can play in the future of Ukraine, and we hope they will utilize those resources so Ukraine can come out of this crisis as a strong, democratic, and independent country.

There has to be accountability. There has to be accountability for those who are responsible for the deaths in Kiev. I mention that because, yes, there is a moral reason for that. Those who commit amoral atrocities should be held accountable. That is just a matter of basic rights. But there is also the situation when they don't bring closure here, it offers little hope that these circumstances will not be repeated in the future. If future government leaders believe they could do whatever they want and there will be no consequences for their actions, they are more likely to take the irresponsible actions we saw on Ukraine.

So, yes, it is important we restore a democratic government in Ukraine. It is important that government be independent and able to become a full member of Europe. It is important that government respect the human rights of its citizens, but it is also important they hold those responsible for these atrocities accountable for their actions.

The Obama administration took some action this past week. They did deny visas to certain members who were responsible for the Government of Ukraine, and they did freeze bank accounts of those who were involved in the corrupt practices in Ukraine. That was a good first step and I applaud their actions.

I remind my colleagues we passed the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act as part of the Russia PNTR legislation. I was proud to be the sponsor of the Sergei Magnitsky Rule

of Law Accountability Act. What it does—and it says it was amended to apply only to Russia—those who are involved in gross violations of internationally recognized human rights will be denied the privilege of being able to come to America, to get a visa and we will deny them the opportunity to use our banking system.

Why is that important? Because we found those corrupt officials want to keep their properties outside of their host country. They want to visit America. They want to use our banking system. They want their corrupt ways to be in dollars, not in rubles. Denying them that opportunity is an effective remedy for making sure they can't profit from all of their corruption.

That legislation was limited to Russia not by our design. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee approved the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act as a global act applying beyond Russia.

Sergei Magnitsky was a young lawyer who discovered corruption in Russia. He did what he should have done—told the authorities about it. As a result, he was arrested, tortured, and killed because he did the right thing.

We took action to make sure those responsible could not benefit from that corruption. That was the Sergei Magnitsky bill. We felt, though, it should be a tool available universally. We had to compromise on that, and it was limited to Russia.

It is time to change that. Along with Senator MCCAIN, I have introduced the Global Human Rights Accountability Act, S. 1933. It has several bipartisan sponsors. It would apply globally. So, yes, it would apply to Ukraine. It would have congressional sanctions to the use of tools for denying visa applications and our banking privileges to those who are responsible for these atrocities. I believe our colleagues understand how important that is for us to do.

It is interesting that today the State Department issued its Human Rights Practices for 2013. This is a required report that we request. It gives the status of human rights records throughout the world, talking about problems.

I am sure my colleagues recognize that human rights problems are not limited to solely Russia or Ukraine, from Bahrain to China, to Bangladesh, from Belarus to Ethiopia, to Venezuela, from the Sudan to South Sudan, Syria, the list goes on and on and on.

The report lists all of the gross violations of human rights that have occurred. Unfortunately, this list is too long. I can name another dozen countries that are spelled out in this report. Human rights are universal, and it is our responsibility to act and show international leadership.

It takes time to pass good laws, as it should, which is why we must act with urgency now. The measures contemplated in my legislation have great corrective power, but they are strongest when deployed in a timely manner, preferably before the outbreak of violence.

The year 2013 was a particularly challenging year for human rights and we cannot afford to be silent. The Global Human Rights Accountability Act serves as an encouragement for champions of democracy, promoters of civil rights, and advocates of free speech across the globe.

As the great human rights defender Nelson Mandela once said: ''There are times when a leader must move ahead of the flock, go off in a new direction, confident that he is leading his people the right way.''

In this great body, the Senate, we have a responsibility to lead the way in accountability for human rights. We have done that in the past. We have shown through our own example and we have shown through our interest in all corners of the world that this country will stand for the protection of basic human rights for all the people. We now have a chance to act by the passage of the global Magnitsky law. I hope my colleagues will join me in helping enact this new chapter and the next chapter in America's commitment to international human rights.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, yesterday, while relaying to the Senate some anecdotes he believed proved the success of ObamaCare, the majority leader stated this:

> Despite all the good news, there are plenty of horror stories being told. All of them are untrue, but they are being told all over America.

Well, that statement, quite frankly, shocked me, and I am sure it would have shocked millions of Americans, if they had heard it, who are feeling the detrimental effects of this very unpopular law, the Affordable Care Act.

I have heard directly from countless Kansans about the devastating effects ObamaCare has had on them and their families. Most of the Kansans I speak with are concerned primarily about what the future will hold for their children and grandchildren. What type of life will we as parents and grandparents be passing on to future generations?

I can assure the majority leader that Kansans are salt-of-the-earth people. They are, most assuredly, not liars. They do not deserve to be called liars by any Member of this body.

Take Philip and his wife from Lenexa who are in their midfifties. Philip has been self-employed for the last 20 years but had maintained coverage through his wife's employer for most of that time. She now works for a much smaller company which can only pay a fraction of the cost of their insurance, so it was much cheaper for him to purchase insurance in the individual market starting in 2013. Finding affordable coverage now, in 2014, has been a much greater challenge. He writes:

> With the changes in health insurance due to implementation of the ACA for the next year, we shopped the Kansas exchange for 2014 plans. What we found was shocking.

They found that for the same level of coverage, they would now have to pay a premium more than double what they paid in 2013. On top of the higher premium, they would be faced with double the deductible and nearly double the out-of-pocket maximum.

In his letter Philip says:

> Frankly, we anticipate a decline in income for the next two years, but still won't qualify for subsidies; this simply makes the ''Affordable Health Care'' unaffordable for us.

He continues:

> The icing on the cake—my wife's employer has told her they expect to drop their health care coverage for their employees altogether in 2015 because of the added expenses of the ACA! I honestly don't know what we will do; we are not wealthy by any means and have not been able to fund our retirement plan for a couple of years now. We do not have sufficient money to retire at any time soon and ACA will take everything we could afford to save. We hope Congress can come up with a logical and truly affordable option to the ACA soon!

This is common criticism I have heard many times, and I can assure the majority leader that Philip's story is true.

I have also heard from members of the Kansas Disabled American Veterans service organization who have shared the difficulty and struggle of veterans having to relinquish their preferred health care plans due to cost increases caused by ObamaCare. They are now pursuing care through the VA, which presents a whole other host of new obstacles to receiving the care they deserve. So we have veterans who are unable to afford health care under the Affordable Care Act now coming to the veterans system and being unable to, anytime soon, enroll. In fact, their biggest concern is they will now have to wait 3 months to 6 months to get their first appointment.

The bottom line is that veterans will either pay more for their health benefits through ObamaCare and lose their preferred doctors or be forced to join the backlog of veterans seeking care. Neither is a good option for our veterans. Veterans in Kansas and across the Nation are feeling the burdens of ObamaCare. They have sacrificed so much for our country, and I can assure the majority leader that they are telling the truth.

Another example of how ObamaCare is hurting Kansans is from Salina, a town in the middle of our State. The nonprofit YMCA in Salina will be capping the schedules of part-time employees at 25 hours per week to avoid having to provide them health insurance benefits as part of ObamaCare. The administrator says:

It is unfortunate. We have a lot of good people who you'd love to have working more hours that we're going to have to make the cut. This is hitting nonprofits hard. A for-profit company, this cuts into their profits, but we don't have profits to cut into.

This YMCA is not alone in their efforts to trim costs. Numerous companies and organizations across Kansas are having to cut back the hours of part-time employees because of ObamaCare. And I can tell the majority leader once again that those people and those organizations are telling the truth.

Yesterday afternoon the majority leader came to the floor once again and read an opinion column from The Hill newspaper. This article, authored by Mark Mellman, supported the majority leaders' efforts to discredit the stories being told of Americans who are having very real struggles and those who have lost their health care coverage as a result of ObamaCare. The majority leader read this column on the Senate floor literally word for word; however, he stopped just short of the end of the column, and I wanted to finish reading the footnote of the column which he chose not to read. It was about the author.

Mellman is president of The Mellman Group and has worked for Democratic candidates and causes since 1982. Current clients include the Majority Leader of the Senate and the Democrat whip in the House.

I just wanted to complete the record, that the majority leader is reading an article by a Democratic consultant, employed by the majority leader, to furnish evidence that what he is saying about the untruths of people who are complaining about ObamaCare is based upon fact. Mark Mellman really is not the person to be quoting as to whether the Affordable Care Act is working.

I would also point out that ObamaCare has been heavily debated for years now. For 5 years we have been talking about the Affordable Care Act. During this time there have been so many broken promises, so many falsehoods, and so many direct lies. We heard them all.

''ObamaCare will lower all of our health care costs.''

''ObamaCare won't cut Medicare.''

''ObamaCare will create jobs.''

And who can forget ''If you like your doctor or health plan, you can keep them.''

These were lies. These were untruths. They were promises made and summarily broken. This is why so many Americans are outraged. It is time for Washington to stop dismissing their concerns and start listening to them.

Another disturbing moment—in fact, I think perhaps the most disturbing part of what the majority leader said—after he read the column from The Hill, he said this:

It is time the American people spoke out against this terrible dishonesty and about those two brothers who are about as un-American as anyone I can imagine.

This really bothers me. Accusations about who is un-American are deeply troubling, and to me that is an unfortunate comment when we refer to anyone. From the earliest days of our Republic, it has been a tactic exerted by those in power to humiliate and discredit those who come from different backgrounds or have a different point of view that challenges the people in power, and it is part of a strategy to convince ordinary Americans that sinister forces are working to undermine our country and our institutions. Ironically, by charging some person or group with being un-American or disloyal, the effort to stifle an exchange of ideas erodes the very foundation of our democratic government.

These accusations have been leveled during times of war, but they are just as prevalent during times of peace. We know of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1797, the Know-Nothing Party taking aim at immigrants in the 1800s, and the Red Scare after the First World War.

In the process leading up to women's suffrage, critics of giving women the vote belittled them. One even suggested that women were too emotionally delicate to take on the task of voting. Thankfully, these ridiculous assertions could not derail the passage of the 19th Amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote.

Yet perhaps the most famous example is a Senator using his position to charge people as diverse as Hollywood actors and Army generals and Secretary of State George C. Marshall of political views which differed with the Senator's. In fact, the Senator believed their views were traitorous. He referred to such people as ''enemies from within.'' Why would a Senator reach such a conclusion? Because those political views disagreed with his own. Maybe it was also for the headlines and attention he craved or perhaps he was just paranoid, in search of a bogeyman. For more than 5 years this Senator leveled the charges of ''disloyalty'' without any real evidence. Because of his flippant claims, he did untold damage to so many lives, with very little consequence to himself. Not until enough of his colleagues had enough and put an end to his campaign against other citizens did this unfortunate episode in our Nation's history come to an end. This tactic didn't end in 1950 and, indeed, it continues today.

I am disappointed by those who impugn President Obama, questioning his legitimacy and sincerity as he seeks to do what he believes is his best for the country. Yet it is undoubtedly a two-way street. The President dismissed those who opposed his candidacy in 2008 as people who ''cling to guns or religion'' or have ''antipathy toward people who are not like them.''

When I served in the House of Representatives in 2009, Speaker NANCY PELOSI said in the town hall meeting in August of that year that those with concerns about ObamaCare were ''un-American.''

No one has the right to determine whose beliefs are American or un-American—certainly no one in the House of Representatives or the Senate.

It is troubling that there is a reflexive reaction in Congress to label political critics as un-American or disloyal. Recognizing disagreement is part of the decisionmaking process of our democracy, and a respectful dialogue between all Americans is critical to a well-functioning Republic. Certainly anything short of that is not worthy of the Senate floor.

I'm weary of repeated attempts to distract the American people from the rollout and poor performance of ObamaCare.

This week a New York Times/CBS poll found that only 6 percent of Americans believe that ObamaCare is ''working well and should be kept in place as is.'' I ask the majority leader: Does that mean that the other 94 percent of Americans surveyed are liars?

In fact, ObamaCare is a disaster to our Nation's health care system, and it is a disaster to our country's economy. The American people have made their opinions known, and rather than remedy the situation and address their concerns, the majority leader and others are trying to change the conversation and attack the very Americans who have real, life-impacting concerns about their access to health care.

My friends on the other side of the aisle act as though the majority of Americans support ObamaCare. They do not. They never have. We didn't listen to them when ObamaCare was passed. We have not listened to them since. In fact, the same New York Times/CBS poll found that Americans ''feel things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track'' by a margin of nearly 2 to 1. This poll was comprised of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, of which 63 percent feel things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track.

I agree that we are headed in the wrong direction, and I fear—like most Americans—that instead of righting the course, we have a Senate majority leader who will want to distract the hard-working Americans busy with their families, struggling, and living their lives.

Speaking of dysfunction, the majority leader is speaking about dysfunction in the Senate that he alone has the ability to control. The pilot of the plane cannot and should not blame the passengers for the turbulence.

I'm glad the majority leader mentioned the Senate feels like ''Groundhog Day'' or groundhog year. He is absolutely right. Over and over, how many times has the majority leader obstructed the Senate debate and votes on amendments? Over and over we see the same strategy from the majority leader to run the Senate according to his rules and his alone. He controls the Senate operations. He controls the ability to move past ''Groundhog Day,'' and he controls whether or not his colleagues can advocate for amendments and have votes.

Republican Senators are not alone in this thinking—although I'm sure the majority leader wishes that it was just the Republicans complaining. Many Senate Democrats also feel the same way. They too have legislation. They too have amendments they would like to see in front of the Senate that would see the light of day.

One such amendment that the majority leader is using in his blame game is a bipartisan amendment offered by Senators Menendez and Kirk, a Republican and Democrat, with 59 Senate cosponsors. There is an overwhelming amount of Senate support for this amendment. So why can't we get the issue of Iran's nuclear capabilities to the Senate floor? Why does the Senate majority leader continue to obstruct the Senate process rather than return to regular order and allow the Senate to operate the way it was intended?

The dysfunction of the Senate ultimately hurts the American people, and the majority leader has the ability to change that. My hope is that we move beyond this time in the Senate's history, that we move beyond the same old, same old, and that we have the opportunity to chart a new path forward to restore the Senate to function as it should.

I have no interest in serving in a Senate that doesn't do its work. Neither the majority leader nor any other Member of this body has the ability to represent individual Americans' interest at any given moment.

We each represent people from our respective States who have different points of view. I understand that people have a different point of view depending upon where they live, their background, their experience, and their philosophy. This diversity of opinion is what makes this country and, by extension, the Senate such a force for good in the world.

These opposing viewpoints are by their very definition American. The diversity and disagreement among ourselves is actually American, not un-American. Whether it is the Kansas small business owner who fears losing health insurance or the brave participants of the Seneca Falls Convention, Americans have the right to be heard and the right to play a part in the American political process. No one has the right to call those people un-American.

The litmus test for what is or is not American behavior cannot be administered or measured in partisan terms. Yet the bulk of the comments made by the majority leader attempted to do just that.

I am disappointed that it is even necessary for me to be on the Senate floor to talk about these disparaging comments, but the American people deserve an accountable legislature.

Whether you agree or disagree with the direction of our country—if you disagree with the direction it is heading in or you think we are doing OK, you are still an American, and you have the right to voice that opinion without having your allegiance to the United States called into question.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations on today's Executive Calendar: Nos. 568, 569, 565, and 571.

I further ask unanimous consent that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that President Obama be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, Senator GRASSLEY, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, is unable to be on the floor at this time, and on his behalf I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I will read into the RECORD—maybe tonight, but if not, I will do it Monday—statements made in the past by the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee where he talked in detail about how foolish it would be to have cloture on nominations for judges—his exact words.

I am disappointed that there has been an objection, but as I indicated yesterday, we are in groundhog year. Why would this next week be any different than the rest of this year?

They have objected and obstructed—they meaning the Republicans in the Senate—everything. Look at what we just finished—and I mean finished. We just finished a bill that had been worked on for a long time by the junior Senator from Vermont, the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

This is a bill that would help veterans. No one disputes the bill would help veterans. All 26 veterans organizations, including the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, supported that legislation—plus 24 other veterans organizations. So what happens over here with the Republicans? They figured out a way to say no. They always do that. But the way they say no is to obstruct, and that is what they did on this veterans bill.

I hope every veteran in America understands the fact that we had something that would improve the lives of the fighting men and women who came back from Iraq and Afghanistan, and those Asian veterans from Vietnam and some from Korea and some from World War II who are still with us. Because of the continual obstruction over here to do anything they can to slow down the Obama administration, they are even willing to hurt veterans.

This was a bill that didn't take a single penny. It was paid for with leftover war money. We agreed to have amendments, but that is just all hot air from the Republicans. We would be willing to do these bills if they would allow us to have amendments, and they figured out a way to say no again.

So we have to invoke cloture on district court judges that my friend, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, has said time and time again should not happen.

Either tonight or Monday I will read verbatim into the RECORD what he has said in the past.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF DEBO P. ADEGBILE TO BE AN ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 659.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Debo P. Adegbile, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there is a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Debo P. Adegbile, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard J. Durbin, Patty Murray, Barbara Boxer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jack Reed, Carl Levin, Debbie Stabenow, Tom Udall, Martin Heinrich, Christopher Murphy, Michael F. Bennet, Maria Cantwell, Amy Klobuchar, Richard Blumenthal, Tom Harkin.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived for the cloture motion with respect to Calendar No. 659.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF PEDRO A. DELGADO HERNANDEZ TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 568.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Pedro A. Delgado Hernandez, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there is a cloture motion at the desk and I ask it be reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Pedro A. Delgado Hernandez, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Benjamin L. Cardin, Mark L. Pryor, Mark Begich, Tom Harkin, Amy Klobuchar, Christopher Murphy, Patty Murray, Jon Tester, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Angus S. King, Jr., Claire McCaskill, Richard Blumenthal, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jack Reed.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF PAMELA L. REEVES TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 569.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Pamela L. Reeves, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. There is a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Pamela L. Reeves, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Mark L. Pryor, Mark Begich, Robert Menendez, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tom Harkin, Amy Klobuchar, Christopher Murphy, Patty Murray, Jon Tester, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Angus S. King, Jr., Claire McCaskill, Richard Blumenthal, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jack Reed.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF TIMOTHY L. BROOKS TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 565.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Timothy L. Brooks, of Arkansas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to report the motion.

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, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Timothy L. Brooks, of Arkansas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Mark L. Pryor, Mark Begich, Robert Menendez, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tom Harkin, Amy Klobuchar, Christopher Murphy, Patty Murray, Jon Tester, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Angus S. King, Jr., Claire McCaskill, Richard Blumenthal, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jack Reed.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF VINCE GIRDHARI CHHABRIA TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 571.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Vince Girdhari Chhabria, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I ask the clerk to report the cloture motion, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Vince Girdhari Chhabria, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Benjamin L. Cardin, Ron Wyden, Christopher A. Coons, Martin Heinrich, Jack Reed, Robert Menendez, Tom Harkin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patty Murray, Dianne Feinstein, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Carl Levin, Jeff Merkley, Amy Klobuchar.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF ROSE EILENE GOTTEMOELLER TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ARMS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 636.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Rose Eilene Gottemoeller, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Rose Eilene Gottemoeller, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

Harry Reid, Robert Menendez, Benjamin L. Cardin, Ron Wyden, Christopher A. Coons, Patrick J. Leahy, Martin Heinrich, Jack Reed, Tom Harkin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patty Murray, Dianne Feinstein, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Carl Levin, Jeff Merkley, Amy Klobuchar.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. Mr. President, is the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 309, S. 1086, now pending?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is pending.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 309, S. 1086, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act.

Harry Reid, Tom Harkin, Barbara A. Mikulski, Benjamin L. Cardin, Christopher A. Coons, Patrick J. Leahy, Jack Reed, Robert Menendez, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patty Murray, Jeff Merkley, Ron Wyden, Martin Heinrich, Dianne Feinstein, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Carl Levin, Amy Klobuchar.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

JUDICIAL NOMINEES

Mr. REID. Madam President, I filed cloture on the childcare block grant. I have every assurance from my Republican colleagues that this vote will not be necessary. I hope that is the case. It would be great if we could vitiate that and move and start legislating.

I believe that will be the case. Sometimes it is a long time from today to next Wednesday, when a vote would occur. I really do believe it will not be necessary. I hope that is the case.

I indicated that I would say a few words about the man that does all of the objecting, or a lot of the objecting around here. We had the Senator from Kansas, the junior Senator from Kansas come and say he objected to these judges being approved because the senior Senator from Iowa, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, asked him to do so.

In recent days Senator GRASSLEY has criticized my management of the Senate floor regarding nominations. The ranking member of the Judiciary Committee has said that I am responsible for the gridlock because of filibuster reform over the overuse of cloture. The past statements and recent actions of my friend, the senior Senator from Iowa, reveal his obvious either misunderstanding of what he said in the past or—I will leave it at that. There are a lot of terms that I could use, but I will not use them.

These are things that he has said in the past that obviously he did not mean at the time or he has forgotten what he said. He once stood on the floor and said he was strongly in favor of up-or-down votes on all nominations. He even said, ''Filibustering the nominee into oblivion is misguided warfare and the wrong way for a minority party to leverage influence in the Senate.''

That is what the man who is doing all of the objecting said before. He also said:

It is just plain hogwash to say that moving to make sure the rule is to give judicial nominees an up-or-down vote will hurt our ability to reestablish fairness in the judicial nominating process. It is not going to hurt minority rights.

These are direct quotes from him:

It establishes what we call regular order and as it has been for 214 years. It will be fair both to Republicans and Democrats alike. All the majority leader wants to do is have a chance to vote on those nominees up or down.

He could be easily talking about me. Maybe in the past he was talking about Senator Frist or Senator Lott. But it does not matter who has this job. That is what he is talking about:

All the majority leader wants is to have a chance to vote these nominees up or down. If these individuals do not have 51 votes, they should be rejected. But if these individuals do have 51 votes, then they should be confirmed. That is according to the Constitution.

That is what he said. He said it here in May a few years ago, May 23. He also said—this is another quote.

Let's debate the nominees and give our advice and consent. It's a simple yea or nay when called to the altar to vote. Filibustering a nominee into oblivion is misguided warfare and the wrong way for a minority party to leverage and influence the Senate. Threatening to grind the legislative activity to a standstill if they don't get their way is like being a bully in the schoolyard playground.

He said that. The senior Senator from Iowa said that. He further said:

Let's do our jobs. Nothing is nuclear about asking the full Senate to take an up-or-down vote on judicial nominees.

I'm not making this up. This is what he said, the man who has the audacity to come here to the floor and object, saying what a terrible thing it is that we are having up-or-down votes on these judges.

He went on to say:

It is the way the Senate has operated for years. The reality is that Democrats are the ones who are turning Senate tradition on its head by installing a filibuster against the President's judicial nominees.

That is what he said. He slows down Senate business even on nominees he supports. How do you like that? This week alone, the senior Senator from Iowa repeatedly voted against cloture on nominations he then supported moments later: Beth Freeman, Northern District of California; James Donato, Northern District of California; James Moody, Eastern District of Arkansas; Jeffrey Meyer, Connecticut.

He voted to invoke the filibuster rule and then turns right around and votes for those judges. His obstruction, though, I am sorry to say, is not limited to nominations. When the Senate considered S. 744, the comprehensive immigration bill, Senator GRASSLEY objected to consideration or adoption of Republican or bipartisan amendments on at least four occasions.

When challenged, Senator GRASSLEY admitted to violation of Senatorial courtesy. Here is what Senator LEAHY said:

Is it not a fact that the first amendment that was brought up here was a bipartisan amendment of mine and Senator Hatch? Shortly thereafter, the Senator from Iowa came with an amendment. Following normal courtesy, I allowed mine to be set aside so he could bring up his. So isn't it a fact that we asked if he might set it aside for some noncontroversial amendments on either side? He told me he could not. The Senator is correct.

You cannot talk out of both sides of your mouth unless somebody understands they are listening to what you say both times. The ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, the senior Senator from Iowa, he is talking out of both sides of his mouth. The people of Iowa should check this out and see what he said and what he does.

So he can come and criticize all he wants—criticize me. But it should be based upon facts, not standing his own statements on their head. He can't have it both ways.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ABLE ACT

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I wish to discuss the ABLE Act, which is a piece of legislation that has been the subject of enormous and substantial bipartisan support both in the Senate and in the House.

We know that a lot of families have relied upon and have really benefited from the so-called 529 plans—a section of the IRS Code that allows families to save tax-free for education. What we are trying to do with the ABLE Act is to replicate that opportunity so that families who have a loved one with a disability—it may be one disability or it may be more than one, but every family who has a loved one with a disability should have the opportunity to save just as they might for education in a tax-free manner, in a tax-advantaged way.

We have been working on this legislation for a number of years. Senator RICHARD BURR, the senior Senator from North Carolina, and I have led this effort in the Senate. As I said, it would build upon that 529 model for education.

The ABLE Act enjoys the support of 63 Senators, 63 cosponsors. In the House, it is up to 335 Members. That is why we mentioned that over 400 Members of Congress agree. That is why the hashtag #passtheABLEact! is important to highlight.

There are few measures which come before the Senate or the House which enjoy that kind of bipartisan support. In the Senate there are no more than 5 bills that enjoy the support of 63 or more Senators. We are pleased about that, but we are not done yet. We still have a long way to go to get this legislation done.

So as important as it is to highlight the numbers, it is also important to highlight the people who did the hard work to get us there. I want to commend Members of the House and Senate, but the ones who are worthy of even more substantial commendation would be a lot of individuals, some of whom are here in Washington this week: The National Down Syndrome Society. I was just with folks from the National Down Syndrome Society this morning over on the House side. They allow a Senator to go across to the House side. Our current Presiding Officer knows this, as she served there. Once in a while we get to go over there, and they were kind enough to invite us over there this morning. They have done remarkable work on this legislation and are continuing their advocacy today, even as we speak. We are grateful for their work.

Autism Speaks is another great organization that has done enormous work to bring us to where we are today, and the Arc as well. So many Americans know a lot about the Arc, the National Down Syndrome Society, as well as Autism Speaks. So we are grateful for that support, but we still have a ways to go.

One of the best ways to ensure this legislation will get over the goal line—I don't want to use too many football analogies here—but if we are getting close, even if we are in the so-called red zone, we are not in the end zone yet. We have a ways to go. But one of the best ways to make sure that happens is to talk about the real people that legislation like this would affect.

I mentioned the number of supporters we have, but I didn't mention the full name of the bill: Achieving a Better Life Experience. That is what the acronym ABLE stands for. But I like to think about it in this way as well.

I have a constituent, Sara Wolff, who is with us here today. She knows the rules don't allow me to indicate where she is today, but she is very close by, and she is with us today. I am grateful Sara is with us because she is a great example of someone who has a disability but is very able. She has a disability, but on a regular basis—hour after hour, day after day—she finds a way to overcome her disability or to manage it as best she can. She is a remarkable speaker. She gives as many speeches in a week as I give, and I am an elected official. She is well-known in northeastern Pennsylvania where we live. We live in the same county, but I live in Scranton and she lives in Moscow. She works for the O'Malley & Langan Law Offices. She is a law clerk there.

But as smart as she is on the law and these issues, probably the most significant part of her whole personality is the dynamism she brings to issues. She is a dynamic person. She does something few of us do well—even people who work here as elected officials—because she knows how to engage with people. She knows how to deliver a message. She knows how to be candid and direct but to do it in a way that is engaging and warm and friendly. So once in a while I will take instruction from Sara Wolff. But even more than that, I take inspiration from her.

Sara is someone who is very able and talented and committed, but she is among the many Americans—Pennsylvanians in my case—asking us to pass this legislation so that if a family such as hers wants to begin to save to help pay for a whole range of services for an individual with a disability, they can do so in a tax-advantaged environment in order to save over time, and do it in a manner that doesn't put them at a disadvantage from a tax standpoint down the road.

So Sara is a great example of why the ABLE Act should pass, and she is doing more than her share to make sure that it does pass. So I am grateful to Sara Wolff for doing that, and I am especially grateful to people like Sara, who like a lot of us at some point in our lives have to overcome a tragedy. Sara lost her mother Connie not too long ago to a sudden and rapid illness. But she has been able to deal with that tragedy and still help us day in and day out to get the ABLE Act passed.

I will highlight one more story and then I will conclude. Angie Cain is a 28-year-old who lives in Indianapolis, IN, and like Sara Wolff she lives with Down syndrome. Angie has five different jobs and works 5 days a week. She works paid positions at Kohl's on Mondays and at the YMCA on Fridays. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays she volunteers for several organizations, including a hospital, a Down syndrome office in Indiana, and the Alzheimer's unit of an assisted living facility.

Unfortunately, like so many Americans with disabilities, Angie is unable to save enough to cover her future needs—the same problem I just highlighted—if we don't change the law with the ABLE Act. Under current law, she must have less than $2,000 in assets in order to be eligible for Supplemental Security Income. That doesn't make a lot of sense, and that is one of the reasons we have to change the law. Angie is, therefore, forced to limit the amount of money she earns and work multiple paid and volunteer positions in order to benefit from the steady benefits that SSI provides.

Angie would like to live independently and, at the same time, she knows that she has limitations in that regard because without adequate savings and income, because of the current state of the law, she is forced to live with her family. She would like to be independent. That is something we all yearn for at some point in our lives. Angie's family is worried about her living and financial situation, especially down the line, years from now, when

her family may not be with her any longer.

Stories such as Angie Cain's story, the story of Sara Wolff, and individuals across the country like Sara and Angie are the reason we have to pass the ABLE Act. They don't need a lot of help. They need just a tool, one tool in their toolbox, to be able to reach down and have the opportunity to have their families save in a way that will help them down the road.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 19 percent of Americans live with one or more disabilities, 12 percent live with severe disabilities, and many of them are unsure about their ability to cover their basic expenses in the future because they are unable to build adequate savings.

We talk a lot about how folks should save. We encourage people to save for college. We encourage families to do that, and we encourage people to save for all kinds of things. Just the principle itself—to save and to conserve—is a good one to espouse and to advocate. But we have to give, in this instance, families an opportunity to save for a loved one with a disability or, in some cases, more than one disability. So whether it is Sara Wolff or Angie or others, we have to give them an opportunity to do that and give their families that opportunity.

When you see that number of Members of Congress—400—coming together, I believe it is not simply a question of whether this will pass but only a question of when the ABLE Act will pass. I hope that will take place in the next couple of months and that we can get every single Member of the Senate and House to join us.

This is one major thing we could do this year to show the American people we get it when it comes to one challenge that a lot of families face.

TRIBUTE TO BETSY SCHMID

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 13 months ago, I inherited an awesome responsibility. In the blink of an eye, I had become Chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, a position long held by Senator Daniel Inouye.

It was daunting to step into the shoes of a member of the ''greatest generation,'' a Medal of Honor recipient, and one of the most respected advocates for the men and women who serve our country in uniform. It was my good luck that the gavel I inherited came with Betsy Schmid, the staff director of the subcommittee.

Betsy first came to the Senate in February 2002, on detail to the Defense Subcommittee as a Presidential management intern. While it was only a temporary assignment, I believe Betsy would be the first to tell you that she would have done anything to return.

Return she did, joining the Defense Subcommittee as professional staff in March 2003. Over the next 8 years, Betsy served as a budget analyst focusing on some of the largest, most complex, and politically sensitive programs in the Department of Defense.

After years as an outstanding budget analyst, Chairman Inouye appointed Betsy to serve as the staff director of the Subcommittee on Defense in February 2011. It is a daunting job. The subcommittee oversees more than half of the Nation's discretionary budget, plus tens of billions more for the costs of overseas conflicts.

As staff director, Betsy has done an outstanding job of serving me this year, and Senator Inouye before me. But more importantly, her time here was in service to the Senate, the Nation, and our Armed Forces.

During her service, she had been handed the unenviable task of reducing the defense budget by scores of billions of dollars.

Many said that the cuts could not be made without sacrificing major critical military capabilities, but Betsy and her staff proved them wrong. Betsy made the numbers work, and there is no doubt in my mind that our Nation is more secure today because we got many of these budgetary decisions right.

This is Betsy Schmid's last week with the Subcommittee on Defense. She has been given an offer that she simply could not refuse. I wish her well and know she will contribute in important ways, but we will miss her.

During her service in the Senate, she has continued the tradition of bipartisanship and putting the men and women of the Armed Forces and Intelligence Community first. No one has worked harder to achieve these goals, working late nights, weekends, and more than a few holidays to serve her country to the utmost of her considerable abilities.

So with this distinguished record of public service, I would like to provide my sincere thanks and congratulations to Elizabeth Lynne Schmid. I wish her the very best in her future endeavors.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise today in recognition of Black History Month.

First established in 1976 as part of the U.S. Bicentennial, President Gerald Ford marked the inaugural Black History Month with a call to ''honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.''

The State of Illinois has played a significant role in this ongoing struggle for justice. President Abraham Lincoln led our Nation through its bloodiest war to save the Union, abolish slavery, and begin the work we continue to this day to end discrimination.

It was Illinois Senator Paul Douglas who raised the Illinois standard and joined in lending support for Hubert Humphrey's call for civil rights at the 1948 Democratic Convention. Douglas was a stalwart on civil rights as a Senator, defying filibusters and the wrath of his colleagues to make this principled stand in the 1950s and 1960s.

It was Illinois Senator Everett Dirksen who worked with Members of both parties to help pass the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964 50 years ago this July. That Dirksen Senate seat would later be filled by three of the nine African-American Senators who have served in this body—more than any other State in the Nation.

In 1992, Carol Moseley Braun became the first and only African-American woman to serve in the Senate. In 2004, I was joined here in the Senate by Barack Obama, who would of course go on to become the first African-American President in American history. Roland Burris assumed his seat when President Obama moved into the White House.

The Senate has since welcomed Senators TIM SCOTT of South Carolina, Mo Cowan of Massachusetts, and CORY BOOKER of New Jersey. This 113th Congress marks the first time that two African-American Senators served concurrently.

The Senate is changing to better reflect the diversity of this Nation, but the pace of that change is painfully slow. Our challenge is to shape a nation where America's leaders look like America and where the talents of all people are welcomed.

We proudly celebrate the tremendous work of the courageous men and women who have come before us to make this country a better place. During this month, as we do throughout the year, America continues to fight so that we may all live in a fairer and more equal nation.

SENATE EMPLOYEES' CHILD CARE CENTER

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I wish to recognize the 30th anniversary of a special place in our Senate community—the Senate employees' childcare center. The teachers and administrators at the center are some of the unsung heroes of the Senate, and it is a privilege to be able to pay tribute to them today.

The Senate employees' childcare center opened its doors on February 27, 1984, as the result of a small group of Senate employees who came together as parents to create a childcare program for their children that would best meet the unique needs of Senate employees. Although operating out of different buildings, the center has been in continuous operation since its opening day. In 1989, the center became the first childcare center in Washington, DC, to receive accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children—a hallmark of quality in the child care world—and it has remained accredited ever since.

Over the years the center has grown in size and has moved locations several times, but one thing that has never

changed is the center's commitment to excellence. Through the dedicated efforts of its administrators and faculty, the center provides an exceptional level of care and a top-notch early childhood education program. While adhering to rigorous standards, the center also remains a warm and close-knit community. It is now a separate nonprofit governed by a parent board of directors, and all of the parents regularly donate their time and their energy—from organizing the center's library to washing crib sheets and blankets—to ensure that the center runs smoothly. It is a place where everyone knows every child's name and where children rush in the doors in the morning with smiles on their faces because they know they are going to a place where they will be welcomed, where they will learn, and where they will be loved.

That loving environment is provided by the people who are truly the heart of the Senate childcare center—its teachers. Childcare workers perform some of the most difficult and most important jobs in our society. Their job is far more than feeding, diapering, and keeping children safe. They help develop young minds in the earliest, most critical developmental years. Childcare workers don't do their jobs for the money, and they often don't get the respect they deserve. They do their jobs because they love children and they love being a part of watching them grow.

The center is blessed with a particularly exceptional faculty—many of the teachers have been there for decades. They have watched the children they have cared for grow up, go to college, get married, and have children of their own, and they are still there with open arms and loving hearts for the next generation of children that walk through the door. Though they are not technically public employees, there is no doubt that they are dedicated public servants who make an invaluable contribution to the Senate community.

I want to particularly recognize a few of the most longstanding faculty members at the center. Phyllis Green, the lead teacher in the center's toddler room, has been with the center all 30 years of its operation. Parents describe her as a warm, steady, and nurturing presence, who has helped countless children discover the world and gain new skills and new independence. Anyone who can spend 30 years with toddlers is truly a remarkable individual, and I applaud ''Ms. Phyllis'' for her years of service. Other teachers with longstanding service include the center's beloved assistant director, Bridgette Waters, who is marking her 20th year this year, teachers Janet Green-Tucker, Joan Middleton, Michelle Buckner, and Rosa Woodard, each of whom has served, or will soon serve, 20 years or more with the center, and teachers Pia Corona, Tangela Cassell-Johnson, Andrea Henriques, Kellie Salley, and Mishele Torbati, each of whom has served, or will soon have served, 10 years or more.

I would also like to recognize the 9 years of service provided by the center's departing director, Christine Schoppe Wauls, who will leave our community at the end of the month to enjoy her well-deserved retirement. Christine, thank you for your years of service to the Senate community. Indeed, the entire faculty and staff of the center deserve our respect and gratitude for the important work that they do each day.

I have often said that when a staffer signs up to work for the Senate, their whole family really signs up for public service. Senate families make many sacrifices so that a parent—or sometimes both parents—can serve the Senate. For the parents who send their children to the Senate childcare center, the difficult balancing act of work and family is made just a little bit easier.

It is a great comfort to Senate staffers to know that their children are in such wonderful care. It is a great comfort to us as Senators to know that our staff can do their jobs well without worrying about their children's safety and well-being. We would be a better country if every working American could have the same kind of security and peace of mind when they go to work each day.

So on this, the 30th anniversary of the Senate employees' childcare center, I offer my congratulations to the center for achieving this important milestone and my very best wishes for many more years of service.

TRIBUTE TO SETH HARRIS

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to the former Deputy Secretary of Labor, Seth Harris, who recently left the Department after nearly 5 years of service. In his time serving as both Deputy Secretary and Acting Secretary, Seth was an invaluable asset to the Department. He brought to these positions a deep knowledge of both the agency and labor law, and he made significant contributions to the Department both as a manager and as a policy expert. Perhaps most important, he brought to these positions the lifelong passion for helping working families succeed that has been the hallmark of his impressive career.

