United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2014 *No. 16*

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 28, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DANIEL WEBSTER 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.

A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, as Yogi Bera once said, ''It's deja vu all over again.''

How many times can we have the same argument?

Forty-one years ago, the Supreme Court affirmed a woman's constitutional right to choose. Yet, four decades later, this Chamber will vote yet again to rob women of their right to control their own bodies.

Today, the Hyde amendment prohibits the use of taxpayer dollars to pay for abortion services. While I oppose this restriction, it is important to emphasize that this statute is already the law. It was passed in 1976. Yet the legislation we are considering today would take that restriction even further.

My friends on the other side of the aisle are no longer content with simply banning Federal funding for abortions. Now even private funding for this constitutional right is up for debate. A vote in favor of this bill will authorize for the first time penalties for private insurance companies that offer plans that cover abortion services. Let me say that again. This bill will allow the Federal Government to use tax policy to punish private companies that even offer coverage for abortion as part of their insurance plans.

And the penalties don't stop at insurance companies. This bill also goes after consumers, penalizing those who choose insurance plans in the Federal exchange that include coverage for abortion services by removing their eligibility for income-based subsidies.

Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy is staggering.

Every day on the floor, my colleagues lecture about their mission to keep the Federal Government out of the daily lives of the American people, but apparently those principles don't extend to a doctor's office or to the most private and intimate choices a woman can make about her own body. A woman who makes the choice to end her pregnancy should not have her motives questioned. It is a choice no one wants to make, but the unfortunate reality is that many people have to. If my colleagues are looking to end abortion, let's take actions that will actually reduce the number of abortions instead of making policies that embarrass and demonize women.

Here are a few suggestions:

Let's invest in family planning programs that help men and women have more control over when and how they start their families; let's support comprehensive sex education so that teenagers know how to be safe and prevent unintended pregnancies; let's make adoption easier for loving families so that no child is left spending his entire youth as a ward of the State.

Mr. Speaker, I know that many of us will never agree on the very personal and emotional issue of abortion, but instead of rehashing the same fights, let's focus on things we can agree on. Let's reconsider the definition of ''pro-life'' to include efforts that improve the quality of life for people in America. Being pro-life should mean supporting programs like Head Start and school lunches, which help our young people succeed. Being pro-life should mean supporting investments in job training programs to help people find well-paying jobs so they can provide for their families. Being pro-life should mean supporting a raise in the minimum wage so a single mother who is working 40 hours a week isn't living below the poverty line. Being pro-life should mean supporting SNAP benefits so that working families don't have to choose between feeding their children and paying their rent.

The list of things this Congress can do to support the lives of Americans whom we represent is endless. It is a shame we waste so much time having the same old arguments. I am afraid we have lost sight of what our constituents sent us here to do. Let's stop attacking women's health, and instead let's focus on making investments in our future that will help Americans realize their full potential and live the American Dream.

A QUIET LEGACY OF CONVICTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GOWDY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOWDY. Mr. Speaker, one of the most enjoyable parts of our job is speaking to children at schools, and you get some tough and interesting questions. A couple of months ago, a precious child at a school in upstate South Carolina asked me who was the most famous person I had ever met. That is a very good question, I told the child. I have met President Bush; I have met President Obama; I have met JOHN LEWIS; I have met PAUL RYAN; I have met Bono, the lead singer of U2; I have met McGruff, the Crime Dog—I have even met TIM SCOTT—but I told the child the most famous person I had ever met was his teacher, and we all smiled and laughed.

But it did get me thinking, Mr. Speaker, that we are surrounded by fame. We fly into an airport named for Reagan. We work in a town named for Washington. We pass monuments to Jefferson and Lincoln and Dr. King. The buildings we work in are named for famous people, and within those buildings are statues and portraits of still more famous people. We are surrounded by fame, Mr. Speaker, and it is easy to forget that, while those people made contributions to our country, the country was built, is being built, and will continue to be built by average, ordinary women and men who lead quiet lives of conviction and courage—average folks doing above average things, ordinary folks doing extraordinary things. That is the essence of who we are as a people, and while there may not be a monument or a portrait dedicated to those ordinary men and women, there is something even better, and it is called a legacy. So, in honor of those women and men, Mr. Speaker, who lead quiet lives of conviction, I want to honor a man who was just like them.

Bruce Cash was a pharmacist in my hometown of Spartanburg. He was buried last week—way too soon, in my opinion, but such are the ways of the Lord. He was a pharmacist, so we saw him when we were sick, and more importantly, we saw him when our children were sick. He was compassionate, and he was kind, and he acted like you were the only person he was taking care of that day. He was active in his church, doing everything from driving a bus on choir tour, to being chairman of the Board of Deacons, to taking his vacation time to chaperone other people's children while they went and sang to prisoners in prisons.

He was a devoted father and husband. He and his wife, Kitty, had six children and scores of grandchildren; and when you walked into his pharmacy, Mr. Speaker, you didn't see his business license, and you didn't see his pharmacy license—you saw a picture of his children. He wanted to quietly signal to you that that was the most important thing in his life.

I would tell you, Mr. Speaker, to look up Bruce Cash on the Internet, but you are not going to find much. In fact, he never even bothered to change the name of his pharmacy. He left on his pharmacy the name of the man who owned it before him.

He had the quality that best defined the Lord Jesus that he believed in, which is humility. He didn't want to talk about himself; he wanted to talk about you. He didn't want to tell you his opinion; he wanted to ask you your opinion. He didn't want to talk about his illness; he wanted to talk about your illness. He didn't want to talk about how life had dealt him an unplayable hand of cards; he wanted to talk about grace and hope and things that last beyond our lifetime.

In conclusion, Bruce was humble, and he believed it was more important to live a sermon than to preach one.

So I want to thank you, Bruce, for setting an example of average, ordinary people building this country, and the next time a child asks me who the most famous person is I have met, I will tell him it is you.

THE STATE OF OUR ECONOMIC UNION

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, this evening, from the dais behind me, President Obama will deliver his annual State of the Union message; and while there are hopeful signs and a brightening of the economic outlook for the country as a whole, the President will almost certainly concentrate on the battles ahead.

Even as America struggles to shake off the effects of the worst downturn since the Great Depression, our economy and our society are being challenged by a yawning inequality gap that affects tens of millions of American families and threatens to erode the underpinnings of our social contract.

Last fall, economists Emmanuel Saez and Thomas Piketty released an analysis of 2012 tax returns, and they found that the top 10 percent of American earners took more than half of the country's total income in 2012—the highest level ever recorded. The top 1 percent received more than 20 percent of the income earned by Americans, a level not seen since 1928, the year before the stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression. Top earners have also recovered more quickly over the last 3 years as their wages and investments have recouped value at a much brisker clip than those of the rest of Americans.

Inequality has also been a persistent political theme here and around the world, and it helped to launch the Occupy Wall Street movement. Last year, Pope Francis spoke out against what he termed an ''economy of exclusion'' while New York City's new mayor, Bill de Blasio, won the election by highlighting inequality there. President Obama, himself, made expanding opportunity a major theme in a speech in December, and he discussed the issue at length in his past two State of the Union addresses. I expect him to return to the theme tonight and in the coming months of the 113th Congress as we prepare to go to the polls in November.

There is a broadly held, national consensus that an overly high concentration of wealth spawns a host of economic social and political ills, but that agreement has not fostered a concerted strategy on expanding opportunity and closing the wealth gap. America has always rewarded hard work, and the possibility for a better life has been part of the attraction for generations of immigrants and others struggling to climb the economic ladder; but economic mobility, as a recent study from Harvard and Cal demonstrates, varies greatly within the United States, and while economic mobility has not changed significantly over time, it is consistently less prevalent in the United States than in most developed countries. We should never seek to punish success or to, as some describe it, soak the rich, but we must take steps to address the problem of growing inequality both in the short term and in the long term.

I believe there are three things that Congress and the President can do to give Americans and the middle class and those who aspire to join it the chance to move up:

First, we need to extend emergency unemployment assistance for those who are still looking for work and who cannot find a job on their own. The weekly litany of those who are losing benefits is disheartening, and we must not turn our backs on our fellow Americans;

Second, we need to raise the minimum wage nationwide, and it is shameful that it has been 5 years since the last increase. In fact, according to one study, the minimum wage today is actually worth $2 less than in 1968. Raising the minimum wage to just over $10, as I support, would push millions of hardworking Americans out of poverty and stimulate economic activity throughout the country;

These two steps can be part of a short-term solution that stops the bleeding, but real change requires giving American workers the education and training to compete domestically and internationally for the high-skilled, high-wage jobs that are the ticket to the middle class and beyond. Investing in education and building schools and curricula for the 21st century is a long-term project, but it is the one that has the greatest potential in terms of economic growth and increased opportunity while preserving the spirit of free enterprise and entrepreneurship that built this country.

Mr. Speaker, tonight the President will challenge us to join him in an effort to reinvigorate the American Dream for another generation. Let us join him in that sacred task.

THE DARRELL GWYNN FOUNDATION

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 recognize the Darrell Gwynn Foundation, a national organization that for almost 12 years has made its mission ''to provide support for people with paralysis and prevent spinal cord injuries.''

On Friday, May 9, this important foundation will be holding an event in my congressional district to assist in providing power wheelchairs to children and young adults with spinal cord injuries.

Darrell Gwynn, son of former NHRA drag racing world champion Jerry Gwynn, seemed destined to replicate his father's achievements when his life took a tragic turn at the young age of 28. While participating at a demonstration race in England, Darrell's car broke apart, then veered into a retaining wall at 240 miles an hour.

□ 1015

He sustained life-threatening injuries, but faith and determination allowed Darrell to survive this ordeal.

In response to his new circumstances, Darrell was motivated to help others who face similar challenges, and he founded the Darrell Gywnn Foundation. The Foundation's cornerstone, the Wheelchair Donation Program, provides the gift of mobility and independence to those living with paralysis.

Darrell's spirit and relentless efforts to offer support to people living with paralysis have earned him the respect and adulation of his colleagues. My good friend for many years—decades, actually—Angel Pardo, president of Spinal Cord Living-Assistance Development, said the following:

> Mr. Gwynn is passionate about his work, and works hard to help others. Despite being quadriplegic and a partial arm amputee, he often works 7 days a week.

Thank you, Angel.

Mr. Speaker, the work that Darrell Gwynn and Angel Pardo do every day on behalf of individuals afflicted by this condition is very important. There are an estimated 12,000 new cases of spinal cord injury and paralysis each year. Over 36 percent are a result of car accidents.

I know from the many personal stories from my constituents and friends just how devastating these injuries can be. The toll is often not exclusively physical. The emotional and financial tolls can be substantial, both on the victims and their families.

The provision of a power wheelchair can return confidence, freedom, and independence to a victim. This life-changing piece of equipment, however, comes at the considerable cost of approximately $25,000 a chair, and that is where the Darrell Gwynn Foundation comes in. They are committed to improving the victims' quality of life by providing each with a power wheelchair.

I encourage all members of our south Florida community to attend the Darrell Gwynn Foundation event on Friday, May 9, at Casa Larios Restaurant in Miami.

Congratulations, Darrell and Angel. May you continue to help so many afflicted individuals.

OPTIMISM

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of the optimism of this Nation and of her people. Frankly, we do live in the greatest Nation in the world. Sometimes we are questioned when we say that, but I say it proudly and with a spirit of humbleness. I know that because on faraway shores and lands there are men and women who wear the uniform proudly.

This morning, in our own House of Representatives, we held a reception for participants of the Wounded Warriors program. These individuals are in a number of Members' offices. Many of us look forward to that opportunity, and they continue to serve.

So I know as President Obama rises tonight to speak to the Nation, he will have a sense of optimism, which I will enjoy and support. He will note, however, that as we are optimistic, we must provide that optimism and economic opportunity for all of our brothers and sisters, citizens and persons, in the United States of America.

It is well known that we have made great strides. We no longer have the horrific mortgage collapse, though we are still working with homeowners. We don't have the debacle on Wall Street because, as Democrats, we worked hard to fix that problem, as Wall Street continues to thrive. Of course, we have taken ourselves out of the doldrums of a deep depression—or recession—in 2008 and 2009 with a powerful stimulus package which today, in Houston, Texas, has seen the retrofit of the Mickey Leland Federal Building. With $90 million, they put people to work fixing a building where citizens come for services.

That is the American way of investing, and not handouts, as has been described by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. When are we going to recognize that the investment in human resources is really the answer?

Thank you, Mr. President, for understanding that.

Theodore Roosevelt said:

> The man of great wealth owes a peculiar obligation to the State, because he derives special advantage from the mere existence of government.

That is true. Wealth inequality must be fixed, and it must be fixed now. In the U.S., income inequality has been rising steadily over the past four decades, reaching levels not seen since the late 1920s.

The President has signed an executive order, which I congratulate him on, understanding that you cannot live on less than $10 an hour. It needs to be more. That is investing in the American way. That is generating the jobs so that individuals can then spend their dollars and then more jobs are created.

So tonight I don't want there to be a retrenching. I don't want us to be overwhelmed with this myth of debt and deficit so much so that we cannot invest in the education of our children and we can't fix the horrible situation of individuals not having access to higher education.

Who in their right mind would continue to allow those who are chronically unemployed and need unemployment insurance to suffer, as they are doing? Who would allow four out of five beneficiaries who have at least one adult that they are taking care of, children that they are taking care of, or multiple adults, who would allow 50 percent of those who have a college education and 36 percent who have a high school education and are not able to get jobs, and not extend the unemployment benefits on an emergency basis? Who would allow the over 9 in 10 that live in households with a total income under $75,000 that need this extension of unemployment benefits so they can pay their rent or mortgage, who would allow such a crisis?

We are doing it right here, and we should be optimistic.

I have introduced legislation to extend unemployment for a whole year. It is an emergency. Then I introduced H.R. 3888, which indicates that those who are on unemployment benefits can get training to redirect their career with a stipend—their unemployment benefits do not cease—so that they can come back to what they want—the very stories that I listened to as I went to career recovery and resources fairs.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, I will be optimistic. I will be optimistic for Maggie, a 25-year-old Army veteran who has to get food stamps. She makes $10 an hour, 6 days a week, in order to save for paramedic training. She is the very example of someone that we can provide that training for so she can invest in the community, even though she tried nursing but did not have the money to finish. Or, maybe I can speak of Ms. Aguilar, who lives in my State of Texas, which refuses to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

Where is the optimism, Mr. Speaker?

So tonight, Mr. President, you do what is necessary for the optimism of this Nation. It is the greatest Nation in the world. We will stand with you as you invest in human resources, create jobs, provide unemployment extension, and raise the minimum wage to cure wealth inequality.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of an important week for my community, but also for our Nation as a whole.

This is the 40th annual Catholic Schools Week, and it is a time to recognize the importance of parochial education on the fabric of our community and our country. This year's theme truly encapsulates the critical mission of Catholic schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge, and Service. These are important things to teach our children.

Yesterday, I was happy to be able to stop by St. Mark's School in historic Bristol, Bucks County, and meet with schoolchildren there. St. Mark's School has been providing a top-rate education for Bucks County families for over 125 years, and, like all Catholic schools, their connection to their community is deep and vital.

Parents are involved at the school. They were there at the school when I arrived, running a book fair for the students. The teachers sacrifice greatly for the children, as do the families make sacrifices to send their children to St. Mark's and to other Catholic schools throughout our country.

As a Catholic school graduate, the husband of a Catholic school teacher, and a parent also, I understand how important it is to draw attention to the academic, the faith development, and the community service excellence performed year-round in Catholic schools.

Mr. Speaker, there are few things more important to a parent than the success of our children in and out of the classroom. One of the most important decisions a parent makes is the school that will educate their children.

National Catholic Schools Week is a time to recognize the importance of school choice for families looking to increase access to opportunity and the American Dream for future generations, and also to say thank you to the parishes and schools that serve our children this week and every week.

HONORING FALLEN TOLEDO FIREFIGHTERS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, tonight, the President will deliver his State of the Union address to the Nation. Our Nation is great because of the patriotism, strength, and self-sacrifice of our people.

In that spirit, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give honor to two fallen Toledo firefighters, Stephen Machcinski and James Dickman.

Mr. Machcinski is survived by his parents, sister, and brother. Mr. Dickman is survived by his wife, 3-year-old daughter, 1-month-old son, and parents.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of these brave men. These heroes responded to a two-story apartment building fire where people were reported inside. Toledo Mayor Michael Collins said it best:

> The average person would run in the opposite direction than they do, but that is their profession.

As we all go about our busy lives every day, we often fail to recognize that we likely owe our way of life to someone else because of their sacrifice. Firefighters, police officers, and other emergency and law enforcement personnel put their lives on the line for us every single day. We should all take a moment every now and then to say thank you to these extraordinary citizens.

Our hearts go out to the families who lost such brave and generous loved ones. May they be comforted with the knowledge that Stephen and James died in a noble profession founded to protect and serve our people and our Republic. They accomplished their mission for our city. We are forever indebted to them, and are flying flags over this Capitol today in their memory.

CALLING FOR AN END TO VIOLENCE IN UKRAINE

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want to reference as well this morning the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which reads:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Sixty-five years after the ratification of this most important document, police in Ukraine continue to brutally fend off protesters and journalists, who have been demonstrating for over 2 months in the bitter cold for their human rights and democratic freedoms. We know there have been countless injuries, and now, sadly, there have been five deaths.

Kiev, a beautiful and historic city, now resembles a war zone, covered with ash and burning fires. The situation in Ukraine grows more dire everyday, and we in Congress have the responsibility to stand with Ukraine's freedom marchers.

I call on our fellow Members to support the passage of H. Res. 447, which supports the democratic aspirations of the people of Ukraine and calls for condemnation of the regime's undemocratic practices. We implore President Yanukovych and the opposition leaders to advance the cause of freedom for all the people of Ukraine.

Last evening, Ukraine's parliament rightly repealed its early passage of the anti-free assembly laws, and its prime minister resigned. These are hopeful signs to calm the unrest.

As we gather this evening to learn about the state of our own Union, let us not forget the state of our trusted allies around the world. I ask President Obama to please draw attention to the economic and political crisis in Ukraine here tonight.

No more blood should be shed in Ukraine. The world community looks to Ukraine to live up to the magnificent nation she can be, linking East and West, North and South. Her potential is unlimited.

Ukraine's people, who have suffered so much, not just currently, but over the last century, are owed their most deserved day in the sun. History's clock is ticking. May God be with them.

□ 1030

MASSACHUSETTS SNAP RECIPIENTS WILL BE HARMED BY FARM BILL HEAT AND EAT CUTS

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will be voting on a 950-page-plus bill that no one has read. This is a bill, the farm bill, which was first made available to us late last evening.

To make matters even worse, Mr. Speaker, we are told that we will only have 1 hour of debate on this bill, and we are not even to have a rule on the bill. We are going to have a rule that incorporates the farm bill with an abortion bill. What they have to do with one another, I have no idea.

But it is clear what is going on here, and that is that the leadership of this House does not want anyone to know what is in that bill. One of the things that is in that bill, which I find reprehensible, is an $8.6 billion cut in the SNAP program.

The SNAP program exists to make sure that people in this country do not go hungry. On November 1, last November 1, a cut of $11 billion went into effect. The recovery moneys ran out. Congress did not renew them, so everybody on SNAP, all 47 million people, received a cut.

Food prices didn't go down. The economy hasn't gotten much better, but their food benefit went down. And their benefit is, on average, about $1.40 a meal per day. So those who think that this is some sort of generous benefit have no idea what they are talking about.

So we cut their benefit; and they are now ending up spending more time at food banks and food pantries, looking for ways to put food on their table so that their kids don't go hungry; and we bring a farm bill to the floor that cuts that program by another $8.6 billion.

Now, supporters of the farm bill say, well, really it could have been a lot worse. You should just be happy it is $8.6 billion. You should declare victory.

Well, those people who are going to be adversely impacted by that $8.6 billion cut don't feel a lot of victory.

Yes, it is targeted. It is targeted at those individuals who are on this so-called ''Heat and Eat'' program. These are poor people who get a little bump up in their benefit to put food on their table, mostly elderly people, mostly disabled people.

So we are going to go tell them that they are going to get significantly less

a month in a food benefit, but the good news for them is there will be some that won't be adversely impacted. They should take some satisfaction in that.

We talk about numbers all the time. We talk about statistics. Let me read to you a couple of real life examples.

William, an elderly man from Salem, Massachusetts, currently receives $181 a month in SNAP. He lives in senior housing, where heat and utilities are included, but the rent exceeds 35 percent of his $802 a month supplemental Social Security income.

His SNAP benefit of $181 a month is based on the Heat and Eat option. He incurs other health-related expenses not covered by Medicaid, but he has had significant difficulty producing the detailed verification required by the State.

His current SNAP would be significantly reduced by more than $80 a month if he lost this Heat and Eat option.

Pamela, a severely disabled woman from Northborough, Massachusetts, currently receives $115 a month as SNAP benefits. She gets $1,007 in monthly Social Security disability benefits. In addition to other medical conditions, she is a diabetic and requires a special diet to meet her daily nutritional needs.

While she lives in public housing, she must pay for her own appliances and maintenance fees, including her air conditioning unit, essential to her health. She does not have a car, but uses her limited income for private transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping and pharmacy trips, as she is not near any public transportation.

With the loss of the Heat and Eat SNAP option, her SNAP benefit will be reduced by $100 a month, so from $115 to the minimum of $15 a month, significantly impacting her ability to maintain her special diet.

Let me say to my colleagues here, the cut that went into effect last November will cost the average family of three about $30 a month in benefits. Those who will be impacted by the cuts of this Heat and Eat program will lose an additional $80 to $90 a month. So their reduction in their monthly benefit for food should be between $120 and $130 a month.

Where are they going to find the food?

Who is going to make up the difference?

My colleagues on the Republican side say, well, they can go beg to the States; the States ought to do more; or if the States say no, go to the churches or the synagogues or the mosques. Maybe they will do more.

The bottom line is, if any of my colleagues took the time to go back to their districts and visit their food banks, they would realize they are at capacity. Food banks can't give out any more.

So I would urge my colleagues, vote against this farm bill. Do not make hunger worse in America.

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, for the past 40 years, my work in this House has been guided by my firm belief that every child, regardless of his or her ZIP code, deserves access to a quality education that will prepare them for future success; and every parent deserves to know that their child's school is helping their son or daughter achieve his or her full potential.

That is why, under No Child Left Behind, we demanded the accountability include transparency on school performance. We share the collective responsibility, at all levels of government, to make good on the promise of high-quality education for all students. Unfortunately, we all know that not every school is living up to that promise.

When any school fails its students, it is our responsibility, not only to give those students a high-quality public school option, but to also improve the low-performing schools. It is simple: no child should be stuck in a failing school.

This week is National School Choice Week. Many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and their strategists have embraced the so-called ''school choice'' as a part of their rebranding effort to appear more caring.

Politico reported just last week that the Republican strategists have been counseling the Republicans that talking about helping poor minority children softens the Republican image. Talking about it, not doing something about it.

Conservative advocacy groups have declared in planning documents that it is an excellent media opportunity to focus on kids and the future. It is a media opportunity to focus on children, not to do something about it.

This new effort even has a warm and fuzzy name, the Growth and Opportunity Project. This is political posturing at its worst, and it does nothing to provide actual choice for our Nation's students.

The cornerstone of true school choice is the principle that every child has the right to attend a great school. Not only should the students have high-quality options, but we need to demand that low-performing schools improve, and support that improvement.

Without quality schools to pick from, families face an empty choice. Yet that is all the Republican majority has offered Americans so far.

Neither school choice nor quality of schools was on their agenda when they voted for the Republican rewrite of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. That bill abandoned our responsibility to ensure that every child has access to a high-quality education. It undercut Federal support for schools.

The majority leader pledged that Republicans remain vigilant in protecting and promoting school choice; yet their bill removed the school choice mechanisms that were already in current law. And their bill failed to require that schools in districts improve when they are failing to effectively educate students.

With the Republicans' Elementary and Secondary Education bill, along with sequestration, the majority turned its back on the Nation's most vulnerable students. They took money away from America's poorest schools, and they took money away from America's poorest students.

The very people that the majority's school choice media opportunity pretends to support are the same ones that are hurt by the majority's actual votes in this Chamber. Not a media conversation, not the posturing to appear to soften the image, but the actual votes taken in this Chamber harm the very children that they now say they want to support with this media opportunity to soften their image.

It was the Democratic Elementary and Secondary Education bill that held schools accountable for improvement and demanded that children be afforded new education opportunities when stuck in a failing school.

School choice should not be an empty promise. It should not be a political tag line that frees my colleagues from taking responsibility for our Nation's education system.

Mr. Speaker, if you want meaningful school choice, you must demand schools be held accountable for equitably serving all students, and you must provide the support that the schools need to provide that quality education.

Without that accountability for school quality, what choices would parents really have when their schools are failing?

An option between two low-performing schools? Not a good option.

An option between low-performing neighborhood schools and figuring out how to get your child across town to a different school, providing the transportation, and still hold down the job, that is not a fair option.

What we know, Mr. Speaker, is that if you ask parents all across America, they will tell you that their first choice in school choice is to have a neighborhood school that is high-performing; have a neighborhood school that meets the demands of that family and those children to get a first-class education; not to drive across town; not to spend time putting their kids in transit or putting their kids in harm's way trying to walk to that better school.

Fix the neighborhood schools; and if you don't, then provide that child the alternative to go to another school, as we did in current law, not as we do in the media release.

I challenge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to go beyond the rhetoric and posturing and sit down with me and others to make real, sustainable improvements in public education for all students.

Poor and minority kids are not a media opportunity. These are real children who deserve an equal shot at a bright future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MRS. ADELFA CALLEJO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mrs. Adelfa Callejo, a well-respected civil rights leader and attorney in Texas.

Mrs. Callejo was 90 years old when she passed last week. She developed into her role as an advocate for justice at an early age. As the oldest daughter of a father who did not speak English, Mrs. Callejo often had to serve as an intermediary in the defense of her family against intimidation from Federal immigration agents or unfair treatment in schools targeted at Mexican American immigrants.

As the first Hispanic woman to graduate from law school at Southern Methodist University, her background and education have not gone unnoticed. Mrs. Callejo emerged as a prominent civil rights attorney in Texas, battling questionable city council redistricting in the late 1980s, and staunchly opposing illegal immigration policies in Farmers Branch, among other prominent legal battles, that have helped to shape our State.

Mrs. Callejo was known best for her forceful advocacy and fiery personality. She overcame tremendous adversity as a female and as a Hispanic, although nothing would deter her from becoming a powerful financial and social force in Texas.

She once said: Only through education will we make the world a better place than we found it. She lived true to these words and worked with the Dallas Independent School District to ensure a better education was offered to a more diverse range of students; and for that, she was honored by a school being named for her in the Dallas Independent School District.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Callejo was an inspirational character who offered her talent and her resources to those who were less fortunate. While she had an incredible presence in Dallas, her reputation as ''the Godmother'' extended far beyond the city limits.

While her passing comes as a great loss to many, we may continue to look to her life for an inspiration. I am proud to call her my friend and supporter.

Mr. Speaker, we have lost a warrior.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, a gunman walked into a mall in Columbia, Maryland, and opened fire, killing two people before taking his own life. Prior to the mall shooting, we saw six school shootings take place nationwide in just 10 days.

Countless other Americans are terrorized each day on streets that have become shooting galleries where kids aren't safe to walk to school or go to the corner store or sit on their front porches. And yet we do nothing.

Time and time again, despite the headlines and the bloodshed and the pleas from the parents of the victims to act, Congress has failed to pass commonsense gun reforms that would save thousands of American lives, including background checks, which are supported by 90 percent of Americans.

□ 1045

Somehow, in the years between Columbine and Newtown, we have developed a collective indifference to the killings. After each shooting, we are in disbelief; but then we shrug and move on, dismissing the mass shootings as isolated incidents and ignoring the everyday shootings altogether.

Sadly, a callus has formed where our compassion should be. Or is it that the gun lobby's agenda has taken the place of our country's conscience?

I am at a loss because I truly do not understand how we can continue to ignore the public health epidemic that is gun violence in America. What will it take? How many more must die? How many parents must weep before we do the right thing?

Make no mistake, gun violence is robbing us of a generation. It is a slow-motion plague that is killing our kids one day at a time.

In the Chicagoland area, gun violence has claimed some of our best and our brightest, like 15-year-old Hadiya Pendleton, who was shot and killed a year ago this week while standing in a park with friends. You may remember, she was killed a week after performing for President Obama's inauguration.

She was certainly one of my district's shining stars. But she was, by far, not the only one. There were many Hadiyas, young people with promise and potential who were felled by gun violence. They had family and friends who loved them, communities who mourned them, and they are:

Eva Casara, 17; Tyrone Lawson, 17; Maurice Knowles, 16; Darnell Williams, 17; Abdullah Trull, 16; Leonard Anderson, 17; Jaleel Pearson, 18; Malcolm Whitney, 16; Fearro Denard, 18; Tyshon Anderson, 18; Tyrone Hart, 18; Ashaya Miller, 15; Equiel Velasquez, 17; Christopher Lattin, Jr., 15; Rey Donantas, 14; Victor Vegas, 15; Tyrone Lawson, 17; Antonio Fenner, 16; Frances Colon, 18; Jorge Valdez-Benitez, 18; Oscar Marquez, 17; Jonyla Watkins, 6 months; Arrell Monegan, 16; Victor Damian, 15; Clifton Barney, 17; Miguel Delaluz, 17; Leetema Daniels, 17; Fearro Denard, 18; Patrick Sykes, 15; Dionte Maxwell, 18; Miguel Villegas, 15; April McDaniel, 18; Fernando Mondragon, 18; Kevin Rivera, 16; Ricardo Herrera, 17; and Alexander Lagunas, 18.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here in honor of their memories, asking my colleagues to get serious about gun reform and to pass legislation to help them stem the tide of shootings in this country. I hope one day never to have to add another name to that list.

RECOGNIZING BART OFFICER TOMMY SMITH

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, there is no person more worthy of respect and tribute than he or she who lays down their own life while working to protect others. Today it is with great sadness that I wish to honor Bay Area Rapid Transit Sergeant Thomas Smith, whose end of watch came too early when he was tragically killed on January 21 of this year.

Sergeant Smith, known as Tommy to his family and friends, is from a law enforcement family that knows all too well the daily risks of wearing a badge and serving the community as a police officer. Sergeant Smith's wife, Kellie, also works as a police officer, as do his two brothers, Ed and Pat, and also his brother-in-law Todd. So aware were Sergeant Smith and his family of the personal danger they faced in their jobs that they had a rule of what they would say to each other whenever they would leave each other's company: Never say good-bye. You only tell each other, ''Be safe.''

But Sergeant Smith is not a hero because of how he died; he is a hero because of how he lived. On the job, Sergeant Smith worked honorably every day—not just the day that we lost him—to protect our community.

Sergeant Smith cared most about his family, and nothing else was even a close second, as his own lieutenant described earlier last week. Sergeant Smith took every opportunity to spend time with whom he called his ''girls''—his wife, Kellie, and their 6-year-old daughter, Summer.

May we always remember Sergeant Smith and how he lived so honorably for us. And may Sergeant Smith now watch over us from above, as he always did on Earth, to make sure that all of us can be safe.

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 10 o'clock and 50 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

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

Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

The people's House prepares to welcome the President of the United States this day, as well as the other governmental, judicial, and military leadership of our Nation. The world watches as America's great experiment in civilian self-government is in high relief.

May all who populate these hallways this day be possessed of goodwill and a shared commitment to guarantee the freedoms and responsibilities inspired by the soaring rhetoric and subsequent actions of our American ancestors.

May all that is said and done in this Chamber today redound to the benefit of our Nation and glory of Your holy name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HIGGINS 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 75. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1901. An act to authorize the President to extend the term of the nuclear energy agreement with the Republic of Korea until March 19, 2016.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

THIS IS AMERICA, NOT BURGER KING

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the State of the Union is tonight, but the President has already said that he would ignore Congress if he doesn't have his way. He is going to rule by pen and phone: the pen to write down laws and executive orders, bypassing Congress; the phone to call lower-level operatives I suppose, like the EPA, the IRS, NSA, and impose new rules and, thus, again, bypassing Congress.

Mr. Speaker, nowhere in the Constitution is the phrase ''executive order.'' It is not in this Constitution. This is not an imperial kingdom where the ruler makes his own rules as he goes along.

We all learned in ninth-grade civics that Congress makes the law, and the President can approve or disapprove it. It is in the Constitution.

Rather than rule by pen and phone, the President should be bound by the law and rule by the Constitution and by his oath, but the Constitution seems to be a mere suggestion to this administration.

Madam Speaker, this is America; it is not Burger King. The President cannot always have it his way.

And that's just the way it is.

THE SO-CALLED NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION ACT

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

Ms. CHU. Madam Speaker, H.R. 7, the so-called No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, is as deceitful as it is dangerous. We already ensure that tax dollars don't fund abortions and have ever since the Hyde Amendment was introduced in 1976.

This new effort is an attempt to create restrictions far beyond the scope of current law, interfering with how women use their own private dollars, on their own private insurance, for health coverage.

This is just the latest Republican assault in their ongoing war on women. It is why I felt it was so important to introduce the Women's Health Protection Act. My bill would put a stop to the unprecedented attack on abortion we have seen at the State level over the last few years. It would ensure that every woman has access to the medical care she is entitled to.

Decisions about pregnancies are deeply personal and difficult, and they belong to the woman and the doctor she trusts, period.

THE STATE OF OUR NATION'S FOREIGN POLICY

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

Mr. HOLDING. Madam Speaker, when the President delivers his State of the Union address tonight, it will be important to note what he won't say about the state of our Nation's foreign policy. This is because, on President Obama's watch, America has been notably absent from the world stage.

His foreign policy has taken America away from a role of global leadership to a shuffled retreat. Madam Speaker, successful foreign policy is defined by your friends trusting you and your enemies fearing you. Chances are the President will only touch momentarily on the Iranian nuclear deal tonight and for good reason. It has gathered strong bipartisan opposition, and the regime in Tehran has flaunted the deal as a legitimization of their shadowy nuclear program.

Madam Speaker, those who seek freedom and democracy look now more than ever to America for leadership. Chances are you won't hear much about that from the President tonight.

ROBERT MOSES PARKWAY FUNDING

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, today the New York Power Authority took an important step toward righting a historic wrong by providing funding to remove the Robert Moses Parkway in Niagara Falls. Niagara Falls is a national treasure, drawing millions of visitors each year.

However, with the construction of the Robert Moses Parkway in the 1960s, the New York Power Authority created both economic and physical barriers to Niagara Falls in arguably the greatest waterfront in the world.

For Niagara Falls, it is not about tearing something down; it is about building something up. Removal of the parkway is a critical step in giving this city the waterfront it deserves and unleashing the limitless economic potential that comes with it.

The New York Power Authority did the right thing, and the future of Niagara Falls will be better because of it.

STATE OF THE UNION PREVIEW

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, this evening, I am glad to hear the President will deliver the State of the Union address focused on optimism.

Optimism requires he changes his disastrous policies destroying jobs, as revealed by the record number of food stamp recipients. Each higher food stamp report uncovers job destruction. Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin has proven jobs are created by citizens keeping their own money. It is not the government's money. Dangerous deficits are unsustainable.

The President needs to repeal and replace the ObamaCare train wreck which destroys jobs. He should uncover the tragedy of the Benghazi murders and promote peace through strength to prevent further attacks. Reducing the military threatens American families with expanded terrorist safe havens. The IRS targeting of citizens should really be investigated. The NSA should be restricted and not spy on all Americans. The Department of Justice and FBI eavesdropping on media should be stopped, with reprimands for malfeasance.

The President can restore optimism if he and his advisers change course. Americans have seen the overreach of Big Government. Now we should work together for limited government and expanded freedom.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

WORKING FOR ALL OF AMERICA

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, the President is going to address this House and this country with great enthusiasm about the work that he has done with his Cabinet, Democratic Members of Congress, and others who have worked with him to make America better.

He will able to report that 3 million Americans have enrolled in the Affordable Care Act, giving suffering Americans with preexisting conditions the opportunity for good health care. He will able to acknowledge that people like Mrs. Aguilar would be better off if States like Texas would have expanded the Medicare coverage. Her children are covered, but she is not. We are committed to working to make sure that that happens.

He will be able to say that he stands on the side of extending the unemployment for working Americans—those who have worked and now are unemployed, and yes, he will be able to say that it is important that we invest in the infrastructure.

It is important to note that America is great, as we watch our soldiers in foreign lands wearing the uniform with pride.

We must invest in the American people. Food stamps, which are now given mostly to working Americans, are an investment, and the President can be optimistic and work for all of America.

NO TAXPAYER FUNDS FOR ABORTION

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, last week, amid frigid temperatures, hundreds of thousands of Americans marched in our Nation's Capital in support of the unborn and the value of life. Today, it is our turn.

It is our turn to stand for life by supporting H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act. This bill would ban the use of taxpayer dollars to fund abortions once and for all. The last thing pro-life taxpayers should be required to do is subsidize unethical practices. It is their money, and you better believe I will fight for them to have a say in how it is spent.

Enough is enough.

Madam Speaker, today, this isn't just what Republicans want. According to multiple polls, the majority of Americans oppose the use of Federal funding for abortions. This is what the American people want, and it is time folks in Washington listened. Remember, we work for them.

Let's stand for life. It is the right and just thing to do.

UKRAINE

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, today, Ukraine faces a pivotal moment in its history. The Ukrainian people are making their demand for freedom and economic growth loud and clear, protesting President Yanukovych's refusal to sign accords with the European Union. Ukrainian police forces have met protesters with intimidation, and the escalating violence has resulted in the death of protesters. The use of excessive force to silence peaceful voices undermines the country's democratic future.

The United States and Ukraine share an ideal of democracy in which citizens may live free of oppression and may elect their own leaders. When those leaders break their promises, it is even more important that citizens can freely express their discontent.

We all must closely watch the negotiations between the current administration and the opposition. The United States should continue to stand with the Ukrainian people in their desire for economic growth and a free republic.

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

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

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, let me begin by reminding the House that the gentleman that spoke before me on this side of the aisle, Mr. SAM JOHNSON from Texas, is a real American hero, and let us not forget that.

This week is recognized as National School Choice Week, a week dedicated to bringing awareness to a very simple idea: let's put parents in charge of their children's education.

School choice means giving every child the opportunity to learn at the place that best meets their needs, not one they are relegated to because of where they may live or what district they are assigned to.

For decades now, where our children learn has been decided by arbitrary government rules that could never understand the needs of each individual child or family. When kids fail to make the grade, the solution has been to throw more money and government regulation into the mix, but the end results cannot be clearer.

This top-down, government-knows-best system has failed to serve the very people it seeks to help, and support from parents and teachers for initiatives like Common Core continues to crumble.

Be it a charter school, private school, home school, or local public school, the fact of the matter is parents know what works best for their child, not Washington. We owe it to our children to help them reach their full potential.

I strongly believe that every child, regardless of background or school district, should have the opportunity to learn at the school that best meets their needs. Let's work together for a brighter future for our children.

□ 1215

EVERYONE WHO WORKS HARD AND PLAYS BY THE RULES DESERVES A CHANCE AT SUCCESS

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

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, tonight, the President will address a key American principle, that everyone who works hard and plays by the rules deserves a chance at success. We certainly expect our kids to work hard in school and play by the rules in hopes that they will have strong futures that include a shot at the American Dream.

No matter what side of the aisle we are on, we can all agree that what we want is the best for our kids and, in some cases, our grandkids. But what kind of future are we giving them if they have to start behind kids in other countries where access to pre-K is widespread?

Kids who are part of a quality pre-K program are more likely to graduate high school, to earn higher pay, and live more productive lives.

In looking for common ground, we should learn from the recent spending deal which showed bipartisan support for boosting early education. Let's not let tonight be a wasted opportunity to give our kids the strong start that they desire.

FEDERAL REGULATION

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

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Speaker, I would like to call attention to recent remarks made by Department of the Interior Secretary Sally Jewell. Regarding document requests submitted by the Natural Resources Committee, the Secretary gave excuses as to why it was inconvenient for her agency to comply with these requests and allow Congress to fulfill its duty in providing oversight to Federal agencies.

I serve on the Natural Resources Committee, and the document requests submitted concerned Federal regulations burdening this Nation. The Secretary noted that going through these documents was a waste of time and money for her agency.

Yet Congress is charged with keeping an agency like the Department of the Interior accountable because we are all, in turn, held accountable to the American taxpayer. We want answers to these regulation questions.

A battle is being waged in our country between an increasingly overbearing government and an increasingly burdened country of entrepreneurs. The struggle between regulation and innovation has tied the hands of many job creators.

The Federal Government must stop putting people out of business through regulation and help get our country back to work.

NO TAXPAYER FUNDS FOR ABORTION ACT

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Madam Speaker, instead of talking about jobs, or the economy, or the unemployed who have lost their benefits because of our inaction, we are here talking about legislation that strips women of their fundamental right to make their own medical decisions.

If H.R. 7 passes, millions of women who work for small businesses, or who will be buying insurance on the exchanges, will lose access to comprehensive health care.

H.R. 7 is a radical bill that places restrictions on how women can spend their private dollars to purchase their private insurance. It would also make the Hyde amendment permanent, which will cause detrimental and devastating effects to all women, especially low-income women.

We must stand by women and vote ''no'' on H.R. 7.

THE CONGRESSIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE CAUCUS

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

Mr. MESSER. Madam Speaker, no child in America should be forced to go to a school where they won't have a meaningful chance to learn. That is why school choice matters.

School choice is about the freedom of parents to choose the best educational environment for their child to succeed. For some, that means open enrollment. For others, that means a public charter school. Some may prefer a magnet school or a private school or even a virtual school. Others may want to home school their children.

Whatever the choice, National School Choice Week is about celebrating those choices and recognizing that applying market-based principles and technology to education can enhance student achievement and lead to better results.

That is why I am creating the Congressional School Choice Caucus, which will be dedicated to expanding educational freedom and promoting policies that increase high-quality education options for all children.

I urge my colleagues to join us and empower parents with a choice so their kids have a chance for success.

AN UNPRECEDENTED ASSAULT ON WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, today, this House will consider H.R. 7, which is an unprecedented assault on women's health care.