Indeed, this was not Seth's first stint at the Department of Labor. He served for 7 years at the Department during the Clinton Administration, under both Secretaries Robert Reich and Alexis Herman. During this time, he served as counselor to the Secretary of Labor and as Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, among other roles. He then moved to the academy, where he served as a professor of law at the New York Law School and director of its Labor & Employment Law Programs. While teaching at the New York Law School, his scholarship often focused on a law that is particularly close to my heart—the Americans with Disabilities Act. While teaching, Seth was also a Senior Fellow at the Life Without Limits Project of the United Cerebral Palsy Association, and was a member of the National Advisory Commission on Workplace Flexibility. When President Obama took office, Seth again answered the call to serve his country, and was confirmed as the eleventh United States Deputy Secretary of Labor in May of 2009.

I can understand why he wanted to return to the Department. As I have said on more than one occasion, of all the executive agencies, it may be the Department of Labor that touches the lives of ordinary working Americans the most on a day-to-day basis. The Department of Labor ensures that every American receives a fair day's pay for a hard day's work, and can come home from work safely each night. It helps ensure that a working mother can stay home to bond with her newborn child and still have a job to return to. It helps workers who have been laid off, veterans returning from military service, young people with disabilities entering the workforce and those who develop disabilities and are trying to reenter the workforce—it helps all of these workers to build new skills and aspire to better opportunities for the future. In addition, the Department helps guarantee that hard-working people who have saved all their lives for retirement can enjoy their golden years with security and peace of mind.

Yet, despite this important mission, it is safe to say that when Seth and the current leadership team arrived at the Department, it was an agency suffering from significant neglect. Enforcement activity was down. Vital regulations to protect workers had been weakened or repealed. The agency faced significant management challenges. Not surprisingly, the morale of the agency's career staff was low.

It has been heartening to see this critical agency revitalized under the Obama administration. Enforcement statistics are improving. More workers are getting better training so they can find better jobs. Employee morale at the agency is improving. In short, the Department of Labor is doing what it is supposed to be doing, and doing it well. As Deputy Secretary—the official responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Department—Seth Harris played a key role in helping the Department meet these challenges.

In a message to Department staff upon his departure, Seth shared some of the agency's accomplishments over the last 5 years. I wanted to include this list in the RECORD, because it is an impressive array of achievements. To quote his message:

Last year, we achieved the lowest workplace fatality rate for miners, the fewest number of miners dying in workplace accidents, and the fewest workplace injuries in

mines, ever. Over the last five years, we have twice achieved the lowest rate of fatalities in general industry, ever, including last year. And over the last five years, we achieved the lowest fatality rate in the construction industry, ever.

Last year, we conducted the largest number of whistleblower investigations, ever. Last year, we helped more miners who suffered retaliation from their employers for raising health and safety concerns than were helped in the entire second term of the Bush Administration or the entire second term of the Clinton Administration. Black lung that cripples and kills miners will become much, much rarer under a new rule we proposed. Hundreds of deaths and thousands of morbid illnesses will be prevented each year under a new rule we proposed to protect workers from exposure to silica.

Over the past 5 years, we have returned more than $1.1 billion in wages to the workers from whom they had been stolen. We conducted the largest number of directed Davis-Bacon investigations, ever. And we did the best job, ever, of targeting our wage and hour investigations to the workplaces that had violations, even when the workers felt too threatened and too disempowered to complain. We expanded minimum wage and overtime protections to nearly 2 million home health aides. The people who care for us when we need them most will now get the most basic of worker protections.

Last year, we conducted the largest number of pension and health plan investigations over the past five years. During that same period, we recovered more than $1.3 billion in pension and health plan benefits for more than 710,000 participants and beneficiaries through informal resolutions. We also promulgated almost two dozen rules with our colleagues at Treasury and HHS to implement the President's historic health care law.

Last year, we assured that the largest percentage of workers exiting Labor Department job training programs got industry-recognized credentials. We also helped hundreds of community colleges work with employers to give tens of thousands of workers skills that employers need right now and will need for years to come. We expanded eligibility for the Trade Adjustment Assistance and unemployment insurance under the President's Recovery Act. And we nursed all 53 jurisdictions administering UI programs through the worst unemployment crisis in seven decades.

Last year, we did the best job, ever, of targeting the very small number of union officers and staff who embezzle funds or engage in fraud. We also achieved near record efficiency in concluding investigations of union elections despite the fewest resources available ever.

Over the past five years, we have stripped away a mountain of bureaucratic and legal barriers that kept our civil rights agency from finding and remedying discrimination. And we are finding and fixing pay discrimination, in particular, at an accelerating rate. We changed the law so that hundreds of thousands more people with disabilities and veterans will get jobs with federal contractors every year.

Last year, we helped the highest percentage of federal employees with disabilities on workers compensation to return to work since we started keeping records on this activity. We also processed workers compensation claims for longshore workers and energy employees at the fastest clip, ever.

We have done the best job, ever, of managing the taxpayers' money entrusted to the Labor Department's care. We have had five consecutive years of clean financial audits, and these last two years, we had no material deficiencies in our financial audit. We replaced a 25-year-old financial management system that put us out of compliance with just about every law with a new cloud-based financial management system that helps us comply with every law, and balance our books, and spend the taxpayers' money responsibly.

Last year, we did the best job, ever, of paying our bills on time, and we paid the smallest amount of interest for late payments, ever. We paid our small business contractors faster than ever. And the percentage of contracting we are doing with small businesses is the highest, ever.

We accomplished all of this by taking seriously President Obama's direction to engage in evidence-based, data-driven management.

The Government Accountability Office recently conducted a survey of all managers in 24 executive branch departments and agencies at the GS–13 level and higher. GAO asked these federal managers a long list of questions that amounted to, ''does your agency or department use evidence-based, data-driven decision making?'' The Labor Department beat all 24 federal agencies that were part of the survey. We lead the federal government in Obama-style evidence-based, data-driven management.

This impressive list of accomplishments reflects an agency that is back on track. It is a testament to the hard work of Secretary Solis, Secretary Perez, Seth Harris, the DOL leadership team, and the dedicated career staff that work for the agency across the country.

While he has moved on to new challenges in his professional life, our Nation owes a great debt of gratitude to Seth Harris for his leadership and for his passionate dedication to helping working families. I know Seth's work on these issues is far from done, and I look forward to continuing to work with him in his new roles in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO JEAN MANNING

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, Jean Manning is synonymous with the Office of the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment. Since establishing the Office in 1993 at the direction of the Joint Leadership, Ms. Manning has provided invaluable counsel to Senate offices to ensure their compliance with applicable employment laws, including the Equal Pay Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and numerous other laws Congress applied to itself when it passed the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 and the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995. Now, after decades of service to the Senate, Jean is retiring. While her retirement is much deserved after a long career, her wise counsel will be missed throughout this great institution.

Ms. Manning, who originally hails from Chicago, began her career as she now ends her career—with public service. After receiving a B.A. in 1972 from the University of Illinois, she took on the important role of educating junior high school students. Ms. Manning left teaching to further her education, obtaining an M.B.A. and a J.D. from the University of Illinois. While pursuing her law degree, Ms. Manning was a member and Articles Editor of the University of Illinois Law Review, in which she published an article about using multiple regression analysis to assess and remedy salary inequity between men and women, a subject about which she has always been passionate. Also while in law school, Ms. Manning was awarded the Rickert Award for Excellence in Legal Writing, an honor that anyone who has reviewed Ms. Manning's exceptional legal writing will know was well deserved.

Following her graduation from law school in 1983, Ms. Manning began her legal career in the great State of California, where she honed her legal skills as a labor and employment law litigator at several prestigious national law firms. Although she eventually moved to the East Coast in 1992, Ms. Manning still considers California her home. She returns to California several times each year to visit friends and family. In retirement, she plans to live in northern California during part of each year.

In the early 1990s, Congress as a workplace underwent a sea change when all major employment laws became applicable to Congress. The Joint Leadership selected Jean Manning as the Senate's first Chief Counsel for Employment to establish and to manage the Office of the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment. Ms. Manning's goal was to create a nonpartisan, legal defense office in the Senate that would provide top-tier legal advice and representation to all Senators and Senate offices in the area of labor and employment law. Ms. Manning has far exceeded her goal. The office she established has a stellar reputation throughout the Senate. On a daily basis, the Office of the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment advises and trains all Senate offices of their obligations under employment laws. Every year, the Office presents over 70 legal seminars within the Senate to ensure that Senate managers understand and adhere to all employment laws when managing their offices.

Ms. Manning also has tirelessly represented Senate employing offices at all levels of the Federal court system, including arguing before the United States Supreme Court. It is a testament to the high standards she set for herself and her entire office that, since its inception 21 years ago, the Office of the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment has never lost a case.

Throughout her Senate career, Ms. Manning has provided Senators, officers and Senate employing offices with unfailingly sound legal advice—even at times when she knew her advice might be unpopular. We thank her for her exceptional service to the Senate. The Senate is losing a great legal advocate, educator and source of institutional knowledge. The Senate is a better place for Ms. Manning's outstanding service, and she will be missed.

TRIBUTE TO VIRGINIA RENEE SIMPSON

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the dedicated career and service to the Congress and the Nation of Renee Simpson, who is retiring at the end of this month after over 30 years of service in both the Executive and Legislative branches of our government. She has dedicated her life to public service helping keep our Nation and its citizens secure, and we honor her for her longstanding dedication.

Renee is leaving the Senate as a staff member for Audits and Oversight of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. During her 3 years on the Committee, Renee has been integral to the committee's oversight of the 16 intelligence agencies. She led reviews of the intelligence community's information technology modernization and classification processes, and served as a committee liaison with the inspectors general of the intelligence community. Her knowledge and insight helped both identify items of concern and proposals for improvement.

In addition to her service with the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Renee has served as a Legislative Affairs Officer in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and as the Special Senate Liaison for the United States Marine Corps Office of Legislative Affairs. But perhaps her most significant assignments and accomplishments came during her 24 years of service with the U.S. Naval Reserves.

Ms. Simpson's distinguished military career began as an Operations and Readiness Officer for Desert Shield/Desert Storm and her unwavering commitment to service led her to posts around the world, including to NATO's Allied Forces Southern Headquarters Command, the U.S. Embassy in Rome, Italy, the Joint Task Force in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, U.S. Joint Forces Command, and the Office of the Director of Naval Intelligence in Washington, DC.

Renee has received numerous awards for her military service including the Defense Superior Service Medal as well as many Navy and Marine Corps Commendation and Achievement Medals.

Renee is especially close to her family and her priorities and heart lie with them in Sanford, NC. Her father, Lester Ray Simpson, is a proud Navy veteran of the Korean War who has an appreciation of fine attire with just the right bow tie. Her mom, Vivian, remains Renee's unending inspiration and role model. And according to Renee, her sister, Jane Rae Fawcett, is ''a superstar and the smartest, funniest person I know.'' Finally, her family simply would not be complete without her anchor of a brother-in-law, Deputy Sheriff Ed Fawcett. Renee lives, breathes and loves her family above all else.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to publicly thank Renee and to note my appreciation for her dedicated and dignified efforts. We will miss your insight and experience, and your commitment to pursuing the right policies to protect our Nation.

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Subcommittee assignments.

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

UNITED STATES, SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION & FORESTRY

113th Congress, Subcommittee Assignments, February 27, 2014

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMODITIES, MARKETS, TRADE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Sen. Donnelly, Chair, Sen. Heitkamp, Sen. Harkin, Sen. Brown, Sen. Gillibrand, Sen. Walsh, Sen. Chambliss, Ranking, Sen. Roberts, Sen. Boozman, Sen. Hoeven, Sen. Johanns.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON JOBS, RURAL ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENERGY INNOVATION

Sen. Heitkamp, Chair, Sen. Brown, Sen. Klobuchar, Sen. Bennet, Sen. Donnelly, Sen. Casey, Sen. Johanns, Ranking, Sen. Hoeven, Sen. Grassley, Sen. Thune, Sen. Boozman.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION, FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Sen. Bennet, Chair, Sen. Harkin, Sen. Klobuchar, Sen. Leahy, Sen. Heitkamp, Sen. Walsh, Sen. Boozman, Ranking, Sen. McConnell, Sen. Chambliss, Sen. Thune, Sen. Roberts.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION, SPECIALTY CROPS, FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Sen. Casey, Chair, Sen. Leahy, Sen. Harkin, Sen. Brown, Sen. Gillibrand, Sen. Bennet, Sen. Hoeven, Ranking, Sen. McConnell, Sen. Chambliss, Sen. Grassley, Sen. Thune.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, MARKETING AND AGRICULTURE SECURITY

Sen. Gillibrand, Chair, Sen. Leahy, Sen. Klobuchar, Sen. Donnelly, Sen. Casey, Sen. Walsh, Sen. Roberts, Ranking, Sen. McConnell, Sen. Boozman, Sen. Johanns, Sen. Grassley.

*Senator Stabenow and Senator Cochran serve as ex officio members of all subcommittees.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN FROM GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, no family should be forced to endure the loss of a child. In his memoir, President Dwight Eisenhower wrote that the loss of his 3-year-old son in early 1921 was ''the greatest disappointment and disaster in my life, the one that I have never been able to forget completely.'' That is why one of the fundamental expectations that Americans have of their government is also one of the most simple: to protect America's children; to ensure that our communities, our streets, and our families are safe.

But sadly, Congress has done little to combat the gun violence that continues to devastate American children and families. Many have characterized horrific shootings affecting children in our Nation, such as the one which occurred in Newtown, CT, as somehow separate from mainstream American society. But recent studies have shown that such incidents cannot be viewed in a vacuum. Instead, as a recent Yale University study has established, they are part of a wider, disturbing trend of gun violence wounding and killing American children. This study found that every day in the United States, around 20 children sustain firearm injuries serious enough to require hospitalization. In 6 percent of those cases, the wounds prove to be fatal. Three quarters of child hospitalizations examined by the study were the result of unintentional or accidental injuries, often cases of children playing with an unsecured firearm.

The study's rigorous clinical framework, combined with the reality that it is discussing children, makes for jarring reading. The researchers found, for example, that the most common firearm-inflicted injuries on children are open wounds, fractures, and internal injuries to the thorax, abdomen, or pelvis. Injuries to the nerves or spinal cord are also frequent. Traumatic brain injury resulting from gun violence is most often found in children younger than 5. These are not statistics of soldiers on a battlefield who volunteered to face danger. These are innocent children, in our communities, right here at home.

This cycle of violence touches families around our Nation. Like in Detroit, where a recent Detroit News investigation showed that nearly 500 Detroit children have died in homicides since 2000, mostly as the result of gun violence. That investigation cited, as an example, the story of 12-year-old Kenis Green Jr. Last August, he was shot and killed on his front porch during his uncle's birthday party. In Texas, last October a 5-year-old boy shot himself with a .40 caliber pistol that his babysitter left unattended when she went to take a nap. In South Carolina, last December a 15-year-old boy accidentally shot and killed a 12-year-old while loading a magazine into a firearm.

If almost anything in the world was responsible for sending 20 American children to the hospital every day, or was frequently involved in teenage suicides, or was inflicting traumatic brain injuries on toddlers, Congress would spring into action to address what can only be described as a public health crisis. We would enact comprehensive safety standards to stop the bloodshed. But when firearms are responsible for these horrific effects, inexplicably, we do nothing.

I urge my colleagues to recognize this crisis and to act to protect our children from gun violence. I urge my colleagues to take up and pass gun safety measures already pending in this Congress to keep firearms out of

the wrong hands and to make our society safer. We owe our children nothing less.

BROWN UNIVERSITY

Mr. REED. Madam President, today I want to recognize an extraordinary university, deeply rooted in the history of Rhode Island, Brown University. Brown is celebrating its 250th anniversary. Brown University's founding in 1764 makes it the seventh oldest institution of higher education in the United States, predating even the American Revolution. The university originally began as a small school located in Warren, RI, known as the College of Rhode Island. As Brown grew, it moved to College Hill in Providence in 1770, where it has thrived to this day and was renamed a few years later to acknowledge a $5,000 gift from Nicholas Brown, a member of the class of 1786.

Since its founding, Brown University has played an important role in Rhode Island and our Nation's history. Indeed, it was the first Ivy League institution to admit students of all religions. Brown remains committed to diversity and access. Over 20 years ago, Brown established the Leadership Alliance, a national academic consortium of leading research universities and minority-serving institutions with the mission to develop underrepresented students into outstanding leaders and role models in academia, business, and the public sector. Brown stands out for its willingness to openly delve into its past while staying focused on the future, and it has made a vital commitment to college access through its need-blind admissions policy, ensuring that no student admitted to Brown will be turned away for financial reasons.

Brown established a truly student-driven curriculum—the Brown Curriculum—in 1970 to allow students to personalize their course of study. In an effort to continue its edge in innovation, Brown launched its Plan for Academic Enrichment in 2002 to help transform the fields of research, education, and public leadership. Fiscal year 2013 saw the University conduct more than $170 million in sponsored research, helping the Rhode Island economy and making new discoveries that can improve lives.

The commitment of Brown's alumni to public service is also particularly noteworthy and admirable. According to a 2013 article by Washington Monthly, Brown ranks fifth among national universities and first in the Ivy League for the number of alumni working in public service. Some of the Brown alumni currently playing important roles in the public sphere include Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen, U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez, and World Bank President Dr. Jim Yong Kim. Through this commitment to service, members of the Brown community continue to find ways to improve the quality of life for people across Rhode Island, the Nation, and the world.

I am proud of the talented men and women who have contributed to the success of Brown University over these past 250 years. I congratulate Christina Paxson, Brown's 19th president, the students, the Brown Corporation, and the entire Brown community on this significant milestone.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JEFF TEAGUE

• Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I wish to recognize Jeff Teague, president of Teague Auto Group in El Dorado, AR, who was named the 2014 Time Magazine Dealer of the Year.

Awarded annually, the Time Magazine Dealer of the Year Award recognizes the auto dealer who demonstrates exceptional business performance and distinguished community service. Jeff was recognized for the positive impact he is making on the El Dorado community.

In 1981, Jeff and his father opened their first dealership as partners, a Chevrolet-Oldsmobile dealership, in Walnut Ridge, AR. He opened his current dealership in El Dorado in 1990, and through hard work and determination, Jeff built his dealership into a thriving business. His story is an Arkansas success story which I am proud to acknowledge.

In addition to his business success, Jeff has been a licensed pilot for 26 years and frequently uses this skill to serve his community, including flying church members to charitable initiatives and serving as a standby pilot for a local liver transplant patient. He is a member of Rotary International, the El Dorado Chamber of Commerce, the El Dorado Economic Development Board, the Batesville Chamber of Commerce, and since 2007, has served as chairman of the South Arkansas Regional Airport Commission. Jeff also currently serves on the board of directors for Citizens Bank of Batesville.

Jeff and his wife, Sarah, are well known for their community involvement in El Dorado. They both are actively involved with the Boys & Girls Clubs of El Dorado, the South Arkansas Arts Center, the South Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, MusicFest El Dorado, the Salvation Army, Union County 4–H, the South Arkansas Historical Foundation, and Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries.

I want to offer my congratulations to Jeff Teague on this well-deserved honor and thank him for his dedication and commitment to the community of El Dorado and to Arkansas.•

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:29 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. 1944. An act to protect private property rights.

H.R. 3308. An act to require a Federal agency to include language in certain educational and advertising materials indicating that such materials are produced and disseminated at taxpayer expense.

H.R. 3865. An act to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from modifying the standard for determining whether an organization is operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare for purposes of section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

The message also announced that pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 4303, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the Board of Trustees of Gallaudet University: Mr. YODER of Kansas and Mr. BUTTERFIELD of North Carolina.

The message further announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2761, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Speaker appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the British-American Interparliamentary Group: Mr. ROE of Tennessee.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 12:47 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker had signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 2431. An act to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 1423. An act to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1944. An act to protect private property rights; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 2530. An act to improve transparency and efficiency with respect to audits and communications between taxpayers and the Internal Revenue Service; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 2531. An act to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from asking taxpayers questions regarding religious, political, or social beliefs; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 3308. An act to require a Federal agency to include language in certain educational and advertising materials indicating that such materials are produced and disseminated at taxpayer expense; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

H.R. 3865. An act to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from modifying the standard for determining whether an organization is operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare for purposes of section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

S. 2062. A bill to authorize Members of Congress to bring an action for declaratory and injunctive relief in response to a written statement by the President or any other official in the executive branch directing officials of the executive branch to not enforce a provision of law.

S. 2066. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the intentional discrimination of a person or organization by an employee of the Internal Revenue Service.

S. 2067. A bill to prohibit the Department of the Treasury from assigning tax statuses to organizations based on their political beliefs and activities.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. LEVIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

Air Force nomination of Brig. Gen. Travis D. Balch, to be Major General.

Air Force nomination of Col. Nathaniel S. Reddicks, to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nomination of Brig. Gen. James C. Witham, to be Major General.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Michael E. Williamson, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Col. Thomas R. Tempel, Jr., to be Major General.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Kevin W. Mangum, to be Lieutenant General.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. William T. Collins and ending with Brig. Gen. James S. Hartsell, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 30, 2014.

Marine Corps nomination of Lt. Gen. Robert E. Schmidle, Jr., to be Lieutenant General.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. Jan E. Tighe, to be Vice Admiral.

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

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

Air Force nominations beginning with Kathryn L. Aasen and ending with John K. Walton, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with David M. Berthe and ending with Paul A. Willingham, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Amy R. Astonlassiter and ending with Aimee N. Zakaluzny, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Elizabeth R. Andersondoze and ending with Aaron T. Yu, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Wesley M. Abadie and ending with Scott A. Zakaluzny, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with William E. Dickens, Jr. and ending with Richard R. Givens II, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 30, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Kyle William Blasch and ending with Andrew T. Maccabe, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 30, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Luan Tran Le and ending with David C. Schaefer, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 30, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Cynthia B. Camp and ending with Bryan M. Winter, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 30, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Laura I. Fernandez and ending with Albert C. Rees, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 30, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Diane M. Doty and ending with Edward D. Ronnebaum, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 30, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Richard L. Allen and ending with Sandra R. Volden, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 30, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Connie L. Alge and ending with Kenneth E. Yee, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 30, 2014.

Army nomination of Sun Y. Kim, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of William T. Monacci, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Glennie Z. Kertes, to be Major.

Army nomination of Charles A. Williams, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Roger J. Belbel and ending with Yves P. Leblanc, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 6, 2014.

Army nomination of Michael E. Cannon, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Aizenhawar J. Marrogi, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Thomas E. Byrne and ending with James H. Chang, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Army nominations beginning with Christopher D. Coulson and ending with Michael Woodruff, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Army nominations beginning with Edward Ahn and ending with D012017, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Ernest P. Abelson II and ending with David D. Zyga, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 7, 2014.

Marine Corps nomination of Ryan M. Oleksy, to be Major.

Marine Corps nomination of Sean T. Hays, to be Major.

Marine Corps nomination of Lakendrick D. Wright, to be Major.

Marine Corps nomination of John E. Simpson III, to be Major.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Bill W. Brooks, Jr. and ending with Michael W. Costa, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Marine Corps nomination of James R. Keller, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Marine Corps nomination of Clennon Roe III, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Marine Corps nomination of Anthony Redman, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Marine Corps nomination of Jeffrey P. Wooldridge, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Billy A. Dubose and ending with John P. Mullery, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Christopher S. Eichner and ending with James Smiley, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Randall E. Davis and ending with Wade E. Wallace, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Damon L. Andersen and ending with Richardo A. Spann, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Paulo T. Alves and ending with Patrick J. Toal, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Christian D. Galbraith and ending with Mark J. Lehman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Timothy J. Aldrich and ending with Chris A. Storey, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Kenneth L. Aikey and ending with Scott B. Roland, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Terry H. Choi and ending with Freddie D. Taylor, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

Navy nomination of Leon M. Leflore, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Gregory D. Sutton, to be Commander.

Navy nomination of Chad C. Schumacher, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nominations beginning with Jack D. Hagan and ending with Richard S. Montgomery, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 6, 2014.

Navy nominations beginning with Reinel Castro and ending with Dustin R. Ward, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 6, 2014.

Navy nomination of Megan M. Donnelly, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Danielle L. Leiby, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nominations beginning with Michael R. Cathey and ending with Andrew J. Young, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 10, 2014.

By Mr. HARKIN for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

*Portia Y. Wu, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

*Massie Ritsch, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Communications and Outreach, Department of Education.

*Vivek Hallegere Murthy, of Massachusetts, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, subject to qualifications therefor as provided by law and regulations, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service for a term of four years.

*Heather L. MacDougall, of Florida, to be a Member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission for a term expiring April 27, 2017.

*Christopher P. Lu, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor.

By Mr. LEAHY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Steven Paul Logan, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

John Joseph Tuchi, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

Diane J. Humetewa, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

Rosemary Marquez, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

Douglas L. Rayes, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

James Alan Soto, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

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

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. KIRK:

S. 2050. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the national limitation amount for qualified highway or surface freight transfer facility bonds; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 2051. A bill to provide States with greater flexibility in innovative highway financing; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. REED, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2052. A bill to reauthorize the weatherization and State energy programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2053. A bill to direct the Architect of the Capitol to place a chair honoring American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action on the Capitol Grounds; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. HARKIN):

S. 2054. A bill to require certain standards and enforcement provisions to prevent child abuse and neglect in residential programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. PRYOR):

S. 2055. A bill to allow for the collection of certain user fees by non-Federal entities; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 2056. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 13127 Broadway Street in Alden, New York, as the ''Sergeant Brett E. Gornewicz Memorial Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 2057. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 198 Baker Street in Corning, New York, as the ''Specialist Ryan P. Jayne Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BEGICH:

S. 2058. A bill to establish a loan guarantee program for natural gas distribution grids to be installed in areas with extremely high energy costs; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. BEGICH:

S. 2059. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit for the purchase of heating and cooling equipment which meets the Energy Star program requirements and is used in certain high-cost energy communities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 2060. A bill to direct the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board to develop accessibility guidelines for electronic instructional materials and related information technologies in institutions of higher education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 2061. A bill to prevent conflicts of interest relating to contractors providing background investigation fieldwork services and investigative support services; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 2062. A bill to authorize Members of Congress to bring an action for declaratory and injunctive relief in response to a written statement by the President or any other official in the executive branch directing officials of the executive branch to not enforce a provision of law; read the first time.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 2063. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to assist States to rehabilitate or replace certain bridges, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. ROBERTS:

S. 2064. A bill to provide for the repeal of certain provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that have the effect of rationing health care; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself and Mr. LEVIN):

S. 2065. A bill to create incentives for the development of alternative fuel vehicles; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 2066. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the intentional discrimination of a person or organization by an employee of the Internal Revenue Service; read the first time.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 2067. A bill to prohibit the Department of the Treasury from assigning tax statuses to organizations based on their political beliefs and activities; read the first time.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2068. A bill to provide for the development and use of technology for personalized handguns, to require that, within 3 years, all handguns manufactured or sold in, or imported into, the United States incorporate such technology, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BEGICH (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. WARNER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WALSH, Ms. HIRONO, and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 2069. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand and modify the credit for employee health insurance expenses of small employers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2070. A bill to reduce the number of nuclear-armed submarines operated by the Navy, to prohibit the development of a new long-range penetrating bomber aircraft, to prohibit the procurement of new intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BEGICH:

S. 2071. A bill to establish outer Continental Shelf lease and permit processing coordination offices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 2072. A bill to prohibit the Department of the Treasury from assigning tax statuses to organizations based on their political beliefs and activities; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 2073. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the intentional discrimination of a person or organization by an employee of the Internal Revenue Service; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. COONS, Mr. WARNER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. HOEVEN, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 2074. A bill to promote energy savings in residential buildings and industry, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr.

BLUNT, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. ENZI):

S. Res. 364. A resolution expressing support for the internal rebuilding, resettlement, and reconciliation within Sri Lanka that are necessary to ensure a lasting peace; to the Committee on Foreign Relations .

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. NELSON):

S. Res. 365. A resolution deploring the violent repression of peaceful demonstrators in Venezuela, calling for full accountability for human rights violations taking place in Venezuela, and supporting the right of the Venezuelan people to the free and peaceful exercise of representative democracy; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. BROWN):

S. Res. 366. A resolution expressing support for the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week; considered and agreed to.

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

S. Res. 367. A resolution designating March 3, 2014, as ''Read Across America Day''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COONS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. PRYOR, and Ms. WARREN):

S. Res. 368. A resolution designating February 28, 2014, as ''Rare Disease Day''; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. Con. Res. 33. A concurrent resolution celebrating the 100th anniversary of the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act, which established the nationwide Cooperative Extension System; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 135

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 135, a bill to amend title X of the Public Health Service Act to prohibit family planning grants from being awarded to any entity that performs abortions, and for other purposes.

S. 232

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 232, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

S. 313

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 313, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the tax treatment of ABLE accounts established under State programs for the care of family members with disabilities, and for other purposes.

S. 370

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 370, a bill to improve and expand geographic literacy among kindergarten through grade 12 students in the United States by improving professional development programs for kindergarten through grade 12 teachers offered through institutions of higher education.

S. 489

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 489, a bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to increase and adjust for inflation the maximum value of articles that may be imported duty-free by one person on one day, and for other purposes.

S. 635

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 635, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 635, supra.

S. 1008

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1008, a bill to prohibit the Secretary of Homeland Security from implementing proposed policy changes that would permit passengers to carry small, non-locking knives on aircraft.

S. 1070

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1070, a bill to make it unlawful to alter or remove the unique equipment identification number of a mobile device.

S. 1086

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1086, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

S. 1174

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1174, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers.

S. 1187

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1187, a bill to prevent homeowners from being forced to pay taxes on forgiven mortgage loan debt.

S. 1269

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1269, a bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to support community college and industry partnerships, and for other purposes.

S. 1322

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1322, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act relating to controlled substance analogues.

S. 1456

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1456, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Shimon Peres.

S. 1495

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. JOHANNS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1495, a bill to direct the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to issue an order with respect to secondary cockpit barriers, and for other purposes.

S. 1531

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1531, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the types of wines taxed as hard cider.

S. 1562

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1562, a bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 1657

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1657, a bill to reduce prescription drug misuse and abuse.

S. 1697

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1697, a bill to support early learning.

S. 1737

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1737, a bill to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend increased expensing limitations and the treatment of certain real property as section 179 property.

S. 1738

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1738, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

S. 1794

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1794, a bill to designate certain Federal land in Chaffee County, Colorado, as a national monument and as wilderness.

S. 1862

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Delaware

(Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1862, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Monuments Men, in recognition of their heroic role in the preservation, protection, and restitution of monuments, works of art, and artifacts of cultural importance during and following World War II.

S. 1923

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1923, a bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to exempt from registration brokers performing services in connection with the transfer of ownership of smaller privately held companies.

S. 1980

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1980, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide for 12-month continuous enrollment under the Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program and to promote quality care.

S. 2026

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2026, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income any prizes or awards won in competition in the Olympic Games or the Paralympic Games.

S. 2037

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2037, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to remove the 96-hour physician certification requirement for inpatient critical access hospital services.

S. CON. RES. 6

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 6, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 2752

At the request of Mr. BURR, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 2752 intended to be proposed to S. 1982, a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2760

At the request of Mr. COBURN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2760 intended to be proposed to S. 1982, a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2762

At the request of Mr. COBURN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2762 intended to be proposed to S. 1982, a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. ROBERTS:

S. 2064. A bill to provide for the repeal of certain provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that have the effect of rationing health care; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss ObamaCare provisions that should be keeping my colleagues and all Americans up at night. Obviously, my views are very different from my colleagues who have just propounded their views on the same subject.

Unfortunately, since the implementation of ObamaCare began, the stories and reports have only confirmed the many warnings that I and many of my colleagues made during the debate. Most of the stories Kansans tell me now involve many hundreds of dollars in increases in monthly premiums or people simply losing their coverage. These are real stories from real Kansans, and they are not lies.

Compounding the problem, this administration has made it a routine practice to do what we call a regulations dump on Friday. This is a deliberate posting of sometimes thousands of pages of regulations during the time when the American public and the press is least likely to be paying attention.

Most recent reports from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services—what we call CMS—are that millions of small businesses will face increased premium rates under ObamaCare. The President promised to make it easier for small businesses to offer coverage and, lo and behold, it may even become impossible for them to do so.

Then there are the cuts our seniors are about to face to their Medicare plans. We can't forget that the President pilfered—that is a good word, pilfered—$1 trillion from Medicare to pay for ObamaCare. These cuts have been delayed, but the most recent regulation on Part D and Medicare Advantage will be extremely detrimental to seniors' access to the availability of Medicare plans. And because of this, for once—for once—I wish to speak about a subject where we get ahead of the curve, get in front of the next disaster, and repeal specific provisions of this law that I think will be most harmful to patients.

I have talked before about how this law comes between patients and doctors, but I think we need to bring more attention to the specter of what I call rationing—yes, rationing. In the absence of complete repeal, I urge my colleagues that these provisions must be repealed.

During the health care reform debate, and many times since then, I have spoken at length about rationing. Specifically, I want people to know about what I refer to as the four rations that are included in ObamaCare. Yes, this is a very real threat. And, yes, they will ration care.

Let me start with something called the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Innovation Center. That is a pretty big, fancy government name. The Center has an enormous budget to match, aimed at finding innovative ways to reform payment and the delivery of health care. That sounds very good, but what this means is that the ''innovation center'' can now use taxpayer dollars to invest in ways to reduce patient access to care.

Let me say that again. The government can now use taxpayer dollars to invest in ways to reduce patient access to care. It gives the government new powers to cut payments to Medicare beneficiaries with the goal to reduce program expenditures. The reality is they are going to reduce patients' ability to access the care they want and need—all hidden under the cloak of innovation. And that isn't innovation at all. Even if they did give it a fancy title, folks, it is smoke and mirrors. This outfit is already pushing out all of the regulations to implement ObamaCare that are now hurting patients—all the regulations we hear about from our health care providers.

Let me move to the second ration. It grants new authorities to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force—that is another nice-sounding entity with a long title. This Preventive Services Task Force used to be a body that was scientific and academic, that reviewed treatment, testing, and prevention information, and made recommendations for primary doctors. Nothing is wrong with that. It used to be an academic body that made recommendations, not a body pushing through mandates and regulations. Many would argue that is still what they do today. However, the effect of their recommendations is they are significantly more costly and burdensome. Because of ObamaCare, the task force can now decide what should and, more importantly, should not be covered by health plans. That is not prevention, that is rationing. If the task force doesn't recommend it, then it won't be covered by health plans and patients bear the cost of the procedure. We are seeing this already with things such as prostate exams and mammograms for breast cancer which have been so helpful to so many people—saved their lives.

The third rationer is the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute. Yes, that is another mouthful. This is the outfit that was given millions and millions of dollars to do comparative effectiveness research. I am not opposed to research. I don't know anyone in this body who is opposed to research, especially when it is used to inform the conversation between doctors

and their patients. But there is a reason this was formerly called cost-effective research. There is a very fine line between providing information to doctors and patients to determine the best course of care and using that information to decide whether the care or treatment is worth paying for. I have long been concerned that instead this research will be abused to arbitrarily deny patients access to potentially lifesaving treatments or services. That simply should not happen. The research should only be used for the doctor and the patient to make the best health care decision.

Finally, the fourth rationer—my personal nemesis—the Independent Payment Advisory Board—IPAD. This is a board made up of 15 unelected bureaucrats who will decide what gets to stay and what gets to go in Medicare coverage. They will decide which treatments and services will be covered and which will not, with no accountability whatsoever.

When proposed, supporters of the health care law told me: We are too close to our constituents. It is too difficult to make the hard decisions.

Then they said: Let's have somebody else do it.

That was during the debate with regard to IPAD.

I couldn't believe it. I believe we are elected to make the hard decisions and take care of the hard votes, and I believe that is the way Kansans want it, and I think that is the way virtually everybody in every other State wants it. This board diminishes our constitutional responsibility.

Even worse is the fine print of the Independent Payment Advisory Board, or IPAD. If Kansans or any Americans determine they do not like the direction the board is taking and they call my office and, down the road, any other office of any other distinguished Senator to ask me to do something about it—which is what you get when you go back home on any regulation today: what are you going to do about it?—it will take 60 votes in the Senate to overturn their decision—60.

On the surface this sounds OK until you realize that the President doubtless will never support Congress overturning the recommendation of this board made up of his bureaucrats. So he will veto it, and overriding a veto, obviously, takes a two-thirds vote. That is 66 votes to overturn a decision by the payment board.

My colleagues have been changing the rules around here because they think 60 votes is too high a threshold. What are the chances of reaching 66? But wait. There is even more. If the Secretary appoints a board unable to make recommendations for cuts to Medicare—tough decisions, albeit—then she gets the authority to make the decision of what to cut, one person.

This President has already cut $½ trillion from Medicare to pay for ObamaCare and gave himself the ability to go after even more Medicare dollars and have no accountability. This, my friends, is frightening; it is ridiculous; it is irresponsible; but it is not new.

I have been talking about the four rationers for a long time and what it means to patients, especially senior patients.

What upsets me, scares me, as I watch all the other warnings and broken promises come true, is what is going to happen to Kansans and all the folks back home when the warnings about the four rationers come true.

We need to protect the all-important doctor-patient relationship, which the four rationers put at risk. That is why today I come to the floor to introduce the Four Rationers Repeal Act of 2014.

For once, look beyond the current troubles we are experiencing. We have to get ahead of the curve. This legislation repeals the Independent Payment Advisory Board; it repeals the euphemistically but misleadingly named Innovation Center; it repeals the changes made to the Preventive Services Task Force; and it makes sure any—any—comparative effectiveness research, called CER, is used by the doctor and patient, not coverage providers or CMS, to determine the best care for patients.

This legislation is relatively simple. It should be supported by all of my colleagues to address some of the egregious changes from ObamaCare that are about to happen just around the bend. It is time to get ahead of the curve this time, prevent it.

I really believe that in order to protect this all-important doctor-patient relationship, we need to repeal and, most importantly, replace ObamaCare with the real reforms that work for Kansans and all Americans.

However, in the meantime we can also start taking it down, piece by piece, which is what my Four Rationers Repeal Act does. I urge my colleagues to support this proposal. For once, let's get ahead of the curve.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself and Mr. LEVIN):

S. 2065. A bill to create incentives for the development of alternative fuel vehicles; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, today I join with Senator INHOFE to introduce a bill to incentivize the production and use of alternative fuel vehicles, including natural gas vehicles, NGVs, and plug-in-electric hybrids. Encouraging the production of alternative fuel vehicles will help to diversify our fuel mix, while reducing our reliance on imported oil and also reducing carbon emissions. In the U.S. alone, NGVs offset the use of nearly 360 million gallons of gasoline in 2011. We hope our bill will help increase that number.

The moment is right to capitalize on the abundance of domestically sourced natural gas. Already, American manufacturers have benefited from the availability of domestically produced natural gas, reducing the cost of US-based production and contributing to the return of manufacturing to the United States. If we can expand the use of natural gas to fuel our vehicles, then American consumers can also benefit from this cleaner and cheaper domestic fuel.