This law would mean that millions of American women who would like to purchase their health insurance with their own money cannot purchase comprehensive health insurance, insurance which is their legal right because this House of Representatives and, Madam Speaker, I would note, a House of Representatives, particularly on the majority side, that is dominated by men, tell them they cannot do so.

What is even more cynical, however, is that those who are promoting this and have said this know that it will not become law. It is a messaging bill.

It is intended to send a message to whom?

And just what is that message?

So while we are debating that, the House is not taking up unemployment insurance extension, which is not a messaging bill. It is heat in the home, it is keeping the lights on, it is paying the mortgage, it is putting food on the table for the children of the people in those homes.

That is not a messaging bill. That is the work that we were sent here to do.

GROWING CONCERNS ABOUT THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

(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. Madam Speaker, when we needed bipartisan action to lower costs and improve health care, Congress passed the Affordable Care Act on a party-line vote.

Given the growing number of failures that have been revealed since the law's implementation began, it is time for Congress to work together to address the unworkable provisions for the good of the American people.

Fortunately, opposition to the ACA's flawed policy is moving beyond party labels. Last year, the Democratic-led Senate voted 79–20 to repeal the law's medical device tax. Since then, more and more Members of Congress recognize there are bigger problems.

Earlier in January, despite the Obama administration's vocal opposition to the efforts to boost consumer protections under the law, a veto-proof majority of Republicans and Democrats in the House voted to pass H.R. 3811, which would help secure personal information on the online exchanges.

Madam Speaker, the American people deserve bipartisan solutions.

NO TAXPAYER FUNDS FOR ABORTION ACT

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

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, here we go again. Instead of working with President Obama and Democrats to create jobs, economic opportunities, and fight poverty, extreme Tea Party Republicans are at it again, attacking women's health care and reproductive rights. Yes, it is another battle in the war on women.

Instead of working together to extend unemployment benefits, here we are today debating another dangerous and divisive attempt to strip away the rights of women.

Madam Speaker, Congress currently imposes unfair limitations on insurance coverage of abortion and, through the Hyde amendment, that is a fact, even though I personally think we should get rid of all these restrictions.

Yet this bill, H.R. 7, creates an unprecedented interference in the lives of women and their families by restricting coverage for women's health in private insurance plans.

It specifically attacks low-income women in the District of Columbia by permanently, mind you, permanently prohibiting the District from spending

its purely local funds on abortions for low-income women.

How many of you would want the Federal Government to restrict your funding in your local districts for any health care benefits for women?

It codifies the harmful Helms amendment. Enough is enough.

NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION ACT

(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. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank Messrs. SMITH and LIPINSKI for introducing H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, a crucial bill that will help us save so many innocent lives. As pro-life Members of Congress, we have a commitment to fight on behalf of those who have no voice and to take the necessary steps to advance legislation on the floor.

The vast majority of Americans do not want their tax dollars to be used to pay for abortions. This bill would establish a permanent prohibition on taxpayer subsidies for abortions.

For many years, the Hyde amendment and other Federal prohibitions on public funding for abortion have been enacted as appropriation riders, but they are not permanent. We need to get rid of this patchwork approach and enact H.R. 7 to ensure that Federal funds are not used to pay for abortions.

I will continue to work with like-minded Members of Congress to promote H.R. 7 and all pro-life legislation because I understand that we have a responsibility to protect the innocent unborn.

ASSAULT ON WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE

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

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Madam Speaker, I found her. Forty years ago I found my friend, Flora, bleeding, near death. She was a victim of an illegal abortion, forced to turn to a back-alley practitioner. She survived, but many like her did not.

Today, my Republican colleagues are, once again, trying to take us back to those days with a new, radical bill to deny our mothers, our daughters, our sisters the right to obtain a safe and legal abortion.

I have a better idea. Madam Speaker, let's pass the Women's Health Protection Act that will allow all women, no matter where they live in this country, access to the tools and information that they need to make their own private health care decisions.

Madam Speaker, we cannot—we will not—go back.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF DAVIE COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF CHRISTOPHER FLEMING

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

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize Davie County Deputy Sheriff Christopher Fleming, injured last week while attempting to apprehend a violent suspected home invader.

When deputies initially attempted to arrest the suspect, he fled to a nearby home and held two juveniles hostage at gunpoint for over an hour. After the hostages were released, Deputy Fleming, along with three other members of the sheriff's office, entered the home in order to apprehend the suspect.

The suspect opened fire, hitting Deputy Fleming in the shoulder. Deputy Fleming's canine partner, Gorky, a Russian shepherd and 5-year veteran of the force, was also shot in the incident and died last Thursday.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to report the suspect is in custody, and Deputy Fleming is in good condition and expected to make a full recovery.

This incident is a reminder of the risks taken by those who work to keep our communities safe. We must not take their sacrifices for granted.

PROTECTING ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

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

Ms. KUSTER. Madam Speaker, today, the House will, once again, vote to restrict access to our reproductive health care. H.R. 7 would callously deny coverage to comprehensive health care for millions of women across America.

When women are denied the freedom to make their own personal health care decisions, their economic opportunities are diminished as well. Instead of denying tax credits to women and small businesses seeking affordable health coverage, Congress needs to work together to empower women and increase opportunity.

We should start by passing the Paycheck Fairness Act so every woman deserves and receives equal pay for equal work. This week marks the fifth anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act being signed into law. Enactment of this law was a landmark achievement in the fight against gender discrimination, but there is so much work to do.

Madam Speaker, Congress needs to get to work for women, not against women.

□ 1230

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION STATISTICS

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

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Tonight, President Obama will give another speech on the state of the American Union, and here are a few facts you likely won't hear him report to the American people. After 1,834 days as President, here are the results:

6.5 million more Americans in poverty; $6.6 trillion in massive new debt on our children and grandchildren; 13 million more Americans on food stamps; 5 million Americans and counting have lost their health insurance because of ObamaCare; and 24.2 million Americans are still looking for a full-time job in the Obama economy.

Mr. President, I can only hope that you will recognize and that you honestly will admit and that tonight you will apologize for the damage your policies have inflicted on our Nation, on the American people, and on the American Dream.

WOMEN SHOULD MAKE THEIR OWN HEALTH CARE DECISIONS

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

Mr. BARBER. Madam Speaker, as the husband of an incredible woman who has guided and advised me for 46 years and the father of two strong and accomplished young women and the grandfather of three granddaughters, I stand with all women today.

I stand in support of every woman's right to be able to choose what is best for her and her family. And I stand ready to protect and preserve the ability of every woman to make her own health care decisions with her doctor and without the interference of politicians in Washington. And I stand in opposition to H.R. 7, which would restrict the rights of women and their access to care.

I urge my colleagues, every one, to stand with me.

A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

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

Ms. TITUS. Like those who have spoken so eloquently before me, I stand in strong opposition to H.R. 7. This legislation would drastically undermine a woman's constitutional right to choose and could effectively eliminate access to safe, legal reproductive care for low-income women across the country. It would also hurt our small businesses by raising taxes on those who offer their employees comprehensive health insurance.

Republicans have repeatedly demonstrated a lack of understanding about basic women's health care, and this bill is just one more example of their continuing attack on women's rights.

H.R. 7 is a step backward. It is nothing more than a distraction from the critical work we should be doing to

pass immigration reform, strengthen our economy, and create jobs. We apparently have no time to vote on unemployment benefits for our neighbors but plenty of time to take away a woman's right to choose.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this harmful and unconstitutional legislation.

UNEMPLOYMENT

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

Ms. HANABUSA. Madam Speaker, many who are unemployed through no fault of their own remember December 28. That was when the unemployment insurance was not extended and Congress failed them. 1.3 million Americans were without any support as of that day. In 6 months, that number will grow to 1.9 million—72,000 a week, or one person every 8 seconds.

The real problem that we face is really the lack of job opportunities. Madam Speaker, we must bring the President's proposal for job creation to the floor. Remember, you have to be actively seeking work before you can receive unemployment insurance. Do you see the problem? There are no efforts to create jobs, and there is no bill there to protect those who are unemployed through no fault of their own.

This is the highest long-term unemployment this country has seen since World War II. People need government to recognize this problem, and we have failed. We need to go back and know why unemployment insurance was created in the first place. We need to be that compassionate country again.

NO TAXPAYER FUNDING OF ABORTION ACT

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, for years, the other side of the aisle has been trying to get between a woman and her doctor. Now they are trying to come between a woman and her health insurance company. They want to open a new front in the war on women, and this one cruelly focuses on poor women.

The law of the land is already clear: no Federal funding for abortions. But with H.R. 7, which will be on the floor today, even private insurance plans could be restricted from covering abortion if you get a government subsidy. So if you are a low-income woman who needs help affording health care insurance, this bill is aimed squarely at you.

Rather than tackling the real the problems of economic growth and job creation, the other side of the aisle seems obsessed with curbing a woman's reproductive rights. They may not want to call this a war on women, but I would point out to my colleagues that women—and only women—are the casualties of this multifaceted assault on a woman's right to choose and reproductive rights.

40TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

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

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, as a proud graduate of St. Symphorosa Grammar School and St. Ignatius College Prep, and as a strong supporter of Catholic education, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions Catholic schools have made to our Nation.

Next week is the 40th annual National Catholic Schools Week, and I have introduced H. Res. 461, along with the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), to honor the work done by parents, teachers, administrators, and parishioners for the more than 2 million children at over 6,600 Catholic schools in America. This year's theme, ''Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge, and Service,'' highlights the values that are the centerpiece of a Catholic school education.

Later on this week, I will be visiting several schools, including St. Rene in Chicago, St. Francis Xavier in La Grange, the SS. Cyril and Methodius in Lemont, and St. Catherine's of Alexandria in Oak Lawn.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Catholic schools across our Nation for the outstanding education they provide to so many Americans.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 7, NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION AND ABORTION INSURANCE FULL DISCLOSURE ACT OF 2014, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2642, FEDERAL AGRICULTURE REFORM AND RISK MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2013

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 465 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 465

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 7) to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113-33 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary, the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means, and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2642) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the conference report to its adoption without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate; and (2) one motion to recommit if applicable.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I raise a point of order against House Resolution 465 because the resolution violates section 426(a) of the Congressional Budget Act. The resolution—in waiving all points of order against consideration of both H.R. 7, the anti-abortion bill, and the conference report on H.R. 2642, the farm bill—waives section 425 of the Congressional Budget Act, thereby causing a violation of section 426(a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BLACK). The gentleman from Massachusetts makes a point of order that the resolution violates section 426(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The gentleman has met the threshold burden under the rule, and the gentleman from Massachusetts and a Member opposed each will control 10 minutes of debate on the question of consideration. Following debate, the Chair will put the question of consideration as the statutory means of disposing of the point of order.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, first of all, let me just say that it is outrageous, absolutely outrageous, that the Republican leadership has combined a major piece of antiabortion legislation with the farm bill conference report into one single rule, restricting our ability to debate both of these important issues.

There is an $8.6 billion cut to SNAP in this conference report, a cut that will only affect poor families, primarily the elderly and the disabled. Besides being cruel and heartless, this cut is also an unfunded mandate. If States, cities, or towns want to prevent hunger from getting worse, they will have to spend more money out of their own budgets.

Now, I know my Republican friends are in a big hurry to go off to their issues retreat at some luxurious resort, but maybe we could have found another hour somewhere.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to serve on the Agriculture Committee. I was honored to serve on the conference committee for the farm bill. I want to thank Chairman LUCAS and Ranking

Member PETERSON and all of my colleagues for their hard work.

I want a farm bill. I want to support the farm bill conference. But from the beginning of this process, I made my position very clear that I will not vote for a farm bill that makes hunger worse in America. And this farm bill fails that basic test. If this bill passes, hundreds of thousands of vulnerable Americans will have less to eat, period.

Now, some people will say, well, an $8 billion cut in SNAP is better than what the House Republicans wanted to do. That is a strange argument, Madam Speaker. It is like saying thank goodness the burglar only took the silver, because he could have taken the jewelry, too.

The fact of the matter is that any cut to SNAP will be piled on top of the cut that already went into effect last fall. And any cut to SNAP will result in more Americans going hungry. And any cut in SNAP will increase the financial burdens on State and local governments.

There are those, Madam Speaker, who claim that the Heat and Eat program is some sort of a loophole. It isn't. It is a policy decision. It is a way for States to help some of our neighbors who are struggling through very difficult times. But even if this is a loophole, I ask my friends, of all the loopholes in Federal law, of all of the special interest giveaways, this is the one you are going to target? This is the one that is in your crosshairs, a program that helps poor people get enough food to eat? My goodness.

There are those who say that States and local governments or food banks or food pantries should pick up the slack. Have any of those people actually ever been to a food bank? Have they ever talked to a director of a food pantry? Because they are already at capacity, Madam Speaker. They can't meet the needs of the clients that they already have.

My Republican friends have made their priorities very clear. They want to dismantle the social safety net. They want to get the Federal Government out of the business of helping people get enough to eat.

But I also want to say that I am disappointed, Madam Speaker, in the people in my own party, here in the Congress and in the White House, who are going along with this.

Tonight, the President of the United States will stand in this Chamber and deliver the State of the Union; and when he talks about income inequality and helping people get into the middle class, all of us Democrats—and I hope some Republicans—will stand up and cheer. But before that happens, we have an opportunity to put our votes where our cheers are; we have a chance to match our actions with our rhetoric. And the way to do that is to vote ''no'' on this conference report.

□ 1245

So I say to my fellow Democrats, if cutting SNAP or other programs that help poor people is the price of admission to get anything done, any piece of major legislation passed, then we have strayed very, very far from our principles. Madam Speaker, again, I want to remind my colleagues that this is an unfunded mandate because there will be an increased burden on States, cities and towns to deal with this issue of hunger.

By the way, Madam Speaker, when people are hungry, when kids are hungry, they don't learn in school. When people are hungry, they end up going to the emergency room more often. When children are hungry, when they get a common cold, they end up staying in the hospital for a period of time. That all costs us a great deal in terms of not only Federal money but State and local money. So, in my opinion, this is an unfunded mandate, and this is a burden on the States.

Madam Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 5½ minutes remaining.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield the remaining time to the gentlelady from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts, and I thank him for his dedication and his passion on this issue that people in the United States of America should not go hungry.

I rise in support of my colleague's point of order. This farm bill contains cuts to the food stamp program that will transfer the responsibility to States and cities to provide food to their families. May I remind the Members of this body that food stamps—our Nation's most important anti-hunger program—was just cut 2 months ago in November—in November.

Because of the recent expiration of the Recovery Act provisions, food stamps have already been cut by $5 billion for next year and $11 billion is the cut over 3 years. What does it mean? It means that a family of four lost $36—or 16 meals—a month in support. That is already the difference between health and hunger.

Now the savage cuts in this farm bill would push Americans already living on the edge that much closer to the brink. Because of the $8.5 billion in cuts here, 850,000 households—translates into 1.7 million Americans—will lose an average of $90 a month or 66 more meals a month. Low-income seniors, working poor with families, individuals with disabilities and veterans would be particularly impacted by these cruel cuts.

Perhaps some Members have forgotten. That is because we eat well. That is because we eat well every day. Members have forgotten hunger is an abomination. We are talking about men and women experiencing real physical trauma, children who cannot concentrate in school because all they can think about is food, and seniors are forced to decide in what has been a polar vortex, a virulent winter season, whether or not they will go hungry or be cold.

This is a problem all across the land. In my Connecticut district, nearly one in seven households are not sure they can afford enough food to feed their families. In Mississippi, 24.5 percent suffer food hardship. In West Virginia and Kentucky, 22 percent. In Ohio, nearly 20 percent, and in California, just over 19 percent.

The continued existence of hunger in America is a disgrace. That is why in the past there has been a strong tradition of bipartisanship on fighting hunger and supporting nutrition. This farm bill flies in the face of that tradition. It takes food from the poor to pay for crop subsidies for the rich.

Food stamps have one of the lowest error rates of any government program. It is a powerful and positive impact on economic growth because they get resources into the hands of families who are going to spend them right away. The research shows that for every $5 of Federal food stamp benefits, it generates nearly twice that in economic activity.

Children's Health Watch, those researchers found that after collecting 14 years of data on over 20,000 low-income families that when families experienced a loss or reduction in food stamp benefits, they are more likely to be food insecure, to be in poor health, and their children experience intensified developmental delays relative to their peers.

Most importantly, food stamps are the right thing to do. It is the job of a good government to help vulnerable families to get back on their feet, and cutting food stamps will cause more hunger and health problems for Americans. In the words of Harry Truman:

> Nothing is more important in our national life than the welfare of our children, and proper nourishment comes first in attaining this welfare.

This bill—this bill—flies in the face of that. It will cut $8.5 billion. You couple that with the cuts that have already been made in the economic recovery program, and that is almost $20 billion in a cut to the food stamp program. Some of my colleagues will say, well, we only did 8½ billion in the farm bill. Let me just tell you: it may come from two sources, but the constituency is the same.

Who are we as a nation? Where are our values? If we can provide crop subsidies for the richest farmers in this Nation and tell them that they can make $900,000 a year before they will not be able to get a subsidy, or 26 individuals who get a premium subsidy for crop insurance of at least $1 million a year—those folks are eating, they are high on the hog, they got three squares a day. When we provide $1.40—it is $1.40 per meal for food stamp beneficiaries—the people at the top end don't have an income cap. They don't have any asset test, and that is not true for food stamp recipients. We prescribe who can

receive them. There are income limitations and asset limitations. Who are we as a nation? What are we about? Let's not take food out of the mouths of families and their children.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I claim time in opposition to the point of order and in favor of consideration of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from North Carolina is recognized for 10 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, the question before the House is should the House now consider H. Res. 465. This point of order, Madam Speaker, is a dilatory tactic. I will remind the gentleman that each bill under this rule will be separately considered and debatable on the House floor.

Madam Speaker, in order to allow the House to continue its scheduled business for the day, I urge Members to vote ''yes'' on the question of consideration of the resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

The question is, Will the House now consider the resolution?

The question of consideration was decided in the affirmative.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I raise a point of order against House Resolution 465 under clause 9(c) of rule XXI because the resolution contains a waiver of all points of order against H.R. 7, the abortion bill, and the conference report on H.R. 2642, the farm bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts makes a point of order that the resolution violates clause 9(c) of rule XXI.

Under clause 9(c) of rule XXI, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) and a Member opposed each will control 10 minutes of debate on the question of consideration.

Following that debate, the Chair will put the question of consideration as follows: ''Will the House now consider the resolution?''

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, the conference report on the farm bill was made public at around 7:30 last night. With nearly 1,000 pages dumped on us at the last minute, we know that no one has had a chance to read the entire thing. I'm a conferee, and even I had an extra few hours to try to digest this monstrosity of a bill, but who knows what is in this bill? That is why I'm raising this earmarks point of order.

As I said earlier, Madam Speaker, one of the things that is most troubling to me and a number of my colleagues, again, is this attack on poor people and is this attack on SNAP, a program that does nothing more than provide food to people.

Madam Speaker, I would like to include for the RECORD a letter that was addressed to Congress from the mayors of Baton Rouge, Boston, Dallas, the District of Columbia, Gary, Hartford, Ithaca, Los Angeles, Madison, Memphis, New York, Providence, Raleigh, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle and Tucson urging us in both the House and the Senate to reject these SNAP cuts. These mayors have made it very clear that it would have an adverse impact on the people that they represent. They have stressed in this letter the importance of SNAP to help people to be able to put food on the table for their children.

I also would like to reference a statement from the Food Research and Action Center, otherwise known as FRAC. They are urging us to vote against this conference committee report if these SNAP cuts remain in the bill. They have said that SNAP is essential to the nutrition, the health and the well-being of 47 million Americans each month, but every participant suffered a significant cut in benefits beginning last November 1.

As the gentlelady from Connecticut made mention of, on November 1, an $11 billion cut in SNAP went into effect. All 47 million beneficiaries received a cut. Food prices didn't go down, but their benefit went down, and now we are going to pile on. There are some who say, well, it doesn't affect all 47 million. It is only going to be about 1 million or so people that will be adversely impacted, but those people that will be adversely impacted stand a great deal to lose. The November 1 cut for the average family of three resulted in a $31 a month benefit cut. You add this on top of it, and it is another $80 to $90. So that family of three will receive about $120 to $130 less per month.

What are they going to do? Even before these cuts went into effect, they were going to food banks, they were going to charities looking for help because their benefit was so meager to begin with. What are they supposed to do? I think in this House of Representatives, I don't care what your political party or ideology is, it should never, ever, ever be acceptable that anybody in this country—the United States of America, the richest country in the history of the world—should go hungry.

The fact that we are moving forward with the farm bill—a deal that contains this $8.6 billion in cuts—I think is outrageous. I'm all for a deal. I want a farm bill. I'm willing to swallow a lot of things in this bill that I don't like, but the price of doing that should not be to increase hunger and poverty in this country, and that is what this bill does.

We talk about deals. Behind these deals are real people. They are our neighbors. They are in every community. There is not a congressional district in our country that is hunger free. These people are everywhere. We have an obligation to not turn our backs on them. SNAP is one of the most efficiently run Federal programs with one of the lowest error rates.