Michigan has become a leading innovator in advanced alternative fuel vehicles and is revolutionizing our transportation sector. As automakers in Michigan and elsewhere manufacture NGVs they face the dilemma often encountered when introducing an alternative fueled vehicle: what will come first, the NGV infrastructure or the vehicle itself? This is the classic chicken and egg question. Ethanol, Diesel and electric vehicles all faced this challenge when first introduced. Our bill will allow Michigan to continue to innovate and harness the power and benefits that domestically sourced alternative fuels have to offer this country.

The benefits of expanding the number of natural gas and alternative fuel vehicles on our roads are numerous. Up to 90 percent of the natural gas used in the United States comes from the United States. We need to tap into this domestic resource for our transportation needs and take an aggressive approach to reducing our dependence on foreign oil. Consumers should also have more choice and flexibility when it comes to fueling their vehicles. This bill allows for that. At the moment natural gas is about half the price of gasoline. Consumers should be able to benefit from these reduced prices. Furthermore, vehicles running on natural gas have 20–30 percent less CO_2 tailpipe emissions than gasoline fueled vehicles. Because natural gas burns cleaner, it increases the life of the car. It has no lead or benzene or other chemicals that break down auto parts or dilute lubricants.

These are all desirable reasons to encourage more NGV production. The use of natural gas vehicles is expanding among private fleets used by airports and transit agencies where refueling infrastructure is available. However, the chicken and egg dilemma is slowing the adoption of both dedicated and bi-fuel natural gas vehicles among light-duty passenger vehicles.

Our legislation would incentivize both production and consumer demand for alternative fuel vehicles such as natural gas vehicles and plug-in electric hybrids by expanding regulatory incentives. It would also provide consumers with an added incentive to drive natural gas vehicles by giving them access to high occupancy vehicle, HOV, lanes. Giving consumers an additional benefit such as HOV access could help increase demand for these vehicles and the fueling stations that are necessary to support them.

The President outlined in his State of the Union his goal to achieve energy independence through the use of alternative fuels. He specifically mentioned natural gas as the bridge fuel that can

grow our economy, create jobs for the middle class, and reduce carbon pollution. I am pleased to introduce legislation today that takes a step toward meeting that goal.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 364—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE INTERNAL REBUILDING, RESETTLEMENT, AND RECONCILIATION WITHIN SRI LANKA THAT ARE NECESSARY TO ENSURE A LASTING PEACE

Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. ENZI) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations :

S. RES. 364

Whereas May 19, 2014, marks the five-year anniversary of the end of the 26 year civil war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government of Sri Lanka;

Whereas the people of Sri Lanka suffered greatly as a result of this conflict, the impact and aftermath of which has been felt by all, especially by women, children, and families;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka established a ''Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission'' (LLRC) to report whether any person, group, or institution directly or indirectly bears responsibility for incidents that occurred between February 2002 and May 2009 and to recommend measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the future and promote further national unity and reconciliation among all communities;

Whereas the LLRC report was presented to the Sri Lankan Parliament on December 16, 2011, and officially translated into Sinhala and Tamil on August 16, 2012;

Whereas the LLRC report acknowledges important events and grievances that have contributed to decades of political violence and war in Sri Lanka and makes constructive recommendations on a wide range of issues, including the need to credibly investigate widespread allegations of extrajudicial killings; enforced disappearances; intentional targeting of civilians and noncombatants; demilitarizing the north and the country as a whole; reaching a political settlement with minority communities on the meaningful decentralization of power; and promoting and protecting the right to freedom of expression for all through the enactment of a right to information law and additional rule of law reforms;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka developed the National Plan of Action to implement the recommendations of the LLRC and has made significant progress within limited time in the implementation of the National Plan of Action, notably in the areas of demining, rehabilitation of ex-combatants, resettlement of displaced persons, improvements of infrastructure and social services in the North and East, as well as investigations into complaints regarding persons who have disappeared during the war;

Whereas there have been reports of attacks on places of worship and restrictions on the media in several places in Sri Lanka;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka expressed its commitment to address the needs of all ethnic groups and has recognized the necessity of a political settlement and reconciliation for a peaceful and just society, which is a long-term process that will need to be driven by the people of Sri Lanka themselves;

Whereas the September 21, 2013, elections in Sri Lanka for the Northern, Central, and North Western Provincial Councils were an important step in fulfilling this commitment;

Whereas these elections were made possible through a sustained effort by the Government of Sri Lanka to restore infrastructure in the North and put in place a system for the conduct of the elections;

Whereas the elections allowed the people of the North of Sri Lanka to exercise their political rights that had been withheld from them for more than 20 years by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and resulted in a clear victory for the provincial wing of the Tamil National Alliance;

Whereas Sri Lanka is enjoying rapid economic growth as an important hub for shipping transport, technology, and tourism in the South Asia region;

Whereas Sri Lanka is of great strategic importance to the United States, due to its location, deep-water ports, and proximity to the world's busiest shipping lanes, an importance noticed and pursued by other significant powers; and

Whereas Sri Lanka seeks to be a key United States partner in the fight against terrorism and Indian Ocean piracy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) calls upon the President to develop a comprehensive and well balanced policy towards Sri Lanka that reflects United States interests, including respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, as well as economic and security interests;

(2) calls on the United States Government and the international community to assist the Government of Sri Lanka, with due regard to its sovereignty, stability, and security, in establishing domestic mechanisms to deal with any grievances arising from actions committed by both sides during and after the civil war in Sri Lanka;

(3) encourages the Government of Sri Lanka to put in place a truth and reconciliation commission similar to the one adopted by South Africa to help heal the wounds of war, taking into account the unique characteristics of the conflict and its aftermath; and

(4) urges the Government of Sri Lanka to improve religious and media freedoms and to bring to justice those responsible for attacks on journalists and newspaper offices as well as places of worship, regardless of religion.

SENATE RESOLUTION 365—DEPLORING THE VIOLENT REPRESSION OF PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATORS IN VENEZUELA, CALLING FOR FULL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS TAKING PLACE IN VENEZUELA, AND SUPPORTING THE RIGHT OF THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE TO THE FREE AND PEACEFUL EXERCISE OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. NELSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.:

S. RES. 365

Whereas the Government of Venezuela's chronic mismanagement of its economy has produced inflation that exceeds 50 percent annually, currency shortages, economic distortions, and the routine absence of basic goods and foodstuffs;

Whereas the Government of Venezuela's failure to guarantee minimal standards of public security for its citizens has led the country to become one of the most violent in the world, with the per capita homicide rate in the city of Caracas exceeding 115 per 100,000 people;

Whereas the Government of Venezuela has taken continued steps to remove checks and balances on the executive, politicize the judiciary, undermine the independence of the legislature through use of executive decree powers, persecute and prosecute its political opponents, curtail freedom of the press, and limit the free expression of its citizens;

Whereas, on January 23, 2014, National Representative Maria Corina Machado and Mr. Leopoldo López, leader of the political party ''Popular Will'', among others, called on the Venezuelan people to gather in street assemblies and debate a popular, democratic and constitutional ''way out'' of Venezuela's crisis of governability;

Whereas, since February 4, 2014, the people of Venezuela—responding to ongoing economic hardship, high levels of crime and violence, and the lack of basic political rights and individual freedoms—have turned out in demonstrations in Caracas and throughout the country to protest the Government of Venezuela's inability to ensure the political and economic well-being of its citizens;

Whereas the government of Nicolas Maduro responded to the mass demonstrations by ordering the arrest without evidence of senior opposition leaders, including Mr. Leopoldo Lopez, Carlos Vecchio, and Antonio Rivero, and by violently repressing peaceful demonstrators with the help of the Venezuelan National Guard and groups of armed, government-affiliated civilians, known as ''collectives'';

Whereas, on February 18, 2014, opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez turned himself in to authorities in Venezuela, was arrested, and charged unjustly with criminal incitement, conspiracy, arson, and intent to damage property;

Whereas the Maduro government has sought to censor information about the demonstrations and the government's violent crackdown by blocking online images and threatening the few remaining uncensored domestic media outlets;

Whereas President Maduro threatened to expel the United States news network CNN from Venezuela and has taken off the air the Colombian news channel NTN 24, which transmits in Venezuela, after news outlets reported on the nation-wide protests;

Whereas the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights released a statement on February 14, 2014, which ''expresses its concern over the serious incidents of violence that have taken place in the context of protest demonstrations in Venezuela, as well as other complaints concerning acts of censorship against media outlets, attacks on organizations that defend human rights, and acts of alleged political persecution''; and

Whereas, as of February 27, 2014, there have been 13 people killed, over 100 injured, and dozens have been unjustly detained due to pro-democracy demonstrations throughout Venezuela: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms United States support for the people of Venezuela in their pursuit of the free exercise of representative democracy as guaranteed by the Venezuelan constitution

and defined under the Inter-American Democratic Charter of the Organization of American States;

(2) deplores the use of excessive and unlawful force against peaceful demonstrators in Venezuela and the inexcusable use of violence and politically-motivated criminal charges to intimidate the country's political opposition;

(3) calls on the Government of Venezuela to disarm and dismantle the system of ''colectivos'' or ''collectives'' and any other government-affiliated or supported militias or vigilante groups;

(4) calls on the Government of Venezuela to allow an impartial, third-party investigation into the excessive and unlawful force against peaceful demonstrations on multiple occasions since February 4th, 2014;

(5) urges the President to immediately impose targeted sanctions, including visa bans and asset freezes, against individuals planning, facilitating, or perpetrating gross human rights violations against peaceful demonstrators, journalists, and other members of civil society in Venezuela; and

(6) calls for the United States Government to work with other countries in the hemisphere to actively encourage a process of dialogue between the Government of Venezuela and the political opposition through the good offices of the Organization of American States so that the voices of all Venezuelans can be taken into account through their country's constitutional institutions as well as free and fair elections.

SENATE RESOLUTION 366—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. CASEY (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. BROWN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 366

Whereas multiple sclerosis (MS) can impact people of all ages, races, and ethnicities;

Whereas MS is 2 to 3 times more common in women than in men;

Whereas while MS is not directly inherited, studies show there are genetic and, probably, environmental, ethnic, and geographic factors that make certain individuals more susceptible to the disease;

Whereas worldwide, there are approximately 2,300,000 people who have been diagnosed with MS;

Whereas MS is typically diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, however, it is estimated that between 8,000 and 10,000 children and adolescents in the United States are living with MS;

Whereas MS is an unpredictable neurological disease that interrupts the flow of information within the brain and between the brain and the rest of the body;

Whereas symptoms of MS range from numbness and tingling in the extremities to blindness and paralysis, and the progress, severity, and specific symptoms of MS in any affected individual cannot yet be predicted;

Whereas there is no single laboratory test available that provides a definitive diagnosis for MS;

Whereas the exact cause of MS is still unknown, and there is no cure;

Whereas the Multiple Sclerosis Coalition, a national network of independent organizations dedicated to enhancing quality of life for all those affected by MS, recognizes and supports Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week during March of every year;

Whereas the mission of the Multiple Sclerosis Coalition is to enhance cooperation among organizations to provide greater benefits to individuals and families affected by MS;

Whereas the goals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week are to invite people to join the movement to end MS, encourage people to demonstrate their commitment to moving toward a world free from MS, and acknowledge those who have dedicated their time and talent to advancing MS research and programs; and

Whereas this year Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week is being recognized during the week of March 3, 2014, through March 9, 2014: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week;

(2) supports promoting awareness of individuals who are affected by multiple sclerosis;

(3) encourages States, localities, and the territories and possessions of the United States to support the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week by issuing proclamations designating March 3, 2014, through March 9, 2014, as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week;

(4) commends the efforts of States, localities, and the territories and possessions of the United States to support the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week;

(5) encourages media organizations to participate in Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week by educating the public about multiple sclerosis;

(6) recognizes and reaffirms the commitment of the United States to ending multiple sclerosis by supporting multiple sclerosis research and education programs;

(7) supports all individuals in the United States living with multiple sclerosis;

(8) expresses gratitude to the family and friends of individuals living with multiple sclerosis, who are a source of love and encouragement to those individuals; and

(9) salutes the health care professionals and medical researchers who—

(A) provide assistance to individuals affected by multiple sclerosis; and

(B) continue to work towards finding new ways to stop the progression of the disease, treat its symptoms, and end multiple sclerosis forever.

SENATE RESOLUTION 367—DESIGNATING MARCH 3, 2014, AS ''READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY''

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

S. RES. 367

Whereas reading is a basic requirement for quality education and professional success, and is a source of pleasure throughout life;

Whereas the people of the United States must be able to read if the United States is to remain competitive in the global economy;

Whereas Congress has placed great emphasis on reading intervention and providing additional resources for reading assistance, including through the programs authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) and through annual appropriations for library and literacy programs; and

Whereas more than 50 national organizations concerned about reading and education have joined with the National Education Association to designate March 3, the day after the anniversary of the birth of Theodor Geisel (also known as ''Dr. Seuss''), as a day to celebrate reading: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 3, 2014, as ''Read Across America Day'';

(2) honors Theodor Geisel (also known as ''Dr. Seuss'') for his success in encouraging children to discover the joy of reading;

(3) honors the 17th anniversary of Read Across America Day;

(4) encourages parents to read with their children for at least 30 minutes on Read Across America Day in honor of the commitment of the Senate to building a country of readers; and

(5) encourages the people of the United States to observe Read Across America Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 368—DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 28, 2014, AS ''RARE DISEASE DAY''

Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COONS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. PRYOR, and Ms. WARREN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 368

Whereas a rare disease or disorder is one that affects a small number of patients – in the United States, typically less than 200,000 individuals annually;

Whereas as of the date of approval of this resolution, nearly 7,000 rare diseases affect approximately 30,000,000 people in the United States and their families;

Whereas children with rare genetic diseases account for more than half of the population affected by rare diseases in the United States;

Whereas many rare diseases are serious, life-threatening, and lack an effective treatment;

Whereas great strides have been made in research and treatment for rare diseases as a result of the Orphan Drug Act (Public Law 97-414);

Whereas the Food and Drug Administration has made great strides in involving the patient in the drug review process as part of its Patient-Focused Drug Development program, an initiative that originated in the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act (Public Law 112-144);

Whereas a third of all treatments approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2013 were orphan products intended to treat rare diseases;

Whereas lack of access to effective treatments and difficulty in obtaining reimbursement for life-altering, and even life-saving, treatments still exist and remain significant challenges for the rare disease community and their families;

Whereas rare diseases and conditions include epidermolysis bullosa, progeria, sickle cell anemia, spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD), Tay-Sachs, cystic fibrosis, pulmonary fibrosis, many childhood cancers, and fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva;

Whereas people with rare diseases experience challenges that include difficulty in obtaining accurate diagnoses, limited treatment options, and difficulty finding physicians or treatment centers with expertise in their diseases;

Whereas the rare disease community made great strides in 2013, including the passage of the National Pediatric Research Network Act (Public Law 113-55), which calls special

attention to rare diseases and directs the National Institutes of Health to facilitate greater collaboration among researchers;

Whereas both the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health have established special offices to advocate for rare disease research and treatments;

Whereas the National Organization for Rare Disorders, an organization established in 1983 to provide services to and advocate on behalf of patients with rare diseases, remains a critical public voice for people with rare diseases;

Whereas 2013 marked the 30th anniversary of the Orphan Drug Act and the National Organization for Rare Disorders;

Whereas the National Organization for Rare Disorders sponsors Rare Disease Day in the United States to increase public awareness of rare diseases;

Whereas Rare Disease Day is observed each year on the last day of February;

Whereas Rare Disease Day is a global event, first observed in the United States on February 28, 2009, and observed in 60 countries in 2013; and

Whereas Rare Disease Day is expected to be observed globally for years to come, providing hope and information for rare disease patients around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates February 28, 2014, as ''Rare Disease Day'';

(2) recognizes the importance of improving awareness and encouraging accurate and early diagnosis of rare diseases and disorders; and

(3) supports a national and global commitment to improving access to, and developing new treatments, diagnostics, and cures for rare diseases and disorders.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 33—CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENACTMENT OF THE SMITH-LEVER ACT, WHICH ESTABLISHED THE NATIONWIDE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:

S. CON. RES. 33

Whereas May 8, 2014, marks the centennial of the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.), which established the Cooperative Extension System, the nationwide transformative education system operating through land-grant colleges and universities (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103)) in partnership with Federal, State, and local governments;

Whereas Senator Michael Hoke Smith of Georgia and Representative Asbury Francis Lever of South Carolina authored the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.) to bring the research-based knowledge of land-grant colleges and universities to individuals where the individuals live and work;

Whereas the first section of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 341) states that the purpose of the Act is ''to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture, uses of solar energy with respect to agriculture, home economics, and rural energy, and to encourage the application of the same'' through extension work carried out by the land-grant colleges and universities;

Whereas cooperative extension work is a critical component of the three-part mission of the land-grant colleges and universities to work collaboratively with research institutions, in particular the State agriculture experiment stations and 106 colleges and universities, in each State of the United States, the District of Columbia, and each territory or possession of the United States, including—

(1) part B institutions (as defined in section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1061));

(2) 1994 Institutions (as defined in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law 103-382)); and

(3) Hispanic-serving institutions (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103));

Whereas research-based education provided through the Cooperative Extension System to farmers and ranchers helped establish the United States as a leading agricultural-producing nation in the world;

Whereas, in 1924, the clover emblem was adopted by the Department of Agriculture to represent the 4–H Clubs through which the nationwide youth development program of the Cooperative Extension System is carried out;

Whereas, since 1924, 4–H Clubs have prepared millions of youth for responsible adulthood;

Whereas cooperative extension activities—

(1) prepare individuals for healthy, productive lives via sustained education, such as the nutrition education program established under section 1425 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3175);

(2) help to break the cycle of poverty; and

(3) reduce the expenditures of Federal and State assistance programs;

Whereas educational activities carried out under the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.) provide rapid response to disasters and emergencies, such as through the Extension Disaster Education Network and other similar efforts, by providing real-time alerts and resources so that educators can respond to urgent needs resulting from hurricanes, floods, oil spills, fire, drought, pest outbreaks, and infectious diseases affecting humans, livestock, and crops;

Whereas cooperative extension activities translate science-based research for practical application through local and online learning networks in which educators are uniquely available to identify emerging research questions, connect with land-grant college or university faculty to find answers, and encourage the application of the findings of that research to improve economic and social conditions;

Whereas cooperative extension activities engage with rural and urban learners through practical, community-based, and online approaches resulting in the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to strengthen the profitability of animal and plant production systems, protect natural resources, help individuals make healthy lifestyle choices, ensure a safe and abundant food supply, encourage community vitality, and grow the next generation of leaders; and

Whereas many States are celebrating the centennial of the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.) with resolutions and proclamations, and many land-grant colleges and universities are also commemorating the enactment of that historic Act: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) recognizes the significance of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.) to the establishment of the Cooperative Extension System;

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe and celebrate the centennial with a focus on launching an innovative and sustainable future for the Cooperative Extension System;

(3) honors the university faculty and local educators who dedicate careers to providing trusted educational programs to help people, families, youth, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future;

(4) thanks the volunteers who provide thousands of hours to promote excellence for 4–H Clubs, the Master Gardeners program, the Family and Consumer Sciences program, and other programs of the Cooperative Extension System in their communities;

(5) encourages continued collaboration and cooperation among Federal, State, and local governments to ensure the sustainability of the Cooperative Extension System as the premiere nonformal educational network in the United States; and

(6) celebrates millions of youth, adults, families, farmers, ranchers, community leaders, and others who engage in cooperative extension learning opportunities designed to extend knowledge and change lives.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2780. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2781. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2782. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2783. Mrs. MCCASKILL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2784. Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2785. Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. JOHANNS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2786. Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2787. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2788. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2789. Ms. KLOBUCHAR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2790. Ms. KLOBUCHAR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2791. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. AYOTTE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2792. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her

to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2793. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. AYOTTE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2794. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2795. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2796. Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. JOHANNS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2797. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2798. Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MURPHY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2799. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2800. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2801. Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2802. Mr. BOOZMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2803. Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. MARKEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2804. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2780. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 207, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

SEC. 446. PILOT PROGRAM ON TRAINING SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY VETERANS ON FEDERAL CONTRACTING.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall commence a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing training to eligible small businesses on contracting with the Federal Government for the procurement of property or services.

(b) ELIGIBLE SMALL BUSINESS.—For purposes of this section, an eligible small business is a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans that—

(1) has operated for not fewer than two years;

(2) has not fewer than three full-time equivalent employees; and

(3) has experience providing a property or service to the Federal Government as a contractor or subcontractor.

(c) DURATION.—The pilot program required by subsection (a) shall be carried out during the five-year period beginning on the date of the commencement of the pilot program.

(d) GRANTS REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program required by subsection (a) through the award of one or more grants to one or more nonprofit organizations for the provision of instruction by professional service experts, government officials, and representatives of government agencies to eligible small businesses on contracting described in such subsection.

(e) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary may not make a grant to a nonprofit organization under this section unless the nonprofit organization agrees that, with respect to the costs to be incurred by the nonprofit organization in carrying out training for which the grant was awarded, the nonprofit organization will make available (directly or through donations from public or private entities) non-Federal contributions in an amount that is equal to or great than the amount of the grant awarded.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $5,000,000 for fiscal year 2014 and each fiscal year thereafter through fiscal year 2018.

(g) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY VETERANS DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''small business concern owned and controlled by veterans'' has the meaning given such term in section 8127 of title 38, United States Code.

SA 2781. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 291, after line 21, add the following:

Subtitle E—Disability Compensation Generally

SEC. 641. MAKING PERMANENT SPECIAL EFFECTIVE DATE FOR AWARDS OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION FOR VETERANS WHO SUBMIT APPLICATIONS FOR ORIGINAL CLAIMS THAT ARE FULLY-DEVELOPED.

Section 5110(b)(2)(C) is amended by striking ''and shall not apply with respect to claims filed after the date that is three years after the date of the enactment of such Act''.

SEC. 642. PROVISIONAL BENEFITS AWARDED FOR FULLY DEVELOPED CLAIMS PENDING FOR MORE THAN 180 DAYS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 53 is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 5319A. Provisional benefits awarded for fully developed claims pending for extended period

''(a) PROVISIONAL AWARDS REQUIRED.—For each application for disability compensation that is filed for an individual with the Secretary, that sets forth an original claim that is fully-developed (as determined by the Secretary) as of the date of submittal, and for which the Secretary has not made a decision, beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date on which such application is filed with the Secretary, the Secretary shall award the individual a provisional benefit under this section.

''(b) PROVISIONAL AWARDS ESTABLISHED.—A provisional benefit awarded pursuant to subsection (a) for a claim for disability compensation shall be for such monthly amount as the Secretary shall establish for each classification of disability claimed as the Secretary shall establish.

''(c) RECOVERY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may recover a payment of a provisional benefit awarded under this section for an application for disability compensation only—

''(1) in a case in which the Secretary awards the disability compensation for which the individual filed the application and the Secretary may only recover such provisional benefit by subtracting it from payments made for the disability compensation awarded; or

''(2) in a case in which the Secretary determines not to award the disability compensation for which the individual filed the application and the Secretary determines that the application was the subject of intentional fraud, misrepresentation, or bad faith on behalf of the individual.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 53 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5319 the following new item:

''5319A. Provisional benefits awarded for fully developed claims pending for extended period.''.

SA 2782. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 33, after line 18, add the following:

SEC. 207. ONE-YEAR EXTENSION OF VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

Section 3692 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by inserting ''31,'' after ''30,''; and

(B) by striking ''and the Persian Gulf War'' and inserting ''the Persian Gulf War, and the post-9/11 operations in Iraq and Afghanistan'';

(2) in subsection (b), by inserting ''31,'' after ''30,''; and

(3) in subsection (c), by striking ''December 31, 2014'' and inserting ''December 31, 2015''.

SA 2783. Mrs. MCCASKILL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 367, after line 14, add the following:

SEC. 918. TRAUMATIC SERVICEMEMBERS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR ADVERSE REACTIONS TO VACCINATIONS ADMINISTERED BY DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1980A(b)(3) is amended—

(1) by striking ''The Secretary'' and inserting ''(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Secretary''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(B) The Secretary shall not exclude under subparagraph (A) a qualifying loss experienced by a member as a result of an adverse reaction to a vaccination administered by the Department of Defense, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, for the purposes of military accession, training, or deployment.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect as if included in the provisions of and amendments made by section 1032 of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief, 2005 (Public Law 109–13; 119 Stat. 257).

SA 2784. Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 367, after line 14, add the following:

SEC. 918. AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO ENHANCED-USE LEASES FOR CERTAIN BUILDINGS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AT THE WEST LOS ANGELES MEDICAL CENTER, CALIFORNIA.

(a) AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided by subsection (b), in accordance with subchapter V of chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into an enhanced-use lease for a covered building for the provision of long-term therapeutic housing for covered veterans.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The authority provided by paragraph (1) is a specific authorization for purposes of section 8162(c) of such title.

(b) PROHIBITION ON DISPOSITION OF LEASED PROPERTY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with section 224(a) of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008 (division I of Public Law 110–161; 121 Stat. 2272), section 8164 of title 38, United States Code, shall not apply to a covered building.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the prohibition under such section 224(a) on the disposal of a covered building.

(c) QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW AND REPORT.—

(1) REVIEW REQUIRED.—Not less than once during each five-year period in which an enhanced-use lease is in effect under subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of such lease, including by assessing each party that is entered into such lease and determining whether the terms of the lease are being upheld.

(2) REPORT REQUIRED.—During each five-year period in which an enhanced-use lease is in effect under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the review conducted under paragraph (1) with respect to such lease.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED BUILDING.—The term ''covered building'' means any of the following buildings located at the West Los Angeles Medical Center, California:

(A) Building 205.

(B) Building 208.

(2) COVERED VETERAN.—The term ''covered veteran'' means a veteran who is—

(A) homeless; and

(B) with respect to housing, requires assisted living or other similar form of care.

(3) ENHANCED-USE LEASE.—The term ''enhanced-use lease'' has the meaning given that term in section 8161 of title 38, United States Code.

(4) LONG-TERM THERAPEUTIC HOUSING.—The term ''long-term therapeutic housing'' means supportive housing consisting of clinically supportive living facilities that provide housing to a homeless veteran for a period that is sufficient for the veteran to achieve stability and require a lower level of care than is provided at such facilities.

SA 2785. Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. JOHANNS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title IX, add the following:

SEC. 918. PILOT PROGRAM TO REHABILITATE AND MODIFY HOMES OF DISABLED AND LOW-INCOME VETERANS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) DISABLED.—The term ''disabled'' means an individual with a disability, as defined by section 12102 of title 42, United States Code.

(2) ELIGIBLE VETERAN.—The term ''eligible veteran'' means a disabled or low-income veteran.

(3) ENERGY EFFICIENT FEATURES OR EQUIPMENT.—The term ''energy efficient features or equipment'' means features of, or equipment in, a primary residence that help reduce the amount of electricity used to heat, cool, or ventilate such residence, including insulation, weatherstripping, air sealing, heating system repairs, duct sealing, or other measures.

(4) LOW-INCOME VETERAN.—The term ''low-income veteran'' means a veteran whose income does not exceed 80 percent of the median income for an area, as determined by the Secretary.

(5) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—The term ''nonprofit organization'' means an organization that is—

(A) described in section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and

(B) exempt from tax under section 501(a) of such Code.

(6) PRIMARY RESIDENCE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''primary residence'' means a single family house, a duplex, or a unit within a multiple-dwelling structure that is the principal dwelling of an eligible veteran and is owned by such veteran or a family member of such veteran.

(B) FAMILY MEMBER DEFINED.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term ''family member'' includes—

(i) a spouse, child, grandchild, parent, or sibling;

(ii) a spouse of such a child, grandchild, parent, or sibling; or

(iii) any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with a veteran is the equivalent of a family relationship.

(7) QUALIFIED ORGANIZATION.—The term ''qualified organization'' means a nonprofit organization that provides nationwide or statewide programs that primarily serve veterans or low-income individuals.

(8) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

(9) VETERAN.—The term ''veteran'' has the meaning given the term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(10) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION.—The term ''veterans service organization'' means any organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF A PILOT PROGRAM.—

(1) GRANT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a pilot program to award grants to qualified organizations to rehabilitate and modify the primary residence of eligible veterans.

(B) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall work in conjunction with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish and oversee the pilot program and to ensure that such program meets the needs of eligible veterans.

(C) MAXIMUM GRANT.—A grant award under the pilot program to any one qualified organization shall not exceed $1,000,000 in any one fiscal year, and such an award shall remain available until expended by such organization.

(2) APPLICATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each qualified organization that desires a grant under the pilot program shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and, in addition to the information required under subparagraph (B), accompanied by such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(B) CONTENTS.—Each application submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include—

(i) a plan of action detailing outreach initiatives;

(ii) the approximate number of veterans the qualified organization intends to serve using grant funds;

(iii) a description of the type of work that will be conducted, such as interior home modifications, energy efficiency improvements, and other similar categories of work; and

(iv) a plan for working with the Department of Veterans Affairs and veterans service organizations to identify veterans who are not eligible for programs under chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, and meet their needs.

(C) PREFERENCES.—In awarding grants under the pilot program, the Secretary shall give preference to a qualified organization—

(i) with experience in providing housing rehabilitation and modification services for disabled veterans; or

(ii) that proposes to provide housing rehabilitation and modification services for eligible veterans who live in rural, including tribal, areas (the Secretary, through regulations, shall define the term ''rural areas'').

(3) CRITERIA.—In order to receive a grant award under the pilot program, a qualified organization shall meet the following criteria:

(A) Demonstrate expertise in providing housing rehabilitation and modification services for disabled or low-income individuals for the purpose of making the homes of such individuals accessible, functional, and safe for such individuals.

(B) Have established outreach initiatives that—

(i) would engage eligible veterans and veterans service organizations in projects utilizing grant funds under the pilot program;

(ii) ensure veterans who are disabled receive preference in selection for assistance under this program; and

(iii) identify eligible veterans and their families and enlist veterans involved in skilled trades, such as carpentry, roofing, plumbing, or HVAC work.

(C) Have an established nationwide or statewide network of affiliates that are—

(i) nonprofit organizations; and

(ii) able to provide housing rehabilitation and modification services for eligible veterans.

(D) Have experience in successfully carrying out the accountability and reporting requirements involved in the proper administration of grant funds, including funds provided by private entities or Federal, State, or local government entities.

(4) USE OF FUNDS.—A grant award under the pilot program shall be used—

(A) to modify and rehabilitate the primary residence of an eligible veteran, and may include—

(i) installing wheelchair ramps, widening exterior and interior doors, reconfigurating and re-equipping bathrooms (which includes installing new fixtures and grab bars), removing doorway thresholds, installing special lighting, adding additional electrical outlets and electrical service, and installing appropriate floor coverings to—

(I) accommodate the functional limitations that result from having a disability; or

(II) if such residence does not have modifications necessary to reduce the chances that an elderly, but not disabled person, will fall in their home, reduce the risks of such an elderly person from falling;

(ii) rehabilitating such residence that is in a state of interior or exterior disrepair; and

(iii) installing energy efficient features or equipment if—

(I) an eligible veteran's monthly utility costs for such residence is more than 5 percent of such veteran's monthly income; and

(II) an energy audit of such residence indicates that the installation of energy efficient features or equipment will reduce such costs by 10 percent or more; and

(B) in connection with modification and rehabilitation services provided under the pilot program, to provide technical, administrative, and training support to an affiliate of a qualified organization receiving a grant under such pilot program.

(5) OVERSIGHT.—The Secretary shall direct the oversight of the grant funds for the pilot program so that such funds are used efficiently until expended to fulfill the purpose of addressing the adaptive housing needs of eligible veterans.

(6) MATCHING FUNDS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A qualified organization receiving a grant under the pilot program shall contribute towards the housing modification and rehabilitation services provided to eligible veterans an amount equal to not less than 50 percent of the grant award received by such organization.

(B) IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.—In order to meet the requirement under subparagraph (A), such organization may arrange for in-kind contributions.

(7) LIMITATION COST TO THE VETERANS.—A qualified organization receiving a grant under the pilot program shall modify or rehabilitate the primary residence of an eligible veteran at no cost to such veteran (including application fees) or at a cost such that such veteran pays no more than 30 percent of his or her income in housing costs during any month.

(8) REPORTS.—

(A) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit to Congress, on an annual basis, a report that provides, with respect to the year for which such report is written—

(i) the number of eligible veterans provided assistance under the pilot program;

(ii) the socioeconomic characteristics of such veterans, including their gender, age, race, and ethnicity;

(iii) the total number, types, and locations of entities contracted under such program to administer the grant funding;

(iv) the amount of matching funds and in-kind contributions raised with each grant;

(v) a description of the housing rehabilitation and modification services provided, costs saved, and actions taken under such program;

(vi) a description of the outreach initiatives implemented by the Secretary to educate the general public and eligible entities about such program;

(vii) a description of the outreach initiatives instituted by grant recipients to engage eligible veterans and veteran service organizations in projects utilizing grant funds under such program;

(viii) a description of the outreach initiatives instituted by grant recipients to identify eligible veterans and their families; and

(ix) any other information that the Secretary considers relevant in assessing such program.

(B) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the completion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that provides such information that the Secretary considers relevant in assessing the pilot program.

(C) INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than March 31, 2019, the Inspector General of the Department of Housing and Urban Development shall submit to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives a report containing a review of—

(i) the use of appropriated funds by the Secretary and by grantees under the pilot program; and

(ii) oversight and accountability of grantees under the pilot program.

(9) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated for carrying out this section $4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2019.

SA 2786. Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 310, strike line 21 and all that follows through page 311, line 13, and insert the following:

(b) MAKING PERMANENT EXTENDED PERIOD OF PROTECTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF UNIFORMED SERVICES RELATING TO MORTGAGES, MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE, AND EVICTION.—Section 710(d) of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–154; 126 Stat. 1208) is amended by striking paragraphs (1) and (3).

SA 2787. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 76, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

SEC. 330. COMPTROLLER GENERAL CERTIFICATION REQUIRED BEFORE CLOSURE OF MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not close any medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs unless and until the Comptroller General of the United States makes the certification described in subsection (b) with respect to such medical center and submits such certification to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(b) CERTIFICATION.—The certification described in this subsection is a certification that the Comptroller General has determined, pursuant to subsection (c), that the effect of the closure of the medical center described in subsection (a) on the provision of care to veterans in the catchment area of such medical center does not outweigh the budget savings to the Department resulting from such closure.

(c) DETERMINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—With respect to a proposed closure of a medical center of the Department, the Comptroller General shall determine whether the effect of such closure on the provision of care to veterans in the catchment area of such medical center outweighs the budget savings to the Department resulting from such closure.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In making the determination described in paragraph (1), the Comptroller General shall consider the potential effect of such closure on the following:

(A) The quality of care provided to veterans in the catchment area of such medical center.

(B) The access of such veterans to specialized health care services.

(C) The access of such veterans to residential rehabilitation treatment programs of the Department and other inpatient care.

(D) Distances required to be traveled by such veterans to receive inpatient and outpatient care.

(E) The access of such veterans that are members of Indian tribes (as that term is defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b)) to medical care.

SA 2788. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 38, after line 22, add the following:

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs submits to Congress a certification that—

(1) during the 180-day period ending on the date on which the Secretary submits such certification to Congress, no individual who has filed a claim with the Secretary for compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code—

(A) is currently waiting for an adjudication of such claim; and

(B) has been waiting for an adjudication of such claim for a period of 125 days or more; and

(2) the Secretary has carried out the major medical facility leases described in section 381.

SA 2789. Ms. KLOBUCHAR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 161, after line 25, insert the following:

SEC. 407. GRANTS FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL TRAINING FOR VETERANS.

Section 330J(c) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254c–15(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (7), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (8), by striking the period and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(9) furnish coursework and training to veterans to enable such veterans to satisfy emergency medical services personnel certification requirements, as determined by the appropriate State regulatory entity, except that in providing such coursework and training, such entity shall take into account previous medical coursework and training received when such veterans were members of the Armed Forces on active duty.''.

SA 2790. Ms. KLOBUCHAR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 76, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

SEC. 330. DESIGNATION OF MEDICAL FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AS HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS.

(a) DESIGNATION AS HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREA.—Section 332(a)(1) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254e(a)(1)) is amended in the second sentence by inserting ''and medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs (including State homes, as defined in section 101(19) of title 38, United States Code)'' after ''(42 U.S.C. 1395x(aa)),''.

(b) CONCURRENT BENEFIT.—

(1) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.—Section 338A(b) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 2541(b)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking ''and'';

(B) in paragraph (4), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) not be participating in the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Professionals Educational Assistance Program under chapter 76 of title 38, United States Code.''.

(2) DEBT REDUCTION PROGRAM.—Section 338B(b) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 2541–1(b)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking ''and'';

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) not be participating in the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Professionals Educational Assistance Program under chapter 76 of title 38, United States Code.''.

(c) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out the National Health Service Corps Program under subpart II of part D of title III of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254d et seq.), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall consult with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect to health professional shortage areas that are medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs (including State homes, as defined in section 101(19) of title 38, United States Code).

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2791. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. AYOTTE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 76, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

SEC. 329A. REPORT ON ABILITY OF VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION TO MEET PATIENT ACCESS STANDARDS FOR NORTHERN MARKET OF NEW ENGLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the findings of the Secretary with respect to the Secretary's review of the ability of the Veterans Health Administration to meet patient access standards for the northern market of the Department of Veterans Affairs New England Health Care System, particularly with respect to Coos County, New Hampshire.

SA 2792. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 291, after line 21, add the following:

SEC. 633. MINIMUM NUMBER OF DECISION REVIEW OFFICERS STATIONED AT REGIONAL OFFICES.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that at least two decision review officers of the Department of Veterans Affairs are stationed at each regional office of the Veterans Benefits Administration.

SEC. 634. EXPANSION OF PROGRAM OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR SUPPORT OF PROGRAMS THAT FURNISH LEGAL ASSISTANCE.

The Dire Emergency Supplemental Appropriations and Transfers for Relief From the Effects of Natural Disasters, for Other Urgent Needs, and for Incremental Cost of ''Operation Desert Shield/Dessert Storm'' Act of 1992 (Public Law 102–229) is amended under the heading ''SALARIES AND EXPENSES'' under the heading ''COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS'' under the heading ''INDEPENDENT AGENCIES'' by inserting ''or in connection with decisions to which section 7104 of such title may apply, or with other proceedings of the Board of Veterans' Appeals,'' after ''proceedings in the Court,''.

SEC. 635. REPORT ON INCREASING NUMBER OF DECISION REVIEW OFFICERS.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the feasibility and advisability of increasing the number of decision review officers employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs to a number that is equal to or greater than the number that is 25 percent bigger than the number of decision review officers that were employed by the Department on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act. Such report shall include an assessment of the expected cost and effect of such increase on the processing of appeals of decisions of the Secretary with respect to claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.

SEC. 636. REPORT ON INCREASING NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the feasibility and advisability of increasing the number of members of the Board of Veterans' Appeals to 75. Such report shall include an assessment of the expected cost and effect of such expansion on the processing of appeals of decisions of the Secretary with respect to claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.

SA 2793. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. AYOTTE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 76, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

SEC. 330. AVAILABILITY OF FULL-SERVICE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS IN CERTAIN STATES OR PROVISION OF COMPARABLE SERVICES THROUGH CONTRACT WITH OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN THE STATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 17 is amended by inserting after section 1706 the following new section:

''§ 1706A. Management of health care: access to full-service Department medical centers in certain States or comparable services through contract

''(a) REQUIREMENT.—With respect to each of the 48 contiguous States, the Secretary shall ensure that veterans in a State who are eligible for hospital care and medical services under section 1710 of this title have access—

''(1) to at least one full-service Department medical center in such State; or

''(2) to hospital care and medical services comparable to the services typically provided by full-service Department medical centers through contract with other health care providers in such State.

''(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in subsection (a) shall be construed to limit the ability of the Secretary to provide enhanced care to an eligible veteran who resides in one State in a Department medical center in another State.

''(c) LIMITATION ON REQUIREMENT.—Subsection (a) shall be effective in any fiscal year only to the extent and in the amount provided in advance in appropriations Acts.

''(d) FULL-SERVICE DEPARTMENT MEDICAL CENTER DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'full-service Department medical center' means a facility of the Department that provides medical services, including hospital care, emergency medical services, and surgical care rated by the Secretary as having a surgical complexity level of standard.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1706 the following new item:

''1706A. Management of health care: access to full-service Department medical centers in certain States or comparable services through contract.''.

(c) REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report describing the extent to which the Secretary has complied with the requirement imposed by section 1706A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), including the effect of compliance with such requirement on improving the quality and standards of care provided to veterans.

SA 2794. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title IV, add the following:

SEC. 416. EMPLOYEE PAYROLL TAX HOLIDAY FOR NEWLY HIRED VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d) of section 3111 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(d) SPECIAL EXEMPTION FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS HIRED DURING CERTAIN CALENDAR QUARTERS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) shall not apply to 50 percent of the wages paid by the employer with respect to employment during the holiday period of any eligible veteran for services performed—

''(A) in a trade or business of the employer, or

''(B) in the case of an employer exempt from tax under section 501(a), in furtherance of the activities related to the purpose or function constituting the basis of the employer's exemption under such section.

''(2) HOLIDAY PERIOD.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'holiday period' means

the period of 4 consecutive calendar quarters beginning with the first day of the first calendar quarter beginning after the date of the enactment of the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014 .

''(3) ELIGIBLE VETERAN.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'eligible veteran' means a veteran who—

''(i) begins work for the employer during the holiday period,

''(ii) was discharged or released from the Armed Forces of the United States under conditions other than dishonorable, and

''(iii) is not an individual described in section 51(i)(1) (applied by substituting 'employer' for 'taxpayer' each place it appears).

''(B) VETERAN.—The term 'veteran' means any individual who—

''(i) has served on active duty (other than active duty for training) in the Armed Forces of the United States for a period of more than 180 days, or has been discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States for a service-connected disability (within the meaning of section 101 of title 38, United States Code),

''(ii) has not served on extended active duty (as such term is used in section 51(d)(3)(B)) in the Armed Forces of the United States on any day during the 60-day period ending on the hiring date, and

''(iii) provides to the employer a copy of the individual's DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, that includes the nature and type of discharge.

''(4) ELECTION.—An employer may elect not to have this subsection apply. Such election shall be made in such manner as the Secretary may require.

''(5) COORDINATION WITH WORK OPPORTUNITY CREDIT.—For coordination with the work opportunity credit, see section 51(3)(D).''.

(b) COORDINATION WITH WORK OPPORTUNITY CREDIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (3) of section 51 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) DENIAL OF CREDIT FOR VETERANS SUBJECT TO 50 PERCENT PAYROLL TAX HOLIDAY.—If section 3111(d)(1) (as amended by the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014) applies to any wages paid by an employer, the term 'qualified veteran' does not include any individual who begins work for the employer during the holiday period (as defined in section 3111(d)(2)) unless the employer makes an election not to have section 3111(d) apply.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (c) of section 51 of such Code is amended by striking paragraph (5).

At the end of subtitle E of title IV, add the following:

SEC. 446. PERMANENT SBA EXPRESS LOAN GUARANTY FEE WAIVER FOR VETERANS.

Section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (18)(A), by striking ''With respect'' and inserting ''Except as provided in paragraph (31), with respect''; and

(2) in paragraph (31), adding at the end the following:

''(G) GUARANTEE FEE WAIVER FOR VETERANS.—The Administrator may not assess a guarantee fee under paragraph (18) in connection with a loan made under this paragraph to a veteran on or after October 1, 2014.''.

SEC. 447. REPORT ON FINANCIAL PLANNING AND COUNSELING FOR OWNERS OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS IN THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall submit to Congress a report assessing the feasibility of providing financial planning and counseling to owners of small business concerns who are members of a reserve component prior to deployment.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term ''reserve component'' means a reserve component of the Armed Forces named in section 10101 of title 10, United States Code; and

(2) the term ''small business concern'' has the meaning given the term under section 3(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(a)).

SEC. 448. REPORT ON THE MILITARY RESERVISTS ECONOMIC INJURY DISASTER LOAN PROGRAM.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall submit to Congress a report on the Military Reservists Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (in this section referred to as the ''program'') authorized under section 7(b)(3) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)(3)), which shall include—

(1) a discussion of the outreach efforts of the Small Business Administration to increase participation in the program;

(2) the number of loans made under the program;

(3) an analysis of the effectiveness of the program; and

(4) recommendations for improving the program.

SA 2795. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 61, between lines 5 and 6, insert the following:

SEC. 314. SPECIAL CHANGE IN STATUS RULE FOR EMPLOYEES WHO BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR TRICARE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (g) of section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) CHANGE IN STATUS RELATING TO TRICARE ELIGIBILITY.—For purposes of this section, if a cafeteria plan permits an employee to revoke an election during a period of coverage and to make a new election based on a change in status event, an event that causes the employee to become eligible for coverage under the TRICARE program shall be treated as a change in status event.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to events occurring after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2796. Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. JOHANNS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle A of title IV, add the following:

SEC. 407. AUTHORITY TO INCREASE AVAILABILITY OF PRIVATE SECTOR ON-JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS.

During the four-year period beginning on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out section 3677(b)(1)(A) of title 38, United States Code, by substituting ''75 per centum'' for ''85 per centum''.

SEC. 408. ON-JOB TRAINING AT FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.

Beginning on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into agreements with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies to operate programs of training on the job under section 3677 of title 38, United States Code, to train eligible veterans or persons to perform skills necessary for employment by the department or agency operating the program.

SA 2797. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 367, after line 14, add the following:

SEC. 918. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON REVIEW OF DISCHARGE STATUS OF VIETNAM ERA VETERANS WITH POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER WHO WERE DISCHARGED UNDER CONDITIONS OTHER THAN HONORABLE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—It is the sense of Congress that individuals who served in the active military, naval, or air service during the Vietnam era, who have a service-connected post traumatic stress disorder, who were discharged or released from such service under conditions other than honorable, and who are now upstanding members in their communities, should have their less than honorable discharge or release reviewed by the applicable board for the correction of military records.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms ''active military, naval, or air service'', ''service-connected'', and ''Vietnam era'' have the meanings given such terms in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

SA 2798. Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MURPHY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 33, after line 18, add the following:

SEC. 207. REPEAL OF TIME LIMITATIONS ON USE OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3031 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(i)(1) Notwithstanding subsections (a) through (g) and any other provision of law, the period during which a covered individual entitled to educational assistance under this chapter may use such covered individual's entitlement shall not end until the date that is 10 years after the date on which such covered individual begins using such benefit.

''(2) For purposes of this subsection, a covered individual is any individual—

''(A) whose basic pay was reduced under paragraph (1) of section 3011(b) of this title; or

''(B) with respect to whom an amount was collected under paragraph (2) of such section.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3020(f) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) Subsection (i) of section 3031 of this title shall not apply for purposes of this subsection.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (i) of section 3031, as added by subsection (a), and paragraph (4) of section 3020(f), as added by subsection (b), shall apply as if such subsection and such paragraph had been enacted immediately after the enactment of the Veterans' Educational Assistance Act of 1984 (Public Law 98–525; 98 Stat. 2553).

SEC. 208. VETERANS EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Chapter 36 is amended by adding at the end of subchapter II the following new section:

"§ 3697B. Veterans education outreach program

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide funding for offices of veterans affairs at institutions of higher learning (as defined in section 3452(f) of this title) in accordance with this section.

''(b) PAYMENTS TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.—(1)(A) The Secretary shall, subject to the availability of appropriations, make payments to any institution of higher learning, under and in accordance with this section, during any fiscal year if the number of persons eligible for services from offices assisted under this section at the institution is at least 50, determined in the same manner as the number of eligible veterans or eligible persons is determined under section 3684(c) of this title.

''(B) The persons who are eligible for services from the offices assisted under this section are persons receiving educational assistance administered by the Department, including assistance provided under chapter 1606 of title 10.

''(2) To be eligible for a payment under this section, an institution of higher learning or a consortium of institutions of higher learning, as described in paragraph (3), shall submit an application to the Secretary. The application shall—

''(A) set forth such policies, assurances, and procedures that will ensure that—

''(i) the funds received by the institution, or each institution in a consortium of institutions described in paragraph (3), under this section will be used solely to carry out this section;

''(ii) for enhancing the functions of its veterans education outreach program, the applicant will expend, during the academic year for which a payment is sought, an amount equal to at least the amount of the award under this section from sources other than this or any other Federal program; and

''(iii) the applicant will submit to the Secretary such reports as the Secretary may require or as are required by this section;

''(B) contain such other statement of policies, assurances, and procedures as the Secretary may require in order to protect the financial interests of the United States;

''(C) set forth such plans, policies, assurances, and procedures as will ensure that the applicant will maintain an office of veterans' affairs which has responsibility for—

''(i) veterans' certification, outreach, recruitment, and special education programs, including the provision of or referral to educational, vocational, and personal counseling for veterans; and

''(ii) providing information regarding other services provided veterans by the Department, including the readjustment counseling program authorized under section 1712A of this title and the programs carried out under chapters 41 and 42 of this title; and

''(D) be submitted at such time or times, in such manner, in such form, and contain such information as the Secretary determines necessary to carry out the functions of the Secretary under this section.

''(3) An institution of higher learning which is eligible for funding under this section and which the Secretary determines cannot feasibly carry out, by itself, any or all of the activities set forth in paragraph (2)(C), may carry out such program or programs through a consortium agreement with one or more other institutions of higher learning in the same community.

''(4) The Secretary shall not approve an application under this subsection unless the Secretary determines that the applicant will implement the requirements of paragraph (2)(C) within the first academic year during which it receives a payment under this section.

''(c) AMOUNT OF PAYMENTS.—(1)(A) Subject to subparagraph (B), the amount of the payment which any institution shall receive under this section for any fiscal year shall be $100 for each person who is described in subsection (b)(1)(B).

''(B) The maximum amount of payments to any institution of higher learning, or any branch thereof which is located in a community which is different from that in which the parent institution thereof is located, in any fiscal year is $150,000.

''(2)(A)(i) The Secretary shall pay to each institution of higher learning which has had an application approved under subsection (b) the amount which it is to receive under this section.

''(ii) If the amount appropriated for any fiscal year is not sufficient to pay the amounts which all such institutions are to receive, the Secretary shall ratably reduce such payments.

''(iii) If any amount becomes available to carry out this section for a fiscal year after such reductions have been imposed, such reduced payments shall be increased on the same basis as they were reduced.

''(B) In making payments under this section for any fiscal year, the Secretary shall apportion the appropriation for making such payments, from funds which become available as a result of the limitation on payments set forth in paragraph (1)(B), in an equitable manner.

''(d) COORDINATION AND PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE, TECHNICAL CONSULTATION, AND INFORMATION.—The Secretary, in carrying out the provisions of this section, shall seek to assure the coordination of programs assisted under this section with other programs carried out by the Department pursuant to this title, and the Secretary shall provide all assistance, technical consultation, and information otherwise authorized by law as necessary to promote the maximum effectiveness of the activities and programs assisted under this section.

''(e) BEST PRACTICES AND ADMINISTRATION.—(1) From the amounts made available for any fiscal year under subsection (f), the Secretary shall retain one percent or $20,000, whichever is less, for the purpose of collecting information about exemplary veterans educational outreach programs and disseminating that information to other institutions of higher learning having such programs on their campuses. Such collection and dissemination shall be done on an annual basis.

''(2) From the amounts made available under subsection (f), the Secretary may retain not more than two percent for the purpose of administering this section.

''(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $6,000,000 for fiscal year 2014 and each fiscal year thereafter.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 36 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3697A the following new item:

''3697B. Veterans education outreach program.''.

SA 2799. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 367, after line 14, insert the following:

TITLE X—DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF MILITARY SERVICE

SEC. 1001. DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF MILITARY SERVICE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) CIVIL RIGHTS DEFINITIONS.—The terms ''complaining party'', ''demonstrates'', ''employee'', ''employer'', ''employment agency'', ''labor organization'', ''person'', ''respondent'', and ''State'' have the meanings given the terms in section 701 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e).

(2) MEMBER OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.—The term ''member of the uniformed services'' means an individual who—

(A) is a member of—

(i) the uniformed services (as defined in section 101 of title 10, United States Code); or

(ii) the National Guard in State status under title 32, United States Code; or

(B) was discharged or released from service in the uniformed services (as so defined) or the National Guard in such status under conditions other than dishonorable.

(3) MILITARY SERVICE.—The term ''military service'' means status as a member of the uniformed services.

(b) EMPLOYER PRACTICES.—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer—

(1) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to the individual's compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's military service; or

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify the employer's employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect the individual's status as an employee, because of such individual's military service.

(c) EMPLOYMENT AGENCY PRACTICES.—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employment agency to fail or refuse to refer for employment, or otherwise discriminate against, any individual because of the individual's military service, or to classify or refer for employment any individual on the basis of the individual's military service.

(d) LABOR ORGANIZATION PRACTICES.—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for a labor organization—

(1) to exclude or to expel from its membership, or otherwise to discriminate against, any individual because of the individual's military service;

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify its membership or applicants for membership, or to classify or fail or refuse to refer for employment any individual, in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities, or would limit such employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect the individual's status as an employee or as an applicant for employment, because of such individual's military service; or

(3) to cause or attempt to cause an employer to discriminate against an individual in violation of this section.

(e) TRAINING PROGRAMS.—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for any employer, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprenticeship or other training or retraining, including on-the-job training programs, to discriminate against any individual because of the individual's military service in admission to, or employment in, any program established to provide apprenticeship or other training.

(f) BUSINESSES OR ENTERPRISES WITH PERSONNEL QUALIFIED ON BASIS OF MILITARY SERVICE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, it shall not be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to hire and employ employees, for an employment agency to classify, or refer for employment any individual, for a labor organization to classify its membership or to classify or refer for employment any individual, or for an employer, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprenticeship or other training or retraining programs to admit or employ any individual in any such program, on the basis of the individual's military service in those certain instances where military service is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of that particular business or enterprise.

(g) NATIONAL SECURITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, it shall not be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to fail or refuse to hire and employ any individual for any position, for an employer to discharge any individual from any position, or for an employment agency to fail or refuse to refer any individual for employment in any position, or for a labor organization to fail or refuse to refer any individual for employment in any position, if—

(1) the occupancy of such position, or access to the premises in or upon which any part of the duties of such position is performed or is to be performed, is subject to any requirement imposed in the interest of the national security of the United States under any security program in effect pursuant to or administered under any statute of the United States or any Executive order of the President; and

(2) such individual has not fulfilled or has ceased to fulfill that requirement.

(h) SENIORITY OR MERIT SYSTEM; QUANTITY OR QUALITY OF PRODUCTION; ABILITY TESTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, it shall not be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to apply different standards of compensation, or different terms, conditions, or privileges of employment pursuant to a bona fide seniority or merit system, or a system which measures earnings by quantity or quality of production or to employees who work in different locations, provided that such differences are not the result of an intention to discriminate because of military service, nor shall it be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to give and to act upon the results of any professionally developed ability test provided that such test, its administration, or action upon the results is not designed, intended, or used to discriminate because of military service.

(i) PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT NOT TO BE GRANTED ON ACCOUNT OF EXISTING NUMBER OR PERCENTAGE IMBALANCE.—Nothing contained in this section shall be interpreted to require any employer, employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee subject to this section to grant preferential treatment to any individual or to any group because of the military service of such individual or group on account of an imbalance which may exist with respect to the total number or percentage of persons with military service employed by any employer, referred or classified for employment by any employment agency or labor organization, admitted to membership or classified by any labor organization, or admitted to, or employed in, any apprenticeship or other training program, in comparison with the total number or percentage of persons with military service in any community, State, section, or other area, or in the available work force in any community, State, section, or other area.

(j) BURDEN OF PROOF IN DISPARATE IMPACT CASES.—

(1) DISPARATE IMPACT.—

(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—An unlawful employment practice based on disparate impact is established under this section only if—

(i) a complaining party demonstrates that a respondent uses a particular employment practice that causes a disparate impact on the basis of military service and the respondent fails to demonstrate that the challenged practice is job related for the position in question and consistent with business necessity; or

(ii) the complaining party makes the demonstration described in subparagraph (C) with respect to an alternative employment practice and the respondent refuses to adopt such alternative employment practice.

(B) DEMONSTRATION OF CAUSATION.—

(i) PARTICULAR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES.—With respect to demonstrating that a particular employment practice causes a disparate impact as described in subparagraph (A)(i), the complaining party shall demonstrate that each particular challenged employment practice causes a disparate impact, except that if the complaining party can demonstrate to the court that the elements of a respondent's decisionmaking process are not capable of separation for analysis, the decisionmaking process may be analyzed as one employment practice.

(ii) DEMONSTRATION OF NONCAUSATION.—If the respondent demonstrates that a specific employment practice does not cause the disparate impact, the respondent shall not be required to demonstrate that such practice is required by business necessity.

(C) ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE.—The demonstration referred to by subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be in accordance with the law as it existed on June 4, 1989, with respect to the concept of ''alternative employment practice''.

(2) BUSINESS NECESSITY NO DEFENSE TO INTENTIONAL DISCRIMINATION.—A demonstration that an employment practice is required by business necessity may not be used as a defense against a claim of intentional discrimination under this section.

(3) RULES CONCERNING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a rule barring the employment of an individual who currently and knowingly uses or possesses a controlled substance, as defined in section 102(6) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802(6)) and included in schedule I or II of the schedules specified in that section, other than the use or possession of a drug taken under the supervision of a licensed health care professional, or any other use or possession authorized by the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 801 et seq.) or any other provision of Federal law, shall be considered an unlawful employment practice under this section only if such rule is adopted or applied with an intent to discriminate because of military service.

(k) PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATORY USE OF TEST SCORES.—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for a respondent, in connection with the selection or referral of applicants or candidates for employment or promotion, to adjust the scores of, use different cutoff scores for, or otherwise alter the results of, employment related tests on the basis of military service.

(l) IMPERMISSIBLE CONSIDERATION OF MILITARY SERVICE IN EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES.—Except as otherwise provided in this section, an unlawful employment practice is established when the complaining party demonstrates that military service was a motivating factor for any employment practice, even though other factors also motivated the practice.

(m) RESOLUTION OF CHALLENGES TO EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES IMPLEMENTING LITIGATED OR CONSENT JUDGMENTS OR ORDERS.—

(1) PRACTICES NOT CHALLENGEABLE.—

(A) PRACTICES TO IMPLEMENT A LITIGATED OR CONSENT JUDGMENT OR ORDER.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and except as provided in paragraph (2), an employment practice that implements and is within the scope of a litigated or consent judgment or order that resolves a claim of employment discrimination under the Constitution or Federal civil rights laws may not be challenged under the circumstances described in subparagraph (B).

(B) CIRCUMSTANCES.—A practice described in subparagraph (A) may not be challenged in a claim under the Constitution or Federal civil rights laws—

(i) by a person who, prior to the entry of the judgment or order described in subparagraph (A), had—

(I) actual notice of the proposed judgment or order sufficient to apprise such person that such judgment or order might adversely affect the interests and legal rights of such person and that an opportunity was available to present objections to such judgment or order by a future date certain; and

(II) a reasonable opportunity to present objections to such judgment or order; or

(ii) by a person whose interests were adequately represented by another person who had previously challenged the judgment or order on the same legal grounds and with a similar factual situation, unless there has been an intervening change in law or fact.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to—

(A) alter the standards for intervention under rule 24 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or apply to the rights of parties who have successfully intervened pursuant to such rule in the proceeding in which the parties intervened;

(B) apply to the rights of parties to the action in which a litigated or consent judgment or order was entered, or of members of a class represented or sought to be represented in such action, or of members of a group on whose behalf relief was sought in such action by the Federal Government;

(C) prevent challenges to a litigated or consent judgment or order on the ground that such judgment or order was obtained through collusion or fraud, or is transparently invalid or was entered by a court lacking subject matter jurisdiction; or

(D) authorize or permit the denial to any person of the due process of law required by the Constitution.

(3) COURT FOR ACTIONS THAT ARE CHALLENGEABLE.—Any action not precluded under this subsection that challenges an employment consent judgment or order described in paragraph (1) shall be brought in the court, and if possible before the judge, that entered such judgment or order. Nothing in this subsection shall preclude a transfer of such action pursuant to section 1404 of title 28, United States Code.

(n) DISCRIMINATION FOR MAKING CHARGES, TESTIFYING, ASSISTING, OR PARTICIPATING IN ENFORCEMENT PROCEEDINGS.—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to discriminate against any of the

employer's employees or applicants for employment, for an employment agency, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprenticeship or other training or retraining, including on-the-job training programs, to discriminate against any individual, or for a labor organization to discriminate against any member thereof or applicant for membership, because the employee, applicant, individuals, or member involved has opposed any practice made an unlawful employment practice by this section, or has made a charge, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this section.

(o) PRINTING OR PUBLICATION OF NOTICES OR ADVERTISEMENTS.—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer, labor organization, employment agency, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprenticeship or other training or retraining, including on-the-job training programs, to print or publish or cause to be printed or published any notice or advertisement relating to employment by such an employer or membership in or any classification or referral for employment by such a labor organization, or relating to any classification or referral for employment by such an employment agency, or relating to admission to, or employment in, any program established to provide apprenticeship or other training by such a joint labor-management committee, indicating any preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination, based on military service, except that such a notice or advertisement may indicate a preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination based on military service when military service is a bona fide occupational qualification for employment.

(p) EXEMPTIONS.—

(1) INAPPLICABILITY OF TITLE TO CERTAIN ALIENS.—This section shall not apply to an employer with respect to the employment of aliens outside any State.

(2) COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTE AS VIOLATION OF FOREIGN LAW.—It shall not be unlawful under this section for an employer (or a corporation controlled by an employer), labor organization, employment agency, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprenticeship or other training or retraining (including on-the-job training programs) to take any action otherwise prohibited by such section, with respect to an employee in a workplace in a foreign country if compliance with such section would cause such employer (or such corporation), such organization, such agency, or such committee to violate the law of the foreign country in which such workplace is located.

(3) CONTROL OF CORPORATION INCORPORATED IN FOREIGN COUNTRY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If an employer controls a corporation whose place of incorporation is a foreign country, any practice prohibited by this section engaged in by such corporation shall be presumed to be engaged in by such employer.

(B) FOREIGN PERSON NOT CONTROLLED BY EMPLOYER.—This section shall not apply with respect to the foreign operations of an employer that is a foreign person not controlled by an American employer.

(C) CONTROL.—For purposes of this subsection, the determination of whether an employer controls a corporation shall be based on—

(i) the interrelation of operations;

(ii) the common management;

(iii) the centralized control of labor relations; and

(iv) the common ownership or financial control,

of the employer and the corporation.

(4) CLAIMS OF NO MILITARY SERVICE.—Nothing in this section shall provide the basis for a claim by an individual without military service that the individual was subject to discrimination because of the individual's lack of military service.

(q) POSTING NOTICES.—Every employer, employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee covered under this section shall post notices to applicants, employees, and members describing the applicable provisions of this section, in the manner prescribed by section 711 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e–10).

(r) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall issue regulations to carry out this section in accordance with subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code.

(s) ENFORCEMENT.—The powers, remedies, and procedures set forth in sections 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, and 712 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e–4, 2000e–5, 2000e–6, 2000e–7, 2000e–8, 2000e–9, and 2000e–11) shall be the powers, remedies, and procedures this section provides to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, to the Attorney General, or to any person alleging discrimination on the basis of military service in violation of any provision of this section, or regulations promulgated under subsection (r), concerning employment.

SEC. 1002. ENDING HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MEMBERS OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 802 of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3602) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(p) 'Member of the uniformed services' means an individual who—

''(1) is a member of—

''(A) the uniformed services (as defined in section 101 of title 10, United States Code); or

''(B) the National Guard in State status under title 32, United States Code; or

''(2) was discharged or released from service in the uniformed services (as so defined) or the National Guard in such status under conditions other than dishonorable.''.

(b) DISCRIMINATION IN THE SALE OR RENTAL OF HOUSING AND OTHER PROHIBITED PRACTICES.—Section 804 of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3604) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting ''or because the person is a member of the uniformed services'' after ''national origin'';

(2) in subsection (b), by inserting ''or because the person is a member of the uniformed services'' after ''national origin'';

(3) in subsection (c), by inserting ''or because a person is a member of the uniformed services,'' after ''national origin,''; and

(4) in subsection (d), by inserting '', or because the person is a member of the uniformed services,'' after ''national origin''.

(c) DISCRIMINATION IN RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE-RELATED TRANSACTIONS.—Section 805 of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3605) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting ''or because the person is a member of the uniformed services'' after ''national origin''; and

(2) in subsection (c), by striking '', or familial status'' and inserting ''familial status, or whether a person is a member of the uniformed services''.

(d) DISCRIMINATION IN THE PROVISION OF BROKERAGE SERVICES.—Section 806 of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3606) is amended by inserting ''or because a person is a member of the uniformed services'' after ''national origin''.

(e) RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION OR PRIVATE CLUB EXEMPTION.—Section 807(a) of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3607(a)) is amended, in the first sentence by inserting ''or to persons who are not members of the uniformed services'' after ''national origin''.

(f) ADMINISTRATION.—Section 808(e)(6) of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3608(e)(6)) is amended, in the first sentence, by inserting ''(including whether such persons and households are or include a member of the uniformed services)'' after ''persons and households''.

(g) PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION.—Section 901 of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3631) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting '', or because the person is a member of the uniformed services (as such term is defined in section 802 of this Act),'' after ''national origin'';

(2) in subsection (b)(1), by inserting ''or because a person is a member of the uniformed services (as such term is defined in section 802 of this Act),'' after ''national origin,''; and

(3) in subsection (c), by inserting ''or because a person is a member of the uniformed services (as such term is defined in section 802 of this Act),'' after ''national origin,''.

(h) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 821. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION RELATING TO THE TREATMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.

''(a) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act may be construed to prohibit any person from—

''(1) making available to an individual a benefit with respect to a dwelling, a residential real estate-related transaction (as defined in section 805 of this Act), or a service described in section 806 of this Act because the individual is a member of the uniformed services; or

''(2) selling or renting a dwelling only to members of the uniformed services.

''(b) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term 'benefit' includes a term, condition, privilege, promotion, discount, or other favorable treatment (including an advertisement for such treatment) having the purpose or effect of providing an advantage to a member of the uniformed services.''.

SEC. 1003. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This title shall become effective 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 2800. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 155, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

Subtitle I—Diagnosis, Treatment, and Research on Exposure to Toxic Substances

SEC. 391. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) ARMED FORCE.—The term ''Armed Force'' means the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof.

(2) DESCENDANT.—The term ''descendant'' means, with respect to an individual, the biological child, grandchild, or great-grandchild of that individual.

(3) TOXIC SUBSTANCE.—The term ''toxic substance'' shall have the meaning given that term by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and shall include all substances that have been proven by peer reviewed scientific research or a preponderance of opinion in the medical community to lead to disabilities related to the exposure of an individual to those substances while serving as a member of the Armed Forces.

(4) VETERAN.—The term ''veteran'' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 392. NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT, AND RESEARCH OF HEALTH CONDITIONS OF THE DESCENDANTS OF INDIVIDUALS EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES DURING SERVICE IN THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) NATIONAL CENTER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall select a medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs to serve as the national center for the diagnosis, treatment, and research of health conditions of descendants of individuals exposed to toxic substances while serving as members of the Armed Forces that are related to that exposure (in this section referred to as the ''Center'').

(2) CRITERIA FOR SELECTION.—The Center shall be selected under paragraph (1) from among medical centers of the Department with expertise in diagnosing and treating functional and structural birth defects and caring for individuals exposed to toxic substances, or that are affiliated with research medical centers or teaching hospitals with such expertise, that seek to be selected under this section.

(b) FUNCTIONS.—

(1) DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Center may diagnose and treat, without charge, each patient for whom the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has made the following determinations:

(i) The patient is a descendant of an individual who served as a member of the Armed Forces.

(ii) The individual was exposed to a toxic substance while serving as a member of the Armed Forces.

(iii) The patient is afflicted with a health condition that is determined by the advisory board established in section 393 to be a health condition that results from the exposure of that individual to that toxic substance.

(B) TREATMENT.—Treatment under this section is limited to treatment of health conditions for which the advisory board established in section 393 has made a determination described in subparagraph (A)(iii).

(C) ADDITIONAL DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.—Nothing in this section shall preclude a patient from receiving additional diagnosis or treatment at the Center or another facility of the Department in connection with other health conditions or benefits to which the individual is entitled under laws administered by the Secretary.

(D) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE TREATMENT.—Recommendations for future treatment of a patient shall be transmitted to a primary care provider for that patient, with follow-up consultations with the Center scheduled as appropriate.

(E) USE OF RECORDS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense or the head of a Federal agency may make available to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for review records held by the Department of Defense, an Armed Force, or that Federal agency, as appropriate, that might assist the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in making the determinations required by subparagraph (A).

(ii) MECHANISM.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense or the head of the appropriate Federal agency may jointly establish a mechanism for the availability and review of records by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under clause (i).

(2) RESEARCH.—The Center may conduct research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of descendants of individuals exposed to toxic substances while serving as members of the Armed Forces that are related to that exposure.

(c) SOCIAL WORKERS.—The Center shall employ not less than one licensed clinical social worker to coordinate access of patients to appropriate Federal, State, and local social and healthcare programs and to handle case management.

(d) REIMBURSEMENT FOR NECESSARY TRAVEL AND ROOM AND BOARD.—The Center may reimburse any parent, guardian, spouse, or sibling who accompanies a patient diagnosed or treated pursuant to this section for the reasonable cost of—

(1) travel to the Center for diagnosis or treatment of the patient pursuant to this section; and

(2) room and board during the period in which the patient is undergoing diagnosis or treatment at the Center pursuant to this section.

(e) REPORT.—Not less frequently than annually, the Center shall submit a report to Congress that includes the following:

(1) A summary of the extent and nature of care provided pursuant to this section.

(2) A summary of the research efforts of the Center under this section that have been completed within the previous year and that are ongoing as of the date of the submission of the report under this subsection.

SEC. 393. ADVISORY BOARD.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish an advisory board (in this section referred to as the ''Advisory Board'') to advise the center established under section 392, to determine which health conditions result from exposure to toxic substances, and to study and evaluate cases of exposure of current and former members of the Armed Forces to toxic substances if such exposure is related the service of the member in the Armed Forces.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) COMPOSITION.—Not later than 150 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and other heads of Federal agencies as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate, select not less than 13 members of the Advisory Board, of whom—

(A) not less than three shall be members of organizations exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(B) not less than one shall be—

(i) a descendant of an individual who was exposed to toxic substances while serving as a member of the Armed Forces and the descendant has manifested a birth defect or functional disability as a result of the exposure of that individual; or

(ii) a parent, child, or grandchild of that descendant; and

(C) additional members may be selected from among—

(i) health professionals, scientists, and academics with expertise in—

(I) birth defects;

(II) developmental disabilities;

(III) epigenetics;

(IV) public health;

(V) the science of environmental exposure or environmental exposure assessment; or

(VI) the science of toxic substances;

(ii) social workers; and

(iii) advocates for veterans or members of the Armed Forces.

(2) CHAIRPERSON.—The Secretary shall select a Chairperson from among the members of the Advisory Board.

(3) TERMS.—Each member of the Advisory Board shall serve a term of two or three years as determined by the Secretary.

(c) DUTIES.—

(1) ADVISORY ROLE WITH RESPECT TO THE CENTER.—With respect to the center established under section 392, the Advisory Board shall—

(A) oversee and assess the work of the center; and

(B) advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on—

(i) issues related to the provision of treatment and care at the center;

(ii) issues related to the research conducted at the center; and

(iii) the particular benefits and services required by the descendants of individuals exposed to toxic substances while serving as members of the Armed Forces.

(2) DETERMINATION THAT HEALTH CONDITIONS RESULTED FROM TOXIC EXPOSURE.—The Advisory Board shall determine which health conditions in descendants of individuals exposed to toxic substances while serving as members of the Armed Forces are health conditions that resulted from the exposure of that individual to that toxic substance for purposes of eligibility for the following:

(A) Treatment of that descendant at the center established under section 392.

(B) Medical care for that descendant under section 1781 of title 38, United States Code.

(C) Support for the family caregiver of that descendant under section 1720G(a) of such title.

(D) Support for the caregiver of that descendant under section 1720G(b) of such title.

(3) STUDY AND CONSIDERATION OF TOXIC SUBSTANCE EXPOSURE CLAIMS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Advisory Board shall study and evaluate claims of exposure to toxic substances by current and former members of the Armed Forces that is related to the service of the member in the Armed Forces.

(B) SUBMISSION OF CLAIMS.—Claims of exposure described in subparagraph (A) may be submitted to the Advisory Board in such form and in such manner as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may require by any of the following individuals or entities:

(i) A member of the Armed Forces.

(ii) A veteran.

(iii) A descendant of a member of the Armed Forces.

(iv) A descendant of a veteran.

(v) A veterans advocacy group.

(vi) An official of the Department of Veterans Affairs with responsibility or experience monitoring the health of current and former members of the Armed Forces.

(vii) An official of the Department of Defense with responsibility or experience monitoring the health of current and former members of the Armed Forces.

(C) CONSIDERATION OF CLAIMS.—Not later than 180 days after receiving a claim submitted pursuant to subparagraph (B), the Advisory Board shall consider the claim and take one of the following actions:

(i) If the Advisory Board determines that exposure to a toxic substance occurred to a degree that an individual exposed to that substance may have or develop a medical condition that would qualify that individual for health care or compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense, the Advisory Board shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs a report described in subparagraph (D).

(ii) If the Advisory Board determines that further consideration of the claim is necessary to adequately assess the extent of exposure, the Advisory Board shall refer the claim to the Office of Extramural Research

established under section 394 to conduct further research and report its findings to the Advisory Board.

(iii) If the Advisory Board determines that exposure to a toxic substance did not occur or occurred to a negligible extent, the Advisory Board shall report such determination to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(D) REPORT.—If the Advisory Board makes a determination under subparagraph (C)(i), the Advisory Board shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs a report that contains the following:

(i) Evidence used by the Advisory Board in making the determination under subparagraph (C)(i), including, if appropriate, the following:

(I) Scientific research, including any research conducted by the Office of Extramural Research established under section 394.

(II) Peer-reviewed articles from scientific journals relating to exposure to toxic substances.

(III) Medical research conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, or the medical community.

(ii) Recommendations on the extent to which the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense should provide health care, benefits, or other compensation with respect to exposure to a toxic substance to the following individuals:

(I) An individual exposed to a toxic substance as determined under subparagraph (C)(i).

(II) A descendant of that individual.

(iii) Information on cost and attributable exposure, as defined in regulations prescribed pursuant to this subtitle.

(E) PUBLICATION OF EVIDENCE.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register the evidence described in clause (i) of subparagraph (D) that is submitted with the report required by that subparagraph.

(ii) EXCEPTION.—Such evidence may not be published if the Secretary determines that preventing such publication—

(I) is in the national security interest of the United States; or

(II) protects the privacy interests of individuals exposed to toxic substances.

(F) SUBPOENA AUTHORITY.—The Advisory Board may require by subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses necessary to consider claims of exposure to toxic substances under this paragraph.

(G) COOPERATION OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The head of each relevant Federal agency, including the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, shall cooperate fully with the Advisory Board for purposes of considering claims of exposure to toxic substances under this paragraph.

(d) MEETINGS.—The Advisory Board shall meet at the call of the Chair, but not less frequently than semiannually.

(e) COMPENSATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The members of the Advisory Board shall serve without compensation.

(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Advisory Board shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Advisory Board.

(f) PERSONNEL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson may, without regard to the civil service laws and regulations, appoint an executive director of the Advisory Board, who shall be a civilian employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and such other personnel as may be necessary to enable the Advisory Board to perform its duties.

(2) APPROVAL.—The appointment of an executive director under paragraph (1) shall be subject to approval by the Advisory Board.

(3) COMPENSATION.—The Chairperson may fix the compensation of the executive director and other personnel without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, except that the rate of pay for the executive director and other personnel may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

SEC. 394. OFFICE OF EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH.

(a) OFFICE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish an Office of Extramural Research (in this section referred to as the ''Office'')—

(1) to conduct research on wounds, illnesses, injuries, and other conditions suffered by individuals as a result of exposure to toxic substances while serving as members of the Armed Forces; and

(2) to assist the Advisory Board established under section 393 in the consideration of claims of exposure to toxic substances.

(b) DIRECTOR.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall select a Director of the Office.

(c) GRANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to approval by the advisory council established under subsection (e), the Director may award grants to reputable scientists and epidemiologists to carry out this section.

(2) EXCEPTION.—The Director may not award grants to individuals or organizations associated with or having an interest in a chemical company or any other organization that the Secretary determines may have an interest in the increased use of toxic substances.