This is important. SNAP in and of itself is not going to solve the problem of hunger or poverty. The bottom line is by cutting it the way we are doing, we are making things worse for people. I stood on the floor today, and I read the descriptions of individuals in Massachusetts who, if this farm bill passes, will see a significant cut in their benefit, and their question to me is, what do I do? Where do I go? Tell me how to put food on the table for my kids. Tell me how I'm going to survive.

We should not be making the lives of people who are suffering more miserable. That is not our job.

I will also insert for the RECORD the entire Food Research and Action Center statement.

Madam Speaker, in Massachusetts alone there will be 125,000 SNAP households that could suffer up to a $70 to $80 a month cut in SNAP benefit if this farm bill goes through as it is. There is no reason in the world that we should be cutting this program. This is not an ATM machine to pay for big farm subsidies. This is not an ATM machine to make up for the fraud, the waste and the abuse in the crop insurance program.

Again, I will repeat to my colleagues, tonight we are going to hear the President talk about income inequality, and my criticism here, it is a bipartisan criticism. I'm critical of the Republicans for the cruel cuts that were proposed in the original farm bill—up to $40 billion—and I'm frustrated that there are people in my own party, including in this White House, who don't believe this is worth a fight. Well, this is worth a fight. If this is not worth a fight, I don't know what the hell we are here for. If making sure people in this country don't go hungry is not a priority, then I don't know what we are doing here.

We can explain this away, we can rationalize it and justify it. I have heard all the talking points. My favorite is that nobody will actually lose their benefit.

□ 1300

What that neglects to tell you is that your benefit will be cut down to almost nothing. Yes, they will still get a little benefit, but it might be $15 a month instead of $115 a month. I mean, is that the best we can do, on both sides of the aisle? This never used to be a partisan issue. This never used to be a polarizing issue, and now all of a sudden it has become one. Again, I plea with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, let's come together and get a farm bill done, but not at this price.

And I urge the White House to stand up and fight alongside of us on this. They should be taking a greater leadership role on this. It is not enough to just talk about income inequality; you have to fight for it, too.

MAYORS OF BATON ROUGE, BOSTON, DALLAS, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, GARY, HARTFORD, ITHACA, LOS ANGELES, MADISON, MEMPHIS, NEW YORK, PROVIDENCE, RALEIGH, SACRAMENTO, SALT LAKE CITY, SAN DIEGO, SAN FRANCISCO, SEATTLE, AND TUCSON,

January 27, 2014.

Hon. DEBBIE STABENOW,
Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.
Hon. FRANK D. LUCAS,
Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.
Hon. THAD COCHRAN,
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.
Hon. COLIN PETERSON,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN STABENOW, RANKING MEMBER COCHRAN, CHAIRMAN LUCAS, AND RANKING MEMBER PETERSON: As mayors of major cities across the United States, we write to express our serious concerns about provisions under discussion in the Farm Bill reauthorization conference that could make it much more difficult for millions of Americans to put food on their tables. These provisions include billions of dollars in cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We urge you to work to remove these cuts to a program that provides essential food support to low-income families and individuals across the country.

SNAP provides food support for approximately 47 million Americans, more than half of whom are children and seniors. As mayors, every day we see the importance of SNAP benefits and how they have helped millions of Americans to feed their families during an extended period of economic uncertainty and high unemployment. Although the economy is showing signs of recovery, unemployment rates are still above pre-recession levels and we are still faced with rates above the national average in many cities across the country.

In addition, since every dollar in SNAP benefits generates up to $1.80 in local economic activity, cuts will also have a negative impact on our urban economies.

At this critical juncture in our recovery, we urge you eliminate changes to the SNAP program that will reduce a support as basic as food to so many struggling Americans and could undermine our local economies.

Sincerely,

Ralph Becker, Mayor, Salt Lake City; Karen Freeman-Wilson, Mayor, City of Gary; Todd Gloria, Interim Mayor, City of San Diego; Melvin L. ''Kip'' Holden, Mayor, City of Baton Rouge; Edwin M. Lee, Mayor, City of San Francisco; Bill de Blasio, Mayor, City of New York; Eric Garcetti, Mayor, City of Los Angeles; Vincent Gray, Mayor, District of Columbia; Kevin Johnson, Mayor, City of Sacramento; Nancy McFarlane, Mayor, City of Raleigh; Ed Murray, Mayor, City of Seattle; Mike Rawlings, Mayor, City of Dallas; Pedro E. Segarra, Mayor, City of Hartford; Angel Taveras, Mayor, City of Providence; A C Wharton, Jr., Mayor, City of Memphis; Svante L. Myrick, Mayor, City of Ithaca; Jonathan Rothschild, Mayor, City of Tucson; Paul R. Soglin, Mayor, City of Madison; Martin J. Walsh, Mayor, City of Boston.

From: On Behalf of Food Research and Action Center
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014
To: Ellen Teller
Subject: FRAC Statement on the Farm Bill

[From FRAC, Food Research and Action Center, Jan. 28, 2014]

SNAP CUTS IN FARM BILL WILL LEAD TO LESS FOOD FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE

WASHINGTON, DC.—The Farm Bill moving from conference committee to the floor of the House and Senate will cut SNAP benefits to an estimated 850,000 households by an average of $90/month. The Food Research and Action Center is encouraging members to vote ''No'' on the bill because of the pain this provision will cause for so many of the most vulnerable members of our society, making monthly food allotments fall even further short of what is needed.

SNAP is essential to the nutrition, health and well-being of 47 million Americans each month. But every participant suffered a significant cut in benefits beginning last November 1st. Demand at emergency food providers around the country has skyrocketed. Now the Farm Bill, if passed, will considerably worsen the already bad situation for nearly a million households.

The SNAP cuts in the conference bill amount to $8.6 billion over 10 years. The bill has modest boosts in nutrition supports in respects (e.g. for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), for ''double bucks'' farmers' market programs, for improved SNAP education and training programs, for Healthy Food Financing). These are small positive steps but are far from commensurate to the SNAP damage in the bill.

We appreciate that key conferees and other Senators and House members spoke and acted to reject the far larger harmful cuts proposed by the House. But FRAC believes the $8.6 billion SNAP cut is deeply harmful.

This cut has been opposed by major newspapers, anti-poverty and anti-hunger groups and food banks across the county. It is inconsistent with polls showing voters—across party, age and other demographics—reject food stamp cuts. It is inconsistent with the President's proposals to improve, not harm, SNAP benefits. In a bitter irony, the bill goes to the floor almost exactly a year after an expert Institute of Medicine committee found that SNAP benefits are already inadequate for most families to purchase an adequate, healthy diet; and it comes in the same month that researchers issued a new study showing that low-income people have increased hypoglycemia-related hospital admissions late in the month because they run out of food. The SNAP cuts will be a blow to health and nutrition, and to the government's long-term fiscal well-being as well.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I am proud once again to join my colleague. I, too, want a farm bill. In fact, I had the honor of helping to negotiate the 2008 farm bill, the nutrition portion of it, where we maintained that historic coalition between the safety net for agriculture and the safety net for nutrition.

I think it is almost unbelievable that we got a thousand-page bill, and I just want to say to the American public here that they should ask Members of Congress whether or not they have read the bill. We went over and over this with regard to the health care bill. Some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle kept asking us if we have read the bill. No one has really read this bill. There were four people who negotiated this work. There could well be significant earmarks in this effort.

Let me point out the reverse Robin Hood legislation here. It steals food from the poor to help pay for handouts to wealthy agribusiness. Let me just give a couple of examples. In violation of the congressional rule that provisions passed by both bodies should not be changed, the conference, four people, more than doubled the annual primary payments from $50,000 to $125,000, or $250,000 a couple. They reopened the loophole that was closed in the House and in the Senate that allows wealthy farmers to collect far more than the nominal payment limit: $50,000. They raised it to $125,000 for an individual; to a couple, $250,000. House and Senate on a bipartisan basis closed the loophole.

This allows payments to be collected by multiple people on the farm. What we have today is eight people can collect a $125,000 payment, leading to a million-dollar subsidy for a farm. Seven of those eight people never have to put their foot on the farm. It is called padding the payroll. ''Farmers,'' they don't have to undergo any income means testing to receive a subsidy.

The Durbin-Coburn amendment in the Senate would reduce the level of Federal premium support for crop insurance participants with an adjusted gross income of $750,000. The conference report—four people—determined that they would make that cap at $900,000. Again, the wealthiest people in the Nation.

Let me tell you about crop insurance. I don't know that the American public knows that the Federal Government, you, Mr. and Mrs. Taxpayer, you pick up 60 percent of the cost of that crop insurance. That doesn't include administrative fees. There are 26 individuals today who get at least a million dollars in premium subsidy. We can't find out who they are. They could be Members of Congress, because they are protected: 26 individuals. We have almost 50 million people who are on the food stamp program, 16 million of whom are children. And there is no fraud and abuse in this program, the way there is in the crop insurance program; and yet we want to take food out of the mouths of families and children in this Nation. It is the wrong thing to do. This bill should be rejected.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise to claim time in opposition to the point of order and in favor of consideration of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from North Carolina is recognized for 10 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. The question before the House is, Should the House now consider H. Res. 465? This point of order,

Madam Speaker, is a dilatory tactic. None of the provisions contained in the underlying measures meet the definition of an earmark under the rule.

The chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary certified that H.R. 7 contains no congressional earmarks by including the following earmark statement in the report accompanying this bill, which was filed on January 23, 2014:

> In accordance with clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, H.R. 7 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(e), 9(f) or 9(g) of rule XXI.

The following was included in the Joint Explanatory Statement for the farm bill:

> Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, neither this conference report nor the accompanying joint statement of managers contains any congressional earmarks, congressionally directed spending items, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits, as defined in such rules.

I also remind the gentleman that this conference agreement is a bipartisan and bicameral measure. Nine of the 10 Democrat conferees from the Agriculture Committee have signed the conference report. The conference report was made available to all Members and the public yesterday, in full compliance of the 3-day availability rule.

In order to allow the House to continue its scheduled business for the day, Madam Speaker, I urge Members to vote ''yes'' on the question of consideration of the resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

The question is, Will the House now consider the resolution?

The question of consideration was decided in the affirmative.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from North Carolina is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER) 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. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members 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. House Resolution 465 provides for a closed rule allowing for consideration of H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, and provides for separate consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2642, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013, under a standard conference report rule.

Madam Speaker, since 1976, the Hyde amendment—which prohibits the Federal funding of abortions—has been included in relevant appropriations bills. Each year it has been consistently renewed and supported by congressional majorities and Presidents of both parties.

NARAL, an abortion advocacy group, has suggested that prohibiting public funds for abortion reduces abortion rates by roughly 50 percent. That means that half of the women who would have otherwise had a publicly funded abortion end up carrying their babies to term.

In 1993, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the Hyde amendment prevented as many as 675,000 abortions every single year. This means that millions of Americans are alive today because of the Hyde amendment. After 38 years, it is time for this life-saving amendment to become permanent law.

When Barack Obama was elected in 2008, a myriad of long-established laws, including the Hyde amendment, created a mostly uniform policy that Federal programs did not pay for abortion or subsidize health plans that included coverage of abortion, with only narrow exceptions.

Unfortunately, ObamaCare destroyed that longstanding policy, bypassing the Hyde amendment restriction and paving the way for publicly funded abortions. The President's health care law authorized massive public subsidies to assist millions of Americans to purchase private health plans that will cover abortion on demand. In other words, hard-earned taxpayer dollars are now being used to pay for elective abortions. This is simply unacceptable.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 7 will codify the principles of the Hyde amendment on a permanent, government-wide basis, which means it will apply longstanding Federal health programs such as Medicaid, SCHIP, and Federal Employees Health Benefits, as well as to new programs created by ObamaCare. H.R. 7 prohibits the use of Federal funds for abortions. It does so by prohibiting all Federal funding for abortion; prohibiting Federal subsidies for ACA health care plans that include coverage for abortion; prohibiting the use of Federal facilities for abortion; and prohibiting Federal employees from performing abortions.

This bill applies to the Federal funding of abortions, except in cases of rape, incest, or when the life of the mother is in danger. This commonsense measure, which restores a longstanding bipartisan agreement, protects the unborn and prevents taxpayers from being forced to fund thousands of abortions. For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote for life by voting in favor of this rule and H.R. 7.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume. I will attach extraneous material to this part of my speech since we only have 30 minutes on two legislative matters.

Madam Speaker, at a time when millions are struggling to find work, the majority has decided that their top priority, one of the first 10 bills of the session that they number, is to continue the decades-long assault on a woman's constitutionally protected right to choose.

Before I go any further, let me be clear: this bill is a hoax. Federal taxpayer dollars are not spent on abortion. This has been true for more than three decades. Under the Hyde amendment, the use of Federal dollars to pay for abortions is flatly prohibited except in the case of rape or incest or when the life of the mother is in danger.

Thus, despite what the majority may claim, H.R. 7 is not a solution to a problem but a poorly, thinly veiled attempt to chip away at ObamaCare and women's reproductive rights, another battle in the war against women.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 7 is a reflection of a majority out of touch with the American people and struggling to understand fundamental truths about reproductive health. And we really mean struggle.

This extreme legislation was originally sponsored by a man, originated from a subcommittee composed of 13 men, and was passed out of the Judiciary Committee with the votes of 21 Republican men. This has been the problem for a long time—men in blue suits and red ties determining what women can and should do when it comes to their own health.

One such Republican man has declared that ''wife is to voluntarily submit'' to her husband in a book that he recently wrote. Another has declared, and this is a new one, this is not the one from the last election, ''the incidents of rape resulting in pregnancy are very low.'' In other words, Madam Speaker, the men who are making these decisions simply don't know what they are talking about.

Meanwhile, a Republican man on the Judiciary Committee recently said that today's legislation is good for reducing the unemployment numbers because:

> Having new children brought into the world is not harmful to job creation. It very much promotes job creation for care and services and so on that need to be provided for a lot of people to raise children.

Unfortunately, the hypocrisy of that statement is it comes from a majority that staunchly opposes increasing any funding for pre-K education or paid sick leave for working parents, and the same majority cutting nutritional benefits for the working poor under the farm bill that we will consider tomorrow. Such a hypocritical and mean-spirited agenda reminds me of another quote from former Congressman Barney Frank who once famously said that

the anti-choice legislators ''believe that life begins at conception but ends at birth.'' In other words, once it is born, they don't want to have anything to do with it. In looking at the majority's legislative priorities, it is almost impossible to disagree.

Madam Speaker, a new poll shows that 64 percent of Americans agree that ''decisions on abortion should be made by a woman and her doctor.'' The government should never have gotten into the business of being between the woman and her doctor, or anyone else she wants to consult. Only 24 percent say ''government has a right and obligation to pass restrictions on abortion.'' Perhaps that is why the majority is passing H.R. 7 on the same day as the State of the Union, because we know it is not going anywhere. We know that the Senate will not take this up; and if by some strange set of events it should pass the Senate, which it won't, the President would never sign it.

□ 1315

But anyway, we bring it up on the same day of the State of the Union, rushing it through Congress to make some kind of point to some people somewhere before they leave on a weekend retreat and making one rule to consider two drastically different bills even though we would have had plenty of time to have had two rules here.

Included under today's rule is the conference report on the farm bill, a major piece of legislation that impacts all aspects of the economy. Surely it deserves a full and open debate before its final passage.

Instead, the majority is proposing another closed and House rule-breaking process because we have not had time to read it. This will also be their 100th closed rule since taking control in 2011, and allowing just an hour of general debate for each bill and 15 minutes basically on the rule on our side of the House.

If one wonders at the lack of productivity from this Congress, just look at the closed and partisan legislative process pursued by the majority and you will quickly understand.

Madam Speaker, with all of the major issues facing our country, attacking women's health care shows just how extreme—and extremely out of touch—the Washington Republicans are because the Republicans at home don't feel that way.

We should be passing legislation to create jobs, to grow our economy and to level the playing field for working women, not taking the country backwards with bills that attack women's rights.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on today's rule and the underlying legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, for more than three decades, the so-called Hyde Amendment has flatly banned the use of Federal dollars to pay for abortions except in cases of rape or incest or when the life of the mother is endangered. In part, the Hyde Amendment reads, ''None of the funds appropriated in this Act, and none of the funds in any trust fund to which funds are appropriated in this Act, shall be expended for health benefits coverage that includes coverage of abortion.''

Despite the Majority's claims to the contrary, today's legislation goes far beyond the definitive language of the Hyde Amendment in an attempt to restrict a woman's reproductive health options under private insurance plans and her ability to spend private dollars on a constitutionally protected right to reproductive health care.

At the heart of this legislative attack is the extremely broad and vague language included in today's bill that redefines the definition of ''federal funding.'' Under this legislation, the definition of Federal funding would be expanded to include the benefit of a tax expenditure. While this terminology may seem complex, its consequences are quite simple.

If this bill becomes law, a woman purchasing health insurance that includes abortion coverage will be denied a premium tax credit that helps make coverage affordable in the first place. Facing such a circumstance, she would be financially incentivized to buy a cheaper health insurance plan that does not include abortion services. As more women give up health insurance plans with abortion coverage, health insurance companies will stop offering such plans. Very quickly, it will become both prohibitively expensive and difficult to purchase abortion coverage in a health insurance plan.

In so doing, this bill takes particular aim at the reproductive rights of poor women. Women who are struggling to get by rely almost exclusively upon insurance premium subsidies to reduce the cost of health care while more affluent women can often access additional benefits such as Flexible Spending Accounts to reduce their health care costs. While insurance premium subsidies are eliminated under today's bill Flexible Spending Accounts are left untouched.

We should not be restricting either of these tax benefits that serve America's women, but it is particularly immoral for the Majority to be targeting the most vulnerable women among us.

Sadly, targeting the reproductive health care of poor women is nothing new for the Republican Party. As far back as the 1970's Henry Hyde infamously stated ''I would certainly like to prevent, if I could legally, anybody having an abortion: a rich woman, a middle class woman, or a poor woman. Unfortunately, the only vehicle available is the [Medicaid] bill,'' he continued—which as we know only affects low-income women and families.

In addition to taking a tax benefit away from those struggling to get by, today's bill would raise taxes on small businesses in another attempt to make force small businesses to drop insurance coverage. Under this legislation, small businesses that offer health insurance plans that include abortion coverage would be ineligible for the Small Business Tax Credit. Currently, 87 percent of all employer-sponsored insurance plans include coverage for abortion, and the Small Business Tax Credit can be worth 35–50% of the cost of a small business' premiums. Taking away this tax credit would be a major tax INCREASE on small businesses for simply keeping the same insurance coverage that they already have.

In short, today's legislation is an attempt to rewrite our Nation's laws so that it is financially impossible for a woman to access a private health insurance plan that provides abortion coverage. And it is yet another attack on women's rights from a Majority that seems to be struggling to understand the most fundamental aspects of an issue important to America's women.

Indeed, when it comes to the issue of reproductive rights, one member of the Majority has declared that ''the incidence of rape resulting in pregnancy are very low.'' Another member of the Majority has declared that today's legislation is good for reducing unemployment, because ''having new children brought into the world is not harmful to job creation. It very much promotes job creation for all the care and services and so on that need to be provided by a lot of people to raise children.''

Quotes such as these make it clear how such extreme—and extremely misguided—legislation has made it to the floor today. They also remind us why it is so important that the Majority allows an open and transparent legislative process so that such dangerous legislation never sees the light of day.

Unfortunately, it is under a closed legislative process that variations of this legislation have been introduced and pushed through the House of Representatives in recent years. Repeatedly, the Majority has written similar legislation and included provisions that attempted to redefine rape. The Majority, who just weeks ago decried the role of the IRS in Obamacare, has even introduced a variation of this legislation that empowered the IRS to audit any woman who has had an abortion. This in no way should be the responsibility of the IRS and any attempt to impose the IRS in a woman's medical decisions is nothing but an attack on her constitutionally protected rights.

Once again, it is under a closed legislative process—and an abandonment of regular order—that we find ourselves here today considering yet another misguided attempt to restrict women's rights.

In fact, while today's legislation bears the same name, it is not the same bill that was reported out of the Judiciary Committee earlier this month.

Instead, it is an original Rules Committee print that was first made available less than a week ago and includes significant legislative changes, such as the addition of text from two bills that have never received any committee debate, review or mark-up.

Furthermore, the Majority is asking that we consider this new bill under another closed rule. If we do, it will be the 100th closed rule for a Majority that just concluded the most closed session in history.

Madam Speaker, it comes as little surprise that bad legislative process has produced another bad bill.

Over and over again, the Majority has shown no interest in opening up the legislative process and coming to the table to work on commonsense legislation with members from the other side of the aisle. My Democratic colleagues and I believe that we should be voting on bills to create jobs, grow our economy and level the playing field for working women—but we will never be able to do so until the Majority allows us to truly participate in the legislative process.

Finally, I would be remiss if I failed to mention the farm bill conference report that is also brought to the floor by this resolution. Having only received the 900-plus page bill last night Members have had little chance to read the bill. In fact, as my friend Mr. MCGOVERN has noted, even conferees who supposedly negotiated this deal were not given a chance to read it!

But the one policy I know is included in the conference report is a massive, $8.6 billion cut in SNAP, formerly known as ''food stamps.'' Families receiving SNAP benefits already saw a cut in their monthly food budgets of approximately $30 less than three months ago. For some families, this will mean an additional cut of up to $90—a devastating blow for a low-income household.