(d) SUPPORT TO ADVISORY BOARD.—Not later than 180 days after receiving a request from the Advisory Board established under section 393 to review a claim of exposure pursuant to subsection (c)(3)(C)(ii) of that section, the Office shall submit a report to the Advisory Board with one of the following determinations:

(1) A determination that exposure to a toxic substance occurred to a degree that an individual exposed to that substance may have or develop a medical condition that would qualify that individual for health care or compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense.

(2) A determination that further study of the claim is necessary, to be carried out by, or under the direction of, the Office in coordination with the Advisory Board.

(3) A determination that exposure to a toxic substance did not occur or occurred to a negligible extent.

(e) ADVISORY COUNCIL.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish an advisory council (in this section referred to as the ''Council'') for the Office established under this section.

(2) MEMBERSHIP.—

(A) COMPOSITION.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and any other heads of Federal agencies as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate, select 11 members of the Council, of whom—

(I) not less than three shall be members of organizations exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and

(II) additional members may be selected from among—

(aa) environmental epidemiologists;

(bb) academics; and

(cc) veterans or the descendants of veterans.

(ii) REQUIREMENTS FOR SCIENTISTS.—When considering individuals who are members of the scientific community for selection to the Council, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may select only those individuals—

(I) who have evidenced expertise in and demonstrate a commitment to research that leads to peer-reviewed scientific evaluation of the wounds, illnesses, injuries, and other conditions that may arise from exposure to toxic substances; and

(II) who are not associated with and do not have an interest in a chemical company or any other organization that the Secretary determines may have an interest in the increased use of toxic substances.

(B) CHAIRPERSON.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall select a Chairperson from among the members of the Council.

(C) TERMS.—Each member of the Council shall serve a term of two or three years as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(3) DUTIES.—The Council shall—

(A) approve or disapprove of grants proposed to be awarded by the Director pursuant to subsection (c); and

(B) advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Director on—

(i) establishing guidelines for grant proposals and research proposals under this section; and

(ii) assisting the Advisory Board established under section 393 in the consideration of claims of exposure to toxic substances.

(4) MEETINGS.—The Council shall meet at the call of the Chairperson, but not less frequently than semiannually.

(5) COMPENSATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The members of the Council shall serve without compensation.

(B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Council shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Council.

(f) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the establishment of the Office under this section, the Director and the Chairman of the Council shall jointly submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Congress a report that contains the following:

(1) A summary of the research efforts conducted and the grants awarded under this section.

(2) A summary of the effects of exposure to toxic substances studied pursuant to this section.

(3) Recommendations for steps to be taken to care for and serve—

(A) individuals exposed to toxic substances while serving as a member of the Armed Forces; and

(B) the progeny of those individuals.

SEC. 395. PROVISION OF DEPENDENT CARE AND CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE TO DESCENDANTS OF VETERANS EXPOSED TO CERTAIN TOXIC SUBSTANCES DURING SERVICE IN THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) DEPENDENT CARE.—Section 1781(a) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking '', and'' and inserting a comma;

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting '', and''; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph:

''(5) an individual who is the biological child, grandchild, or great-grandchild of a

veteran who the Secretary has determined was exposed to a toxic substance while serving as a member of the Armed Forces, if—

''(A) the individual has a health condition that is determined by the Advisory Board established by section 393 of the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014 to be a health condition that results from exposure to that toxic substance,

''(B) the individual is homebound as a result of that health condition, and

''(C) the Secretary determines that the veteran has or had the same health condition,''.

(b) CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE.—

(1) COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE.—Subsection (a) of section 1720G is amended—

(A) by striking ''veteran'' each place it appears (except for paragraph (2)(A)) and inserting ''individual'';

(B) by striking ''veterans'' each place it appears and inserting ''individuals'';

(C) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking subparagraphs (A) and (B) and inserting the following:

''(A)(i) is a veteran or member of the Armed Forces undergoing medical discharge from the Armed Forces and has a serious injury (including traumatic brain injury, psychological trauma, or other mental disorder) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service on or after September 11, 2001; or

''(ii) is the biological child, grandchild, or great-grandchild of a veteran who the Secretary has determined was exposed to a toxic substance while serving as a member of the Armed Forces, if—

''(I) the individual has a health condition that is determined by the Advisory Board established by section 393 of the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014 to be a health condition that results from exposure to that toxic substance;

''(II) the individual is homebound as a result of that health condition; and

''(III) the Secretary determines that the veteran has or had the same health condition; and''; and

(ii) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (B); and

(D) in paragraph (9)(C)(i), by striking ''veteran's'' and inserting ''individual's''.

(2) GENERAL CAREGIVER SUPPORT.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended—

(A) by striking ''veteran'' each place it appears and inserting ''individual'';

(B) by striking ''veterans'' each place it appears and inserting ''individuals'';

(C) in paragraph (1), by striking ''who are'' and all that follows through ''of this title''; and

(D) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by redesignating subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) as clauses (i), (ii), and (iii), respectively; and

(ii) in the matter preceding clause (i), as redesignated by clause (i), by striking ''any individual who needs'' and inserting ''any individual who—

''(A)(i) is enrolled in the health care system established under section 1705(a) of this title; or

''(ii) is the biological child, grandchild, or great-grandchild of a veteran who the Secretary has determined was exposed to a toxic substance while serving as a member of the Armed Forces, if—

''(I) the individual has a health condition that is determined by the Advisory Board established by section 393 of the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014 to be a health condition that results from exposure to that toxic substance;

''(II) the individual is homebound as a result of that health condition; and

''(III) the Secretary determines that the veteran has or had the same health condition; and

''(B) needs''.

(3) DEFINITIONS.—Subsection (d) of such section is amended—

(A) by striking ''eligible veteran'' each place it appears and inserting ''eligible individual'';

(B) by striking ''covered veteran'' each place it appears and inserting ''covered individual'';

(C) in paragraph (1), by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the eligible individual or covered individual'';

(D) in paragraph (2), by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the eligible individual'';

(E) in paragraph (3), by striking ''the veteran'' each place it appears and inserting ''the eligible individual'';

(F) in paragraph (4), by striking ''the veteran'' and inserting ''the eligible individual or covered individual''; and

(G) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) The term 'toxic substance' has the meaning given that term in section 391 of the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014.''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) BENEFICIARY TRAVEL.—Section 111 is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)(1), by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(G) An individual described in section 1720G(a)(2)(A)(ii) of this title.''; and

(B) in subsection (e)—

(i) by striking ''veteran'' each place it appears (except for paragraph (2)(B)) and inserting ''individual''; and

(ii) in paragraph (2)(B)—

(I) by striking ''a veteran'' and inserting ''an individual''; and

(II) by striking ''such veteran'' and inserting ''such individual''.

(2) COUNSELING, TRAINING, AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.—Section 1782(c)(2) is amended by striking ''an eligible veteran or a caregiver of a covered veteran'' and inserting ''a veteran who is an eligible individual or a caregiver of a veteran who is a covered individual''.

SEC. 396. DECLASSIFICATION BY DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OF CERTAIN INCIDENTS OF EXPOSURE OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense may declassify documents related to any known incident in which not less than 100 members of the Armed Forces were exposed to a toxic substance that resulted in at least one case of a disability that a member of the medical profession has determined to be associated with that toxic substance.

(b) LIMITATION.—The declassification authorized by subsection (a) shall be limited to information necessary for an individual who was potentially exposed to a toxic substance to determine the following:

(1) Whether that individual was exposed to that toxic substance.

(2) The potential severity of the exposure of that individual to that toxic substance.

(3) Any potential health conditions that may have resulted from exposure to that toxic substance.

(c) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary of Defense is not required to declassify documents if the Secretary determines that declassification of those documents would materially and immediately threaten the security of the United States.

SEC. 397. NATIONAL OUTREACH CAMPAIGN ON POTENTIAL LONG-TERM HEALTH EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THEIR DESCENDANTS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly conduct a national outreach and education campaign directed towards members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their family members to communicate the following information:

(1) Information on—

(A) incidents of exposure of members of the Armed Forces to toxic substances;

(B) health conditions resulting from such exposure; and

(C) the potential long-term effects of such exposure on the individuals exposed to those substances and the descendants of those individuals.

(2) Information on the national center established under section 392 for individuals eligible for treatment at the center.

SA 2801. Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 207, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

Subtitle F—VOW to Hire Heroes Extension

SEC. 451. SHORT TITLE.

This subtitle may be cited as the ''VOW to Hire Heroes Extension Act of 2014''.

SEC. 452. EXTENSION OF WORK OPPORTUNITY CREDIT FOR VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (B) of section 51(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''after December 31, 2013.'' and inserting ''after—

''(i) December 31, 2017, in the case of a qualified veteran, and

''(ii) December 31, 2013, in the case of any other individual.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to individuals who begin work for the employer after December 31, 2013.

SEC. 453. SIMPLIFIED CERTIFICATION OF VETERAN STATUS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (D) of section 51(d)(13) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(D) PRE-SCREENING OF QUALIFIED VETERANS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (A) shall be applied without regard to subclause (II) of clause (ii) thereof in the case of an individual seeking treatment as a qualified veteran with respect to whom the pre-screening notice contains—

''(I) qualified veteran status documentation,

''(II) qualified proof of unemployment compensation, and

''(III) an affidavit furnished by the individual stating, under penalty of perjury, that the information provided under subclauses (I) and (II) is true.

''(ii) QUALIFIED VETERAN STATUS DOCUMENTATION.—For purposes of clause (i), the term 'qualified veteran status documentation' means any documentation provided to an individual by the Department of Defense or the National Guard upon release or discharge from the Armed Forces which includes information sufficient to establish that such individual is a veteran.

''(iii) QUALIFIED PROOF OF UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.—For purposes of clause (i), the term 'qualified proof of unemployment compensation' means, with respect to an individual, checks or other proof of receipt of payment of unemployment compensation to such individual for periods aggregating not less than 4 weeks (in the case of an individual seeking treatment under paragraph (3)(A)(iii)), or not less than 6 months (in the case of an individual seeking treatment under clause (ii)(II) or (iv) of paragraph (3)(A)), during the 1-year period ending on the hiring date.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to individuals who begin work for the employer after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 454. CREDIT MADE AVAILABLE AGAINST PAYROLL TAXES IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 52(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by striking ''QUALIFIED TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS'' in the heading and inserting ''CERTAIN EMPLOYERS'', and

(2) by striking ''by qualified tax-exempt organizations'' and inserting ''by certain employers''.

(b) CREDIT ALLOWED TO CERTAIN FOR-PROFIT EMPLOYERS.—Subsection (e) of section 3111 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by inserting ''or a qualified for-profit employer'' after ''If a qualified tax-exempt organization'' in paragraph (1),

(2) by striking ''with respect to whom a credit would be allowable under section 38 by reason of section 51 if the organization were not a qualified tax-exempt organization'' in paragraph (1),

(3) by inserting ''or for-profit employer'' after ''employees of the organization'' each place it appears in paragraphs (1) and (2),

(4) by inserting ''in the case of a qualified tax-exempt organization,'' before ''by only taking into account'' in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (3),

(5) by inserting ''or for-profit employer'' after ''the organization'' in paragraph (4),

(6) by redesignating subparagraph (B) of paragraph (5) as subparagraph (C) of such paragraph, by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (A) of such paragraph, and by inserting after subparagraph (A) of such paragraph the following new subparagraph:

''(B) the term 'qualified for-profit employer' means, with respect to a taxable year, an employer not described in subparagraph (A), but only if—

''(i) such employer does not have profits for any of the 3 taxable years preceding such taxable year, and

''(ii) such employer elects under section 51(j) not to have section 51 apply to such taxable year, and'', and

(7) by striking ''has meaning given such term by section 51(d)(3)'' in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (5), as so redesignated, and inserting ''means a qualified veteran (within the meaning of section 51(d)(3)) with respect to whom a credit would be allowable under section 38 by reason of section 51 if the employer of such veteran were not a qualified tax-exempt organization or a qualified for-profit employer''.

(c) TRANSFERS TO FEDERAL OLD-AGE AND SURVIVORS INSURANCE TRUST FUND.—There are hereby appropriated to the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund established under section 201 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401) amounts equal to the reduction in revenues to the Treasury by reason of the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b). Amounts appropriated by the preceding sentence shall be transferred from the general fund at such times and in such manner as to replicate to the extent possible the transfers which would have occurred to such Trust Fund had such amendments not been enacted.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall apply to individuals who begin work for the employer after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 455. REPORT.

Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, shall report to the Congress on the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the amendments made by sections 452, 453, and 454 in increasing the employment of veterans. Such report shall include the results of a survey, conducted, if needed, in consultation with the Veterans' Employment and Training Service of the Department of Labor, to determine how many veterans are hired by each employer that claims the credit under section 51, by reason of subsection (d)(1)(B) thereof, or section 3111(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

SEC. 456. TREATMENT OF POSSESSIONS.

(a) PAYMENTS TO POSSESSIONS.—

(1) MIRROR CODE POSSESSIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall pay to each possession of the United States with a mirror code tax system amounts equal to the loss to that possession by reason of the amendments made by this subtitle. Such amounts shall be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury based on information provided by the government of the respective possession of the United States.

(2) OTHER POSSESSIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall pay to each possession of the United States which does not have a mirror code tax system the amount estimated by the Secretary of the Treasury as being equal to the loss to that possession that would have occurred by reason of the amendments made by this subtitle if a mirror code tax system had been in effect in such possession. The preceding sentence shall not apply with respect to any possession of the United States unless such possession establishes to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the possession has implemented (or, at the discretion of the Secretary, will implement) an income tax benefit which is substantially equivalent to the income tax credit in effect after the amendments made by this subtitle.

(b) COORDINATION WITH CREDIT ALLOWED AGAINST UNITED STATES INCOME TAXES.—The credit allowed against United States income taxes for any taxable year under the amendments made by this subtitle to section 51 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to any person with respect to any qualified veteran shall be reduced by the amount of any credit (or other tax benefit described in subsection (a)(2)) allowed to such person against income taxes imposed by the possession of the United States by reason of this section with respect to such qualified veteran for such taxable year.

(c) DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL RULES.—

(1) POSSESSION OF THE UNITED STATES.—For purposes of this section, the term ''possession of the United States'' includes American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands.

(2) MIRROR CODE TAX SYSTEM.—For purposes of this section, the term ''mirror code tax system'' means, with respect to any possession of the United States, the income tax system of such possession if the income tax liability of the residents of such possession under such system is determined by reference to the income tax laws of the United States as if such possession were the United States.

(3) TREATMENT OF PAYMENTS.—For purposes of section 1324(b)(2) of title 31, United States Code, the payments under this section shall be treated in the same manner as a refund due from credit provisions described in such section.

SA 2802. Mr. BOOZMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

SECTION 918. REPEAL OF CERTAIN REDUCTIONS MADE BY THE BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013.

Section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (Public Law 113–67) is repealed as of the date of the enactment of such Act.

SA 2803. Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. MARKEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 367, after line 14, insert the following:

SEC. ____. PLACEMENT OF A CHAIR HONORING AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION ON THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL GROUNDS.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) In recent years, commemorative chairs honoring American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action have been placed in prominent locations across the United States.

(2) The United States Capitol Grounds are an appropriate location to place a commemorative chair honoring American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action.

(b) OBTAINING AND PLACEMENT OF CHAIR.—

(1) OBTAINING CHAIR.—The Architect of the Capitol shall enter into an agreement to obtain a chair featuring the logo of the National League of POW/MIA Families under such terms and conditions as the Architect considers appropriate and consistent with applicable law.

(2) PLACEMENT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this section, the Architect shall place the chair obtained under paragraph (1) on the United States Capitol Grounds in a suitable permanent location.

(c) FUNDING.—

(1) DONATIONS.—The Architect of the Capitol may—

(A) enter into an agreement with any organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of that Code to solicit private donations to carry out the purposes of this section; and

(B) accept donations of funds, property, and services to carry out the purposes of this section.

(2) COSTS.—All costs incurred in carrying out the purposes of this section shall be paid for with private donations received under paragraph (1).

SA 2804. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 61, between lines 5 and 6, insert the following:

SEC. 314. PROGRAM ON ESTABLISHMENT OF SEMI-INDEPENDENT LIVING COMMUNITIES FOR VETERANS AND CAREGIVERS.

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—Commencing not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of establishing and promoting semi-independent living communities for covered veterans and their caregivers.

(b) COVERED VETERANS.—For purposes of this section, a covered veteran is any veteran who is enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment established and operated by the Secretary under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code.

(c) DURATION OF PROGRAM.—The program shall be carried out during the three-year period beginning on the date of the commencement of the pilot program.

(d) LOCATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program in not fewer than three sites selected by the Secretary for purposes of the pilot program.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting locations for the pilot program, the Secretary shall consider the feasibility and advisability of selecting locations in the following areas:

(A) Areas that provide access to complimentary services, including to services of the Veterans Administration.

(B) Areas that allow for group and individual interaction to occur through intentional community planning.

(C) Areas in different geographic locations and regions of the United States.

(e) LIMITATION ON EXPENSES.—In establishing and supporting the pilot program, the Secretary may expend amounts as follows:

(1) For planning and initial implementation of a pilot site, not more than $250,000.

(2) For establishment and support of a pilot site, not more than $750,000.

(f) REPURPOSING OF PHYSICAL SPACE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (e), the Secretary may, in carrying out the pilot program, authorize the repurposing of existing Federally owned space as the Secretary considers appropriate for purposes of the pilot program.

(2) REPURPOSING EXCEPTION.—Existing physical space used for the direct delivery of health care to patients may not be repurposed under paragraph (1).

(g) VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.—The participation of a covered veteran in the pilot program shall be at the election of the covered veteran.

(h) REPORTS.—

(1) PERIODIC REPORTS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the commencement of the pilot program and not less frequently than once every 90 days thereafter until the completion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on activities carried out to implement the pilot program, including outreach activities to veterans and community organizations.

(2) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the commencement of the pilot program and not less frequently than once every year thereafter until the completion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the pilot program detailing—

(A) the timeline for completion, the locations selected, and conclusions of the Secretary as a result of the pilot program; and

(B) recommendations for the continuation or expansion of the pilot program.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 27, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 27, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Ms. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 27, 2014, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Semiannual Monetary Policy Report to the Congress.''

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Ms. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 27, 2014, at 10:30 a.m. in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''North Pacific Perspectives on Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 27, 2014, at 11:15 a.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''International Parental Child Abduction.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Ms. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, on February 27, 2014, at 10 a.m. in room SH–216 of the Hart Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Promoting College Access and Success For Students With Disabilities.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Ms. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 27, 2014, at 1:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Recycling Electronics: A Common Sense Solution for Enhancing Government Efficiency and Protecting Our Environment.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Ms. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on February 27, 2014, at 10 a.m., in SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Ms. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 27, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER

Ms. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Water and Power of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 27, 2014, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Basant Sanghera, a Brookings fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of today's session of the Senate.

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

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my legal fellow, Don Bell, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the calendar year.

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

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to immediate consideration en bloc of the following resolutions, which were submitted earlier today:

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution en bloc.

Mr. REID. I ask consent the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to. (The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2062, S. 2066, S. 2067, and H.R. 3865

Mr. REID. Madam President, there are four bills at the desk and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2062) to authorize Members of Congress to bring an action for declaratory and injunctive relief in response to a written statement by the President or any other official in the executive branch directing officials of the executive branch to not enforce a provision of law.

A bill (S. 2066) to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the intentional discrimination of a person or organization by an employee of the Internal Revenue Service.

A bill (S. 2067) to prohibit the Department of the Treasury from assigning tax statuses to organizations based on their political beliefs and activities.

An act (H.R. 3865) to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from modifying the standard for determining whether an organization is operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare for purposes of section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now ask for a second reading en bloc on each of these four measures, but I object to my own request en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2014

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2 p.m. on Monday, March 3, 2014; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; that following morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Debo Adegbile with up to 30 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled in the usual form prior to the cloture vote on the nomination; and that for the purposes of rule XXII, Friday, February 28, 2014, count as an intervening day.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. The next rollcall vote will be at 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2014, at 2 P.M.

Mr. REID. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:46 p.m., adjourned until Monday, March 3, at 2 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

LISA S. DISBROW, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE, VICE JAMIE MICHAEL MORIN.

LAURA JUNOR, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A PRINCIPAL DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, VICE JO ANN ROONEY, RESIGNED.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

ROBERT W. HOLLEYMAN II, OF LOUISIANA, TO BE A DEPUTY UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR, VICE DEMETRIOS J. MARANTIS, RESIGNED.

INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION

JUAN CARLOS ITURREGUI, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE INTER–AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 26, 2014, VICE THOMAS JOSEPH DODD, TERM EXPIRED.

JUAN CARLOS ITURREGUI, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE INTER–AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 26, 2020. (REAPPOINTMENT)

ROBERTA S. JACOBSON, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE INTER–AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 20, 2014, VICE ADOLFO A. FRANCO, TERM EXPIRED.

ROBERTA S. JACOBSON, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE INTER–AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 20, 2020. (REAPPOINTMENT)

BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS

KAREN KORNBLUH, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS FOR A TERM EXPIRING AUGUST 13, 2016, VICE MICHAEL P. MEEHAN, TERM EXPIRED.

INTER–AMERICAN FOUNDATION

ANNETTE TADDEO–GOLDSTEIN, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE INTER–AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 20, 2018, VICE JOHN P. SALAZAR, TERM EXPIRED.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate February 27, 2014:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

MICHAEL L. CONNOR, OF NEW MEXICO, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING JAMES J. CASION, CEO OF BAKER VICTORY SERVICES, UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor my good friend and colleague James J. Casion as he retires from an impressive and fulfilling career of service. Jim's body of work unquestionably has improved the lives of those among us in need of special services, especially the mentally and physically disabled.

Since 1995, Jim has served as the Chief Executive Officer of Baker Victory Services, an organization that evolved from Father Nelson Baker's extensive social services programs. Today, Baker Victory provides extensive social services including adoption, residential, educational, outpatient, and services for the developmentally disabled. The organization is recognized as a leading institution in the field of behavioral health.

Jim's impact on Baker Victory Services and its predecessor organizations is commendable and noteworthy, as he has served in the Associate or Executive capacity since 1980. His comprehensive knowledge of the institution and its many facilities, built throughout his career, provides him with intimate knowledge of the challenges and best practices in his field.

Jim's passion for providing care and dignity extends into the classroom. His personal educational background includes an associate's degree in Liberal Arts from Orange County Community College, and three degrees and certificates from the University at Buffalo—a bachelor's degree in psychology, a Master's degree in Counseling, and completed a course of Special Study in Community Mental Health and Rehabilitation Counseling. To share his passion and expertise with students of the field, Jim has taught courses serving as an Adjunct Professor at the Canisius College Graduate School of Education, Trocaire College and Erie Community College.

In addition to his work at Baker Victory, Jim has served on countless boards dedicated to improving care in our community and our nation. Some of his past and present appointments and memberships include the Canisius College Graduate School of Education, the Erie County Community Coordinating Council on Children and Families, the Coalition for New York State Children's Mental Health Services, the Child Welfare League of America, Care Management Coalition, Quality Behavioral Health, the National Association for Children's Behavioral Health, the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, the Trauma Informed Community Initiative, and Dopkins and Company.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to honor my friend Jim Casion and congratulate him upon the occasion of his retirement. His selfless work and compassion is inspiring and I admire his mission to provide all people with quality care so they may lead dignified, fulfilling lives. I am so grateful for his work, and sincerely wish him all the best in his retirement.

HONORING MS. ANNE M. ELLIS' LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO THE AMERICAN CONCRETE INSTITUTE

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. PETERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Anne. M. Ellis for her volunteer leadership to the American Concrete Institute (ACI), headquartered in Farmington Hills, MI, an organization whose work is fundamental to our nation's critical infrastructure and key to our economic competitiveness. As a Member of Congress, I am privileged and honored to recognize Ms. Ellis for her leadership and lifelong commitment to this organization and to advancing the knowledge of concrete in the United States and abroad.

ACI has been the pioneer in all concrete-related fields: research and development, structural design, architectural design, construction, and product manufacture. With 99 chapters, 65 student chapters, and nearly 20,000 members spanning over 120 countries, ACI provides knowledge and information for the best uses of concrete. Through a host of activities including continuing education, certification, seminars, publications, and conventions, ACI plays an active and vital role in the concrete industry. Core to ACI is the development of codes and standards, adopted for reference in building codes impacting potentially every concrete project in the United States. Additionally, there are some 21 countries worldwide that base part or all of their national building codes on the ACI's 318 Structural Concrete Building Code provisions.

Ms. Ellis will complete her term, as the 90th President of ACI, at ACI's Spring Convention in Reno. Her Presidency was notable for the many accomplishments typified by the new ACI motto: Always Advancing that launched during her term. Her term also bore witness to a new ACI logo, a new ACI website translatable into 70 languages, and the formation of the following ACI committees: Education, Technical and Certification Committee (ETC); International Project Awards Committee (IPAC); Codes & Standards Advisory Committee; as well as launching the Global Chapter Roundtable. These concrete actions support ACI's new strategic plan that sets it on a course for global leadership in the 21st century.

Anne Ellis' service to ACI began long before her presidency. Ms. Ellis has served on ACI's Board of Direction, the Board of the ACI Foundation, as well as numerous other Board and Technical committees. Working with ACI colleagues, Ms. Ellis helped institute free ACI student e-membership, facilitate ACI's entry into social networking, and establish the Collegiate Concrete Council, the Student and Young Professionals Activities Committee and Sustainability Committees. She was named an ACI Fellow in 2008. Not surprisingly, she has been named by "Concrete Construction" as one of the most influential people in the concrete industry.

Currently, Ms. Ellis is Vice President of Global & Government Initiatives for AECOM, an $8-billion global provider of professional technical and management support services. In this role, Ms. Ellis drives business-critical initiatives and engages in policy, legislative and regulatory issues affecting AECOM and the clients and markets the company serves. Additionally, Ms. Ellis oversees the day-to-day operations of the AECOM Global Advisory Board, comprised of prominent global leaders who are external to AECOM and highly accomplished in business and geopolitics.

Prior to joining AECOM, Ms. Ellis represented the Portland Cement Association and the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association. On behalf of these industries, she advocated for technical guidelines incorporated into landmark legislation that supported the development and construction of environmentally sustainable building designs. She represented the industries in the development of construction trade and supervisor training and certification programs—now standard in master specifications, with hundreds of thousands certified. Additionally, Ms. Ellis was a structural engineering project manager for numerous noteworthy entertainment, institutional and commercial building projects while at Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade & Douglas; Martin, Cagley & Middlebrook; Dewberry & Davis; and Ehlert/Bryan. Throughout her career, Ms. Ellis taught a variety of classes to undergraduate students, including reinforced concrete design, and continuing education classes to practicing engineers, preparing hundreds of engineers for successful completion of the FE and PE exams.

Ms. Ellis is a 2013 inductee into the Virginia Tech Academy of Engineering Excellence, an elite group composed of only 119 people out of its more than 60,000 living alumni. She is a 2007 inductee into the Virginia Tech Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering Academy of Distinguished Alumni. She has completed terms on the Virginia Tech College of Engineering Advisory Board and the Civil and Environmental Engineering Advisory Board, including a term as Chair.

Ms. Ellis serves on the Environmental Technologies Trade Advisory Committee (ETTAC), as an appointee of the Secretary of Commerce. ETTAC provides private-sector advice to 19 federal departments and agencies on federal trade policies and programs concerning the environmental technologies industry.

Ms. Ellis is active in several business and professional organizations. She is a member

of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and served as ASCE National Concrete Canoe Competition judge in 2004, 2005, and 2012. She was named an ASCE Fellow in 2013. The author of numerous articles and coauthor of the ''Concrete Design and Construction'' section in the Fifth Edition of the Standard Handbook for Civil Engineers, Ms. Ellis is a frequent speaker at universities, professional societies, and industry forums. She received her Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, and has been a professional engineer since 1984.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today to honor Ms. Anne M. Ellis' leadership and service to the American Concrete Institute.

IN HONOR OF MASTER TROOPER ROBERT M. HUNT

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Master Trooper Robert M. Hunt of North Carolina's State Highway Patrol and thank him for his heroic actions during the snow storm that hit the Southeast.

On February 12, 2014 North Carolina was hit by a dangerous winter storm that obstructed our roadways and threatened the safety of commuters and all North Carolinians. Despite the dangerous conditions, Trooper Hunt remained committed to his duty to keep our highways and our travelers safe.

As a state trooper, Trooper Hunt heroically stands in harm's way and commits his life to the safety of others every single day. We are fortunate to have brave men and women like Trooper Hunt who dedicate and risk their lives for our well-being and security.

Mr. Speaker, Trooper Hunt is a proven leader in our community. I applaud him for his bravery during this hazardous snow storm, and I thank him for his heroic and selfless actions.

HONORING DEMOLAY INTERNATIONAL

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize DeMolay International, a youth service organization based out of Missouri's 6th Congressional District, on celebrating its 95th Anniversary.

DeMolay International is an outstanding leadership and philanthropic organization. Since Frank Sherman Land, a business leader and community volunteer, started DeMolay International in Kansas City, Missouri, on March 18, 1919, the organization has grown exponentially. The innovative and charitable work conducted by the organization now touches the lives of millions in all fifty states, as well as, Washington, DC, Canada, Brazil, Uruguay, The Philippines, Australia, Italy, Romania and Serbia. Frank Sherman Land believed in working with others and creating strong bonds that will last a life time. DeMolay International is sponsored by and works closely with The Masons, which are a philanthropic fraternal organization that brings men together to make better communities through charitable work. Throughout history, DeMolay International has stayed true to its seven values of love of family, respect for other people's beliefs, courtesy towards all, brotherhood, honoring one's promises, cleanness in thought word and deed, and love of country. The men who serve in this organization vow to practice and live their lives by these core beliefs.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing DeMolay International for their many contributions to Kansas City and their dedication to service.

HONORING THE TONASKET UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES LEGACY SITE

HON. DOC HASTINGS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor those whose vision and hard work have made the United States Armed Forces Legacy Site in Tonasket, Washington, a reality. This site is a touching tribute to the legacy of all of America's veterans—past, present, and future.

In 2006, local veterans George Frank, Roger Castelda, and Ted Huber formed the U.S. Armed Forces Legacy Association in this rural community with the commendable mission of providing a place for veterans and members of the U.S. Armed Forces to be honored, offering a service office for veterans and their families, and presenting a military library for the use and enjoyment of all.

Originally designed by local artist Brad Hughes, the United States Armed Forces Legacy Site was completed on May 18, 2013 in conjunction with the city of Tonasket and with the hard work of many in the community. This inspirational site includes a wall for over 1,000 veterans' plaques, five basalt columns to honor each service branch, a library consisting of the history and wars of the Armed Forces, and a touching mural acknowledging America's military history.

I am pleased to see that the U.S. Armed Forces Legacy Association was named Nonprofit Association of the year for 2012 by the Tonasket Chamber of Commerce and named as the best park/playground by the Omak Chronicle.

Through the efforts of numerous volunteers and donors, the United States Armed Forces Legacy Site has been a tremendous success and truly honors those who protect and preserve the values that shaped the character of our nation. I applaud all of those who made the site what it is today and look forward to future generations being able to show their respect to our America heroes.

CONGRATULATING DONALD C. ROBINETT

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Donald C. Robinett, or ''Robby'' as he is endearingly referred to by his colleagues, on the occasion of his 97th birthday. It is with great enthusiasm that I join his family and friends in celebrating this milestone and the life of Mr. Robinett, a World War II veteran and among the last of the Pearl Harbor veterans living in Ventura County.

Born in Oxnard, California and now a resident of Oak View, California, Mr. Robinett served in the United States Navy from 1935 to 1945 and served on the USS *Tracy* for over five decades.

On that fateful day of December 7, 1941, Mr. Robinett was below deck when the first bombs hit. His experiences and flashbacks of the events that unfolded that tragic morning aboard the USS *Tracy* remain intact. For over 72 years, the vivid memories of the attack on Pearl Harbor still remain with Mr. Robinett. His courage, bravery, and service during one of our Nation's most historic moments, are an example of the characteristics that define the people that have come to be known as the Greatest Generation.

Honorably discharged on September 1, 1945, Mr. Robinett's career includes 10 years in the Navy and even without a day of leave, he was able to marry Eunice Hegna in Las Vegas in 1945. Donald and Eunice had 8 children.

I want to sincerely thank Mr. Robinett for his service and recognize his unwavering commitment, not only to our country, but to the freedoms and liberties that we hold so dear today. As a country and as people united, we will be forever grateful.

It is my honor to offer my sincere congratulations to Mr. Robinett on this special occasion. I wish him a very happy birthday and many more years of continued health and happiness.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE THERAPY CHOIRS OF MICHIGAN'S ANNUAL ''CAPITOL CONCERT'' DURING MICHIGAN THERAPY CHOIR AWARENESS WEEK

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. PETERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Therapy Choirs of Michigan, a nonprofit organization based in Farmington Hills. This year, the Therapy Choirs of Michigan is preparing for its fifteenth annual ''Capitol Concert'' in Lansing, a remarkable achievement and great milestone in its history.

Created in 1998 by Len McCulloch, Therapy Choirs of Michigan was founded with a mission of bringing together members of the community affected by similar disabilities and challenges to provide them with opportunities support each other through artistic vocal expression. While providing the public with entertainment, Therapy Choirs of Michigan seeks to

provide its members and their families with a fun and therapeutic experience that will inspire them in their recovery, as well as raise awareness for the disabilities and challenges faced by its members. Engaging its members in a traditional ''a cappella'' format, Therapy Choirs of Michigan has developed choirs tailored to youth, seniors, individuals with developmental disabilities and veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. For each of its choirs, Therapy Choirs of Michigan provides a supportive environment of structured rehearsals that allows its members to maximize the development of improved self-esteem and building of enhanced social skills.

Over the last fifteen years, the members of Therapy Choirs of Michigan have performed at over 160 concerts across the state while sharing their creativity, resilience, and artistry with others. They have been featured by local television stations and newspapers in the Greater Detroit area for the impact they are making, which includes donation drives that provided the Historic Detroit Rescue Mission with clothing that helped nearly 3,000 Michigan residents in-need. The efforts of its members have earned the Therapy Choirs of Michigan recognition from numerous organizations, including the Farmington Community Arts Council for outstanding achievement in the performing arts. And most recently, the work and impact of the Therapy Choirs of Michigan was recognized by the Michigan House of Representatives, which proclaimed the first week of March to be Therapy Choir Awareness Week across the entire state.

Mr. Speaker, Therapy Choirs of Michigan and its members have demonstrated the incredible resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity and remarkable courage to share their stories and raise awareness of their experiences with residents across the state. It is my honor to recognize and congratulate Len McCulloch and members of the Therapy Choirs of Michigan for the remarkable impact they are making on communities across the state and I wish them continued success and growth as they prepare for their annual ''Capitol Concert'' in Lansing.

NATIONAL MARFAN AWARENESS MONTH

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize February as National Marfan Awareness Month on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Americans affected by Marfan syndrome and related heritable connective tissue disorders across the country.

It is important to raise awareness of Marfan syndrome and related heritable disorders, which are rare genetic conditions. The signs of these conditions include long arms and legs, curved spine, a concave or convex chest, flexible joints, and flat feet. Some patients may display the features of these conditions from birth while others may develop them later in life.

Knowing the signs and features are important and can save lives. The heart is often affected too, which can lead to aortic enlargement and dissection, and sudden death. An early and accurate diagnosis, regular monitoring, and, in some cases, therapies or medical interventions are necessary to prevent cardiac events.

I am proud to represent the Port Washington, NY-based Marfan Foundation, which leads the effort to improve the lives of individuals affected by heritable connective tissue disorders. This year marks Carolyn Levering's 20th anniversary as President and CEO of the Foundation. Under her leadership, the Foundation has grown into an effective and compassionate organization. As a result of her dedication and the hard work of the Foundation, medical research has been advanced, treatments and diagnostic tools have been discovered, patient care has improved and, most importantly, lives have been saved.

I understand Carolyn recently announced plans to step down from her executive role at the Marfan Foundation next year. When the Foundation's Founder, Priscilla Ciccariello, first tapped Carolyn to lead the organization into the next century, there is no way she could've known just how far the heritable connective tissue disorder community could come in just two decades.

During this Marfan Awareness Month, I call on my colleagues to reflect on the progress that Carolyn, Priscilla, and the Marfan Foundation have made, and to ask themselves what they can do on behalf of their Marfan-affected constituents to ensure that the next twenty years are just as encouraging as the previous two decades.

26TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HORRIFIC ATTACK AGAINST ARMENIANS

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, the 27th of February marks the 26th anniversary of the horrific attack against Armenians in the town of Sumgait in Soviet Azerbaijan. Dozens of Armenians were killed and hundreds more were wounded. During the pogrom, Armenian women and children were raped, people were set on fire and beaten to death, while police stood by unwilling or unable to intervene.

The violence touched off a broader attack against Azerbaijan's ethnic Armenians, ultimately resulting in a war with Nagorno-Karabakh in which tens of thousands of people were killed. The conflict remains unresolved today and the military blockade of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic continues. The pogroms precipitated a massive refugee situation displacing hundreds of thousands of people, virtually eliminating Azerbaijan's once-significant Armenian population.

Mr. Speaker, as people of conscience, this is a remembrance we must all engage in. For me, it is also a very personal remembrance. My own family fled the slaughter of the Armenian Genocide under the Ottomans, and when we learned of the massacres against Armenians in 1988, we saw history repeating itself. These vicious acts of murder, targeted at ethnic groups, must be forcefully condemned whenever and wherever we see them.

Without our recognition and our forceful condemnation, the cycle of violence will continue. Even today, Christians and other minority groups are being driven from Syria by extremists, and the once large and diverse ethnic mosaic there is all but eradicated. Without our attention and action by the world community, there will be no end in sight.

Today, Mr. Speaker, let us remember the Armenians who lost their lives in Azerbaijan 26 years ago. And then let us take up the work that our principles demand of us, standing united against ethnic violence, discrimination, extremism and brutality, wherever we find it.

IN RECOGNITION OF JUDGE AMY HATHAWAY'S SERVICE TO THE RESIDENTS OF DETROIT AND WAYNE COUNTY

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. PETERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Honorable Amy P. Hathaway, a judge on the Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan in Wayne County, who is retiring from the bench after nearly two decades of service.

Judge Hathaway's service to the people of Southeast Michigan began more than twenty years ago, when she joined the Wayne County Corporation Counsel as Assistant Corporation Counsel. In this role, Judge Hathaway undertook plaintiff and defense litigation matters in county, state and federal courts, as well oversaw the drafting of county ordinances and review of tax matters. After two years of work for Wayne County, Judge Hathaway was elected the Third Circuit Court of Michigan, with jurisdiction over matters of equity, civil claims in excess of $25,000 and matters involving felony violation of Michigan's criminal statutes. Prior to her public service, Judge Hathaway worked as a paralegal for Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP and as an associate at Dykema Gossett PLLC following her graduation from University of Detroit Mercy School of Law in May 1987.