In closing, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on today's rule, so that we can get to work on real solutions for the American people and put an end to the Majority's dangerous attacks on a woman's constitutionally protected right to choose, as well as their disregard for the plight of the poor and those searching for work.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding. I want to thank VIRGINIA FOXX for her extraordinary leadership on behalf of the weakest and the most vulnerable among us.

Madam Speaker, because abortion dismembers, decapitates, or chemically poisons an unborn child to death, Americans have consistently demanded that public funds not pay for abortion.

I would note parenthetically—and we just saw this last week—since 1973, some 56 million babies, unborn babies, have been killed by abortion, a number, a death toll that equates with the entire population of England.

Madam Speaker, a huge majority—well over 60 percent according to the most polls—show that women and men in this country don't want to be complicit in abortion by subsidizing it. A December 2009 Quinnipiac poll found that 72 percent opposed allowing abortion to be paid for by public funds under health care reform.

Another poll asked: If the choice were up to you, would you want your own insurance policy to include abortion? Sixty-nine percent of women said no.

Madam Speaker, this is because an ever-growing number of people recognize that abortion isn't health care; it kills babies and it hurts women.

We live in an age of ultrasound imaging: the ultimate window to the womb and the child who resides there. We are in the midst of a fetal health revolution, an explosion of benign life-affirming interventions designed to diagnose, treat, and cure the precious lives of these youngest patients. Abortion is the antithesis of health care.

H.R. 7 will help save lives and it will reduce abortions. The Judiciary Committee report accompanying H.R. 7 notes that the high demand has saved over 1 million children, and the number is probably far larger because one in four women who would have had procured an abortion don't go through with it if public funding isn't available.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 7 seeks to accomplish three goals:

One, make the Hyde amendment and other current abortion funding prohibition permanent;

Two, ensure that the Affordable Care Act faithfully conforms with the Hyde amendment, as promised by the President;

And three, provide full disclosure, transparency, and the prominent display of the extent to which any health care insurance plan on the exchange funds abortion.

Madam Speaker, in the runup to passage of the Affordable Care Act, America was repeatedly assured by President Obama himself, including in a speech to a joint session of Congress in September of 2009, that: ''Under our plan, no Federal dollars will be used to fund abortion.''

On March 24, 2010, President Obama issued an executive order that said the Affordable Care Act ''maintains current Hyde amendment restrictions governing abortion policy and extends those restrictions to newly created health insurance exchanges.'' Nothing could have been clearer. That seemed to be ironclad.

As far as my colleagues will recall, the Hyde amendment has two principles: it not only prohibits direct funding for abortion, but also bans funding for insurance plans that include abortion, except in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother.

We now know that the Hyde amendment principles have not been extended to the newly created health insurance exchanges. H.R. 7 seeks to correct that.

Under the Affordable Care Act, Madam Speaker, massive amounts of public funds in the form of tax credits are today paying for, and will soon pay for, insurance plans that include elective abortion. That violates the Hyde amendment and that violates the President's solemn promise.

As we all know, the new law is poised to give billions of dollars—they call them tax credits—directly to insurance companies on behalf of people who purchase health insurance. The Congressional Budget Office counts the cost of these so-called tax credits under the ACA as either direct spending or revenue reductions. Direct spending involves funds taken from where? The Treasury, to subsidize health insurance coverage. According to the CBO, the ACA premium assistance credits will cost the Federal Government $796 billion over 10 years.

Absent repeal or reform of the law, taxpayers will then be forced to foot the bill for abortion. Again, an overwhelming percentage of the people have consistently polled they don't want to be complicit in the taking of human life.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Michigan, Congressman KILDEE.

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentlelady from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending the unemployment insurance benefits for 1.6 million Americans instead of what is a radical Republican assault, a continuous assault, on women's health care rights.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts, Congresswoman CLARK.

(Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts, Congresswoman TSONGAS.

(Ms. TSONGAS asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TSONGAS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Madam Speaker, I want to share emails from just three of the many people I hear from each week who have been personally affected by House Republicans' decision to block a vote on extending unemployment insurance.

Katie from Chelmsford: ''I was laid off in April and have looked for a job since then—with no luck—In spite of the news reports about the economy and how great the job market is, we all know that is not true. I know so many folks still looking for jobs in MA—all well educated, well qualified good people! . . . I truly hope unemployment benefits are extended.''

Clark from Westford: ''I am writing you regarding the stopping of the Federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation program. I am a married father of 2 children in local area colleges living in Westford, MA and rely on this emergency money to survive. I have

been able to work 8 months this year over 3 jobs but all were temporary positions that did not lead to full-time employment. The economy is not yet hot enough to create enough full-time jobs and without this money our family will not make it. Please find the money to pay for extending this program as it is saving our lives . . . literally!''

Doreen from Lowell: ''I'm a single mom of a great 14 year old daughter who is an honor student! (Very proud.) In May of 2013 I was laid off after 23 wonderful years of employment with the same company. This has been a life changing time for [my daughter] and myself, however we have taken the change with nothing less than a positive attitude. We have made sacrifices such as canceling our cable and Internet as well as making cuts from cell phone service to more frugal grocery shopping.

''I found out today that after 6 months of unemployment it has ended! I received a letter just two months ago that I would be extended until May of 2014, however because of Federal budget cuts this is not happening. I've been looking and applying for jobs faithfully on a weekly basis with no luck. Nothing comes close to what I was making before, I have a mortgage by myself as a single mom . . .

''I've been proud of myself for this accomplishment and being a positive strong role model has always been important to me for my daughter. I don't understand how an extension can just be cancelled like that! My daughter and I are now just our small savings account away from being homeless and that's a shame. I can only hope that someone in Congress is listening to us hard working people and will step up and do something about this. It upsets me to think after 23 years of service I can't lean on my government for support. I don't expect to be on unemployment for long but unfortunately 6 months wasn't enough, it's still tough out there! I really appreciate you taking the time to read this email and please, please, please be my voice and make them hear me.''

I urge my colleagues to pass an extension now and help hardworking people throughout our nation avoid economic disaster.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from California, Congressman TAKANO.

(Mr. TAKANO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentlewoman from New Mexico, Congresswoman LUJAN GRISHAM.

(Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I also seek unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans, including nearly 7,500 New Mexico job seekers, instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Georgia, Congressman JOHNSON.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will first make a statement.

The Member asking to insert remarks may include a simple declaration of sentiment toward the question under debate, but should not embellish the request with extended oratory.

The gentleman from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights. H.R. 7 is enumerated appropriately because it reflects the priorities of this Congress.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend.

For what purpose does the gentlewoman from North Carolina seek recognition?

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Chair to reiterate her statement made just a few minutes ago about the extent of the remarks that may be made.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentlewoman from Connecticut, Congresswoman ESTY.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman from New York will be charged due to the embellishment of the gentleman from Georgia.

The gentlewoman from Connecticut is recognized.

(Ms. ESTY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ESTY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Texas, Congressman AL GREEN.

(Mr. AL GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentlewoman from California, Congresswoman LEE.

(Ms. LEE of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Rhode Island, Congressman CICILLINE.

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentlewoman from Texas, Congresswoman JACKSON LEE.

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Maryland, Congressman VAN HOLLEN.

(Mr. VAN HOLLEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from New York, Congressman ELIOT ENGEL.

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans. We really have to have compassion for people. People are starving. We need to help them. That is what Congress should be all about.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of embellishment by the gentleman from New York will be charged to the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Florida, Congressman ALCEE HASTINGS.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to

insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1330

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS).

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Thank you to the gentlelady from North Carolina.

Madam Speaker, we stand in this Hall, and many times it is spoken of the history that goes on here and of the things that have been done, and often it echos through time—the Speakers, the Presidents, the others who have spoken here. Today, I think, as we talk about this, there is an echo that should be coming forth, spoken in the Chamber that was spoken by this, our administration and our President, who said, One more misunderstanding I want to clear up. Adding, No Federal dollars will be used to fund abortions, and conscience laws will remain in place.

To me, that still echoes in this Chamber.

I rise today as a cosponsor of the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act. I rise in strong support of the bill and the underlying rule. I share the belief of many taxpayers, which is that life is a gift worthy of our protection, not something to be snuffed out when deemed inconvenient or challenging. I rise in support of this bill on behalf of those who do not yet have a voice—the yet to be born daughters and sons of our Nation.

For me, this issue is very personal. When my wife was pregnant with our first child, we learned that our daughter, Jordan, was affected with spina bifida. When we were dealing with the struggle and were excited about her birth, we were shocked when people came to us after hearing of Jordan's diagnosis and said we have a choice about whether to keep our child. We knew that Jordan was a gift from God and that there was a plan and purpose for her life. We believe of that fact more strongly than ever today, and we cannot imagine life without Jordan.

I know my family is not alone. Many folks have welcomed children in the midst of difficult circumstances, not because it was easy but because it was right, for when we deny the humanity of the unborn, we betray our own. Every member of civil society has a sacred responsibility to protect the lives of children.

Today, we have the opportunity to affirm the responsibility by passing the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act. This bill helps ensure that taxpayer dollars are directed to care that preserves and improves lives, not to a procedure that guarantees death. On behalf of the millions of Americans who object to abortion on demand, I urge this body to prevent taxpayer dollars from funding such abortions.

As has been said, life matters, and promises matter, and echoes of this Chamber matter as well, especially when spoken by the President.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule and give the House a vote on a bill, written by Mr. VAN HOLLEN and Mr. LEVIN, to extend emergency unemployment benefits paid for with savings from the farm bill that, it seems, this House will pass today.

To discuss his bill, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, let me express very personally why we are asking for a ''no'' on the previous question.

Unemployment insurance has lifted 11 million people from poverty since 2008. It kept 2.5 million people from poverty in 2012. So, for so many people in this country today, there is a personal emergency. Since the end of this program, December 28, they have been facing bills to pay—utility bills, house payment bills, rental bills, money for gas to keep looking for work. These are hardworking Americans who are facing the winds of poverty.

One of them today is with me for the State of the Union—Josie Maisano, from Michigan. She will tell you, as others will today at a press conference, that there is an emergency. There is an emergency for them. Extending UI is a moral American imperative. It is also a national economic benefit.

The Speaker asked for an offset. We are proposing one. So let us today have the chance to bring to the floor a bill to extend unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans, growing 72,000 every week.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. HUELSKAMP).

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act. It is a good bill, an important bill, that takes critical steps to protect the lives of the innocent unborn and the conscience rights of millions of Americans. Before discussing the bill, I think it is important to recall some important history that was discussed previously.

On Saturday, March 20, 2010, the President of the United States announced a so-called ''agreement'' on his Affordable Care Act. In part, because of this agreement supposedly protecting Americans' conscience rights, ObamaCare narrowly passed and was signed into law.

Madam Speaker, the so-called ''Stupak agreement'' was a charade—it did not protect our conscience rights; it did not stop the Federal funding of abortion. In fact, it did the very opposite. It was hidden behind a veil of secrecy and accounting gimmicks, and because of this charade, we are here today.

H.R. 7 is very simple. It does exactly what the administration hoped we would believe they were doing in the Stupak agreement, and it answers the fundamental question: How do we protect the moral beliefs of a majority of Americans on the wrenching issue of taking the lives of the innocent unborn? The answer is clear: We should not force people to pay for what they do not believe in. We should stop Federal bureaucrats from using Americans' hard-earned tax dollars to pay for abortions, and we should allow Americans to exercise their God-given rights of conscience.

The American people are opposed to using taxpayer dollars to pay for the taking of innocent human life. We know this from the thousands of constituents who contact each of our offices. We know this from the hundreds and thousands of Americans who descended upon this Capitol and State capitals across the Nation in March for Lives just last week, and we know this from the 90-plus lawsuits that have been filed by organizations on religious liberty grounds, like the Little Sisters of the Poor, Wheaton College, Hobby Lobby, and Conestoga Wood. The list goes on and on.

We know this in our hearts. It is simply wrong to force people to pay for abortions—something that violates their consciences, their fundamental beliefs and religious liberties.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD).

(Mr. HORSFORD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HORSFORD. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert my statement into the RECORD in support of extending unemployment insurance benefits for the 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights in our great country.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on the Budget.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my friend.

Madam Speaker, what we are seeing here is an abuse of process. We have one rule governing a bill that is an assault on women's health care rights, combined with the same rule for a 900-page farm bill that was filed at 7:30 last night. I know a lot of people around here claim to be speed readers, but we are supposed to have a vote on the farm bill on Wednesday. Some people may decide to vote for it, and some people may decide to vote against it.

What we are asking, Madam Speaker, is that we should all agree that this

House—Republicans and Democrats alike—should have a chance to vote on a bill that says we will take the savings from cutting back on agriculture subsidies and use those savings to pay for an extension of emergency unemployment insurance for over 1.5 million Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own and are out there looking for work every day in an economy where there are still three people looking for every one job. That is what we are asking for, Madam Speaker, with respect to defeating the previous question and letting us have a vote.

Now, the Speaker has said repeatedly over the last couple of weeks that he would be open to extending unemployment insurance if we would find a way to pay for it. We have a way to pay for it. Mr. LEVIN and I went to the Rules Committee and said, Okay. Let's let the whole House vote today after the farm bill passes, if it does pass on Wednesday, and say, Let's use those savings for this important purpose. They said no. They didn't want this House to have that right. So now each of us—Republicans and Democrats alike—will have the opportunity to vote to decide whether this body can decide to spend the savings from cutting ag subsidies to help 1.5 million people in their districts and around the country who are struggling right now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my friend.

By the way, it doesn't just help those struggling families. The Congressional Budget Office says it helps all of us—it helps the small businesses and merchants in our communities—because, if those struggling families can't pay the rent or the mortgage or go out and buy groceries, who does it hurt? It also hurts the local merchants and small businesses.

So, Madam Speaker, for goodness sakes, if people want to vote against the idea of using the savings from cutting the ag subsidies to help 1.3 million Americans—if you want to vote ''no''—go for it, but for goodness sakes, let the people's House have that vote. Let the people's House decide whether we want to help 1.3 million Americans. I hope this will weigh heavily on the conscience of the House.

Ms. FOXX. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I remind my friends on the other side of the aisle and every American watching at home that normal unemployment benefits remain in effect for all Americans in need. What has expired is the additional emergency unemployment compensation that goes above and beyond the normal compensation. This emergency compensation was put in place during the economic downturn and was always intended to be temporary. In fact, we have been told that the recession is over and that it has been over for a long time. Republicans want to help create jobs, and we call on the Senate to act on the bills we have sent them, and we will do just that.

Madam Speaker, I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee, Dr. ROE.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, as an OB/GYN physician who has delivered close to 5,000 babies, I strongly support the sanctity of life and, therefore, H.R. 7.

Since 1976, Congress has prevented taxpayer funding for abortion. Unfortunately, this door was reopened with the passage of the Affordable Care Act. This misguided law, in addition to causing incredible harm to our health care system, has potentially put taxpayers on the hook for funding the termination of innocent life. That is why H.R. 7 is so important. It explicitly states that taxpayer dollars should not be used to fund abortions.

I am not here today making a point. I am here on this floor as a physician, trying to save lives. Abortion is not a business our government should be involved in. As legislators, we carry the responsibility and privilege to protect those who do not have a voice. We must make our laws consistent with our science and ensure full legal protections to those who are waiting to be born. This starts with legislation like H.R. 7.

One of our government's core functions is to protect the most innocent among us, and I will do my best to ensure that government fulfills its duty. I will always fight for the right to life because it is my belief that we are unique creations of God, who knows us and loves us even before we are born.

I urge my colleagues to support this important rule.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, let me give myself just a half a second to say that, again, we hear how important it is until a child is born, but if it is unemployed later, it is not going to get to eat as long as we have this majority.

I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY).

Ms. ESTY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the rule and to the underlying legislation.

Forty-one years ago, the Supreme Court recognized that women have the right to make their own decisions about their reproductive health. Yet, once again, this House is choosing to senselessly attack women's rights.

This bill would restrict a woman's right to make personal medical decisions by bullying small businesses to either drop comprehensive health coverage for their female employees or lose tax credits. Furthermore, it places restrictions on women using private funds to buy private insurance for their most personal medical decisions. This bill is nothing more than an unprecedented, mean-spirited attempt to shame women out of being in control of their own health.

We can and must do better, which is why I urge my colleagues to oppose this effort to restrict health care for women.

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Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that our colleagues are doing all that they can to portray this bill as an attack on women's rights. It is not that at all. I appreciate all of my colleagues who have spoken so eloquently on our side of the aisle about what this bill truly is.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. NUNNELEE).

Mr. NUNNELEE. I thank the gentlelady from North Carolina for yielding.

Today, I rise in support of H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, which will make policies like the Hyde amendment permanent and government-wide, and remove funding for insurance plans that include abortions from the Affordable Care Act.

Just last week, we marked the 41st anniversary of the Roe decision, and we memorialized the 56 million children whose lives have been sacrificed for that decision.

I am a proud defender of life. I represent a State that stands strongly for life. I understand that the very first inalienable right in our Declaration of Independence is the right to life. But I also acknowledge that there is wide disagreement on that subject throughout our Nation and throughout this House. I recognize there is wide debate on when life may begin.

Surely, we can agree that there should be no taxpayer dollars used to fund abortion procedures. There should be no taxpayer forced to pay for health care through ObamaCare that funds abortion against his or her will.

That is why I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 7, and I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the final bill.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of California. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Currently, Congress imposes unfair limitations on insurance coverage of abortions through the Hyde amendment for low-income women, which should be, quite frankly, repealed. Today, Republicans are asking us to go even further—to create an unprecedented interference in the lives of women and their families by restricting coverage for women's health in private insurance plans.

Instead of working together to extend unemployment benefits for the more than 1.3 million unemployed Americans, here we are debating another dangerous and divisive attempt to strip away the rights of women, instead of creating economic opportunity and jobs. Here you go again, attacking women's health care, not to mention that this bill singles out an attack on low-income women in the District of Columbia by permanently prohibiting the District from spending its own locally raised funds on abortions for low-income women. You would not want us

to restrict anything in your districts where privately raised local funds are used.

This is just another battle in the war on women. It has got to stop. We must stop these attacks on women's health.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I will say it again. We are not attacking women's health care with this rule and this legislation.

H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, codifies many long-standing pro-life protections that have been passed under both Republican- and Democrat-controlled Congresses.

The majority of taxpayers oppose Federal funding for abortion, as demonstrated in poll after poll. A recent Marist poll showed that 58 percent of respondents oppose or strongly oppose using any taxpayer dollars for abortions.

During the ObamaCare debate, a 2010 Zogby/O'Leary poll found that 76 percent of Americans said that Federal funds should never pay for an abortion or should pay only to save the life of the mother.

A January 2010 Quinnipiac University poll showed 67 percent of respondents opposed Federal funding of abortion.

An April 2011 CNN poll showed that 61 percent of respondents opposed public funding for abortion.

A November 2009 Washington Post poll showed 61 percent of respondents opposed government subsidies for health insurance that includes abortion.

A September 2009 International Communications Research poll showed that 67 percent of respondents opposed any measure that would ''require people to pay for abortion coverage with their Federal taxes.''

Madam Speaker, it is clear. The American people do not want the government spending their hard-earned tax dollars to destroy innocent human life. Period.

Like most taxpayers, employers also prefer plans that preclude abortion coverage. According to the insurance industry's trade association:

Most insurers offer plans that include abortion coverage, but most employers choose not to offer it as a part of their benefits package.

Even Minority Leader NANCY PELOSI has voted numerous times to prohibit taxpayer funding for abortion in the District of Columbia. President Obama voted against taxpayer funding of abortion in the District of Columbia twice when he was in the Senate, and since being elected President he has signed appropriations legislation into law that prohibits this funding.

As you can see, Madam Speaker, opposition to taxpayer funding for abortion is bipartisan, bicameral, and supported by a majority of the American people. It is time to restore the status quo on government funding of abortion and make this widely supported policy permanent across the Federal Government. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support this rule and H.R. 7.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, first, let me just point out that despite what the gentlelady from North Carolina just said, both President Obama and his administration, as well as Leader PELOSI, strongly oppose H.R. 7.

I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act. Despite the misleading title, this bill is not about Federal funding for abortions. It is about intervening in women's personal health care decisions.

Forty-one years ago, the Supreme Court confirmed in Roe v. Wade a constitutional right for women to keep our decisions about our body between us and our doctors. Yet here we are, more than four decades later, confronted with another draconian bill that encroaches on that right.

Since 1976, the Hyde amendment has prohibited the use of Federal dollars for abortions. The Affordable Care Act is compliant with the Hyde amendment. The Affordable Care Act is law. The bill before us is nothing more than a deceitful attempt to place further restrictions on women's access to health care services.

Unfortunately, these kinds of baseless attacks on women's reproductive rights continue to be led by Republican men. It is clear that the all-male Republican members on the House Judiciary Committee who approved this bill would rather focus their time and American taxpayer dollars on restricting a woman's right to make her own medical decisions rather than confront our Nation's most pressing problems.

You would think that Republicans would realize we have a few more things to focus on that are a higher priority than whether or not women can make their own health care decisions. These men do not represent or reflect the voices of women in America. That is why as a mother, a lawmaker, and as a woman, I stand before you today to say: No more.