While serving on the bench, Judge Hathaway has been recognized by numerous community organizations for her accessibility and conduct. In 2012, the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association gave her an outstanding rating and cited her as among the most accessible and friendly judges on the Third Circuit Court. Additionally, Dbusiness Magazine named Judge Hathaway one of its Top Circuit Court Judges in 2013. Throughout her career, Judge Hathaway is an active member of the State Bar of Michigan and has served on its Constitutional Law Committee. She has also served as a member of the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Children and was elected by her peers to the Board of Directors of the Barristers of Detroit Bar Association, where she was named its Barrister of Year in 1991. Judge Hathaway has also taken on responsibilities as a mentor to the interns that have worked in her office.

In addition to her commitment to serving the residents of Wayne County, Judge Hathaway has remained a proud and dedicated mother to her three adult children and a strong partner for her husband, the Honorable David Groner, who also serves as a judge on the Third Circuit Court of Michigan.

Mr. Speaker, as Judge Hathaway prepares to embark upon a new chapter on her life, I congratulate her and thank her for her many years of service to the people of Wayne County. Over her more than two decades of public service, Judge Hathaway has developed expertise and experience that will cause her to be greatly missed in the court room.

WELCOMING THE CITY OF THOUSAND OAKS' SISTER CITY, SHIBEI DISTRICT OF QINGDAO OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the City of Thousand Oaks, California, who will be welcoming its sister city, Shibei District of Qingdao of the People's Republic of China, for their first visit to the Conejo Valley on February 27, 2014.

Formally approved on July 9, 2013, the Thousand Oaks City Council unanimously accepted the concept of Thousand Oaks, California and Shibei District, Qingdao as sister cities. The relationship between the two cities has a mission to create an environment for promoting and developing effective and mutually beneficial cooperation between the citizens of both municipalities. It is a harmonious relationship in which both parties conduct reciprocal cultural, educational, business, professional and technical exchanges. The friendly cooperation between both cities is based on the principles of mutual respect of the partners and the sovereignty of each state.

With a large Asian-American population presence in the Conejo Valley, community leaders, in collaboration with the Center for Asian Performing Arts, conceptualized the idea of a sister city relationship with China to promote Asian culture and support the cultural exchange between East and West.

There are many shared interests and commonalities among the two cities which makes it an ideal partnership. While Thousand Oaks was named among the top ten safest large cities in the United States, Shibei District, Qingdao was named among the top ten livable cities with the most beautiful bay in China. Additionally, both cities have developed in the areas of technology.

Among the delegation members that will visit the Conejo Valley are the mayor of the Shibei District, the directors of the Bureau of Tourism and of the Bureau of Economic Development, and the deputy chief of staff for the Department of Commerce. On this momentous occasion, the mayors of both cities will sign documents declaring their formal relationship.

I want to congratulate Thousand Oaks and Shibei District on this momentous occasion and look forward to the future accomplishments and successes that this relationship will foster.

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTION ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, in 2005 I supported a similar version of this bill that was truly bipartisan and aimed at reversing a Supreme Court decision, Kelo v. City of New London. In that decision, the Court upheld the right of New London to take private property and transfer it to another private individual for the purpose of increasing the tax revenue of the city. The House passed that bill (H.R. 4128) by a vote of 376–38, but the Senate never took up H.R. 4128.

Unfortunately, the version before us today goes much farther than the more narrowly tailored 2005 bill. H.R. 1944 would bar any form of eminent domain related to generating economic activity. Such a sweeping approach is contrary to the Constitution and to our history.

The rights of property owners were so important to our nation's founders that they enshrined property rights in our Constitution. However, the Founders knew that towns and municipalities would need to look after the greater public good and occasionally acquire property with just compensation to the owners in order to use that property for public good. The power of eminent domain has enabled us to make many advances over the years. It was used to create the national railroad system, the interstate highway system, and make telephone, electric, sewer, and water lines available to all our communities. Eminent domain, when used properly, is a critical power of government that has benefited people in New Jersey and across America. This bill would eviscerate this power, and for that reason I cannot support this bill in its current form.

TAXPAYERS RIGHT-TO-KNOW ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the "Taxpayer Right-to-Know-Act."

The Taxpayer Right-to-Know Act would require all federal agencies to describe, in detail, all programs under their agency, their costs, the number of employees running each program, and possible duplication. Reports would be due each year.

Agencies would also have to publish performance reviews and improper payment rates. OMB would then analyze the reports for overlapping programs and provide concrete recommendations on how to reduce duplication and waste.

This bill would ensure greater transparency, enhance scrutiny of taxpayer dollars, and help deliver better value to the American people.

The Taxpayer Right-to-Know Act is about transparency, fiscal responsibility, and finding solution to right-size the government for the American people.

REMEMBERING THE HONORABLE MARCUS EUGENE COLLINS, SR.

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and solemn remembrance that I rise today to pay tribute to a great man, veteran, and outstanding public servant, the Honorable Marcus Eugene Collins, Sr. Sadly, Marcus passed away on Friday, February 14, 2014, at the age of 87. The funeral service was held on Monday, February 17, 2014, at 3 p.m., in the chapel of Jamerson-Braswell Funeral Home in Pelham, Georgia.

Born on January 25, 1927, in Albany, Georgia, Marcus spent most of his life in Pelham, Georgia. As a veteran of World War II, Marcus honorably and courageously served his country.

Marcus was also dedicated to serving his local community in Georgia. He represented Pelham in the Georgia House of Representatives for twenty years and served as Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee. After his time in the House of Representatives, Marcus was appointed Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Revenue. He served in this capacity from 1983 until his retirement in 1996. Later, Marcus was appointed Executive Director of the Tobacco Community Development Board.

Hailed by his friends and family as a true Southern gentleman, Marcus was a "mover and shaker" in the community. He was ahead of his time, a true innovator, and a crucial player in South Georgia leadership. He was an inspiring mentor to me and to many others and the great legacy he leaves to all of us is the faithful and dedicated life he led.

Maya Angelou once said, "A great soul serves everyone all the time. A great soul never dies." Marcus is undoubtedly great because of his distinguished service to his community, devotion to his work, and the compassion he showed for his friends and loved ones.

Marcus is survived by his wife, Elizabeth; children, Elizabeth, Marcus, David, Jennifer, and Rebecca; and thirteen grandchildren. He was a devoted member of Lake Pleasant Baptist Church in Pelham, Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, my wife Vivian and I would like to extend our deepest condolences to the Collins family and we pray that they be encouraged by their abiding faith and the Holy Spirit during the coming days, weeks, and months ahead. I also ask my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to the Honorable Marcus Eugene Collins, Sr., and his legacy of service to the city of Pelham and State of Georgia. He loved the people of Mitchell County and he was committed to making the community prosperous and to improving the quality of life. He will truly be missed.

IN RECOGNITION OF RONALD DAVIS

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Ronald Davis who has been East Palo Alto's

Police Chief for the last nine years and served on Oakland's Police Department for 19 years before that. Chief Davis has demonstrated outstanding leadership and innovation in reducing crime and increasing public trust through community policing efforts and partnerships with other agencies.

His talent and skills didn't go unnoticed nationally and Chief Davis was appointed by Attorney General Eric Holder to lead the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, COPS, at the U.S. Department of Justice. In his new capacity, Director Davis supports law enforcement allies across the country, including the East Palo Alto Police Department.

Chief Davis led East Palo Alto—once known as the murder capital of the United States—out of one of the worst crime crises in the country. He launched a first of its kind partnership between a city and the State. The East Palo Alto Police Department partnered with the California Department of Correction and Rehabilitation to implement a parole-reentry program that provided programming and enforcement services and a job program with the California Department of Transportation. The results were amazing: the return-to-custody rates dropped from more than 60 percent to less than 20 percent.

Chief Davis also worked closely with local church leaders and social service providers. He rehabilitated gang members by offering job and drug counseling along with medical care to them in exchange for giving up their criminal activities. He understood and was an integral part of his community.

His optimism and drive to improve the system have guided his life and career. Davis earned his Bachelor of Science from Southern Illinois University and completed the Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program at Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

He has co-authored multiple publications, including the National Institute of Justice's "Exploring the Role of the Police in Prisoner Reentry," the Department of Justice's "How to Correctly Collect and Analyze Racial Profiling Data: Your Reputation Depends on It," and the Police Executive Research Forum's "Chief Concerns: The Use of Force."

In 2003, a San Mateo County Grand Jury report deemed the East Palo Alto police force poorly trained and management unaccountable. Chief Davis turned that around and leaves behind a well-trained department.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Davis will be deeply missed by the residents of East Palo Alto, but he will continue his support of our community from Washington, DC, where he will continue his tireless fight for justice as the director of the Community Oriented Policing Services Office in the U.S. Department of Justice.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF SUMGAIT, KIROVABAD AND BAKU MASSACRES

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, 26 years ago today was the first day in a three-day pogrom perpetrated against the Armenian residents of Sumgait in then-Soviet Azerbaijan. Although official figures reported 30 deaths, it is believed that hundreds were murdered and injured as a result of the pogrom.

Just a week before the violence erupted, the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh voted to unify region with Armenia—the beginning of the Karabakh movement. In the days immediately after this vote Azeri civilians and local officials in the city of Sumgait held rallies calling for "death to Armenians".

On the night of February 27, 1988, Armenian residents in Sumgait were targeted and indiscriminately raped, mutilated and murdered. Calls for help from Armenians were ignored by local police and city officials. Journalists were shut out from the area. The violence raged on for three days before Soviet troops were able to put an end to the pogrom.

Witnesses of the horrific massacres later testified that the attacks were planned, as civilians had gathered weapons and the exits of the cities were blocked in advance to prevent Armenians from escaping. The homes of Armenians were marked so that the Azeri mobs could easily target them.

Unfortunately, the perpetrators of the pogrom succeeded in their ultimate goal—driving out Armenians. Fearing more violence, Armenians fled Sumgait. Later that year, another anti-Armenian pogrom occurred in Kirovabad, Azerbaijan from November 21st to 27th, which also forced hundreds of Armenians to flee the region. In January of 1990 violent mobs targeted the Armenian community of Azerbaijan's capital, Baku.

I would like to honor the memory of Armenians killed in the pogroms of Sumgait, Kirovabad, and Baku. If we hope to stop future massacres, we must acknowledge these horrific events and ensure they do not happen again.

This month also marked the 10th anniversary of the heinous murder of Armenian Army Lieutenant Gurgen Margaryan at a NATO training camp in Budapest, by Ramil Safarov, a Lieutenant of the Azerbaijani Army. Safarov used an axe to hack Margaryan to death while he was sleeping. After being convicted of murder by Hungarian courts, he was transferred to Azerbaijan where he was immediately pardoned and given a hero's welcome. Several Azerbaijan government officials have hailed Safarov's actions as patriotism. This is unacceptable, and the international community should hold Azerbaijan accountable for this.

Recognizing the ethnic-cleansing of the Armenians from Azerbaijan is an important step. However, we need to do more—we need to demonstrate to Azerbaijan that the United States is committed to peace and to the protection of Artsakh from coercion.

We must call for an end to all threats and acts of coercion by Azerbaijan's government against the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh.

Congress should strengthen Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act by removing the President's ability to waive U.S. law prohibiting aid to Azerbaijan because of its continuing blockade against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. In 1992, Congress prohibited aid to Azerbaijan because of its continuing blockade against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. However, in 2001, Congress approved a waiver to this provision and administrations have used the waiver since then to provide aid to Baku. Azerbaijan should not be provided aid from the United States as long as they continue a policy of threats and blockades against Artsakh.

I urge the Administration to remove all barriers to broad-based U.S.-Nagorno-Karabakh governmental and civil society communication, travel and cooperation.

HONORING REV. CRAWFORD W. KIMBLE, OF HOUSTON, TEXAS, PASTOR EMERITUS OF GOOD HOPE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Rev. Crawford W. Kimble, Pastor Emeritus of Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church, which originated in Freedmen's Town in 1872.

Reverend Kimble died earlier this week in Houston at the age of 95. He will be laid to rest on Saturday, March 1, 2014.

Rev. Kimble, the fifth of six pastors at Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church, served as Pastor for approximately 35 years. His dream of building Good Hope in its current location (3015 North MacGregory Way) was fulfilled in 1981.

Rev. Kimble was born in Elgin, Texas on March 24, 1918 and he followed the ministerial paths of both his father and grandfather. He began preaching at the age of 33.

Rev. Kimble joined Good Hope Baptist Church in 1951; he preached his first sermon there in 1959; and he later became pastor to many prominent Texans, namely Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, the first African American United States Congresswoman from the South, and Dr. Lonnie Smith, who played an important role in minority voting rights in primary elections.

It is astounding to find that prior to Rev. Kimble's calling into the ministry, he worked as a newspaper editor and writer! His career began as the managing editor with the Houston Informer, Houston's oldest African American newspaper; and it ended with the Kansas City Call.

After more than 30 years in retirement, Rev. Kimble continued to write and publish books. He worked out of his second floor office and living quarters, a Fourth Ward senior citizen apartment complex which was developed and named after him on April 5, 2007: Crawford W. Kimble Senior Living, located at 1025 Saulnier Street, in Fourth Ward, Texas.

Rev. Kimble's works include books entitled "Watch the Tree it Might Fall on You, which he wrote and published at age 8o; "The Adventures of Love: God's plan for a Victorious Life for His People", which he wrote and published at age 90; and "God at Work", his most recent publication, which answers the attacks of Rush Limbaugh on our President, President Barack Obama.

Rev. Kimble was a great man who touched the lives of all who met him. He will be missed.

COMMEMORATING THE 22ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE KHOJALY TRAGEDY

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 22nd anniversary of the Khojaly tragedy which took place on February 25–26, 1992, when the town of Khojaly in the Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan was attacked by Armenian forces. Khojaly, which was home to 7,000 people, was completely destroyed; a total of 613 people were killed.

As the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict still remains unresolved, the U.S. must increase its efforts to facilitate the resolution to the conflict in accordance with international law. Congress must also recognize that the current status-quo is dangerous and a solution to the conflict is necessary to allow hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani IDPs to return to their homes. There is no doubt that a settlement of this protracted conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan would let this region realize its huge potential and become prosperous.

Mr. Speaker, as Azerbaijan, a tested and proven strategic partner of the United States, commemorates the 22nd anniversary of the Khojaly massacre this year, I call on my colleagues in Congress to speak up on this tragedy and stand with the Azerbaijani people.

PROTECTING TAXPAYERS FROM INTRUSIVE IRS REQUESTS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the ''Protecting Taxpayers from Intrusive IRS Requests Act''.

Many of my constituents in the 24th District of Texas—some of whom were unfairly targeted by the IRS—have lost confidence in the impartiality of the agency.

Due to the political targeting scandal, my constituents are deeply skeptical about the IRS and angry at how they have been treated.

I fully agree with their concerns: the IRS has been blatantly too intrusive on my constituents' personal lives and of many other Americans around the country.

Americans should always be protected from unnecessary and intrusive questions about their political, religious, and social beliefs.

On behalf of my constituents, I respectfully urge members to help protect American taxpayers and vote for this bill.

HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MR. LANCELOT THOMPSON

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, during Black History month, I rise today to recognize Lancelot C.A. Thompson of Toledo, Ohio. Toledo Blade newspaper reporter Federico Martinez wrote about Dr. Thompson when a room at the University of Toledo was dedicated in his name recently.

A chemistry instructor, Dr. Thompson was the first African American professor hired by the University of Toledo, in 1958. He explained his initial reception to the reporter: while driving to work through what was considered a white neighborhood, ''The police would pull me over and accuse me of failing to stop at the stop sign. 'What are you doing over here?' the police would ask me. When I told them I was faculty at the university, they would call me a liar and give me a ticket.'' Arriving on campus the reception was no better. School security would try to stop him from entering the faculty parking lot. Sometimes they would threaten him; other times they would mock him for claiming that he, a black man, was a professor. ''They tried to stop me from parking in the lot,'' Dr. Thompson said. ''But I did anyways.''

Dr. Thompson retired from the University of Toledo in 1998 after 40 years of teaching. He recently returned to campus for a special honor: the unveiling of the Lancelot C.A. Thompson Meeting Room in the University of Toledo's Student Union. At the ceremony, University of Toledo Athletic Director Mike O'Brien noted, ''Over the years, Lance has been an adviser, a mentor, and most of all, a friend to many of our student-athletes,'' Among the over one hundred attendees was Dr. Thompson's longtime friend John C. Moore who said the recognition was both overdue and well-deserved. He explained that Dr. Thompson was a pioneer who paved the way for other African American professionals at the university. ''He is such an intelligent gentleman who is really concerned about the fate of his fellow man. He's very educated and still wants to learn something new every day. He's fearless, and he makes it look so easy.''

Lancelot Thompson was born and raised in Jamaica. His parents were teachers. He was an accomplished athlete who competed in the broad jump and 400-sprint relay during the 1946 Pan American Games held in Barranquilla, Colombia, and again during the games held in Guatemala. Both times he took second-place honors in the competition. He was a 24-year-old high school teacher when he received track scholarship offers from Morgan State University in Maryland and Tennessee State University. He recalled, ''Many people in Jamaica, they told me, go to Morgan State; they will lynch you in Tennessee.''

So he boarded a plane for Morgan State University and it didn't take long for Dr. Thompson to be introduced to American racism and discrimination. ''Jamaica is a biracial country, so we didn't have those problems,'' he said. ''In Jamaica, it's more about class issues. The first time I got to an airport I saw no black people, so I started to look for a place to sit down. A black janitor came over and told me I wasn't allowed to sit in that section. He sent me to another part of the airport where other black people were. That was my first experience in America.''

The airport experience was just the beginning of more to come. The reporter writes that upon boarding a train to Baltimore he was dragged and deposited in the ''black coach'' section of the train. ''Everybody in there were black southerners,'' Dr. Thompson said. ''I didn't understand a single word they said.''

In spite of the racism, Lancelot Thompson earned a bachelor of science degree in chemistry from Morgan State in 1952 and a doctorate in physics and inorganic chemistry from Wayne State University in 1955. He went home to Jamaica with the goal of ''trying to revolutionize the way we were teaching chemistry. The school books in Jamaica were old and outdated, and it was difficult to get the 'powers-that-be' to understand how much chemistry had changed over the years.''

In 1957 Dr. Thompson attended a job fair in New York. He explained to the reporter that he applied for and received numerous interview requests. He soon realized that was because potential employers didn't know he was black. ''A guy from Alabama, when he saw me, he turned so red I thought he was going to have a heart attack. 'You know where Alabama is, don't you?' the man asked me. 'Yes sir,' I told him. 'You know we probably don't want you,' he said. 'I probably don't want to go,' I said.''

When Dr. Thompson applied for the University of Toledo job, he included a photo so there would be no surprises. The person who interviewed and hired him, Jerome Kloucek, dean of the arts college, never mentioned race, Dr. Thompson recalled in the newspaper feature. ''Some of the faculty was a little uncomfortable, but I was comfortable. I was used to being around white people.''

In addition to teaching chemistry, Dr. Thompson created the university's first track team. More importantly, he started the annual Aspiring Minorities Youth Conference. He served as assistant dean for undergraduate study in the college of arts and sciences from 1964–66, becoming the dean of student services from 1966–68. He was then promoted to vice president of student affairs, from which he retired in 1988. He retired as a teacher in 1998. Along the way, in 1964, Dr. Thompson was voted the school's Outstanding Teacher.

It was always important to Dr. Thompson to mentor young people, especially African American young people. He explained, ''Being the only black faculty at the university for four years, I had to be a mentor. There was nobody else for them. It didn't matter if it was a black, white, Hispanic, or Asian student, my job was to teach and mentor all students.'' Explaining he was even harder on African American students Dr. Thompson said, ''Oh yes, I was hard on them. I made sure they did the work. I was harder on them than the other students because I knew they had to be a little better than the whites to get the job. You had to be prepared.''

Lancelot Thompson's legacy is carried on in those students and all those he taught. His footprint on the school carries forth through today. We salute his spirit, his tenacity and his courage even as we offer thanks for all he has given to decades of University of Toledo students and our community. Thank you always, Dr. Lancelot Thompson.

A TRIBUTE TO MRS. BARBARA FEATHERSON

HON. MIKE McINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. McINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a truly outstanding North Carolinian, Mrs. Barbara Featherson, who has

served the Social Security Agency in Whiteville, North Carolina, for forty years. Mrs. Featherson's service began in 1974, when she was hired for a part-time administrative position. Consistent hard work and dedication earned her the position of District Manager, and she has worked every day to provide peace of mind to North Carolinians as they prepare to retire. She has committed herself to bettering her community, and I ask you to Mrs. Featherson's enduring commitment to her community makes her an exemplary public servant, and her accomplishments will continue to benefit North Carolina for many years to come. As her time as District Manager comes to a close, let us honor Mrs. Barbara Featherson's long and honorable career and pray that she may receive God's richest blessings.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2014 FLOOR SPEECH

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the unique history, terrible sacrifices, and remarkable contributions that African Americans have made to build our great nation.

Black History Month calls out to all Americans to join together as we advance the unfinished march towards greater diversity and full equality for all.

151 years ago, the Emancipation Proclamation, an executive order issued by President Abraham Lincoln, freed the slaves in all states that were in rebellion against the Union, and established a broad legal framework for the future.

And just like present day executive orders issued by this administration . . . President Lincoln's action set off a fire storm of criticism from those who hated him, and thought he had acted beyond his constitutional powers.

But President Lincoln was not deterred by the vicious and vile uproar from his political opponents. Like all great leaders at pivotal moments in our Nation's history, President Lincoln ignored the politics of the moment and followed the moral compass of history.

He chose the path of courage, he chose the path not taken, in order to advance the cause of freedom.

51 years ago, hundreds of thousands of Americans, both black and white, joined together for the historic March on Washington. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stood in the shadow of the Great Emancipator, he declared in his famous ''I Have a Dream'' speech—''We have come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now.''

Tonight, we should hear those words again. Absorb them. Live them.

As we look back on the accomplishments of the past, let us remember that the fierce urgency of now still calls us to act boldly . . . with courage.

Equality is not to be put on hold. And the hopes of millions who have been left out of the American dream, must not be delayed or denied.

46 years ago, my father, former Congressman Bill Clay, was elected as the first African-American U.S. Representative from Missouri.

He used his experience as a civil rights activist who had been wrongly incarcerated for fighting for his beliefs—to provide a strong voice for his constituents for more than three decades, and he was one of the original 13 cofounders of the Congressional Black Caucus.

One of the St. Louis's first legendary black entrepreneurs, Miss Annie Malone, the daughter of escaped slaves, inspired people around the world as she became a black beauty product millionaire. She was a noted inventor, educator and businesswoman. And she became one of America's first prominent black philanthropists.

As we praise the achievements of these great American heroes, we are reminded of the obligation to honor all of the brave souls who have come before us . . . and to rededicate ourselves to bring honor to their memories by the quality and conduct of our own lives. We learn from and continue to be inspired by our compelling history.

But the past does not limit us. It compels us to continue the long journey towards a most just, more equal society.

That is a Black History Month lesson that everyone across the great country, and in this historic Chamber, should embrace.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, February 25, 2014, I missed one vote in a series of recorded votes. I would have voted ''yes'' on rollcall vote No. 64 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1123, as amended).

HONORING GOOD360

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the organization Good360. Companies like Good360 support philanthropy in a variety of ways—cash grants, marketing consultations, and employee volunteerism, just to name a few.

More than ever before, companies are using their core resources to support community-based partners. Driven by the desire to maximize giving while minimizing waste, the majority of growth in the nonprofit sector has come from the donation of household items that directly impact the needs of American families.

For-profit America plays an important role in addressing poverty, literacy and education, homelessness and many other social issues facing our country. The millions of nonprofit organizations across America rely on the donations of critically needed goods to continue the programs that are essential to helping those with uncertain futures get back on their feet. These programs are integral to strengthening our communities.

Giving is not just restricted to consumer staples. Consumer discretionary companies and information technology companies also make sizable proportions of their contributions in the form of non-cash donations. Their corporate sustainability efforts maximize giving to American families and minimize the amount of unused or reusable goods going to landfills.

With more than one in six Americans living in poverty and nonprofits struggling to maintain programs following significant federal and state budget cuts, the American business community plays a critical role in supporting the nonprofit programs needed to ensure that people and families in need overcome the challenges they face and are better able to pursue the American Dream.

This month, let us look to a time when more businesses give back by donating goods to support people in need, to strengthen the communities in which they do business, and to reduce the amount of products that go into our landfills.

I call upon all American companies and nonprofit organizations—small and large—to participate in activities that provide donated goods that are essential to strengthening communities across our nation.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Good360's contributions to the betterment of our community and the American people, and I ask that my colleagues join me in thanking them for their continued service.

RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

HON. ALBIO SIRES

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, raising the minimum wage is a critical step in closing the opportunity gap and building an economy that works for everyone. Yesterday, I joined my Democratic colleagues in filing a discharge petition for an immediate vote on H.R. 1010 to raise the minimum wage to $10.10, generating economic activity, creating jobs, and growing the middle class.

By raising the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour, we can restore fairness for working men and women across the country. Specifically it would raise wages for nearly 25 million people; increase pay and compensation by $35 billion for hardworking American families; and lift between 1 and 4.5 million Americans out of poverty.

Americans deserve an economy where a hard days' work earns a decent day's pay. No hard working American should be forced to raise their family in poverty, but the low minimum wage currently allows for just that. An increase in the minimum wage is not only the moral thing to do, but it would also provide a much-needed boost to our economy. Simply put, when one earns more, one tends to spend more. More and more private businesses are voluntarily raising the minimum wage of their workers because they see the long-term economic benefits.

It is my hope that Congress takes immediate and swift action in raising the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour.

HONORING THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE LUCERNE INN

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize The Lucerne Inn as it celebrates its bicentennial.

In the early 1800s, Nathan Phillips built a family home in Dedham, Maine, overlooking Phillips Lake, on land granted to John Phillips for his service in the Revolutionary War. Conveniently situated as the only stop on the road connecting the Brewer and Bangor area to Ellsworth and other points Down East, by 1814, the home quickly became a popular location for travelers of all stripes to stay and enjoy a meal. This led to the eventual transformation of the home into The Lucerne Inn.

Over the years, The Lucerne Inn has made a number of changes to include modern amenities while also maintaining its 19th century charm. The Inn currently has 31 rooms overlooking Phillips Lake and the scenic Dedham Hills. Each room includes a flat screen television, gas fireplace, and a heated towel bar. The Inn also features several dining areas that offer a diverse menu of progressive American cuisine and an award-winning wine collection. Bordering the Inn is the Lucerne-in-Maine Golf Course, which offers discounted rates and packages to guests of the Inn.

The Inn plays host to numerous weddings each year, as well as its annual October bridal show, which is attended by more than 100 brides. Additionally, many memorial ceremonies, Christmas parties, baby showers and business meetings choose The Lucerne Inn as their venue. Accommodations such as free wifi, LCD projectors and flip charts are available for such events.

To commemorate The Lucerne Inn's bicentennial, the owners, Steve and Rhonda Jones, are planning several special events and deals for guests and patrons of the Inn. These events include a public open house, wine and menu specials priced at $18.14, and special rates for guests. I am delighted to recognize the accomplishments of this wonderful establishment and look forward to its continued success in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, please join me again in congratulating The Lucerne Inn on its bicentennial.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $17,419,220,117,766.69. We've added $6,792,343,068,853.61 to our debt in 5 years. This is over $6.7 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

HONORING JERRY DENBO

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the death, but more importantly celebrate the life of Jerry L. Denbo, a beloved friend and father. Jerry died at 63 on February 24, 2014.

Jerry Denbo was a genuine Hoosier man. He grew up in Bedford, Indiana where he went to high school. At Indiana University he graduated with a Master's in Education, and worked at two high schools before becoming the State Representative for District 62. Jerry retired from his General Assembly position in 2007 after 17 years of service.

Jerry Denbo was a fierce advocate for the communities he served. For many years Jerry fought to bring casino gaming to French Lick and was ultimately successful, bringing much needed economic assistance and employment to the area. Jerry had a great love for working for the state of Indiana, and brought warmth and humor to his service.

Jerry Denbo exemplified the greatness of the Hoosier spirit. His memory will live on in the prosperity he contributed to the state of Indiana.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. JEANNE A. CONRY

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Dr. Jeanne A. Conry, President of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, who made major contributions to the betterment of women's health throughout her long and successful career.

The initiatives she has undertaken guarantee profound improvements in women's health.

Dr. Conry began her tenure as ACOG President by applauding the Affordable Care Act's priority on women's health, asserting that, "By investing in this generation, we have invested in the next." She called on America's 58,000 ob-gyns and partners in women's health to "lead the changes that are before us, because we are truly the leaders in women's healthcare."

Dr. Conry's theme during her Presidency has been "Every Woman, Every Time," a reminder to her profession and to us all that at every contact in our health care system, reproductive health choices and well-woman care are a necessity.

Her work urges recognition that socioeconomic, demographic, biologic and behavioral differences among women can impact reproductive outcomes greatly.

As part of her leadership, Dr. Conry developed the National Maternal Health Initiative, a partnership to bring together leaders in public and private health policy to improve maternal health outcomes. It includes ACOG; the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM); the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses; the American College of Nurse-Midwives; Merck for Mothers; and the Maternal Child Health Branch of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Dr. Conry has pointed to the successful focus on newborn outcomes that show fetal and infant mortality have decreased by almost 30 percent in the past three decades. Her research shows that maternal mortality has actually increased, however, and in some states by almost 50 percent. Her conclusions reveal African-American women have a maternal mortality rate up to four times higher than white women. These significant findings will improve pregnancy outcomes for generations to come.

Dr. Conry's efforts emphasize the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality through access to contraception planning, and ensuring safety in maternity care. Her initiatives have led to better outcomes through life-course planning, obesity and exercise awareness, and redesigning the postpartum visit to optimize future health and pregnancy outcomes.

She has established a process to regionalize care so that women at high risk deliver at hospitals that can meet their needs. The initiative has gone toward identifying and implementing protocols for maternity risk conditions such as hemorrhaging, hypertension, thromboembolism, cardiac disease, and sepsis.

Dr. Corny has called on all leaders in maternity care to guide this change in women's health care. Her career has also been dedicated to better understanding and investigating how the environment impacts reproductive health by proposing a broader analysis of the health effects that pharmaceuticals, diet, drugs, tobacco, alcohol, radiation and chemicals in the environment have on women.

Her leadership and legacy extend to improving women's health by initiating partnerships to facilitate coordination and harmonization of clinical guidelines in Great Britain, Canada, the United States and other ob-gyn societies. These guidelines now provide direction for maternal health programs as well as the practice of obstetrics and gynecology around the world.

And of course, Dr. Conry's advocacy for women's health here in Washington, D.C. is truly exceptional. From stopping legislative interference in medical practice, to ensuring and protecting ACA coverage of contraceptives, to leading ob-gyns as they visit the Hill in March for improved care of gestational diabetes, Dr. Conry's advocacy knows no bounds.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to rise with me to honor Dr. Jeanne Conry, whose devotion and leadership has advanced the improvement of women's health by leaps and bounds here in the United States and abroad.

THE INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO REQUIRE THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS TO INSTALL THE D.C. SEAL IN THE MAIN READING ROOM OF THE THOMAS JEFFERSON BUILDING

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce a bill to require the Library of Congress

(LOC) to install the District of Columbia seal in the Main Reading Room of the Thomas Jefferson Building of the LOC. The bill calls on the Library of Congress to take the appropriate action to depict the seal of the District of Columbia on the stained-glass windows in the Main Reading Room, where the seals of the states are depicted. Currently, the stained-glass windows contain the seals of all states and territories that existed when the building was constructed, except for the seal of the District of Columbia, whose seal was readily available at the time and should have been depicted. This omission was brought to my attention by a District resident, Luis Landau, a former docent at the Library. We are asking that this omission be corrected at the earliest time. In addition to the omission of the District of Columbia, the only currently unrepresented states from the stained-glass display are Hawaii and Alaska, but they were not states or territories when the building was constructed. The fact that these two states were not part of the Union at the time of the creation of the stained-glass windows argues for a depiction of the District seal as well, which, after all, was in fact the nation's capital at the time.

The residents of the District of Columbia have always had all the obligations of American citizenship, including paying federal taxes and service in all the nation's wars, including the War of 1812, during which the Capitol building, which then housed the Library of Congress, was burned, prompting construction of the current Library of Congress building with the state and territory seals. It is, therefore, without question that the District and its residents should receive equal treatment among the stained-glass windows that portray the history of the United States. D.C. residents deserve to have their history and American citizenship recognized.

There is existing evidence that the seal of the District of Columbia should have been depicted. The Members of Congress room in the Jefferson Building, which is not open to the public, has a painted depiction of the D.C. seal, along with state seals, on its ceiling. This precedent reinforces our request to be represented among the stained-glass windows in the Main Reading Room, which is open to the public. There is no reason why the D.C. seal cannot be added with the planned restoration of the stained-glass. The right time to add the seal of the District of Columbia, whose residents pay full taxes and have served in all the nation's wars, like the residents of the 50 states, would be during the planned restoration.

Congress already automatically includes the District of Columbia and its residents, or has corrected the omission of the District of Columbia, when honoring the states. For example, the District of Columbia War Memorial honors District residents who served in World War I, the World War II Memorial includes a column representing the District of Columbia, the flag of the District of Columbia is displayed among the flags of the fifty states in the tunnel connecting the House office buildings to the Capitol, and D.C.'s Frederick Douglass statue now sits in the Capitol alongside the statues from the 50 states. In January of last year, the President signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, which contains language requiring the armed services to display the District of Columbia flag whenever the flags of the states are displayed. Legislation was also enacted to give D.C. a coin after it was omitted from legislation creating coins for the 50 states. I also successfully worked with the U.S. Postal Service to create a D.C. stamp, like the stamps for the 50 states, and worked with the National Park Service to add the D.C. flag alongside the state flags. Inclusion of the D.C. seal, along with the seals of the states, is the next step.

I urge support of this legislation.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR CITIZENS OF DIANE NASH

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as we reflect on the events of the past month in celebration of the contributions made to our nation by African Americans, I would like to submit Diane Nash's story.

Diane Judith Nash was born on Chicago's South Side on May 15, 1938. Diane's father, Leon Nash, migrated north from Mississippi and held a clerical job in the military during World War II. Dorothy Bolton Nash, Diane's mother, also migrated north from her Tennessee birthplace. Raised by her grandmother, Carrie Bolton, until she was seven, Diane was taught to turn a blind eye toward racial injustice and strive to be a polite and accepting girl. Growing up, she attended the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament parochial school, which was operated by nuns who taught only minority students. Later she would attend public high school and go on to Washington, DC, to begin her college career at Howard University. In 1959, Diane decided to transfer to Fisk University in Nashville. It was in Nashville where she was first exposed to the full force of Jim Crow and its effect on the lives of African Americans—exclusion from restaurants, schools, and facilities common to everyday life.

After experiencing such shocking discriminatory events, Diane decided to search for a way to challenge segregation. She began attending non-violent civil disobedience workshops led by Rev. James Lawson. Rev. Lawson had studied Mahatma Gandhi's techniques of non-violent direct action and passive resistance while studying in India. By the end of her first semester at Fisk, she had become one of Rev. Lawson's most devoted disciples.

In 1960 at the age of 22, she became the leader of the Nashville sit-ins, which lasted from February to May. Unlike previous movements, which were guided by older adults, this movement was led and composed primarily of students and young people. Students would sit-in at segregated lunch counters, accepting arrest in line with non-violent principles. Diane, with JOHN LEWIS, led the protesters in a policy of refusing to pay bail. While participating in the Nashville sit-ins, Diane first met one of her fellow protestors, James Bevel, whom she would later marry and raise two children, a son and a daughter.

Diane helped found the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and quit school to lead its direct action wing. In 1961, Diane and ten fellow students were arrested in Rock Hill, South Carolina for protesting segregation. Once jailed, they would not accept bail. Originally fearful of jail, Diane was arrested dozens of times for her activities. In 1962, although she was four months pregnant she faced a two year prison sentence for contributing to the delinquency of minors whom she had encouraged to become Freedom Riders and ride on the buses. "I believe that if I go to jail now," she wrote in an open letter, "it may help hasten that day when my child and all children will be free—not only on the day of their birth but for all their lives."

In September 1963, Diane and others were shocked by a church bombing in Birmingham which killed four young girls. After learning of this, they committed themselves to raising a non-violent army in Alabama. This plan eventually culminated in the Selma to Montgomery marches for voting rights in Alabama in early 1965. Marchers repeatedly attempted to cross the Pettus Bridge, only to be attacked by Alabama troopers armed with clubs and tear gas. The initiative culminated in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which guaranteed the vote to citizens regardless of race. President John F. Kennedy appointed her to a national committee that prepared for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Diane also worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as an organizer, strategist, field staff person, race relations staff person, and workshop instructor. In 1965 Diane was awarded the Southern Christian Leadership Council's Rosa Parks Award for planning and carrying out the tumultuous campaign for voter registration in Selma, Alabama.

In 2003, Diane received the Distinguished American Award presented by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation. A year later, the LBJ Award for Leadership in Civil Rights was bestowed on Diane by the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum. One of her most recent honors was the award of the National Civil Rights Museum's freedom Award in 2008.

Diane Nash is an outspoken advocate of civil rights for African Americans, women, veterans and young people. She is one of the most iconic female leaders to emerge from the era now commonly known as the civil rights movement. She has spoken at countless colleges and universities, youth organizations and human rights conferences. She currently resides in Chicago, where she has worked for several decades in tenant organizing housing advocacy, and real estate. Diane's life work has been to empower young people to feel that they can bring awareness to any injustice they may be experiencing in their lives through non-violent means.

Recently, Mrs. Nash traveled to Toledo, Ohio to speak at the University of Toledo's Aspiring Young Leaders Conference. She held the young audience spellbound as she related her life's story and quest for full equality of all people in our socity. At age 76, Diane Nash is inspiring the next generation and leading non-violent advancement in American society. What an incredible and rare woman is she. Thank you Mrs. Diane Nash for your brave and effective life dedicated to highest principles of human progress.

RECOGNIZING BARBARA SHIRLEY

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my constituent, Barbara Shirley, who was recently named Florida's Principal of the Year for her leadership at Alta Vista Elementary School in Sarasota, Florida.

Since becoming principal of Alta Vista in 2007, Barbara has secured private funding and recruited volunteers to expand the school's programs to provide free summer school classes to under privileged students, and educate and assist parents.