We should oppose H.R. 7.

We have worked too hard to secure freedom and independence for women in this country; and

We have come too far to let our nation inch back to the dark ages when barriers stood between women and their Constitutional rights.

When I think about the kind of world I want my daughters to live in, it's one where they have access to comprehensive, affordable, and safe health care services.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stand up for women by voting "no" on H.R. 7.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the author of H.R. 7.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank the gentlelady for yielding and for her extraordinary leadership.

Madam Speaker, let me again convey to my colleagues the fact that H.R. 7 seeks to make the Hyde amendment and other current abortion funding prohibitions permanent.

Just a couple of weeks ago, as part of the omnibus bill, Members on both sides of the aisle voted to renew the pro-life riders for another year. Title I of H.R. 7 are those separate riders made permanent. That is all it is.

Secondly, it ensures that the Affordable Care Act faithfully conforms to the Hyde amendment, as promised by the President of the United States.

As the previous speaker just said, she believes it comports with the Hyde amendment. It doesn't.

The Hyde amendment is made up of two parts, I remind my colleagues: direct funding for abortion and no funds to any insurance policy, any coverage, any plan that includes abortion.

It couldn't be simpler. It is right there in the Hyde amendment. It has been there year in and year out.

I would note, parenthetically, that I authored the ban on funding for abortions in the Federal Employees Health Benefit program. We mirrored the language of the Hyde amendment so that today every single insurance plan in the FEHB does not include abortion, except in cases of rape, incest, or life of the mother, just like the Hyde amendment.

Let me also say to my colleagues that we need transparency. There is a galling lack of transparency in ObamaCare on a myriad of fronts, including whether or not a plan includes abortion.

In my own State of New Jersey, we tried and tried and took hours upon hours and finally found out that of the 31 plans offered in the State, 14 plans subsidized abortion on demand. Yet none of the plans—not one—makes this information available to the consumers shopping online.

Ditto for State after State. You can't find out. When you make those phone calls, you get conflicting feedback from the person on the other side, who himself or herself doesn't know either. Every single ObamaCare plan in Connecticut and Rhode Island includes abortion on demand. Every single one. You may be happy with that, but we see that as the taking of human life.

I remind my colleagues, look at what abortion does to the unborn child. The baby is either dismembered, chemically poisoned, or decapitated. The methods are horrific, and we live in a culture of denial that does not want to look at the method.

It also is highly injurious of women, especially on the intermediate and long-term basis, as relates to psychological health.

Let me also say to my colleagues as well: Do you want to know what ObamaCare is doing? Just look at our own plan. Look at the DC Health Link, our own portable health insurance. Of the 112 plans that you and I and our staff can obtain, 103 of those plans are

subsidized by Federal dollars, completely in violation of the Hyde amendment—and my amendment, frankly. Only nine plans are pro-life. And 103 of those plans that you and I can buy pay for abortion on demand.

Just look at the facts.

The rhetoric that is so attacking of our side on the issue—I believe in talking about the issue and not attacking my friends and colleagues, and I do count so many as close personal friends, but when it comes to this issue, we need to talk about victims. I work with a lot of women. I know a lot of women who are post-abortive. They are in need of help and reconciliation. Abortion is the abandonment of women and also the destruction of a child.

ObamaCare has not lived up to its promise. H.R. 7 gets it to the point where it does so.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK).

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 7, which effectively bans insurance coverage for family planning and allows the government to step between a woman and her doctor even when there are risks of serious medical complications.

Madam Speaker, the women of America are watching. Dictating women's personal health care decisions should not be on the table today.

What should be on the table?

How about the many policies that ensure the economic success of women, such as pay equity, paid sick leave, and raising the minimum wage? How about making sure that millions of American job seekers have the vital safety net that unemployment insurance provides and allows them to put food on the table? How about instead of dictating women's health care decisions, we focus on making child care and education more accessible and affordable?

This bill does not move us forward. It moves us backward and inserts the government into the most personal decisions a woman and a family can make.

I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 7.

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Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), who was not able to testify before those 12 men.

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I appreciate the opportunity to speak, particularly since I was denied the courtesy of speaking on this bill, which targets my own district.

Madam Speaker, the only thing worse than targeting the reproductive health of the Nation's women is reaching beyond that to do even greater damage to the women of a local jurisdiction—to permanently keep the District of Columbia from spending its own local funds on abortion services for poor women, as 17 States do. Among them are Alaska, Arizona, and Montana, hardly bastions of liberalism.

Mind you, such spending is already barred in the annual D.C. appropriations bill. Yet H.R. 7 strips—imagine this—strips the District of Columbia of its very identity for purposes of abortion by deeming the District of Columbia government to be part of the Federal Government. What an indignity.

Republicans captured the majority in the name of local control and devolving Federal power to the States and localities. Today, you turn your own principles on their heads to snatch power from a local jurisdiction. We will insist that Republicans practice what they preach.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this offensive and overreaching legislation. It endangers women's health and well-being and attempts to effectively ban working women's access to a legal medical procedure.

With a budget passed, and the President delivering the State of the Union tonight, this body has an important opportunity to turn the page and start acting in a bipartisan manner to address the Nation's real problem.

We should be working together to create jobs, encourage economic growth, and ensure steady and rising wages. Instead, this House majority has once again succumbed to their worst ideological impulses at the expense of women's health. Once again, for almost the 50th time now, they are trying to undermine the Affordable Care Act.

The bill claims to end taxpayer funding for abortion. Everyone in this room knows there is no taxpayer funding for abortion, per the Hyde amendment which is enacted every year.

What this bill does is prevents millions of women working for small businesses from using their own private funds to purchase coverage for services from private insurance. It aims to end any private coverage of these services by private insurance companies. Women cannot get the comprehensive coverage that they need in the insurance marketplace.

The same old, same old from this House Republican majority. Oppose this ideological legislation.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the passage of H.R. 7 will be welcome news for the majority of Americans who do not want their tax dollars paying for the grisly business of abortion. This bill, which is cosponsored by 165 House Members and a quarter of the Senate, will make existing policies like the Hyde amendment permanent and will rid ObamaCare of its massive expansion of public funding for abortion insurance plans.

The President repeatedly assured Americans that ObamaCare would ''maintain current Hyde amendment restrictions governing abortion policy and extend those restrictions to newly created health insurance exchanges.'' That promise didn't pan out, like so many other promises he made. It now joins, ''If you like your plan, you can keep it'' in President Obama's panoply of broken promises.

Madam Speaker, last week hundreds of thousands of Americans came to Washington, D.C., braved the cold, and marched for life. Participants hailed from all 50 States, various religions, and all different walks of life. The one thing they had in common was a shared dedication to protecting the unborn.

The March for Life gives a voice to the voiceless and sends a powerful message to Representatives of the people assembled here in Congress. It is heartening that so many Americans of different backgrounds are willing to take a stand for life.

This is not a partisan issue, and this is not a partisan bill. H.R. 7 reflects the bipartisan, bicameral agreement that our government should not be in the business of subsidizing abortions. This is not a radical idea, Madam Speaker. It is a commonsense proposal that codifies a longstanding practice. Therefore, I again urge my colleagues to vote for this rule and H.R. 7.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the Democrat leader.

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding. I commend her for her longstanding and strong support and respect for women, for their judgment, for the size and timing of their families, for when women succeed, America succeeds. And Congresswoman Ranking Member SLAUGHTER has been a great proponent of that.

Today, the President will stand at the rostrum of the House to report on the State of the Union. On a day when we should join him in laying out a vision of opportunity and optimism for our country, Republicans are voting to limit women's health care decisions.

They are hiding the provisions of this legislation by what they have described as longstanding tradition and accepted policy that there will be no Federal funding for abortions and, indeed, there isn't. It is spelled out every time we have a bill that addresses this in appropriation, which they have stated very clearly and they have said that, in a bipartisan way, we have supported.

So why are we wasting time coming to the floor today to take up something that, as they have conceded, is the accepted policy of the House and of the Congress of the United States?

Why?

We are doing it because they are using it as a front for legislation that is very harmful to reproductive health of women, very disrespectful of women's judgment and, again, a waste of time on the floor of the House, a waste of time when, instead of disrespecting women, we should be mindful and address the needs of 1.5 million and a growing number of Americans who have lost their unemployment insurance through no fault of their own, hardworking Americans who play by the rules and work hard.

The work-hard ethic is alive and well in America; but in this economic time, some people have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

Over time, we have always respected the system that we had, paid these benefits—but not now.

So today, instead of going down this path to nowhere—they know this legislation is going nowhere, that is to say, the underlying damage that they are doing to women's health in their legislation, it is going nowhere.

Instead, we should defeat this rule, vote against the previous question, follow the lead of distinguished Ranking Member SLAUGHTER on the committee, our distinguished Ranking Member VAN HOLLEN of the Budget Committee, vote this rule down, enable us to bring up a bill that will use the savings from the subsidy cuts in the farm bill in order to pay for unemployment insurance benefits.

I, myself, do not think that they should be paid for because it is an emergency and, by and large, those emergencies have never had an offset.

But if the Republicans want an offset, here is an offset, one that is going to be voted into law tomorrow in the House of Representatives. We can use it today to extend these benefits.

Why don't we use the time that we have to meet the needs of the American people, to honor their priorities, to make their future better, instead of dragging us into the past?

So I ask, again, our colleagues to vote against the bill so that we can take up a bill in support of extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans instead of this radical Republican assault on women's health care rights.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, our leader is right. Our message today should be to be able to help the chronically and unemployed individuals who have worked and are now in need of an extension of the unemployment benefits.

Instead, today, as we pass H.R. 7, we will be making a blatant attack on equal protection of the law, and that disappoints me because I know my good friends believe in the Constitution on the other side of the aisle. And the Hyde amendment, and I had the privilege of serving with Chairman Hyde for a number of years on the Judiciary Committee, clearly is the law.

But what this bill has done is gone even further. It has disenfranchised, from their civil liberties, the people of the District of Columbia, and completely abolished home rule, to the extent of women's health. And if it was a State, the question would be whether or not it was appropriate under the 10th Amendment.

Then it has disincentivized small businesses, for you have disqualified them from getting a tax incentive or a tax credit because they are not allowed to provide for their employees.

This bill should be put to the side, and we should pass legislation to ensure that the unemployed have unemployment insurance. That is what is right about America, and we should do the right thing.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the rule for H.R. 7, the so-called "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act," and the underlying bill.

I oppose this bill because it is unnecessary, puts the lives of women at risk, interferes with women's constitutionally guaranteed right of privacy, and diverts our attention from the real problems facing the American people.

Instead of resuming their War on Women, our colleagues across the aisle should be working with Democrats to extend unemployment insurance to the 1.9 million Americans whose benefits have been terminated and to raise the minimum wage to $10.10 per hour so that people who work hard and play by the rules do not have to raise their families in poverty.

A far better use of our time would be to provide help to long-term unemployed jobhunters by bringing to the floor and passing H.R. 3888, the "New Chance for a New Start in Life Act," a bill I introduced that would provide compensated skills training for the jobs of tomorrow to the long-term unemployed.

Last year I opposed this irresponsible and reckless legislation when it was brought to the floor. I opposed this bill when it was considered in the Judiciary Committee earlier this month. I opposed this bill yesterday when it was being considered by the Rules Committee.

Madam Speaker, the version of H.R. 7 before us is only a little less bad than the bill reported by the Judiciary Committee.

Dropped are the tax provisions that would prevent an individual from deducting any abortion expenses as a tax-eligible medical expense or using pre-tax flex health or health savings accounts for abortion expenses.

But the other draconian provisions of this terrible bill remain intact:

1. Prohibits federal funds from being used for any health benefits coverage that includes coverage of abortion. (Thus making permanent existing federal policies.)

2. Prohibits the inclusion of abortion in any health care service furnished by a federal or District of Columbia health care facility or by any physician or other individual employed by the federal government or the District.

3. Applies such prohibitions to District of Columbia funds.

4. Prohibits individuals from receiving a refundable federal tax credit, or any cost-sharing reductions, for purchasing a qualified health plan that includes coverage for abortions.

5. Prohibits small employers from receiving the small-employer health insurance credit provided by the health care law if the health plans or benefits that are purchased provide abortion coverage.

Taken together, these provisions have the effect, and possibly the intent, of arbitrarily infringing women's reproductive freedoms and poses a nationwide threat to the health and wellbeing of American women and a direct challenge to the Supreme Court's ruling in Roe v. Wade.

Madam Speaker, one of the most detestable aspects of this bill is that it would curb access to care for women in the most desperate of circumstances.

Women like Danielle Deaver, who was 22 weeks pregnant when her water broke. Tests showed that Danielle had suffered anhydramnios, a premature rupture of the membranes before the fetus has achieved viability.

This condition meant that the fetus likely would be born with a shortening of muscle tissue that results in the inability to move limbs. In addition, Danielle's fetus likely would suffer deformities to the face and head, and the lungs were unlikely to develop beyond the 22-week point. There was less than a 10% chance that, if born, Danielle's baby would be able to breathe on its own and only a 2% chance the baby would be able to eat on its own.

H.R. 7 hurts women like Vikki Stella, a diabetic, who discovered months into her pregnancy that the fetus she was carrying suffered from several major anomalies and had no chance of survival. Because of Vikki's diabetes, her doctor determined that induced labor and Caesarian section were both riskier procedures for Vikki than an abortion.

Every pregnancy is different. No politician knows, or has the right to assume he knows, what is best for a woman and her family. These are decisions that properly must be left to women to make, in consultation with their partners, doctors, and their God.

H.R. 7 lacks the necessary exceptions to protect the health and life of the mother.

H.R. 7 is an unconstitutional infringement on the right to privacy, as interpreted by the Supreme Court in a long line of cases going back to Griswold v. Connecticut in 1965 and Roe v. Wade decided in 1973.

In Roe v. Wade, the Court held that a State could prohibit a woman from exercising her right to terminate a pregnancy in order to protect her health prior to viability.

While many factors go into determining fetal viability, the consensus of the medical community is that viability is acknowledged as not occurring prior to 24 weeks gestation.

Supreme Court precedents make it clear that neither Congress nor a state legislature can declare any one element—"be it weeks of gestation or fetal weight or any other single factor—as the determinant" of viability. *Colautti* v. *Franklin*, 439 U.S. 379, 388–89 (1979).

The constitutionally protected right to privacy encompasses the right of women to choose to terminate a pregnancy before viability, and even later where continuing to term poses a threat to her health and safety.

This right of privacy was hard won and must be preserved inviolate. The bill before us

threatens this hard won right for women and must be defeated.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition today to the rule. I offered an amendment to H.R. 7 which was not made in order by the Rules Committee. In fact, not a single amendment was made in order.

The majority continues to tell us about their commitment to open debate and regular order. Yet we continue to govern under closed rule.

I am disappointed by the majority's broken promises. I am also opposed to the underlying bill, which is an attack on women and an attack on their families. It limits a woman's constitutionally protected right to choose.

It denies affordable health care, particularly to low-income women. It disproportionately hurts individuals who are counting on Federal assistance to get health care coverage for themselves and their families.

Instead of bringing up bills that undermine a woman's constitutional rights, why can't we just focus on legislation that creates jobs and helps struggling families?

Madam Speaker, today, let us just put an end to these attacks on women's rights. Indeed, we can do this.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady.

Now, instead of taking up critical issues, we are here today considering a radical bill that failed several years ago. It has been resurrected by the majority so that they can continue their war on women and their vendetta against the Affordable Care Act.

It is a deceptively named bill. It is not about unauthorized use of taxpayer dollars. The purpose of this legislation is to make the Federal Government interfere with a woman's decision to use her private dollars for legal health services.

□ 1415

It will restrict women's access to safe reproductive health; and because it would rule out standard insurance policies now available to women, it will leave even more women without health care coverage.

So instead of taking up an ideological, mean-spirited lost cause, let's turn our attention to helping women get comprehensive health care, excellent health care for themselves and their families. Let's help women get excellent affordable child care, help women get pay equity and fairness. Vote ''no'' on this rule.

Ms. FOXX. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, from renewing unemployment insurance for more than 1.6 million Americans to growing our economy and rebuilding our middle class, there is an urgent need for Congress to pass legislation that will help the American people. So I urge my colleagues to reject today's rule so that we can finally get to work, I hope, on real solutions to the problems that face our Nation, not wasting more time with another attack on women's constitutionally protected reproductive rights.

Madam Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to give the House a vote on the bill written by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) to extend emergency unemployment benefits, paid for with the savings from the farm bill that, it seems, this House will pass today or tomorrow.

Madam 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 gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, the only thing I really need to say, other than the absolute requirements here, is that we have had a great demonstration in this rule debate on what is going on here.

H.R. 7, written by men, discussed before a subcommittee of 12 men and then voted on by the main committee, composed mostly of men, who carried the debate, was brought here today; and yet, with the exception of the manager of the bill, not a single woman on the other side came to speak on this bill.

On our side, we had diversity. We had women. We had men getting up and talking about actually complying with the Constitution. And on the other side, we had, once again, men telling women what they are allowed to do.

We are so far past that. When we finally got the right to vote, we said, Let's put all this behind us, certainly in the House of Representatives, the people's House. Can't you understand the difference here in the people's House, that the people represent the diversity of the faces of America, and all the men over there who seem to have devoted their lives to making sure that women do what they expect them to do and what they are told to do and trying to pass laws to require that. I think it was one of the most telling debates that I have ever seen, and I hope that it will not go unnoticed by the American people.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am going to say it again, this bill is not an attack on women or an attack on women's rights.

I think it is wonderful that we had so many men here today speaking on behalf of the unborn. Life is the most fundamental of all rights, Madam Speaker. It is sacred and God-given. But millions of babies have been robbed of that right in this, the freest country in the world. This is a tragedy beyond words and a betrayal of what we, as a Nation, stand for.

Before liberty, equality, free speech, freedom of conscience, and the pursuit of happiness and justice for all, there has to be life. And yet, for millions of aborted infants, many pain-capable and many discriminated against because of gender or disability, life is exactly what they have been denied. And an affront to life for some is an affront to life for every one of us. That is the message we want to get across today.

One day, we hope it will be different. We hope life will cease to be valued on a sliding scale. We hope the era of elective abortions, ushered in by an unelected Court, would be closed and collectively deemed one of the darkest chapters in American history. But until that day, it remains a solemn duty for all of us to stand up for life.

Regardless of the length of this journey, we will continue to speak for those who cannot. And we will continue to pray to the One who can change the hearts of those in desperation and those in power who equally hold the lives of the innocent in their hands.

Madam Speaker, the commonsense measure before us restores an important longstanding bipartisan agreement that protects the unborn and prevents taxpayers from being forced to finance thousands of elective abortions. It reflects the will of the American people and is the product of what has historically been a bipartisan, bicameral consensus in Congress. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for this rule and H.R. 7.

The material previously referred to by Ms. SLAUGHTER is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 465 OFFERED BY MS. SLAUGHTER OF NEW YORK

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

Sec. 3. Immediately upon adoption of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2642) to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes 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. 3936), the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2014. 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 among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. 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. 4. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of the bill specified in section 3 of this resolution.

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. Madam 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.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on ordering the previous question will be followed by 5-minute votes on adoption of House Resolution 465, if ordered, and approval of the Journal.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 222, nays 194, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 26]

YEAS—222

Aderholt
Amash
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
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
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
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 (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
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
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—194

Andrews
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)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
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
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
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
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

NOT VOTING—15

Amodei
Blumenauer
Campbell
Clay
Jones
McCarthy (NY)
Miller (FL)
Pitts
Rogers (MI)

Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Tipton
Westmoreland

□ 1452

Messrs. PASCRELL and CASTRO of Texas changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

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.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 224, nays 192, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 27]

YEAS—224

Aderholt
Amash
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
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
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
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
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
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
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
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
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—192

Andrews
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)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
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
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
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
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
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

NOT VOTING—15

Amodei
Bachmann
Blumenauer
Campbell
Clay
Jones
McCarthy (NY)
Miller (FL)
Rogers (MI)
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Tipton
Westmoreland

□ 1502

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.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 260, nays 142, answered ''present'' 3, not voting 26, as follows:

[Roll No. 28]

YEAS—260

Aderholt
Bachmann
Barber
Barletta
Barrow (GA)
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonamici
Boustany
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Coble
Cole
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Dent
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellison
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gallego
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Grayson
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hahn
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Horsford
Huelskamp
Huffman
Hultgren
Hurt
Issa
Jackson Lee
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kline
Kuster
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Latham
Latta
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Maloney, Carolyn
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Noem
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Pascrell
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Reichert
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thornberry
Tierney
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Van Hollen
Vargas
Velázquez
Wagner
Walden
Walorski

Walz	Wenstrup	Womack
Wasserman Schultz	Whitfield	Yarmuth
Waxman	Williams	Yoho
Webster (FL)	Wilson (FL)	Young (IN)
Welch	Wilson (SC)	
	Wolf	

NAYS—142

Amash	Green, Gene	Palazzo
Andrews	Griffin (AR)	Pallone
Bachus	Gutiérrez	Pastor (AZ)
Barr	Hall	Paulsen
Barton	Hanna	Pearce
Bass	Hartzler	Perry
Benishek	Heck (NV)	Peters (CA)
Bentivolio	Herrera Beutler	Peters (MI)
Bishop (NY)	Holding	Peterson
Brady (PA)	Honda	Pittenger
Braley (IA)	Hoyer	Pitts
Broun (GA)	Hudson	Poe (TX)
Bucshon	Huizenga (MI)	Price (GA)
Burgess	Hunter	Rahall
Capuano	Israel	Reed
Cárdenas	Jeffries	Renacci
Castor (FL)	Jenkins	Richmond
Chaffetz	Johnson (OH)	Rigell
Clyburn	Jordan	Rogers (AL)
Coffman	Joyce	Ros-Lehtinen
Cohen	Keating	Ryan (OH)
Collins (GA)	Kelly (PA)	Sánchez, Linda T.
Connolly	Kilmer	
Costa	Kind	Sarbanes
Cotton	Kinzinger (IL)	Schakowsky
Courtney	Kirkpatrick	Sires
Crowley	Lance	Slaughter
Cummings	Larson (CT)	Smith (MO)
Davis, Rodney	Lee (CA)	Stivers
DeFazio	Levin	Stockman
Denham	Lewis	Terry
DeSantis	LoBiondo	Thompson (CA)
Duckworth	Lowey	Thompson (MS)
Duffy	Lummis	Thompson (PA)
Edwards	Lynch	Tiberi
Ellmers	Maffei	Upton
Farenthold	Maloney, Sean	Valadao
Fattah	Marchant	Veasey
Fitzpatrick	Matheson	Vela
Flores	Matsui	Visclosky
Forbes	McDermott	Walberg
Foxx	McGovern	Waters
Fudge	Miller, George	Weber (TX)
Garamendi	Moore	Wittman
Garcia	Mulvaney	Woodall
Gibson	Neal	Yoder
Graves (MO)	Negrete McLeod	Young (AK)
Green, Al	Nolan	

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—3

Gohmert	Grijalva	Payne

NOT VOTING—26

Amodei	McCarthy (NY)	Runyan
Blumenauer	McCollum	Ruppersberger
Brady (TX)	Meehan	Rush
Campbell	Miller (FL)	Sanchez, Loretta
Clay	Neugebauer	Schrader
Engel	Nugent	Tipton
Gardner	Owens	Titus
Jones	Pocan	Westmoreland
Labrador	Rogers (MI)	

□ 1509

So the Journal was approved.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1094

Mr. MEEHAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the name of the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN) be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1094.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION AND ABORTION INSURANCE FULL DISCLOSURE ACT OF 2014

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 465, I call up the bill (H.R. 7) to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 465, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113–33 is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 7

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act of 2014''.

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

TITLE I—PROHIBITING FEDERALLY FUNDED ABORTIONS

SEC. 101. PROHIBITING TAXPAYER FUNDED ABORTIONS.

Title 1, United States Code is amended by adding at the end the following new chapter:

''CHAPTER 4—PROHIBITING TAXPAYER FUNDED ABORTIONS

''§ 301. Prohibition on funding for abortions

''No funds authorized or appropriated by Federal law, and none of the funds in any trust fund to which funds are authorized or appropriated by Federal law, shall be expended for any abortion.

''§ 302. Prohibition on funding for health benefits plans that cover abortion

''None of the funds authorized or appropriated by Federal law, and none of the funds in any trust fund to which funds are authorized or appropriated by Federal law, shall be expended for health benefits coverage that includes coverage of abortion.

''§ 303. Limitation on Federal facilities and employees

''No health care service furnished—

''(1) by or in a health care facility owned or operated by the Federal Government; or

''(2) by any physician or other individual employed by the Federal Government to provide health care services within the scope of the physician's or individual's employment,

may include abortion.

''§ 304. Construction relating to separate coverage

''Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as prohibiting any individual, entity, or State or locality from purchasing separate abortion coverage or health benefits coverage that includes abortion so long as such coverage is paid for entirely using only funds not authorized or appropriated by Federal law and such coverage shall not be purchased using matching funds required for a federally subsidized program, including a State's or locality's contribution of Medicaid matching funds.

''§ 305. Construction relating to the use of non-Federal funds for health coverage

''Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as restricting the ability of any non-Federal health benefits coverage provider from offering abortion coverage, or the ability of a State or locality to contract separately with such a provider for such coverage, so long as only funds not authorized or appropriated by Federal law are used and such coverage shall not be purchased using matching funds required for a federally subsidized program, including a State's or locality's contribution of Medicaid matching funds.

''§ 306. Non-preemption of other Federal laws

''Nothing in this chapter shall repeal, amend, or have any effect on any other Federal law to the extent such law imposes any limitation on the use of funds for abortion or for health benefits coverage that includes coverage of abortion, beyond the limitations set forth in this chapter.

''§ 307. Construction relating to complications arising from abortion

''Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to apply to the treatment of any infection, injury, disease, or disorder that has been caused by or exacerbated by the performance of an abortion. This rule of construction shall be applicable without regard to whether the abortion was performed in accord with Federal or State law, and without regard to whether funding for the abortion is permissible under section 308.

''§ 308. Treatment of abortions related to rape, incest, or preserving the life of the mother

''The limitations established in sections 301, 302, and 303 shall not apply to an abortion—

''(1) if the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest; or

''(2) in the case where a woman suffers from a physical disorder, physical injury, or physical illness that would, as certified by a physician, place the woman in danger of death unless an abortion is performed, including a life-endangering physical condition caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself.

''§ 309. Application to District of Columbia

''In this chapter:

''(1) Any reference to funds appropriated by Federal law shall be treated as including any amounts within the budget of the District of Columbia that have been approved by Act of Congress pursuant to section 446 of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act (or any applicable successor Federal law).

''(2) The term 'Federal Government' includes the government of the District of Columbia.''.

SEC. 102. AMENDMENT TO TABLE OF CHAPTERS.

The table of chapters for title 1, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

"4. Prohibiting taxpayer funded abortions 301".

TITLE II—APPLICATION UNDER THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

SEC. 201. CLARIFYING APPLICATION OF PROHIBITION TO PREMIUM CREDITS AND COST-SHARING REDUCTIONS UNDER ACA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) DISALLOWANCE OF REFUNDABLE CREDIT AND COST-SHARING REDUCTIONS FOR COVERAGE UNDER QUALIFIED HEALTH PLAN WHICH PROVIDES COVERAGE FOR ABORTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (A) of section 36B(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: ''or any health plan that includes coverage for abortions (other than any abortion or treatment described in section 307 or 308 of title 1, United States Code)''.

(B) OPTION TO PURCHASE OR OFFER SEPARATE COVERAGE OR PLAN.—Paragraph (3) of section 36B(c) of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) SEPARATE ABORTION COVERAGE OR PLAN ALLOWED.—

''(i) OPTION TO PURCHASE SEPARATE COVERAGE OR PLAN.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall be construed as prohibiting any individual from purchasing separate coverage for abortions described in such subparagraph, or a health plan that includes such abortions, so long as no credit is allowed under this section with respect to the premiums for such coverage or plan.

''(ii) OPTION TO OFFER COVERAGE OR PLAN.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall restrict any non-Federal health insurance issuer offering a health plan from offering separate coverage for abortions described in such subparagraph, or a plan that includes such abortions, so long as premiums for such separate coverage or plan are not paid for with any amount attributable to the credit allowed under this section (or the amount of any advance payment of the credit under section 1412 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act).''.

(2) DISALLOWANCE OF SMALL EMPLOYER HEALTH INSURANCE EXPENSE CREDIT FOR PLAN WHICH INCLUDES COVERAGE FOR ABORTION.—Subsection (h) of section 45R of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) by striking ''Any term'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Any term''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) EXCLUSION OF HEALTH PLANS INCLUDING COVERAGE FOR ABORTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'qualified health plan' does not include any health plan that includes coverage for abortions (other than any abortion or treatment described in section 307 or 308 of title 1, United States Code).

''(B) SEPARATE ABORTION COVERAGE OR PLAN ALLOWED.—

''(i) OPTION TO PURCHASE SEPARATE COVERAGE OR PLAN.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall be construed as prohibiting any employer from purchasing for its employees separate coverage for abortions described in such subparagraph, or a health plan that includes such abortions, so long as no credit is allowed under this section with respect to the employer contributions for such coverage or plan.

''(ii) OPTION TO OFFER COVERAGE OR PLAN.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall restrict any non-Federal health insurance issuer offering a health plan from offering separate coverage for abortions described in such subparagraph, or a plan that includes such abortions, so long as such separate coverage or plan is not paid for with any employer contribution eligible for the credit allowed under this section.''.

(3) CONFORMING ACA AMENDMENTS.—Section 1303(b) of Public Law 111–148 (42 U.S.C. 18023(b)) is amended—

(A) by striking paragraph (2);

(B) by striking paragraph (3), as amended by section 202(a); and

(C) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (2).

(b) APPLICATION TO MULTI-STATE PLANS.—Paragraph (6) of section 1334(a) of Public Law 111–148 (42 U.S.C. 18054(a)) is amended to read as follows:

''(6) COVERAGE CONSISTENT WITH FEDERAL ABORTION POLICY.—In entering into contracts under this subsection, the Director shall ensure that no multi-State qualified health plan offered in an Exchange provides health benefits coverage for which the expenditure of Federal funds is prohibited under chapter 4 of title 1, United States Code.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to taxable years ending after December 31, 2014, but only with respect to plan years beginning after such date, and the amendment made by subsection (b) shall apply to plan years beginning after such date.

SEC. 202. REVISION OF NOTICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDING DISCLOSURE OF EXTENT OF HEALTH PLAN COVERAGE OF ABORTION AND ABORTION PREMIUM SURCHARGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (3) of section 1303(b) of Public Law 111–148 (42 U.S.C. 18023(b)) is amended to read as follows:

''(3) RULES RELATING TO NOTICE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The extent of coverage (if any) of services described in paragraph (1)(B)(i) or (1)(B)(ii) by a qualified health plan shall be disclosed to enrollees at the time of enrollment in the plan and shall be prominently displayed in any marketing or advertising materials, comparison tools, or summary of benefits and coverage explanation made available with respect to such plan by the issuer of the plan, by an Exchange, or by the Secretary, including information made available through an Internet portal or Exchange under sections 1311(c)(5) and 1311(d)(4)(C).

''(B) SEPARATE DISCLOSURE OF ABORTION SURCHARGES.—In the case of a qualified health plan that includes the services described in paragraph (1)(B)(i) and where the premium for the plan is disclosed, including in any marketing or advertising materials or any other information referred to in subparagraph (A), the surcharge described in paragraph (2)(B)(i)(II) that is attributable to such services shall also be disclosed and identified separately.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to materials, tools, or other information made available more than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable 1 hour equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS), the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 7.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I come in support of H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act.

This legislation is written with the same simple principle that has been supported on a bipartisan basis for decades. No taxpayer dollars should be spent on abortions and abortion coverage. H.R. 7 establishes a permanent Governmentwide prohibition on taxpayer subsidies for abortion.

This bill is all the more necessary because of the President's health care law and its attack on this long-standing protection of taxpayer dollars. For example, the health care law's premium subsidies can be used to purchase coverage on exchanges that include coverage of abortion.

The ACA breaks with the tradition of the Hyde Amendment, which has ensured that Federal dollars do not subsidize plans that cover abortion.

□ 1515

The bill before us would simply codify the Hyde amendment language so it applies across the Federal Government.

Consumers should also have the right to know whether the plans they are selecting on an exchange include abortion coverage. While the ACA included some notification provisions, many of our constituents are simply unable to find out whether a plan is paying for abortions. In fact, this inability to find out whether exchange plans provide abortion coverage seems to extend to the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

In October of last year, Secretary Sebelius committed in testimony before the Energy and Commerce Committee to provide the Congress and the American people a full list of exchange plans providing abortion coverage. She was asked again to provide this list in December. Yet we are still waiting as the days tick by. We do not have this list.

The self-appointed most transparent administration in history is simply either unwilling or unable to comply with this request. This is why we have added provisions of the Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act. This would ensure Americans have the right to know whether plans on the exchange are providing abortion coverage. This bill is about protecting taxpayer dollars and protecting life. It also ensures we have at least some transparency under the President's health care law.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise to speak in opposition to H.R. 7.

H.R. 7 is not based on fact. The Affordable Care Act does not secretly funnel taxpayer dollars to fund abortions, and it is not based on the real

experiences of American women and families. They want to make their own personal health care decisions in consultation with their doctors and their spiritual advisors, not with their Congressmen.

Instead, this bill would squarely put the government, namely the IRS, in the exam room by effectively raising the taxes of those who choose an insurance plan that happens to cover abortion services. That includes hard-working men, women, and families who would be penalized, and it would burden small businesses, making each one second-guess its current insurance plan. It would make them change their coverage if they want to keep their health insurance coverage affordable. Simply put, H.R. 7 would dictate what individuals can do with their own private dollars.

Instead of this cynical attack on women's personal decisionmaking, we should be empowering our Nation's families by focusing on the economy, by strengthening the middle class, and by helping parents provide the best for their kids. It is really time to stop reverting back to the culture wars and to start trusting our Nation's women, our Nation's families and small businesses to make their own personal health care decisions.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, at this time, I yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN).

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, we were told over and over again: if you like your health insurance plan, you can keep it. We all found out that that wasn't true. I will never forget on the day that ObamaCare passed—I was here in this Chamber—we were promised by the President of the United States that, not only would the taxpayers of this country not be forced to pay for other people's abortions, but that abortion would not be a part of ObamaCare. We know today that isn't true. Abortion is a part of ObamaCare.

What is worse is that no matter how anyone feels about that issue there is pretty strong agreement that no one should be forced to violate one's conscience and pay for other people's abortions and be forced to do that, but that is the way it is. H.R. 7 makes President Obama's promise stand up and ring true, and it is this: that no taxpayer-funded money ever goes to pay for someone else's abortion.

Couldn't we unite on this principle? This is important.

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to my colleague from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WAXMAN. I thank you for yielding to me.

Madam Speaker, existing law very clearly states no taxpayers' money can fund abortions—that is already the law—with the exception of rape, incest, or to save a woman's life. The Republicans are coming in and saying we have got to make sure that no taxpayer's money is going to be used to pay for any insurance that might provide abortions.

The law—the Affordable Care Act—provides that, if you get an insurance policy on the exchange, you can choose a policy that does not provide abortion coverage, but if you choose a policy that has abortion coverage, that portion of the policy must be paid by the purchaser, not the government.

So this is, in fact, like all we do around here, which is propaganda. It is politics. The Republicans try to make people believe that taxpayers' dollars are being used to pay for abortions. It is not true. This bill is bad in substance. It is an unfortunate bill that tries to interfere with the ability of people to buy with their own money a policy that may cover abortion services, which is a legal medical service.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS), who is a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mrs. ELLMERS. Thank you to my distinguished colleague.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, of which I am a proud cosponsor. I am here today for those who cannot speak for themselves.

The premise of this legislation is nothing new. It simply continues the longstanding prohibition of using taxpayer dollars to pay for abortions. Regardless of whether you are pro-life or not, most Americans recognize that it is unfair to force every American in this country to subsidize abortion. This is, however, exactly what ObamaCare does. It has allowed taxpayer subsidies for health care plans that cover elective abortions. H.R. 7 is as much about protecting the taxpayer as it is about protecting the unborn.

I urge my colleagues to make the fair choice and to vote ''yes'' on this bill.

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I am now pleased to yield 1½ minutes to my colleague from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), who is the ranking member of the Health Subcommittee of Energy and Commerce.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 7. This legislation does nothing but impede women's access to health care in this country and turns the clock back on reproductive rights by 38 years.

The bill's sponsors claim it will prevent taxpayer dollars from paying for abortions. However, we already know that Federal funds do not go to abortions except in the limited cases of rape, incest, or to save the mother's life. This bill does not simply codify the Hyde amendment. That is bogus. What this bill does is prohibit millions of American families from using their own money to buy health plans that include abortion coverage.

Madam Speaker, spending time attacking women's health shows just how far out of touch Republicans in Washington are. Instead of focusing on the economy and job creation, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would rather focus on legislation that puts access to reproductive health care in danger and undermines a woman's right to choose.

On December 28, unemployment insurance expired for Americans still struggling to find work. Meanwhile, Democrats have a bill that would raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour, generating economic activity, creating jobs, and growing the middle class. These should be the priorities of the House of Representatives, not this phony bill before us. This legislation is an unprecedented, radical assault on women's health care. I strongly urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. STUTZMAN), who has been such an advocate on our life issues.

Mr. STUTZMAN. I thank the gentlelady for yielding and for her hard work on this very important issue.

Madam Speaker, I am humbled to join my pro-life colleagues here on the House floor and, more importantly, the millions of pro-life Americans across the country.

Although this debate is often clouded by empty euphemisms like ''choice,'' we cannot forget the human element at the heart of this issue. This isn't about abstract concepts. This is about babies, the most vulnerable members of our society. At the same time, we must show compassion and offer help to those struggling through what seems like an impossible circumstance; and, as civilized people, we ought to prevent taxpayer dollars from subsidizing the senseless destruction of innocent lives once and for all. After all, we are a Nation founded to protect life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Today, we have an opportunity to do exactly that with commonsense legislation. Millions of pro-life Americans don't want their tax dollars used to subsidize abortions.

I urge my colleagues to support the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act.

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I am now very pleased to yield 1½ minutes to my colleague from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE), a real champion for women's issues.

Ms. DEGETTE. Madam Speaker, this so-called ''No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act'' has got to be the most deceptively named bill of this Congress.

Here are the facts:

There is no taxpayer funding for abortion. The Affordable Care Act does not change that. Let me say that again. There is no taxpayer funding for abortion. The Affordable Care Act does not change that.

The ACA contains a hard-fought compromise that guarantees that the tax credits made available through the exchanges are segregated out for plans that cover certain women's health benefits. This bill is an attempt to undo

that compromise. It effectively bans the coverage of important women's health services in the new health insurance exchanges. It restricts the way that women can use their own private dollars to purchase private insurance. It says small businesses cannot get tax credits if they choose to use their private dollars to purchase private insurance that covers important women's benefits.

It goes far, far beyond the Hyde amendment, which prohibits taxpayer funding for most abortions in the annual appropriations bills. It also, for the first time, puts the Hyde amendment into law, and it says women in the District of Columbia will not have the same right to access health services as women in other States throughout this country.

This bill would not only restrict comprehensive health care for women; it would also undermine a woman's right to make her own health care decisions under her insurance policy with her own money. Vote ''no.''

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, at this time, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS).

Mr. MEADOWS. I thank my colleague from Tennessee for her leadership on this particular issue.

For far too long, Madam Speaker, I was silent on this particular issue. Some 22 years ago, as we were expecting our first child—my wife was pregnant—I began to talk to her about this particular thing. There my son was kicking in his mother's womb, and as we started to see this, I realized very profoundly that not only was it life but that it responded. My son was responding to my voice and to my touch, and as we saw that, I realized that I had been silent for far too long.

Regardless of where you are on this particular issue, we must say something today—the many of us who find this just appalling that it is even legal today—in allowing taxpayer dollars to be spent. This is something on which we must stand together. So, for those who can't speak for themselves, I stand here today, and I urge my colleagues to support this particular legislation.

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to my colleague from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

□ 1530

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle seem to be absolutely obsessed with taking away a woman's right to make her own personal health decisions with her own money.

Today, we could be extending unemployment benefits to 1.6 million Americans. Instead, we are considering legislation that would discriminate against a woman's right with her own money to pick an insurance policy. We could be raising the minimum wage instead of effectively banning abortion coverage in the ACA market, even though not a penny of Federal dollars will go to do that. We could be passing the Healthy Families Act to provide paid sick leave, instead of erecting more barriers to women's ability to protect their health, and yes, including access to safe and legal abortions.

We should be defeating this legislation for three reasons:

First, because women and their doctors—not politicians—should make their health care decisions;

Secondly, because we should not be undermining access to comprehensive insurance coverage of women's health insurance paid by the insured woman, not the government;

Third, because we have more pressing priorities to address.

It is time that we moved on to things that matter to the American people and not continue this relentless war on women's rights.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I think it is important to realize over 60 percent of the American people agree with us on this issue. You can look at survey after survey. They do not want taxpayers funds used for abortion.

I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY), joining us in this fight to make certain that we preserve taxpayer funds, a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee.

Mrs. ROBY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from Tennessee for her leadership on this.

I have been intrigued at the latest rhetoric on the so-called ''war on women.'' I am intrigued because at some point pro-abortion activists stopped using the word ''abortion.'' Instead of using the ''A'' word, they use terms like ''women's health'' or ''reproductive rights.'' It is a clever word game designed to disguise the truth and build artificial support. After all, who would be against the health of women? Who would oppose anyone's right to reproduce? But what about the baby's health? What about the unborn child's ''right'' to life?

They don't call it abortion anymore because people understand what abortion is. It is the taking of a life. It is death where life once existed. It is cruel and tragic, and there is no place in the Federal budget for funding it.

Mrs. CAPPS. I am now pleased to yield 1½ minutes to my colleague from Florida (Ms. CASTOR).

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. I thank my colleague for yielding time.

Madam Speaker, here at the start of the new year, when Americans are facing so many challenges in their lives, the Republicans are taking us off on this cruel tangent. We should be debating how to boost wages across this country, how to better educate our children, and how to ensure that everyone has a chance and an opportunity to be successful in their lives and secure in their futures, but yet again, a handful of mostly older, mostly male politicians here in Washington, D.C., believe that the priority for us is to interfere in the personal lives of women. They want to intrude in the personal, private health care decisions of women and their families. They think they know best. But how can they?