The classes help students retain what they learned during the school year and teach parents how to manage their finances, cook healthy meals and get job training.

Barbara has been offered positions at schools in more affluent neighborhoods, but chooses instead to be principal of Alta Vista, where more than 90% of the students are on free or reduced lunch and several of the students are homeless.

While many students and schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods score low on state achievement tests, Alta Vista has maintained an A rating.

I appreciate this opportunity to bring much deserved recognition to Barbara for her successful efforts to help at-risk students and their parents.

INTRODUCING THE ''MARITIME GOODS MOVEMENT ACT OF THE 21ST CENTURY''

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, Washington State's economy depends on its thriving ports. And yet, for too long, funds collected to maintain our Nation's waterways have been diverted elsewhere. In spite of urgent needs for maintenance, historically, less than half of the collected amount has actually been spent each year. As a result, American ports are struggling to make the infrastructure investments they need to support American businesses.

Since the original enactment of the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) in 1986, global shipping has undergone considerable change. Current policy incentivizes maximum use of foreign ports to import US-bound goods in order to bypass the HMT on which our ports are so dependent. Annually, this amounts to $30 million in losses to maritime infrastructure, with losses expected to increase if current trends continue. This status quo is inequitable, unsustainable and unacceptable.

Today, I introduced the Maritime Goods Movement Act of the 21st Century to address this growing state and national concern. This legislation will replace the HMT with a new user fee that will provide for the full expenditure of revenue collected to benefit waterways and freight, ensure that all US-bound cargo is treated equally regardless of point of entry, and provide federal support to address critical freight needs at our Nation's largest ports and intermodal freight choke points.

Congress has struggled for years to ensure that our Nation's waterways are funded with little to show for its efforts. It's time to move forward with a solution that will ensure that American ports remain competitive while meeting the realities of global shipping in the future.

RECOGNIZING THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF OCOEE

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the Woman's Club of Ocoee, a chapter of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), for 90 years of volunteer service to the Central Florida community. The Club, organized in 1924, aims ''to associate its members in study and efforts to advance the social, civic, educational and moral welfare of Ocoee and vicinity.''

Members of the Woman's Club of Ocoee selflessly devote their time, efforts and resources to meet the needs of our community. In 2013 alone, Club members contributed more than 11,000 service hours to schools, hospitals and various community organizations.

Since its establishment in 1890, the GFWC has supported the arts, advanced education, promoted healthy lifestyles and encouraged civic involvement both domestically and internationally. Members of GFWC, whether they are advocating for congressional legislation to prevent violence against women or mentoring at-risk girls in local schools, have a ''national voice and a local passion.''

It is a privilege to recognize the contributions of the Woman's Club of Ocoee on this 90th anniversary. They truly demonstrate the spirit of philanthropy and volunteerism for the betterment of our community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIM WALBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 70, I inadvertently voted ''yea'' when I intended to vote ''nay.''

HONORING DR. RICHARD WESTON

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the outstanding contributions of Dr. Richard Weston and to commemorate his retirement after more than 35 years of federal service.

As a constituent of Virginia's 8th district, Dr. Weston earned a Ph.D. in Health Policy and his dissertation was nominated for the Harold Lasswell Prize of the American Political Science Association. Early in his career, he worked in the U.S. House of Representatives under Rep. Ralph Metcalfe, of Chicago and Rep. Bennett Stewart, also of Chicago, and in the U.S. Senate under Sen. Charles Mathias, of Maryland and Sen. Paul Trible, of Virginia.

Dr. Weston worked for the Secretary's Panel for the Evaluation of Epidemiological Research Activities and under the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health at the Department of Energy. While at the General Accounting Office, Dr. Weston worked in the Program Evaluation and Methodology Division's Health Services Research Group. He has also worked for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Washington Office.

Dr. Weston counts among his career highlights an article published in the New England Journal of Medicine; and considers his work this year on the chemical release at the Freedom Industries storage tank site on the Elk River near Charleston, West Virginia among the most rewarding he has done.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Dr. Richard Weston for his dedication to improving public health, and I ask that my colleagues join me in thanking him for his continued service.

RECOGNIZING GRAY GAULDING

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Gray Gaulding, a young man from Statesville, North Carolina. Mr. Gaulding recently piloted his NTS Motorsports Krispy Kreme/TruMoo Number 20 Chevrolet Impala to victory at Phoenix International Raceway, making him the youngest NASCAR K&N Pro Series winner ever. Gray is 15 years old.

Gray began his racing career on dirt bikes at the age of three. Once he found his way onto four wheels, he won an incredible 17 of the first 27 races he competed in on the youth development level. He has since amassed numerous wins on Bandolero, Legend and Super Late Model racing circuits throughout the Southeast.

I wish Gray Gaulding well as he chases the checkered flag and the championship in the NASCAR K&N Pro Series East this year. North Carolina's Fifth Congressional district is proud to be the home of this fine young man and I look forward to a bright future for this remarkable young racecar driver.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JENNA TOSH

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Jenna Tosh. Jenna is the President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Greater Orlando (PPGO), a non-profit provider of reproductive

healthcare and education serving more than 30,000 Central Floridians. Jenna's background is in social work and teen pregnancy prevention. She previously served in Child Protective Services and as PPGO's Director of Education.

Jenna's accomplishments as President and CEO include implementing paperless medical records, expanding access to care for Medicaid and safety net populations, and adding new clinical services. She has expanded access to PPGO evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs throughout Central Florida. PPGO's education programs have been credited for contributing to a 35% reduction in teen pregnancies in Orange County.

Jenna attended the University of Florida where she received a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. She holds a Master's Degree in Political Science from the University of Central Florida (UCF), where she is also pursuing her Ph.D. in Public Affairs, Governance, and Policy Research. Jenna's dissertation research focuses on the impact of state policies restricting adolescents' access to reproductive health services on teen pregnancy outcomes.

A New York native, Jenna was raised on Long Island, and moved to Central Florida in 2001. Her husband Andrew is a Titusville native and UCF graduate. He founded a gaming and simulation company, GameSim, in 2007. They have a 4-year-old son, and live in Winter Park, where they attend First Congregational Church.

In addition to her work for Planned Parenthood, Jenna serves on the Orange County Healthy Start Board of Directors, the Equality Florida Political Action Committee Board, and the Board of the First Congregational Church Preschool & Kindergarten.

I am happy to honor Jenna Tosh, during Women's History Month, for her service to the Central Florida community.

TEMPORARY DEBT LIMIT EXTENSION ACT, S. 540

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, which suspends the current statutory limit on federal borrowing until March 15th, 2015. This crucial legislation effectively increases the debt limit by $1.2 trillion, ending the Republican manufactured crises, and includes $2.2 trillion in deficit reduction according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, without cutting Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. I want to commend House Republican leadership for bringing this legislation to the floor for a vote, which represents a dramatic shift since the disastrous debt ceiling brinkmanship we saw in the summer of 2011.

The 2011 debt limit "crisis" was a political choice—a dangerous and irresponsible political stunt—manufactured by Tea Party Republicans in Congress to prevent President Obama and Congress from focusing on top priorities like job creation and strengthening the economy. As we now know, these reckless actions had real consequences for our economy and global financial markets. Studies by the non-partisan Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Bipartisan Policy Center found that delays in raising the debt limit in 2011 cost taxpayers approximately $19 billion over ten years in higher government borrowing costs. Consumer confidence plummeted, suffering the largest monthly decline (59.2 to 44.5) during the month of August that year, which was the most since the 2008 financial crisis. In addition, a Bloomberg survey of economists found that the debt limit brinkmanship "almost derailed the recovery." Lastly, a recent survey of the world's top economists by the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business found that 84 percent agreed that failure to raise the debt limit in a timely manner creates unneeded uncertainty and could significantly damage our financial markets. Although I am pleased that House Leadership has chosen not to repeat the same mistakes from 2011, it is worrying to see that the majority of House Republicans still oppose raising the debt limit, considering the economic damage they caused three years ago.

The legislation before us today is supported by a broad array of business leaders, including the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Roundtable, and American Bankers Association. Lastly, Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen recently testified that failing to raise the debt limit would be "catastrophic" for the global economy. As our country continues to recover from the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, it is Congress' duty to avoid any unnecessary brinkmanship that risks plunging our economy back into a recession.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the Temporary Debt Limit Extension Act.

COMMENDING CHINA FOR CALLING UPON JAPAN TO "FACE UP TO HISTORY" REGARDING "COMFORT WOMEN" ISSUE

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend China for calling upon Japan to "face up to history" for forcing women and girls, many from countries including China, the Republic of Korea, Southeast Asia, and Pacific Islands, to sexually serve Japanese soldiers during World War II.

For too long Japan's government has tried to downplay and deny the crimes of its Imperial military. Such defiance goes against human conscience. How Japan chooses to face its past will determine how it goes into the future. Its history must not be forgotten and must not be denied and distorted.

I stand with China in urging the Japanese government to acknowledge its history and apologize for it with concrete actions that will win the trust of its Asian neighbors and the international community. I also commend the Chinese Foreign Ministry for denouncing Japan's enslavement of these women and young girls during World War II as "a serious crime against humanity."

I am appreciative of the work of Congressman MIKE HONDA and former Congressman Lane Evans for introducing bills calling upon Japan to apologize. As Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment, the first hearing I ever held was about this issue. The hearing, held on February 15, 2007, was the first time a hearing on this issue had ever been held in the history of the U.S. Congress, and I will always be grateful for the three women who testified.

Three survivors—Ms. Yong Soo Lee, Ms. Jan Ruff O'Herne and Ms. Koon Ja Kim—bravely testified before the Subcommittee and, consequently, their first-hand accounts of their suffering will stand forevermore on the official record of the Subcommittee as a witness against the abhorrent actions of the Japanese Imperial Armed Forces. After hearing the testimony of these three women, I have never been the same. I will never rest until justice is served.

And so, I commend my close colleague, Congressman MIKE HONDA, a Japanese-American, who also personally testified at the hearing about H. Res. 121, a resolution he introduced calling upon Japan to acknowledge, apologize and accept historical responsibility for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery. H. Res. 121, which I co-sponsored, subsequently passed the House on July 30, 2007. I believe it passed because of the three survivors who testified as witnesses.

Regrettably, Japan is again about the business of trying to whitewash its crimes. But, it is my sincere hope that the international community will hold Japan accountable and insist on a formal apology. In this cause, all peaceful nations should hold together and this is why, once more, I publicly commend China for urging Japan to "face up to its history."

IN RECOGNITION OF ANTHONY J. ZIDICH

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Anthony J. Zidich for his 42 years of remarkable and professional service as the City Treasurer of Daly City. Tony is setting a record as the longest-serving elected official in the city's history. His perseverance, open-door policy and love of people, politics and baseball have made him a beloved institution in Daly City.

Tony was appointed City Treasurer of Daly City in December 1971 to fill the unexpired term of Joseph Lewkowitz and he assumed office the following January. He was then elected eleven consecutive times. Before that, he served on the Daly City Recreation Commission for two years. Under Tony's leadership, the Daly City treasury has been well safeguarded. In recent years, it was fashionable for some public treasurers to imagine themselves as miniature versions of Wall Street bankers. And many of these agencies suffered greatly during the Great Recession. Daly City stood up well because Tony had prudently managed the city's funds and decided to leave Wall Street banking to self-declared geniuses who, as history has since proven, were not as smart as Tony Zidich. The real genius of Tony Zidich is quite simple: He gets the job done in good times and bad, through thick and thin, and with complete integrity.

Tony was a founding member of the board of directors of the supporters of the Doelger

Senior Center and continues to be its treasurer. During Tony's stewardship, Doelger has been a major institution in the city, offering senior programming, space for community events and classes of various types. A good treasurer is essential for any long-time community program and Doelger and its seniors can count on Tony to ensure that the money raised by this volunteer organization is always safe and available to support its programs.

Tony's public service is not limited to Daly City, however. He has also served on numerous boards, committees and clubs, including the board of Bay Meadows and Los Alamitos race tracks, the San Mateo County Treasurer's Advisory Board, the Daly City Police Athletic League and the Daly City Credit Union. There is a theme in Tony's service: Building fiscal and human resources to support the future.

In addition to his long and outstanding public service, Tony is a well-known realtor in Daly City. That job has earned him the trust of residents who refer to him as the "go to guy." He can tell residents the history of nearly every block of Daly City. His stories about Daly City are always entertaining and offer tremendous insights into the evolution of this remarkable community. In his office, Tony proudly displays his collection of memorabilia and toys and will engage anyone in a conversation about city politics, city history or baseball.

Tony grew up in San Francisco's Potrero Hill neighborhood. He attended Sacred Heart Cathedral Prep where his passion for baseball thrived. Known as "Babe" for his skills on the field, he was later inducted into the school's Sports Hall of Fame.

Tony joined the U.S. Army and was stationed in San Francisco during the Korean War. He met the love of his life at a dance at the Presidio. Carole Williams and Tony married in 1956 and raised their beautiful and intelligent daughter Debra in Daly City.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to rise with me to honor Anthony Zidich, an extraordinary public servant, businessman and humanitarian whose energy, enthusiasm and expertise have enriched the lives of all Daly City residents. He will be greatly missed at City Hall, but if anyone comes to Daly City and wants to play ball, they'd better go see Tony first. He knows all of the players in the city, and he will freely offer game-changing advice to all who seek to build a better future for his beloved community of Daly City.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JASON BLANKENSHIP

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Jason Blankenship, a constituent who was tragically taken from us last fall.

A Texan by birth, Jason made Albuquerque his home. For over ten years, Jason gave back to the community as a staff member at the University of New Mexico, including several years in Human Resources and scientific research.

A Ph.D. by education, Jason most recently put his talents to work at UNM's Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse and Addictions, where he served as research scientist and member of a team advancing the field of study of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. This was more than just a job to Jason. He was passionate about his research and truly believed in its ability to improve the lives of those suffering from these diseases.

Even though he was engaged in such important work at UNM, Jason always found time to give back to the Albuquerque community, most notably through the Make-a-Wish Foundation where he took great pride in being a "wish granter" to children with tragic illnesses.

He was loved by all for his wonderful personality, his thoughtfulness, his dedication, self-discipline and loyalty. Colleagues and fellow researchers remember Jason as kind, generous and highly skilled. Jason truly believed that the results of his research could positively impact the world around him. At just 43 years old, Jason was taken from us far too soon.

Mr. Speaker, may the life of Dr. Jason Blankenship serve as an inspiration to us all as we work to improve not just ourselves but the community around us.

BATTLING FOR BOBBY—MOREHEAD WRESTLES ITS WAY TO A STATE CROWN

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, in sports, when a team is motivated by some outside cause, it can be difficult to defeat. When that team is determined to reach its goal because of a stricken leader, it can be unstoppable.

That is exactly how to describe the wrestling team at Morehead High School in Rockingham County, North Carolina. I am proud to say that the Morehead Panthers, who call the Sixth District of North Carolina home, recently won the 3A State Dual Team Wrestling Championship.

The Panthers had a theme all season: "Battling for Bobby." The aforementioned Bobby is Bobby Stewart, the former wrestling coach and Morehead's current athletic trainer who was diagnosed with leukemia. Prior to the championship bout, the team unveiled warm-up shirts that read "Battling for Bobby" on the front and "Taking Down Cancer" on the back.

The shirts worked because on February 8, 2014, Morehead defeated Fred T. Foard High School 33–28 to capture the state wrestling championship in the 3A Class. Bobby Stewart's illness focused the team all season as the Panthers compiled a 38–1 season on their way to a state crown. Morehead senior wrestler Payton Mills, who was named the championship's Most Outstanding Wrestler and won the opening match, gives much of the credit to Coach Stewart. "If it weren't for Bobby," Mills told the Reidsville Review, "I wouldn't currently be wrestling at all, let alone winning Most Outstanding Wrestler of the state duals. Mainly, I wanted to do everything I could to help my team win a state championship for Bobby because he's been such a huge influence on how I live my life today."

First-year Head Coach Daniel Bradford also told the Rockingham County newspaper that the Panthers seemed to be a team of destiny. "This is what we work toward all season," Bradford said, "and it's great to see all of that work pay off like this. I knew coming into this season that we had a very strong lineup, with a lot of great wrestlers. But it was more than that. It was a lot of great men. From the very first tournament of the year, I knew we were going to be tough and the only goal for us was to have a chance to win this title."

Coach Bradford will be the first to tell you that it took the entire team to win the state championship. Members of the squad included Alex Bailey, Gideon Biggs, George Blackstock, Willis Booth, Tyler Bruins, Ben Bullins, Will Dabbs, Tyler Dabbs, Zane Hairston, Tylon Hodges, Steven Holland, Mike Jones, Jordan Jones, Dylan Jones, Jadakiss Jumper, Henrik Kummert, Payton Mills, Marqe Mills, Tyshawn Olverson, John Phillips, William Pryor, Cameron Sanders, Christian Santos, Jordan Servie, Wesley Strader, Dylan Willey, Tim Woods, and Alex Villa.

Aiding Coach Bradford in guiding the Panthers to the top included assistant coaches Marty White, Terry Mason, Chris Higgs, Chris Johnson, David Barker, and Robbie Horton. Team doctors Kevin Howard and John Dabbs, along with team trainers Bobby Stewart and Darrell Carter, made sure the Panthers overcame any injuries or illnesses on the path to glory.

The Morehead Wrestlerettes made sure the Panthers heard the crowd cheering them on to victory. The Wrestlerettes included Hope Booth, Anne Fitts, Rachel Gallardo, Destiny Smith, and Hannah Thompson, along with their sponsors Donna Gallardo and Shiela Thompson, and Booster Club president Carl Booth.

On behalf of the citizens of the Sixth District of North Carolina, we congratulate Principal Al Royster, Jr., Athletic Director Jason Tuggle, and the faculty, staff, and students of Morehead High School for winning the 3A State Dual Team Wrestling Championship. The Panthers said they were "Battling for Bobby" and they lived up to that motto all the way to the top.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DR. GWENDOLYN LOUISE McCORD HANKERSON

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Gwendolyn Louise McCord Hankerson, who sadly passed away on February 13, 2014.

Born in White Springs, Florida to the late William Quinton McCord and the late Allie Mae King McCord, Gwen dedicated her life to giving back to her community. A graduate of Dillard High School's Class of 1949, she went on to receive a Bachelor's Degree in Education from North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina in 1953.

Gwen taught third grade at Carver Ranches Elementary School and later became the first principal of Dillard High Community School. In addition, she worked at numerous schools throughout the county, such as Lauderdale Manors, Nova Blanche Forman, and Norfolk Elementary.

After retiring from Broward County Public Schools in the mid 1980s, she taught at Phyllis Wheatley Elementary in the Dade County School System. Building on her teaching career, she received her Master's Degree in Education from Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton, Florida, as well as a Doctorate in Social Psychology and Physiology from Eastern Pennsylvania University.

Gwen made many significant contributions to her community through her passion for education. As a pioneer change agent, she was "the first" many times over in the political realm. Gwen was the first African American appointed to the Judicial Selection Board by Governor Lawton Chiles, the first African American appointed to the Personnel Advisory Board by Commissioner John Hart, the first African American female to run for office in the City of Lauderdale Lakes, the first female swimming coach for Dillard High School, and the first principal of Dillard High Community School.

When Gwen retired, she continued to be a staunch educational advocate. She was one of the founding members and one of the original incorporators of the Sistrunk Historical Festival and the Lalee Terrace Rebuild Foundation. Furthermore, Gwen founded the Broward Branch of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

She initiated the Elders Council of the African American Research Library and Cultural Center to gather stories about African American pioneers of Broward County for her book entitled, Across the Tracks. Additionally, Gwen was a board member for the Literacy Coalition of Broward County, chairperson of the Lauderdale Lakes School Advisory Board, Vice President of the Northwest Democratic Executive Board, Treasurer of the Pride of Fort Lauderdale Elks Lodge, Temple #395, a member of the Order of Eastern Stars, an advisor to the Dillard High School Alumni & Friends Association, Inc., and a member of the Planning and Zoning Board for Broward County.

Gwen was the recipient of numerous awards and honors. In 2011, she received the Rosa Parks Award and the Mildred Hastings Tenacity Award, which was named in honor of my late mother.

A long-time member and officer of Mount Hermon AME Church, Gwen had the very first wedding there on June 11, 1954. She was happily married to Tommie Lee for almost 60 years. She is survived by her husband; four adult children, Charles Holiday, Sr., Kenneth Hankerson, Sr., Evangelist Allison Hankerson-Harris, and Attorney Terri Lynn Hankerson; 11 grandchildren; and 12 great grandchildren.

Mr.Speaker, the Hankerson family and friends, our nation, Florida, and Broward County have lost a remarkable person who made life better for humankind.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3865, STOP TARGETING OF POLITICAL BELIEFS BY THE IRS ACT OF 2014; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2804, ALL ECONOMIC REGULATIONS ARE TRANSPARENT ACT OF 2014; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the rule governing debate for H.R. 2804, the "All Economic Regulations Are Transparent Act of 2014," the so-called "ALERRT Act."

H.R. 2804 makes numerous changes to the federal rule-making process, including: (1) requiring agencies to consider numerous new criteria when issuing rules, such as alternatives to rules proposals; (2) requiring agencies to review the "indirect" costs of proposed and existing rules; (3) giving the Small Business Administration expanded authority to intervene in the rule-making of other agencies; and (4) requiring federal agencies to file monthly reports on the status of their rule-making activities.

I cannot support this legislation in its present form for two reasons, one procedural and one substantive.

Procedurally, I oppose the bill because in its present form it was never considered by the Judiciary Committee. This bill was reported by the Oversight and Government Reform Committee on a party line 19–15 vote but was not acted on by Judiciary Committee.

As reported, the bill contained only provisions relating to monthly reporting requirements regarding agency rule-making.

But the bill being brought to the floor now includes three additional and very controversial Judiciary bills (H.R. 2122, Regulatory Accountability Act; H.R. 1493, Sunshine for Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act; and H.R. 2542, Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act).

This is not the way to legislate on matters that have such serious consequences for the public health and safety.

Substantively, I oppose the underlying bill this rule makes in order because it imposes unneeded and costly analytical and procedural requirements on agencies that would prevent them from performing their statutory responsibilities to protect the public health and safety.

I oppose the bill also because it creates unnecessary regulatory and legal uncertainty, increases costs for businesses and State, local and tribal governments, and impedes common-sense protections for the American public.

Mr. Speaker, the bill is unnecessary and invites frivolous litigation. When a federal agency promulgates a regulation, it already must adhere to the requirements of the statute that it is implementing.

Agencies already must adhere to the robust and well-understood procedural requirements of federal law, including the Administrative Procedure Act, the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA), the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), and the Congressional Review Act.

Regulatory agencies already are required to promulgate regulations only upon a reasoned determination that the benefits of the regulations justify the costs and to consider regulatory alternatives. Final regulations are subject to review by the federal courts which, among other things, examine whether agencies have satisfied the substantive and procedural requirements of all applicable statutes.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2804 in its current form does not include an exemption for rules promulgated by the Department of Homeland Security to protect the safety of the American people and the security of our country.

For this reason, I offered an amendment that provides this important exception and I thank the Rules Committee for making it in order.

The security of the homeland is one of the most preeminent concerns of the federal government. The increased need for national security following the attacks of September 11th makes it important that the Department of Homeland Security not be unduly impeded in the promulgation of rules that may preempt attacks against our nation.

Unnecessary delays to rules set forth by the Department of Homeland Security can wastes scarce resources that keep our nation safe as well as impede the regular operations of the agency.

I urge all Members to support the Jackson Lee Amendment to H.R. 2804.

THE REDUCE EXPENDITURES IN NUCLEAR INVESTMENTS NOW (REIN–IN) ACT OF 2014

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduced the Reduce Expenditures in Nuclear Investments Now (REIN–IN) Act of 2014. The bill would save $100 billion over the next 10 years by reducing or eliminating unnecessary nuclear weapons programs. Senator EDWARD J. MARKEY (D–MA) has introduced companion legislation in the Senate, the SANE Act.

We must significantly reduce U.S. spending on nuclear weapons, delivery systems, and related programs. Today, the United States spends more in this arena than it did at the height of the Cold War. A recent report from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that between 2014 and 2023, the costs of the Administration's plans for nuclear forces will total $470 billion. Other estimates come close to $700 billion, which is more than the federal government will spend on education over the next five years. Worse, there are plans in the works to spend billions of dollars modernizing our nuclear stockpile of missiles, submarines, and bombers, committing us to decades more of waste.

We need to change direction.

My legislation will make the nation safer. The large number of high-alert weapons we have now leaves dangerous room for human error. For example, in August 2007, a B–52

flew cross-country while unknowingly carrying six nuclear-armed, air-launched missiles. Just last month, the Air Force had to suspended 92 launch officers—or missileers—at Malmstrom Air Force Base, MT, where a drug investigation also uncovered that missileers may have been cheating on proficiency exams. The REIN–IN Act, which is supported by over two-dozen organizations, will increase Americans' safety by cutting the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles currently on 24–hour high alert from 450 to 150.

We don't need an expensive stockpile of nuclear weapons that will never use to create a prosperous and secure society. As costs for our nation grow, there are areas where we can cut spending. The first place we should start is with our unnecessary and expensive spending on nuclear weapons that are more suited for the Cold War than the strategic challenges we face today.

I look forward to working with the President and Congress to pass the REIN–IN Act, which will not only reduce overall spending, but reprioritize investments that will actually make the United States safer, more livable, and economically secure.

HONORING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF MR. AL H. CHESSER

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 100th birthday of Al H. Chesser, President Emeritus of the United Transportation Union, a lifetime advocate for his brothers and sisters in labor, and my dear and wonderful friend.

I've had the blessing of working with Al for decades as he advocated and fought for the rights of countless workers throughout his career. His knowledge of the needs of our nation's workers and our labor laws, as well as his experience in the often delicate workings of Congress and our legislative process, made Al one of the most respected and relied-on leaders of the labor movement.

He began his work life in 1935, becoming a clerk at a Kroger grocery store in Kansas. He then went on to represent the Trainmen and then UTU, and served as a Vice President of the AFL–CIO's executive council, as well as Chairman of their Constitution Committee. Hard work and long hours have followed Al since that first grocery store clerk job, and—through his dedication—our workplaces are safer and work quality has improved. He has spent his life making the rights and best interests of others his own, and to this day the lasting mark he's left on each and every worker and legislator he has encountered remains. I am proud to consider Al to be one of the most honorable and fine men I have had the blessing to work with, whether we were taking time just to speak as friends or working together to solve a rail strike.

I'm proud to recognize my dear friend Al Chesser as he is joined by friends and family in celebrating his 100 years of life on March 1, 2014, and I look forward to many more years of friendship.

RECOGNITION OF THE 26TH ANNIVERSARY OF POGROMS AGAINST ARMENIANS IN SUMGAIT

HON. TONY CÁRDENAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the twenty-sixth anniversary of pogroms against people of Armenian descent in Sumgait, Azerbaijan, and call for long-overdue justice.

On February 27th 1988, Sumgait was the scene for organised anti-Armenian violence, leading to the death of more than thirty Armenians, with hundreds more gravely injured. Armenians were attacked and maimed for three days. Despite Baku's 30-minute proximity to Sumgait, police failed to react, allowing the brutality to continue.

This brutality took many forms and was well-documented. On May 22nd 1988, The New York Times reported Armenians being ''hunted'' down and gave an account of a pregnant Armenian woman who had been disembowelled so that the unborn baby could be mutilated. Two months earlier, The Washington Post gave accounts of an Armenian skinned alive and a woman being raped and murdered after her breasts were cut off. These atrocities were highlighted by the Members of Congress at the time, who condemned this state-sponsored massacre against Armenian civilians.

The failure to act by the Azerbaijani authorities and our failure to compel action has resulted in a tidal wave of animosity towards the Armenians, which manifests itself in several ways. Azerbaijani forces east of Karabagh continue to disregard the ceasefire established after the Karabagh war in 1994. Ramil Safarov, who decapitated an Armenian Lieutenant while he slept during a NATO-sponsored training program in 2004, returned home as a hero and was held up as ''an example of patriotism for the Azerbaijani youth'' by the Commissioner for Human Rights of Azerbaijan, Elmira Suleymanova. All the while, Ilham Aliyev continues his brazen rhetoric; consistently declaring Armenians as the national enemy in an effort to unite the Azeri public.

The hatred towards the Armenians is unrelenting, even at the expense of the freedom of their own people. When 75 year old Alcram Ayslisi—one of Azerbaijan's most celebrated writers—had the temerity to consider the conflict from an unbiased perspective, he was subjected to a witch hunt that would not have looked out of place in medieval Europe. His books were burnt. He was stripped of his national literary awards, and, most worryingly, a high ranking politician had promised $13,000 to anyone who could cut off his ear.

I call upon all of my colleagues and fellow Americans to join me in condemning the continued violence and injustice, and continue efforts to ensure that these atrocities never repeat themselves.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

See Final Résumé of Congressional Activity (including the History of Bills) for the First Session of the 113th Congress.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1187–S1253

Measures Introduced: Twenty-five bills and six resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2050–2074, S. Res. 364–368, and S. Con. Res. 33.

Pages S1233–34

Measures Passed:

Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 366, expressing support for the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week. **Pages S1252–53**

Read Across America Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 367, designating March 3, 2014, as ''Read Across America Day''. **Pages S1252–53**

Rare Disease Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 368, designating February 28, 2014, as ''Rare Disease Day''. **Pages S1252–53**

Measures Considered:

Child Care and Development Block Grant Act—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990. **Pages S1210–12, S1225–26**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Rose Eilene Gottemoeller, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. **Page S1225**

Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act: Senate continued consideration of S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and taking action on the following amendments and motions proposed thereto:

Pages S1194–S1210

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 44 yeas to 52 nays (Vote No. 45), Senate failed to table the Reid motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with instructions, Reid Amendment No. 2767, to change the enactment date. **Pages S1209–10**

By 56 yeas to 41 nays (Vote No. 46), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to waive section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and the waiver provisions of applicable budget resolutions, with respect to the bill. Subsequently, the point of order that the bill was in violation of section 311(a)(2) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, was sustained, and pursuant to Section 312 of the Congressional Budget Act, the bill is committed to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Page S1210

Subsequently, the motion to invoke cloture on Reid (for Sanders) Amendment No. 2747 to the bill, and the motion to invoke cloture on the bill were withdrawn. **Pages S1195, S1210**

Reid (for Sanders) Amendment No. 2747, in the nature of a substitute, fell when the bill was committed to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Pages S1195, S1210

Reid Amendment No. 2766 (to Amendment No. 2747), to change the enactment date, fell when Reid (for Sanders) Amendment No. 2747 fell.

Pages S1195, S1210

Reid motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with instructions, Reid Amendment No. 2767, to change the enactment date, fell when the bill was committed to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. **Pages S1195, S1210**

Reid Amendment No. 2768 (to (the instructions of the motion to commit) Amendment No. 2767),

of a perfecting nature, fell when Reid motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with instructions, Reid Amendment No. 2767 fell. **Pages S1195, S1210**

Reid Amendment No. 2769 (to Amendment No. 2768), of a perfecting nature, fell when Reid Amendment No. 2768 (to (the instructions of the motion to commit) Amendment No. 2767) fell. **Pages S1195, S1210**

Adegbile Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Debo P. Adegbile, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General. **Page S1223**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement of Thursday, February 27, 2014, a vote on cloture will occur at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, March 3, 2014. **Page S1223**

A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 3, 2014, Senate resume consideration of the nomination, with up to 30 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled in the usual form prior to the cloture vote on the nomination; and that for the purposes of Rule XXII, Friday, February 28, 2014 count as an intervening day. **Page S1253**

Hernandez Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Pedro A. Delgado Hernandez, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico. **Page S1224**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Debo P. Adegbile, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General. **Page S1224**

Reeves Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Pamela L. Reeves, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee. **Page S1224**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Pedro A. Delgado Hernandez, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico. **Page S1224**

Brooks Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Timothy L. Brooks, of Arkansas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas. **Page S1224**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Pamela L. Reeves, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee. **Page S1224**

Chhabria Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Vince Girdhari Chhabria, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California. **Page S1224**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Timothy L. Brooks, of Arkansas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas. **Page S1224**

Gottemoeller Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Rose Eilene Gottemoeller, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. **Page S1225**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Vince Girdhari Chhabria, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California. **Page S1225**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By a unanimous vote of 97 yeas (Vote No. EX. 47), Michael L. Connor, of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior. **Page S1210**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Lisa S. Disbrow, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force.

Laura Junor, of Virginia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

Robert W. Holleyman II, of Louisiana, to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador.

Juan Carlos Iturregui, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring June 26, 2014.

Juan Carlos Iturregui, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring June 26, 2020.

Roberta S. Jacobson, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2014.

Roberta S. Jacobson, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2020.

Karen Kornbluh, of New York, to be a Member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2016.

Annette Taddeo-Goldstein, of Florida, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2018. **Page S1253**

Messages from the House: **Page S1231**

Measures Referred: **Pages S1231–32**

Measures Read the First Time: **Pages S1232, S1253**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Pages S1232–33**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1234–35**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1235–39**

Additional Statements: **Page S1231**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S1239–52**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S1252**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S1252**

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—47) **Pages S1209–10**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:20 p.m., until 2 p.m. on Monday, March 3, 2014. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1253.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Committee announced the following subcommittee assignments:

Subcommittee on Commodities, Markets, Trade and Risk Management: Senators Donnelly (Chair), Heitkamp, Harkin, Brown, Gillibrand, Walsh, Chambliss, Roberts, Boozman, Hoeven, and Johanns.

Subcommittee on Jobs, Rural Economic Growth and Energy Innovation: Senators Heitkamp (Chair), Brown, Klobuchar, Bennet, Donnelly, Casey, Johanns, Hoeven, Grassley, Thune, and Boozman.

Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry and Natural Resources: Senators Bennet (Chair), Harkin, Klobuchar, Leahy, Heitkamp, Walsh, Boozman, McConnell, Chambliss, Thune, and Roberts.

Subcommittee on Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Food and Agricultural Research: Senators Casey (Chair), Leahy, Harkin, Brown, Gillibrand, Bennet, Hoeven, McConnell, Chambliss, Grassley, and Thune.

Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, Poultry, Marketing and Agriculture Security: Senators Gillibrand (Chair), Leahy, Klobuchar, Donnelly, Casey, Walsh, Roberts, McConnell, Boozman, Johanns, and Grassley.

Senators Stabenow and Cochran are ex officio members of each subcommittee.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine United States Strategic Command and United States Cyber Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from Admiral C. D. Haney, Commander, United States Strategic Command, and General Keith B. Alexander, Commander, United States Cyber Command, both of the Department of Defense.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported 1,093 nominations in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

CURRENT AND FUTURE WORLDWIDE THREATS

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded open and closed hearings to examine responses to questions from the open session on current and future worldwide threats to the national security of the United States, after receiving testimony from James R. Clapper, Jr., Director of National Intelligence, and David Shedd, Deputy Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, both of the Department of Defense.

SEMIANNUAL MONETARY POLICY REPORT TO CONGRESS

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the semiannual Monetary Policy Report to Congress, after receiving testimony from Janet L. Yellen, Chair, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

MAGNUSON–STEVENS ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard concluded a hearing to examine North Pacific perspectives on Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization, after receiving testimony from Jim Balsiger, Alaska Regional Administrator, National

Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce; Chris Oliver, North Pacific Fishery Management Council, Anchorage, Alaska; Tim Andrew, Association of Village Council Presidents, Bethel, Alaska; Joseph T. Plesha, Trident Seafoods Corporation, and Lori Swanson, Groundfish Forum, both of Seattle, Washington; Linda Behnken, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, Sitka; Ricky Gease, Kenai River Sportfishing Association, Soldotna, Alaska; and Michael LeVine, Oceana, and Julianne Curry, United Fishermen of Alaska, both of Juneau, Alaska.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND WATER BILLS

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water and Power concluded a hearing to examine S. 1419, to promote research, development, and demonstration of marine and hydrokinetic renewable energy technologies, S. 1771, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to adjust the Crooked River boundary, to provide water certainty for the City of Prineville, Oregon, S. 1800, to require the Secretary of the Interior to submit to Congress a report on the efforts of the Bureau of Reclamation to manage its infrastructure assets, S. 1946, to amend the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978 to modify the authorization of appropriations, S. 1965, to amend the East Bench Irrigation District Water Contract Extension Act to permit the Secretary of the Interior to extend the contract for certain water services, S. 2010 and H.R. 1963, bills to amend the Water Conservation and Utilization Act to authorize the development of non-Federal hydropower and issuance of leases of power privileges at projects constructed pursuant to the authority of the Water Conservation and Utilization Act, S. 2019, to reauthorize and update certain provisions of the Secure Water Act, and S. 2034, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to facilitate the transfer to non-Federal ownership of appropriate reclamation projects or facilities, after receiving testimony from Senator Merkley; Mike Carr, Senior Advisor to the Director, Energy Policy and Systems Analysis, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, and John Katz, Deputy Associate General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, both of the Department of Energy; Robert Quint, Senior Advisor, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior; Charles V. Stern, Specialist in Natural Resources Policy for the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; Andy Duyck, Clean Water Services, Hillsboro, Oregon; and Belinda A. Batten, Oregon State University Northwest National Marine Renewable Energy Center, Corvallis.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee announced the following subcommittee assignments:

Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Senators Carper (Chair), Cardin, Sanders, Udall (NM), Gillibrand, Booker, Markey, Barrasso, Inhofe, Sessions, Crapo, Wicker, and Fischer.

Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety: Senators Whitehouse (Chair), Carper, Cardin, Sanders, Udall (NM), Markey, Sessions, Barrasso, Crapo, Wicker, and Boozman.

Subcommittee on Water and Wildlife: Senators Cardin (Chair), Carper, Whitehouse, Merkley, Gillibrand, Booker, Boozman, Inhofe, Barrasso, Sessions, and Fischer.

Subcommittee on Superfund, Toxics and Environmental Health: Senators Udall (NM) (Chair), Merkley, Gillibrand, Booker, Markey, Crapo, Inhofe, Wicker, and Fischer.

Subcommittee on Green Jobs and the New Economy: Senators Merkley (Chair), Carper, Sanders, Wicker, and Sessions.

Subcommittee on Oversight: Senators Booker (Chair), Whitehouse, Markey, Inhofe, and Boozman.

Senators Boxer and Vitter are ex officio members of each subcommittee.

INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL CHILD ABDUCTION

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine international parental child abduction, after receiving testimony from Susan S. Jacobs, Ambassador, Special Advisor for Children's Issues, Department of State; Ernie Allen, The International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, Washington, D.C.; David Goldman, Bring Sean Home Foundation, Lincroft, New Jersey; Patrick Braden, Global Future: The Parents' Council on International Children's Policy, Los Angeles, California; and Noelle Hunter, Morehead, Kentucky.

RECYCLING ELECTRONICS

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine recycling electronics, focusing on a common sense solution for enhancing government efficiency and protecting our environment, after receiving testimony from Kevin Kampschroer, Deputy Agent Senior Sustainability Officer, General Services Administration; Thomas G. Day, Chief Sustainability Officer, United States Postal Service; Brenda Pulley, Keep America Beautiful, Washington, D.C.; Walter L. Alcorn, The Consumer Electronics Association, Arlington, Virginia; and Stephen Skurnac, Sim Recycling Solutions, Chicago, Illinois.

PROMOTING COLLEGE ACCESS AND SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine promoting college access and success for students with disabilities, after receiving testimony from Melissa Emrey-Arras, Director, Education, Workforce and Income Security, Government Accountability Office; Dana Fink, Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C.; Elizabeth Evans Getzel, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond; Katherine Myers, Wright State University Office of Disability Services, Dayton, Ohio; Laysha Ostrow, Lived Experience Research Network, Baltimore, Maryland; and Will Farrior, Charleston, South Carolina.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Vivek Hallegere Murthy, of Massachusetts, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, Portia Y. Wu, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor, Christopher P. Lu, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor, Heather L. MacDougall, of Florida, to be a Member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, and Massie Ritsch, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary of Education for Communications and Outreach.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 149, to provide effective criminal prosecutions for certain identity thefts; and

The nominations of Steven Paul Logan, John Joseph Tuchi, Diane J. Humetewa, Rosemary Marquez, Douglas L. Rayes, and James Alan Soto, all to be a United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 14 public bills, H.R. 4104–4117; and 1 resolution, H. Res. 493 were introduced. **Pages H2064–65**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H2065–66**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H.R. 2641, to provide for improved coordination of agency actions in the preparation and adoption of environmental documents for permitting determinations, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 113–363, Pt. 1). **Page H2064**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Byrne to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H2003**

Recess: The House recessed at 11:08 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H2010**

All Economic Regulations are Transparent Act of 2014: The House passed H.R. 2804, to amend title 5, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to publish information about rules on the Internet, by a recorded vote of 236 ayes to 179 noes, Roll No. 78. Consideration of the measure began yesterday, February 26th. **Pages H2014–27**

Rejected the Esty motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a recorded vote of 187 ayes to 229 noes, Roll No. 77. **Pages H2025–27**

Agreed to:

Rothfus amendment (No. 3 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that was debated on February 26th that adds terms to define a negative-impact on jobs and wages rule, helps agencies identify a negative-impact on jobs and wages rule, and requires agency heads approving a negative-impact on jobs and wages rule to submit a statement that they approved the rule knowing of its negative-impact on jobs and wages (by a recorded vote of 249 ayes to 162 noes, Roll No. 71). **Pages H2021–22**

Rejected:

Connolly amendment (No. 7 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that sought to exempt any rule pertaining to air quality or water quality (by a recorded vote of 181 ayes to 235 noes, Roll No. 72);

Pages H2015–16, H2022

Jackson Lee amendment (No. 8 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that sought to exempt rules made by the Secretary of Homeland Security, or any consent decree or settlement made as a result of the rule (by a recorded vote of 180 ayes to 232 noes, Roll No. 73); **Pages H2016–17, H2022–23**

Jackson Lee amendment (No. 9 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that sought to exclude from the bill any rule, consent decree, or settlement agreement that the Director of the Office of Management and Budget determines would result in net job creation or whose benefits exceeds its costs (by a recorded vote of 179 ayes to 235 noes, Roll No. 74); **Pages H2017–18, H2023**

George Miller (CA) amendment (No. 10 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that sought to exempt regulations proposed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to prevent combustible dust explosions and fires (by a recorded vote of 183 ayes to 229 noes, Roll No. 75); and **Pages H2018–20, H2024**

George Miller (CA) amendment (No. 11 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that sought to exempt any regulations, or modifications thereto, which have been recommended in writing by the Inspector General of a federal agency, including but not limited to those which would improve protections for taxpayers, students, public and workplace safety and health, or otherwise increase the effectiveness or efficiency of agency activities (by a recorded vote of 181 ayes to 232 noes, Roll No. 76). **Pages H2020–21, H2024–25**

Agreed that the Clerk be authorized to make technical and conforming changes to reflect the actions of the House. **Page H2028**

H. Res. 487, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 3865) and (H.R. 2804), was agreed to yesterday, February 26th.

Consumer Financial Protection Safety and Soundness Improvement Act: The House passed H.R. 3193, to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to strengthen the review authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council of regulations issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, by a recorded vote of 232 ayes to 182 noes, Roll No. 85. **Pages H2028–43, H2050–55**

Rejected the Shea-Porter motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a recorded vote of 194 ayes to 223 noes, Roll No. 84. **Pages H2052–54**

Pursuant to the rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113–36, modified by the amendment printed in part A of H. Rept. 113–350, shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule. **Pages H2037–39**

Agreed to:

Rigell amendment (No. 1 printed in part B of H. Rept. 113–350) that requires the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to (1) submit an analysis on the impact of its proposed rule or regulation on the financial industry, and (2) submit an analysis of consumer and small business access to credit as a result of the regulation, to the Financial Stability Oversight Council for the purposes of public review (by a recorded vote of 250 ayes to 167 noes, Roll No. 81) and **Pages H2039–40, H2050**

DeSantis amendment (No. 3 printed in part B of H. Rept. 113–350) that repeals the exclusive rulemaking authority of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (by a recorded vote of 227 ayes to 186 noes, Roll No. 82). **Pages H2040–41, H2050–51**

Rejected:

Moore amendment (No. 4 printed in part B of H. Rept. 113–350) that sought to add Findings and Sense of Congress language to the end of the bill that acknowledges and honors the work of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in providing protection and relief to consumers from instances of unfair, deceptive, and abusive practices in financial markets (by a recorded vote of 181 ayes to 236 noes, Roll No. 83). **Pages H2041–43, H2051–52**

H. Res. 475, the rule providing for consideration of the bill, was agreed to on February 11th.

Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act—Rule for Consideration: The House agreed to H. Res. 492, the rule that is providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 899) to provide for additional safeguards with respect to imposing Federal mandates, and for other purposes, by a recorded vote of 227 ayes to 190 noes, Roll No. 80, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 225 yeas to 192 nays, Roll No. 79. **Pages H2043–49**

Quorum Calls—Votes: One yea-and-nay vote and 14 recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H2021, H2022, H2022–23, H2023, H2024, H2024–25, H2026–27, H2027, H2048–49, H2049, H2050, H2050–51, H2051–52, H2053–54, H2054. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Committee Meetings

NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH OVERSIGHT

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies held a

hearing on the Federal Investments in Neuroscience Research Oversight. Testimony was heard from John P. Holdren, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy; and John C. Wingfield, Assistant Director for the Directorate of Biological Sciences, National Science Foundation.

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY MEDICAL COUNTERMEASURE ENTERPRISE OVERSIGHT

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education held a hearing on Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasure Enterprise Oversight. Testimony was heard from Dr. George W. Korch Jr., Senior Science Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response; Dr. Robin Robinson, Director of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority; Dr. Dan Sosin, Deputy Director, Office of the Public Health Preparedness and Response, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Dr. Luciana Borio, Assistant Commissioner, Counterterrorism Policy, Food and Drug Administration; Michael Kurilla, Director, Office of Biodefense Research Resources and Translational Research, National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institute of Health.

POSTURE OF THE U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND AND U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The Posture of the U.S. Special Operations Command and U.S. Transportation Command''. Testimony was heard from General William M. Fraser, III, USAF, Commander, U.S. Transportation Command; and Admiral William H. McRaven, USN, Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command.

POSTURE OF THE U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND AND U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces held a hearing entitled ''Seapower and Projection Forces Capabilities to Support the Asia Pacific Rebalance''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

EXPLORING EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education; and the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training held a joint hearing entitled ''Exploring Efforts to Strengthen the Teaching Profession''. Testimony was heard from Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Heather G. Peske, Associate Commissioner, Educator Quality, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; and public witnesses.

COUNTERFEIT DRUGS: FIGHTING ILLEGAL SUPPLY CHAINS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Counterfeit Drugs: Fighting Illegal Supply Chains''. Testimony was heard from Howard Sklamberg, Deputy Commissioner, Global Regulatory Operations and Policy, Food and Drug Administration; Lev Kubiak, Director, National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center, Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Marcia Crosse, Director, Health Care, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

BENEFITS OF AND CHALLENGES TO ENERGY ACCESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: ELECTRICITY

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Energy and Power held a hearing entitled ''Benefits of and Challenges to Energy Access in the 21st Century: Electricity''. Testimony was heard from Edward S. Finley, Jr., Chairman North Carolina Utilities Commission; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a markup on the following legislation: H.R. 3548, the ''Improving Trauma Care Act of 2013''; H.R. 1281, the ''Newborn Screening Saves Lives Reauthorization Act of 2013''; H.R. 1528, the ''Veterinary Medicine Mobility Act of 2013''; and H.R. 4080, the ''Trauma Systems and Regionalization of Emergency Care Reauthorization Act''. The following bills were forwarded, as amended: H.R. 3548; H.R. 1281; H.R. 1528; and H.R. 4080.

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 2548, the ''Electrify African Act''. The bill was ordered reported, as amended.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies held a hearing on H.R. 4007, the ''Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Authorization and Accountability Act of 2014''. Testimony was heard from Caitlin Durkovich, Assistant Secretary, Infrastructure Protection, Department of Homeland Security; Stephen L. Caldwell, Director, Homeland Security and Justice, Government Accountability Office; Marcia Hodges, Chief Inspector,

Office of Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security; and public witnesses.

BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES' USE OF STOREFRONT OPERATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Use of Storefront Operations''. Testimony was heard from Thomas Brandon, Deputy Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a markup on the following legislation: H.R. 1103, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Alexander Creek, Alaska, is and shall be recognized as an eligible Native village under that Act, and for other purposes; H.R. 1259, the ''Coltsville National Historical Park Act''; H.R. 3110, the ''Huna Tlingit Traditional Gull Egg Use Act''; and H.R. 3605, the ''Sandia Pueblo Settlement Technical Amendment Act''. The following bills were ordered reported, without amendment: H.R. 1103; and H.R. 3605. The following bills were ordered reported, as amended: H.R. 1259; and H.R. 3110.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs held a hearing on the following legislation: H.R. 3105, the ''Aquaculture Risk Reduction Act''; H.R. 3280, the ''Lacey Act Clarifying Amendments Act''; H.R. 3324, the ''Lacey Act Paperwork Reduction Act''; and H.R. 4032, the ''North Texas Invasive Species Barrier Act''. Testimony was heard from William C. Woody, Chief, Office of Law Enforcement, Fish and Wildlife Service; Michael Watson, Executive Director, Plant Health Programs, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; and public witnesses.

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION OVERSIGHT: GAO REPORT—INTERIOR HIRING AND RETENTION CHALLENGES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing entitled ''Obama Administration Oversight: GAO Report—Interior Hiring and Retention Challenges''. Testimony was heard from Frank Rusco, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, Government Accountability Office; Ned Farquhar, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management, Department of Interior.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSED RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL SPEECH: DOUBLING DOWN ON IRS TARGETING

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Job Creation and Regulatory Affairs held a hearing entitled ''The Administration's Proposed Restrictions on Political Speech: Doubling Down on IRS Targeting''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

AFGHANISTAN: HONORING THE HEROES OF EXTORTION 17

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on National Security held a hearing entitled ''Afghanistan: Honoring the Heroes of Extortion 17''. Testimony was heard from Garry Reid, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Special Operations and Law Intensity Conflict, Department of Defense; Deborah Skillman, Director, Casualty and Mortuary Affairs, Department of Defense; Colonel John Devillier, USAF, Commander, Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations, Department of Defense; Colonel Kerk Brown, USA, Director, Army Casualty and Mortuary Affairs, Department of Defense; and Commander Aaron Brodsky, USN, Director, Navy Casualty Services, Department of Defense.

EXAMINING THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Health Care, and Entitlements held a hearing entitled ''Examining the Endangered Species Act''. Testimony was heard from Michael Bean, Counselor, Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Department of Interior; and Samuel Rauch, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Regulatory Programs, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fisheries Services, Department of Commerce.

FIRST DEEP SPACE MISSION FOR THE ORION AND SPACE LAUNCH SYSTEM

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Mars Flyby 2021: The First Deep Space Mission for the Orion and Space Launch System?''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

IMPROVING THE NATION'S HIGHWAY FREIGHT NETWORK

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a hearing entitled ''Improving the Nation's Highway Freight Network''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VA'S VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing entitled ''Review of the Effectiveness of VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program''. Testimony was heard from Daniel Bertoni, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, Government Accountability Office; Jack Kammerer, Director, Vocation Rehabilitation and Employment Service, Veterans Benefits Administration; and public witnesses.

ONGOING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Ongoing Intelligence Activities''. This was a closed hearing.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2014

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade, hearing entitled ''The FTC at 100: Views from the Academic Experts'', 9:30 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises, hearing entitled ''Equity Market Structure: A Review of SEC Regulation NMS'', 9:30 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, markup on H. Res. 488, supporting the people of Venezuela as they protest peacefully for democratic change and calling to end the violence, 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Task Force on Over-Criminalization, hearing entitled ''Criminal Code Reform'', 9 a.m., 2237 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Full Committee, hearing on discussion draft of legislation regarding Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act, 9:30 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1786, the ''National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act Reauthorization of 2013'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Résumé of Congressional Activity

FIRST SESSION OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

The first table gives a comprehensive résumé of all legislative business transacted by the Senate and House. The second table accounts for all nominations submitted to the Senate by the President for Senate confirmation.

DATA ON LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

January 3, 2013 through January 3, 2014

	Senate	*House*	*Total*
Days in session	156	160	..
Time in session	1,095 hrs., 12′	767 hrs., 33′	..
Congressional Record:			
Pages of proceedings	9,124	8,138	..
Extensions of Remarks	..	1,913	..
Public bills enacted into law	17	56	73
Private bills enacted into law	..	..	..
Bills in conference	3	3	..
Measures passed, total	356	366	722
Senate bills	57	17	..
House bills	57	206	..
Senate joint resolutions	..	..	..
House joint resolutions	2	16	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	16	15	..
House concurrent resolutions	14	16	..
Simple resolutions	210	96	..
Measures reported, total	221	290	511
Senate bills	146	4	..
House bills	10	223	..
Senate joint resolutions	2	..	..
House joint resolutions	..	..	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	1	..	..
House concurrent resolutions	..	4	..
Simple resolutions	62	59	..
Special reports	14	30	..
Conference reports	..	..	..
Measures pending on calendar	204	82	..
Measures introduced, total	2,280	4,434	6,714
Bills	1,894	3,810	..
Joint resolutions	29	104	..
Concurrent resolutions	30	72	..
Simple resolutions	327	448	..
Quorum calls	13	1	..
Yea-and-nay votes	291	299	..
Recorded votes	..	341	..
Bills vetoed	..	..	..
Vetoes overridden	..	..	..

* These figures include all measures reported, even if there was no accompanying report. A total of 131 written reports have been filed in the Senate, 320 reports have been filed in the House.

DISPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

January 3, 2013 through January 3, 2014

Civilian nominations, totaling 489, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	229
Unconfirmed	2
Withdrawn	9
Returned to White House	249

Other Civilian nominations, totaling 1,737, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	276
Returned to White House	1,461

Air Force nominations, totaling 5,479, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	5,471
Withdrawn	1
Returned to White House	7

Army nominations, totaling 6,726, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	6,712
Returned to White House	14

Navy nominations, totaling 3,881, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	3,879
Withdrawn	1
Returned to White House	1

Marine Corps nominations, totaling 762, disposed of as follows:

Confirmed	761
Returned to White House	1

Summary

Total nominations carried over from the First Session	0
Total nominations received this Session	19,074
Total confirmed	17,328
Total unconfirmed	2
Total withdrawn	11
Total returned to the White House	1,733

HISTORY OF BILLS ENACTED INTO PUBLIC LAW

(113th Cong., 1st Sess.)

BILLS ENACTED INTO PUBLIC LAW (113TH, 1ST SESSION)

	Law No.		Law No.		Law No.		Law No.		Law No.
S. 47	113–4	S. 1545	113–56	H.R. 588	113–21	H.R. 1911	113–28	H.R. 3190	113–47
S. 130	113–32			H.R. 623	113–68	H.R. 2094	113–48	H.R. 3204	113–54
S. 157	113–33	H.R. 41	113–1	H.R. 678	113–24	H.R. 2167	113–29	H.R. 3210	113–39
S. 252	113–55	H.R. 152	113–2	H.R. 767	113–69	H.R. 2251	113–60	H.R. 3233	113–42
S. 256	113–34	H.R. 185	113–58	H.R. 933	113–6	H.R. 2289	113–22	H.R. 3302	113–49
S. 304	113–35	H.R. 251	113–19	H.R. 1071	113–10	H.R. 2319	113–70	H.R. 3304	113–66
S. 330	113–51	H.R. 254	113–20	H.R. 1092	113–25	H.R. 2383	113–18	H.R. 3343	113–71
S. 459	113–36	H.R. 258	113–12	H.R. 1151	113–17	H.R. 2576	113–30	H.R. 3458	113–63
S. 622	113–14	H.R. 267	113–23	H.R. 1171	113–26	H.R. 2611	113–31	H.R. 3487	113–72
S. 716	113–7	H.R. 307	113–5	H.R. 1246	113–8	H.R. 2747	113–50	H.R. 3588	113–64
S. 793	113–41	H.R. 324	113–16	H.R. 1344	113–27	H.R. 2775	113–46	H.R. 3626	113–57
S. 893	113–52	H.R. 325	113–3	H.R. 1402	113–59	H.R. 2871	113–61		
S. 982	113–13	H.R. 360	113–11	H.R. 1412	113–37	H.R. 2922	113–62		
S. 1348	113–43	H.R. 475	113–15	H.R. 1765	113–9	H.R. 3092	113–38	H.J. Res. 59	113–67
S. 1471	113–65	H.R. 527	113–40	H.R. 1848	113–53	H.R. 3095	113–45	H.J. Res. 91	113–44

BILLS VETOED

Title	Bill No.	Date introduced	Committee		Date Reported		Report No.		Date of passage		Public Law	
			House	Senate	House	Senate	House 113–	Senate 113–	House	Senate	Date approved	No. 113–
To temporarily increase the borrowing authority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for carrying out the National Flood Insurance Program.	H.R. 41	Jan. 3, 2013	FS Bud			.....	.....	.....	Jan. 4, 2013	Jan. 4, 2013	Jan. 6, 2013	1
Making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes.	H.R. 152	Jan. 4, 2013	App Bud			.....	.....	.....	Jan. 15, 2013	Jan. 28, 2013	Jan. 29, 2013	2
To ensure the complete and timely payment of the obligations of the United States Government until May 19, 2013, and for other purposes.	H.R. 325	Jan. 21, 2013	WM HA			.....	.....	.....	Jan. 23, 2013	Jan. 31, 2013	Feb. 4, 2013	3
To reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994.	S. 47	Jan. 22, 2013			.....	.....	.....	.....	Feb. 28, 2013	Feb. 12, 2013	Mar. 7, 2013	4
To reauthorize certain programs under the Public Health Service Act and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to public health security and all-hazards preparedness and response, and for other purposes.	H.R. 307	Jan. 18, 2013	EC VA	HEL&P		Feb. 14, 2013	.....	0	Jan. 22, 2013	Feb. 27, 2013	Mar. 13, 2013	5
Making appropriations for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes.	H.R. 933	Mar. 4, 2013	App Bud			.....	.....	.....	Mar. 6, 2013	Mar. 20, 2013	Mar. 26, 2013	6
To modify the requirements under the STOCK Act regarding online access to certain financial disclosure statements and related forms.	S. 716	Apr. 11, 2013			.....	.....	.....	.....	Apr. 12, 2013	Apr. 11, 2013	Apr. 15, 2013	7
To amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to provide that the District of Columbia Treasurer or one of the Deputy Chief Financial Officers of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer of the District of Columbia may perform the functions and duties of the Office in an acting capacity if there is a vacancy in the Office.	H.R. 1246	Mar. 19, 2013	OGR		Apr. 12, 2013	.....	37	.....	Apr. 15, 2013	Apr. 18, 2013	May 1, 2013	8
To provide the Secretary of Transportation with the flexibility to transfer certain funds to prevent reduced operations and staffing of the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.	H.R. 1765	Apr. 26, 2013	App TI Bud			.....	.....	.....	Apr. 26, 2013	Apr. 30, 2013	May 1, 2013	9
To specify the size of the precious-metal blanks that will be used in the production of the National Baseball Hall of Fame commemorative coins.	H.R. 1071	Mar. 12, 2013	FS			.....	.....	.....	Apr. 24, 2013	May 7, 2013	May 17, 2013	10
To award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal to Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley, in recognition of the 50th commemoration of the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church where the 4 little Black girls lost their lives, which served as a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement.	H.R. 360	Jan. 23, 2013	FS			.....	.....	.....	Apr. 24, 2013	May 9, 2013	May 24, 2013	11
To amend title 18, United States Code, with respect to fraudulent representations about having received military decorations or medals.	H.R. 258	Jan. 15, 2013	Jud		May 20, 2013	.....	84	.....	May 20, 2013	May 22, 2013	June 3, 2013	12

To prohibit the Corps of Engineers from taking certain actions to establish a restricted area prohibiting public access to waters downstream of a dam, and for other purposes.	S.	982	May 16, 2013			.....	.....	.....	.....	May 21, 2013	May 16, 2013	June 3, 2013	13
To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to reauthorize user fee programs relating to new animal drugs and generic new animal drugs.	S.	622	Mar. 20, 2013		HEL&P	.....	Mar. 20, 2013	.....	0	June 3, 2013	May 8, 2013	June 13, 2013	14
To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include vaccines against seasonal influenza within the definition of taxable vaccines.	H.R.	475	Feb. 4, 2013	WM			.....	.....	.....	June 18, 2013	June 19, 2013	June 25, 2013	15
To grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II.	H.R.	324	Jan. 18, 2013	FS HA	BHUA			.....	.....	May 21, 2013	June 27, 2013	July 12, 2013	16
To direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain observer status for Taiwan at the triennial International Civil Aviation Organization Assembly, and for other purposes.	H.R.	1151	Mar. 14, 2013	FA			.....	.....	.....	June 18, 2013	June 27, 2013	July 12, 2013	17
To designate the new Interstate Route 70 bridge over the Mississippi River connecting St. Louis, Missouri, and southwestern Illinois as the ''Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge''.	H.R.	2383	June 14, 2013	TI			.....	.....	.....	June 25, 2013	June 27, 2013	July 12, 2013	18
To direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Federal features of the electric distribution system to the South Utah Valley Electric Service District, and for other purposes.	H.R.	251	Jan. 15, 2013	NR		May 17, 2013	.....	78	.....	June 11, 2013	July 10, 2013	July 18, 2013	19
To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to facilitate the development of hydroelectric power on the Diamond Fork System of the Central Utah Project.	H.R.	254	Jan. 15, 2013	NR Bud		Apr. 9, 2013	.....	25	.....	Apr. 9, 2013	July 10, 2013	July 18, 2013	20
To provide for donor contribution acknowledgments to be displayed at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center, and for other purposes.	H.R.	588	Feb. 6, 2013	NR		Apr. 9, 2013	.....	28	.....	May 6, 2013	June 3, 2013	July 18, 2013	21
To rename section 219(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as the Kay Bailey Hutchison Spousal IRA.	H.R.	2289	June 6, 2013	WM	Fin			.....	.....	June 25, 2013	July 11, 2013	July 25, 2013	22
To improve hydropower, and for other purposes.	H.R.	267	Jan. 15, 2013	EC	ENR	Feb. 4, 2013	May 13, 2013	6	38	Feb. 13, 2013	Aug. 1, 2013	Aug. 9, 2013	23
To authorize all Bureau of Reclamation conduit facilities for hydropower development under Federal Reclamation law, and for other purposes.	H.R.	678	Feb. 13, 2013	NR	ENR	Mar. 25, 2013	May 13, 2013	24	39	Apr. 10, 2013	Aug. 1, 2013	Aug. 9, 2013	24
To designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the ''Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center''.	H.R.	1092	Mar. 12, 2013	TI		June 5, 2013	.....	97	.....	June 25, 2013	July 24, 2013	Aug. 9, 2013	25
To amend title 40, United States Code, to improve veterans service organizations access to Federal surplus personal property.	H.R.	1171	Mar. 14, 2013	OGR	HS&GA	June 25, 2013	July 31, 2013	126	0	July 8, 2013	Aug. 1, 2013	Aug. 9, 2013	26
To amend title 49, United States Code, to direct the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) to provide expedited air passenger screening to severely injured or disabled members of the Armed Forces and severely injured or disabled veterans, and for other purposes.	H.R.	1344	Mar. 21, 2013	HS	CST			.....	.....	May 21, 2013	Aug. 1, 2013	Aug. 9, 2013	27

Title	Bill No.	Date introduced	Committee		Date Reported		Report No.		Date of passage		Public Law	
			House	Senate	House	Senate	House 113–	Senate 113–	House	Senate	Date approved	No. 113–
To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to establish interest rates for new loans made on or after July 1, 2013.	H.R. 1911	May 9, 2013	E&W Bud		May 20, 2013	.....	82	.....	May 23, 2013	July 24, 2013	Aug. 9, 2013	28
To authorize the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to establish additional requirements to improve the fiscal safety and soundness of the home equity conversion mortgage insurance program.	H.R. 2167	May 23, 2013	FS	BHUA			.....	.....	June 12, 2013	July 30, 2013	Aug. 9, 2013	29
To amend title 49, United States Code, to modify requirements relating to the availability of pipeline safety regulatory documents, and for other purposes.	H.R. 2576	June 28, 2013	TI EC	CST	July 16, 2013		152	.....	July 16, 2013	Aug. 1, 2013	Aug. 9, 2013	30
To designate the headquarters building of the Coast Guard on the campus located at 2701 Martin Luther King, Jr., Avenue Southeast in the District of Columbia as the "Douglas A. Munro Coast Guard Headquarters Building", and for other purposes.	H.R. 2611	July 8, 2013	TI		July 16, 2013	.....	153	.....	July 16, 2013	July 30, 2013	Aug. 9, 2013	31
To require the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Federal land to the Powell Recreation District in the State of Wyoming.	S. 130	Jan. 24, 2013	NR	ENR	Sept. 10, 2013	Apr. 22, 2013	190	18	Sept. 10, 2013	June 19, 2013	Sept. 18, 2013	32
To provide for certain improvements to the Denali National Park and Preserve in the State of Alaska, and for other purposes.	S. 157	Jan. 28, 2013	NR	ENR	Sept. 10, 2013	Apr. 22, 2013	192	19	Sept. 10, 2013	June 19, 2013	Sept. 18, 2013	33
To amend Public Law 93-435 with respect to the Northern Mariana Islands, providing parity with Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.	S. 256	Feb. 7, 2013	NR E&W	ENR		June 27, 2013	.....	55	Sept. 10, 2013	Aug. 1, 2013	Sept. 18, 2013	34
To direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the State of Mississippi 2 parcels of surplus land within the boundary of the Natchez Trace Parkway, and for other purposes.	S. 304	Feb. 13, 2013	NR	ENR	Sept. 10, 2013	Apr. 22, 2013	191	25	Sept. 10, 2013	June 19, 2013	Sept. 18, 2013	35
To modify the boundary of the Minuteman Missile National Historic Site in the State of South Dakota, and for other purposes.	S. 459	Mar. 5, 2013	NR	ENR	Sept. 10, 2013	Apr. 22, 2013	193	32	Sept. 10, 2013	June 19, 2013	Sept. 18, 2013	36
To improve and increase the availability of on-job training and apprenticeship programs carried out by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.	H.R. 1412	Apr. 9, 2013	VA	VA	May 17, 2013		64	.....	May 21, 2013	Sept. 23, 2013	Sept. 30, 2013	37
To amend the Missing Children's Assistance Act, and for other purposes.	H.R. 3092	Sept. 12, 2013	E&W			.....	.....	.....	Sept. 17, 2013	Sept. 25, 2013	Sept. 30, 2013	38
Making continuing appropriations for military pay in the event of a Government shutdown.	H.R. 3210	Sept. 28, 2013	App			.....	.....	.....	Sept. 29, 2013	Sept. 30, 2013	Sept. 30, 2013	39
To amend the Helium Act to complete the privatization of the Federal helium reserve in a competitive market fashion that ensures stability in the helium markets while protecting the interests of American taxpayers, and for other purposes.	H.R. 527	Feb. 6, 2013	NR	ENR	Apr. 18, 2013		42	.....	Apr. 26, 2013	Sept. 19, 2013	Oct. 2, 2013	40
To support revitalization and reform of the Organization of American States, and for other purposes.	S. 793	Apr. 24, 2013	FA	FR		June 13, 2013	.....	43	Sept. 17, 2013	July 8, 2013	Oct. 2, 2013	41

To extend the period during which Iraqis who were employed by the United States Government in Iraq may be granted special immigrant status and to temporarily increase the fee or surcharge for processing machine-readable nonimmigrant visas.	H.R. 3233	Oct. 2, 2013	Jud FA			.....	.....	.....	Oct. 2, 2013	Oct. 3, 2013	Oct. 4, 2013	42
To reauthorize the Congressional Award Act	S. 1348	July 23, 2013	E&W	HS&GA		Sept. 23, 2013	.....	109	Sept. 30, 2013	Sept. 26, 2013	Oct. 4, 2013	43
Making continuing appropriations for death gratuities and related survivor benefits for survivors of deceased military service members of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.	H.J. Res. 91	Oct. 8, 2013	App			.....	.....	.....	Oct. 9, 2013	Oct. 10, 2013	Oct. 10, 2013	44
To ensure that any new or revised requirement providing for the screening, testing, or treatment of individuals operating commercial motor vehicles for sleep disorders is adopted pursuant to a rulemaking proceeding, and for other purposes.	H.R. 3095	Sept. 12, 2013	TI		Sept. 25, 2013	.....	225	.....	Sept. 26, 2013	Oct. 4, 2013	Oct. 15, 2013	45
To condition the provision of premium and cost-sharing subsidies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act upon a certification that a program to verify household income and other qualifications for such subsidies is operational, and for other purposes.	H.R. 2775	July 22, 2013	EC WM			.....	.....	.....	Sept. 12, 2013	Oct. 16, 2013	Oct. 17, 2013	46
To provide for the continued performance of the functions of the United States Parole Commission, and for other purposes.	H.R. 3190	Sept. 26, 2013	Jud			.....	.....	.....	Oct. 14, 2013	Oct. 30, 2013	Oct. 31, 2013	47
To amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the preference given, in awarding certain asthma-related grants, to certain States (those allowing trained school personnel to administer epinephrine and meeting other related requirements).	H.R. 2094	May 22, 2013	EC	HEL&P	July 30, 2013	Oct. 30, 2013	182	0	July 30, 2013	Oct. 31, 2013	Nov. 13, 2013	48
To name the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Bay Pines, Florida, as the "C.W. Bill Young Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center".	H.R. 3302	Oct. 22, 2013	VA	VA			.....	.....	Oct. 22, 2013	Oct. 31, 2013	Nov. 13, 2013	49
To amend title 40, United States Code, to transfer certain functions from the Government Accountability Office to the Department of Labor relating to the processing of claims for the payment of workers who were not paid appropriate wages under certain provisions of such title.	H.R. 2747	July 19, 2013	E&W	HEL&P		Oct. 30, 2013	.....	0	Sept. 10, 2013	Nov. 5, 2013	Nov. 21, 2013	50
To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish safeguards and standards of quality for research and transplantation of organs infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).	S. 330	Feb. 14, 2013	EC Jud	HEL&P		May 21, 2013	.....	0	Nov. 12, 2013	June 17, 2013	Nov. 21, 2013	51
To provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2013, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.	S. 893	May 8, 2013	VA	VA		Sept. 4, 2013	.....	87	Nov. 12, 2013	Oct. 28, 2013	Nov. 21, 2013	52
To ensure that the Federal Aviation Administration advances the safety of small airplanes, and the continued development of the general aviation industry, and for other purposes.	H.R. 1848	May 7, 2013	TI	CST	July 16, 2013		151	.....	July 16, 2013	Oct. 4, 2013	Nov. 27, 2013	53

Title	Bill No.	Date introduced	Committee		Date Reported		Report No.		Date of passage		Public Law	
			House	Senate	House	Senate	House 113–	Senate 113–	House	Senate	Date approved	No. 113–
To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to human drug compounding and drug supply chain security, and for other purposes.	H.R. 3204	Sept. 27, 2013	EC			.....	.....	.....	Sept. 28, 2013	Nov. 18, 2013	Nov. 27, 2013	54
To reduce preterm labor and delivery and the risk of pregnancy-related deaths and complications due to pregnancy, and to reduce infant mortality caused by prematurity, and for other purposes.	S. 252	Feb. 7, 2013	EC	HEL&P		Feb. 14, 2013	.....	0	Nov. 12, 2013	Sept. 25, 2013	Nov. 27, 2013	55
To extend authorities related to global HIV/AIDS and to promote oversight of United States programs.	S. 1545	Sept. 24, 2013		FR	.....	Oct. 2, 2013	.....	112	Nov. 19, 2013	Nov. 18, 2013	Dec. 2, 2013	56
To extend the Undetectable Firearms Act of 1988 for 10 years.	H.R. 3626	Dec. 2, 2013	Jud			.....	.....	.....	Dec. 3, 2013	Dec. 9, 2013	Dec. 9, 2013	57
To designate the United States courthouse located at 101 East Pecan Street in Sherman, Texas, as the "Paul Brown United States Courthouse".	H.R. 185	Jan. 4, 2013	TI		Sept. 27, 2013	.....	232	.....	Oct. 22, 2013	Dec. 17, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	58
To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law, and for other purposes.	H.R. 1402	Mar. 25, 2013	VA			.....	.....	.....	Dec. 10, 2013	Dec. 18, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	59
To designate the United States courthouse and Federal building located at 118 South Mill Street, in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, as the "Edward J. Devitt United States Courthouse and Federal Building".	H.R. 2251	June 4, 2013	TI	EPW	Sept. 27, 2013		234	.....	Sept. 28, 2013	Dec. 17, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	60
To amend title 28, United States Code, to modify the composition of the southern judicial district of Mississippi to improve judicial efficiency, and for other purposes.	H.R. 2871	July 31, 2013	Jud		Nov. 12, 2013	.....	258	.....	Nov. 12, 2013	Dec. 10, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	61
To extend the authority of the Supreme Court Police to protect court officials away from the Supreme Court grounds.	H.R. 2922	Aug. 1, 2013	Jud		Nov. 12, 2013	.....	259	.....	Nov. 12, 2013	Dec. 10, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	62
To treat payments by charitable organizations with respect to certain firefighters as exempt payments.	H.R. 3458	Nov. 12, 2013	WM			.....	.....	.....	Dec. 12, 2013	Dec. 13, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	63
To amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to exempt fire hydrants from the prohibition on the use of lead pipes, fittings, fixtures, solder, and flux.	H.R. 3588	Nov. 21, 2013	EC			.....	.....	.....	Dec. 2, 2013	Dec. 17, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	64
To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of the Army to reconsider decisions to inter or honor the memory of a person in a national cemetery, and for other purposes.	S. 1471	Aug. 1, 2013	VA AS	VA			.....	.....	Dec. 11, 2013	Nov. 18, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	65
To authorize and request the President to award the Medal of Honor to Bennie G. Adkins and Donald P. Sloat of the United States Army for acts of valor during the Vietnam Conflict and to authorize the award of the Medal of Honor to certain other veterans who were previously recommended for award of the Medal of Honor.	H.R. 3304	Oct. 22, 2013	AS	AS			.....	.....	Oct. 28, 2013	Nov. 19, 2013	Dec. 26, 2013	66
Making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.	H.J. Res. 59	Sept. 10, 2013	App Bud			.....	.....	.....	Sept. 20, 2013	Sept. 27, 2013	Dec. 26, 2013	67

To provide for the conveyance of certain property located in Anchorage, Alaska, from the United States to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.	H.R. 623	Feb. 12, 2013	NR EC	IA	Oct. 22, 2013		248	.....	Oct. 29, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	Dec. 26, 2013	68
To amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to modify the Pilot Project offices of the Federal Permit Streamlining Pilot Project.	H.R. 767	Feb. 15, 2013	NR	ENR	May 14, 2013		55	.....	May 15, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	Dec. 26, 2013	69
To clarify certain provisions of the Native American Veterans' Memorial Establishment Act of 1994.	H.R. 2319	June 11, 2013	NR		Dec. 11, 2013	.....	287	.....	Dec. 11, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	Dec. 26, 2013	70
To amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to clarify the rules regarding the determination of the compensation of the Chief Financial Officer of the District of Columbia.	H.R. 3343	Oct. 28, 2013	OGR		Nov. 15, 2013	.....	267	.....	Nov. 18, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	Dec. 26, 2013	71
To amend the Federal Election Campaign Act to extend through 2018 the authority of the Federal Election Commission to impose civil money penalties on the basis of a schedule of penalties established and published by the Commission, to expand such authority to certain other violations, and for other purposes.	H.R. 3487	Nov. 14, 2013	HA			.....	.....	.....	Nov. 18, 2013	Dec. 20, 2013	Dec. 26, 2013	72

TABLE OF COMMITTEE ABBREVIATIONS

AG .....Aging
Agr .....Agriculture
ANF .....Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
App .....Appropriations
AS .....Armed Services
BHUA ....Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Bud .....Budget
CST .....Commerce, Science and Transportation
E&W .....Education and the Workforce
EC .....Energy and Commerce
ENR .....Energy and Natural Resources
EPW .....Environment and Public Works
Eth .....Ethics
Fin .....Finance
FS .....Financial Services
FA .....Foreign Affairs
FR .....Foreign Relations
HEL&P ..Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
HS .....Homeland Security
HS&GA ..Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
HA .....House Administration
IA .....Indian Affairs
Int .....Intelligence
Jud .....Judiciary
NR .....Natural Resources
OGR .....Oversight and Government Reform
R .....Rules
RAdm ....Rules and Administration
SST .....Science, Space, and Technology
SB .....Small Business
SBE .....Small Business and Entrepreneurship
TI .....Transportation and Infrastructure
VA .....Veterans' Affairs
WM .....Ways and Means

Next Meeting of the SENATE

2 p.m., Monday, March 3

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 5 p.m.), Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of Debo P. Adegbile, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General, and vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Friday, February 28

House Chamber

Program for Friday: Consideration of H.R. 899—Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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