I trust women and their families to make their own decisions, not the politicians here in Washington, D.C. Republicans in Congress should respect our right to privacy. Politicians shouldn't be allowed to direct treatments and oversee diagnoses from Washington, and they shouldn't unnecessarily restrict a woman's health insurance coverage and the comprehensive policy that she has paid for.

This Republican bill is an unprecedented, radical assault on a woman's right to make her own health and health insurance decisions. It interferes with the relationship between a patient and doctor.

Thankfully, this bill is not going anywhere after the vote today, but it does provide evidence of what Republicans in the House believe is the top priority for America.

Is it jobs? No. Is it boosting wages? No. Is it improving our schools and higher ed? No.

The Republicans' top priority today is to interfere in the personal lives and health decisions of women across our country.

I urge a ''no'' vote.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. May I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California has 1 minute remaining, and the gentlewoman from Tennessee has 2 minutes remaining.

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, H.R. 7 is not about taxpayer funding. It is about what women, families, and small businesses can do with their own money, their own private dollars, and it is about keeping Congress and the IRS out of the doctor's office.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to start trusting America's women to make their own decisions.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this dangerous bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

What an interesting debate we have and what a difference we have in philosophies as we approach the work of this Nation.

I have found it quite curious, as we have some who say we should be talking about how we live better lives and jobs and futures. You know what, Madam Speaker? As we talk today, what our focus is on is making certain that these precious unborn children do have that right to life, to liberty, to the pursuit of happiness. Yes, indeed.

Today, let me just clear up the record for the legislation before us where we talk about no taxpayer funding of abortion. I want to read from the legislation itself, Madam Speaker.

Section 304 in title I:

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as prohibiting any individual, entity, or

State or locality from purchasing separate abortion coverage or health benefits coverage that includes abortion so long as such coverage is paid for entirely using only funds not authorized or appropriated by Federal law.

Reading directly from the bill and then going to section 306:

Nothing in this chapter shall repeal, amend, or have any effect on any other Federal law to the extent such law imposes any limitation on the use of funds for abortion or for health benefits coverage that includes coverage of abortion, beyond the limitations set forth in this chapter.

So, Madam Speaker, may I lay the fears aside of my colleagues. This is an issue that 60 percent of the American people agree with us on. It is an action that they think is important to take; that it is important for taxpayers to have the assurance from their government that we are not going to have taxpayer funds used for abortion.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS).

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Ms. JENKINS asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand before the House today in support of H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act. I supported this legislation last Congress because the message I have consistently received from my constituents is that they do not want their taxpayers dollars funding abortions. Period.

It is time to put this issue to rest once and for all. The majority of Americans, regardless of where they stand on the larger issue, do not want their taxpayer dollars paying for abortions, but for too long, we have had a patchwork of provisions when it comes to Federal funding, which has created potential loopholes and confusion. H.R. 7 solidifies the longstanding provisions of the Hyde amendment, which are especially needed when it comes to the Affordable Health Care Act.

Madam Speaker, I don't have time to stand here and list all of the problems with the President's health care law, but one of these problems can be fixed through the passage of this bipartisan bill, which simply states that taxpayer dollars will not pay for abortions.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

When I go home to talk to my constituents back home in Queens and the portions of the Bronx that I represent, there are a lot of issues that they bring up to me. They want to see unemployment insurance restored. They want to see jobs created. They want to see our economy strengthened. They want to see investments in infrastructure and building our communities.

But not once has anyone ever said, Forget all about that. They have never said to me, Please raise my taxes if Uncle Sam objects to the health care plan I have picked for me, my family, or my business.

Yes, that's exactly what this bill does. It raises taxes on individuals, families, and small businesses.

I offered an amendment that would block this bill from taking effect if it would raise taxes, but the Republican majority, with yet another closed rule, refused to make that amendment in order. Why?

Because they knew that if that amendment were to become a part of this bill, it would kill this bill. Because no matter how you slice it, this Republican bill will raise taxes on hard-working Americans. Small businesses will pay more taxes because if their employee health plan covers abortion or reproductive care, the business will be denied the small business tax credit. No one denies that.

Families will pay more in taxes when they lose any tax credits they received to purchase a health insurance plan if the plan that works best for them happens to include abortion coverage. That is right. Families will have to give up on choosing their own plan.

Stripping these health care tax credits will have the same effect as if we denied or stripped out similar tax credits like the child tax credit or the higher education tax credit.

If this isn't a tax increase, I don't know what is.

This bill interferes with personal choice and decisions.

I find it ironic that my Republican colleagues claim to support ensuring Americans can pick a private health plan that suits their individual needs until the plan they pick covers legal services they find personally objectionable. I find it ironic that my Republican colleagues oppose every suggested tax increase out there until it is one that abnegates their social agenda.

There is no question this is a serious issue and it deserves serious consideration. Yet on an issue as important as access to comprehensive health care coverage—and with such severe tax implications—it is outrageous that this bill was not first considered by the Ways and Means Committee. The reason for that is Republicans are rushing this new bill forward. Not because they are looking to make good policy, but because they are looking to make good political friends—good political friends who support a very narrow political agenda.

I just wish the real issues that we need to be working on like extending unemployment insurance for 1.6 million Americans would get as much attention as all these made-up issues.

With that, Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1545

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume simply to note that, according to the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, the bill would have negligible effects on tax revenues.

Similarly, the CBO estimates that any effects on direct spending would be negligible for each year and over the 10-year budget window.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the author of the bill.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend for her leadership and her very eloquent remarks.

My friend from New York talked about a narrow agenda and a narrow perspective. More than 60 percent of every poll, in the case of one poll, 69 percent of all women in the United States of America say they do not want their funds being used to subsidize abortion on demand.

Let me remind my colleagues that this legislation accomplishes three goals:

One, it makes the Hyde amendment and other current abortion funding prohibitions permanent. We just reauthorized all of those riders just a few weeks ago. This just makes them permanent;

Ensures that the Affordable Care Act faithfully conforms to the Hyde amendment, as promised by the President of the United States;

And provides full disclosure, transparency, and prominent display that is absolutely lacking right now of the extent to which any health insurance plan on the exchange funds abortion.

Madam Speaker, the President of the United States stood about 10 feet from where I am standing right now back in September of 2009 and told a joint session of Congress:

Under our plan, no Federal dollars will be used to fund abortion.

The executive order that was issued in March of 2010 said, and I quote, that the Affordable Care Act ''maintains current Hyde amendment restrictions governing abortion policy and extends those restrictions to newly created health insurance exchanges.''

Madam Speaker, that is simply not true. It is absolutely not true. As my colleagues know, the Hyde amendment has two parts. It prohibits direct funding for abortion, and it bans funding to any insurance coverage, any insurance plan that includes abortion, except in the cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother.

Earlier speakers have said not a penny will go to pay for abortion. Yet under the Affordable Care Act, massive amounts of public funds—what are they if they are not public? They are public funds coming out of the U.S. Treasury in the forms of tax credits. That is the word used.

$796 billion in direct spending, over 10 years, according to CBO, will pay for insurance plans, many, perhaps most of which will include elective abortions, abortion on demand.

Madam Speaker, that massively violates the Hyde amendment. You can't have it both ways. You can't say you

are for the Hyde amendment and you are comporting with the Hyde amendment when you violate it in such a way.

Let me also point out to my colleagues that there are many States where pro-life individuals and constituents will have no opportunity to buy a plan that is pro-life on the exchanges. That includes Connecticut and Rhode Island. Every plan is abortion-on-demand, so their premium dollars, your tax dollars and mine, will be combining to buy plans that provide for abortion-on-demand.

In 2014, Madam Speaker, we have learned so much about the magnificent life of an unborn child. Increasingly, we have also learned about the deleterious effects that abortions have on women, psychologically, the children born subsequently to them and, of course, to other aspects of their physical health.

Please support H.R. 7.

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, may I ask how much time we have.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 6 minutes remaining, and the gentlewoman from Kansas has 5½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

(Mr. MCDERMOTT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, when you are not limited by the facts, you can say almost anything out on this floor; and we are hearing that today because, in the grand tradition of the anti-choice terminology, the title of this bill is an absolute farce.

Taxpayers do not currently fund abortions, and this legislation would do nothing more than make it difficult for private businesses to provide adequate health care for their workers, restrict how our Nation's Capital conducts its affairs, and generally block poor women from accessing safe and legal abortions.

In 1963, I was an intern in Buffalo, New York, before the Hyde amendment, before all the business and abortions were illegal. I stood there on the general medicine ward with two women, one with eight children, one with 12 children, who had gotten septic abortions done in a back alley, and they died.

They left eight and 12 children in that situation. Now, they did that because they didn't have access to clean abortions. They had made a choice. They can make a choice.

If we say women can't make a choice, that is very simple. We will just tell women what to do, which is really what this bill is all about.

The Republicans want to tell women what to do. Stay out of our lives, get the government out of our lives. No, in every area except women's health.

Now, the truth of the matter is not tax credits or health coverage. The heart of this debate is a simple question about does women's health count?

Do women deserve comprehensive health care?

Or are they some kind of submissive person who hangs around the house and we tell them what to do?

Are their health care needs real?

And does 51 percent of our population deserve control over their own health decisions?

Or are they special exceptions who need to be taken care of because they can't decide for themselves?

Do they have a right to make health decisions for themselves?

Does Congress have a right to stigmatize a safe, legal procedure?

Imagine if we were standing up here debating whether or not private business would be allowed to help employees get coverage for prostate cancer or erectile dysfunction drugs or vasectomies. Suppose we were to pass a law and say you can't pay for that kind of stuff?

Imagine if we told men that they would lose their deserved tax credits in the exchange if they purchased insurance that covered their health needs as they decide them?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CROWLEY. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Women's health care is health care. It is not Congress' job to stigmatize legal medical procedures and punish women who use them. It is also not Congress' job to tell Washington, D.C., what to do or to stop people from having their options.

This bill is insulting to women, and the Republicans are asking for it in the next election. If anybody votes for you, it is because they haven't paid attention to what you are doing out here today. You are insulting every woman in this country. She can't make her own decision about her health care.

I urge you to vote ''no.''

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), my colleague on the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, this is appalling that we are even at this point in talking about this providing health care for women. I am really shocked. If we are not providing the best possible medical help for expectant mothers and their unborn child, that is not the issue.

This country has always been the champion of life around the world, protecting human rights. We have always showed up at every single encounter, whenever people were being treated in a way that we thought was not right.

We worry about Syria and the fact that they are losing their citizens, that Assad is killing their citizens. Yet, since 1973, we have aborted 56 million unborn children, 56 million unborn children.

And today we are having a discussion on H.R. 7, where the only thing the American taxpayers are saying, we know, by law, a woman can make that choice, but we also know that taxpayers don't want to fund it.

It is appalling that we have to have this type of a discussion in the United States of America when you know how we feel in our hearts and in our souls. You know how people feel about this.

I want you to think about those 56 million unborn children who could have made a huge difference in this world. It is absolutely appalling to sit in this great room where so many great debates over the protection of human rights and freedom and liberty have taken placer and to be having this discussion.

This has nothing to do with us cutting back on women's health care. It has to do with taxpayers not wanting to fund an abortion. This is what we are talking about.

Please—and as the gentleman just said—is it about the next election? Really?

Have we reduced ourselves to only winning elections and not winning on behalf of people's rights?

These are human rights. I appreciate the time to come to speak.

Madam Speaker, I have got to tell you, this is one of the most disturbing things that we face in the country today, and I want our people to think about this: 56 million children have been aborted.

If we can't wake up and smell the roses on this, then shame on us.

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN).

Ms. LOFGREN. Madam Speaker, there is no tax money being used for abortions. That has been true since Henry Hyde served here with us.

What this bill does is not address that issue. It really is intended to eliminate abortion coverage in private insurance plans.

Our witness, Professor Wood, testified in the Judiciary Committee that eliminating the tax benefit, essentially raising taxes if a small business offers a broad insurance plan that includes abortion, will result in dropping that portion of the coverage. So this is really an extreme measure.

I understand that not everyone believes that women should make this choice. If you are opposed to abortion, don't have an abortion. But don't put the Federal Government in charge of the decisions that are properly and legally made by women, along with their husbands and families.

This is an extreme agenda. It is wrong, and I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS).

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, throughout history, there has often been great intensity surrounding the debates over protecting the innocent lives of those who, through no fault of their own, find themselves obscured in the shadows of humanity.

It encourages me greatly that in nearly all of those cases the collective

conscience was finally moved in favor of the victims. The same thing is beginning to happen in this debate related to innocent, unborn children.

No matter how the left has tried to obscure the true issue, we are finally beginning to ask ourselves the real question: Does abortion take the life of a child?

And we are finally beginning to realize, as a human family, Madam Speaker, that it does. Ultrasound technology demonstrates to all reasonable observers both the humanity of the victim and the inhumanity of what is being done to them.

And we are finally beginning to realize, as Americans, that 56 million lost little lives and their blood staining the foundations of this Nation is enough.

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, we are prepared to close, if the gentlelady has any additional speakers before she closes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 1½ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from Kansas has 2½ minutes remaining.

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, I don't see any additional speakers, so we will be prepared to close.

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady.

The gentlelady from Kansas, my good friend, who I respect greatly, said the overall tax effect is negligible. I would ask, negligible to whom?

If you are that person who can't get a needed tax credit, it is not negligible to you. It is very real.

Part of what is so troubling about this bill is it is not only how much further it goes than current existing law, but how much further this kind of thinking could go.

What other restrictions on medical procedures are next, as my friend from Washington said? If your procedure involves stem cells, prenatal care for teen mothers?

Could hospitals lose funding for training doctors in necessary procedures that this majority may deem troubling?

The question is, where does it end?

How many other ways can the majority use our laws to punish hardworking Americans?

□ 1600

Can they take away your student loans because your teacher wants you to read ''Catcher in the Rye''? Can they limit your tax benefits for buying a house in the wrong neighborhood? The slope is steep and slippery. Vote ''no'' on this wrongheaded bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, we are not interested in raising taxes. This bill does not do that. We are simply ensuring that hardworking Americans who pay taxes and oppose abortion don't see their taxpayer dollars going to fund abortion.

We have had legislation similar to this bill in place for over three decades. This legislation is not a new idea. The majority of Americans have long held that taxpayers should not be forced to foot the bill for abortion practices that they do not believe in.

I would ask everyone to support passage of H.R. 7, Madam Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I consume.

However stark Americans' differences of opinions can be on the matter of abortion, generally, there has long been bipartisan agreement that Federal taxpayer funds should not be used to destroy innocent life. The Hyde amendment, named for its chief sponsor, former House Judiciary Chairman Henry Hyde, has prohibited the Federal funding of abortion since 1976, when it passed a House and Senate that was composed overwhelmingly of Democratic Members.

It has been renewed each appropriations cycle with few changes for over 35 years, supported by Congress' control by both parties and Presidents from both parties. It is probably the most bipartisan, pro-life proposal, sustained over a longer period of time than any other.

Just last week, a Marist landline and cell phone poll of over 2,000 adults found that 58 percent of those surveyed oppose or strongly oppose using any taxpayer dollars for abortions. It is time the Hyde amendment was codified in the United States Code.

H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, sponsored by CHRIS SMITH of New Jersey, would do just that. It would codify the two core principles of the Hyde amendment throughout the operations of the Federal Government, namely, a ban on Federal funding for abortions and a ban on use of Federal funds for health benefits coverage that includes coverage of abortion.

During the time the Hyde amendment has been in place, probably millions and millions of innocent children and their mothers have been spared the horrors of abortion. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the Hyde amendment has led to as many as 675,000 fewer abortions each year. Let that sink in for a few precious moments.

The policy we will be discussing today has likely given America the gift of millions more children and, consequently, millions more mothers and millions more fathers, millions more lifetimes and trillions more loving gestures and other human gifts in all their diverse forms. What a stunningly wondrous legacy.

I encourage my colleagues to support this important legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Ladies and gentlemen, H.R. 7 is not about the regulation of Federal funds. Through the Hyde amendment, Congress already prevents funding of abortion and has done so for more than 30 years. Nothing in the Affordable Care Act changes this fact.

H.R. 7 is not needed to prevent the Federal funding of abortion, nor does it merely codify existing law as has been falsely asserted by those proponents. As a matter of fact, the bill on the floor today contains numerous new provisions adopted after the Judiciary Committee marked up and reported the bill.

This version of the bill has never been examined, debated, or amended by any committee of the House, yet my colleagues in the majority refuse to allow their colleagues any opportunity to amend this harmful bill today. This bill is far too significant and its impact on women is far too harmful to foreclose meaningful debate on an amendment as my colleagues in the majority have done.

This measure represents yet another assault on women's health care and constitutionally protected rights and should be rejected.

I reserve the balance of my time.

I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 7, the so-called "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act."

This bill is just another ill-conceived attempt to push a divisive social agenda instead of focusing on what Americans care most about: creating jobs and improving our Nation's economy.

Plain and simple, H.R. 7 is not about the regulation of federal funds, but yet again another attack on women's health and their constitutionally-protected rights.

Sponsors of H.R. 7 want you to believe that the bill merely codifies existing law, but this is false.

For more than 30 years, the current law has prohibited federal funding for abortion. There is absolutely no risk that the public fisc will be raided to pay for abortion services, even under the Affordable Care Act.

The goal of H.R. 7 is to nullify the decisions of women and small business employers who choose insurance coverage that includes abortion coverage paid for with purely private, non-federal funds.

Through its novel tax penalty provisions, H.R. 7 departs radically from existing law, taking away women's existing health care and placing their health and lives at risk.

H.R. 7 eradicates the authority of the District of Columbia to make decisions about how locally raised funds are used for the healthcare of women.

When Delegate Holmes-Norton sought to address the Judiciary Committee about the bill's overreach, her request was denied by the Majority in utter disrespect for her and the District.

Women deserve a meaningful examination of their constitutionally-protected private health care decisions, not the frivolous and reckless process the Majority has undertaken on this bill before us today.

This bill was rushed through the Judiciary Committee, and was discharged from two other committees of jurisdiction—leaving no opportunity for their Members to seriously consider this legislation.

What the Majority has brought to the floor today contains numerous new provisions, has never been examined, debated, or amended by any Committee of the House.

The fact that the Minority is foreclosed from offering any amendments today is yet further proof that this legislation is simply intended to be yet another polemic attack on women, against our deliberative legislative process, and an attack against the citizens of the District of Columbia.

Why are these latest changes being demanded? Who is pushing this drastic course?

I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose this egregious bill.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER).

Mrs. WAGNER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank Congressman CHRIS SMITH for his leadership in protecting the rights of the unborn.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of life. I believe in the sanctity of life, that life begins at conception, and that life is truly our greatest gift. I also recognize that abortion can be a very divisive issue. However, there is an area where most Americans agree and where elected officials can come together, and that is on the Federal funding of abortion.

Recent polling and information confirms what we have always known, that the majority of Americans do not want their hard-earned tax dollars going to pay for abortions. And Congress has consistently worked together over the years by attaching the Hyde amendment to appropriations bills to prevent taxpayer funds from going towards abortions.

Today the House will vote on a bill that I am proud to cosponsor and support, H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act. This bill does exactly what the name implies: it permanently ensures that no taxpayer dollars go to pay for abortions or abortion coverage. This bill codifies the Hyde amendment as well as addresses taxpayer funding that, unfortunately, the Hyde amendment does not cover.

For example, ObamaCare expressly allows funding for plans that include abortions through taxpayer subsidies. During the health care debate, the President assured the American people that no Federal dollars would be used to fund abortions under ObamaCare. Yet this was just one more in a long line of inaccurate statements on ObamaCare by the President and his administration.

The No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act not only prevents taxpayer funding for abortion under ObamaCare, but it also requires transparency to ensure consumers are fully informed about which plans on the exchanges contain abortion coverage and surcharges.

Madam Speaker, throughout my life, I have worked hard to draw attention to the pro-life movement. I do it with love and compassion. I live for the day when abortion is not just illegal, but it is unthinkable.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased now to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, today we consider H.R. 7, the misleadingly named No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion bill. Congress, unfortunately, already prohibits Federal funding of abortion. This bill does not simply codify existing law. Rather, it modifies and extends current funding restrictions in the Hyde amendment and, for the first time ever, uses the Tax Code to penalize the use of private funds to purchase insurance that covers abortion. It denies small businesses the tax credits they are entitled to under the Affordable Care Act if they offer their employees health insurance, if that health insurance covers abortion. It similarly denies income-eligible women and families the tax credits that they are entitled to under the Affordable Care Act if they use their own money to purchase insurance, if that insurance covers abortion.

The claim here is that a tax credit equals Federal funding. This is a completely new principle, asserted for the first and only time in this context. If we adopt this new theory—that granting tax relief is Federal funding—then how can tax relief for churches, synagogues, and religious-affiliated schools not be considered Federal funding in violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment? We should all be very careful about establishing this new principle.

H.R. 7 is not a codification of existing law, nor is it just another attempt to enact the approach taken in the Stupak-Pitts amendment to the House-passed Affordable Care Act. H.R. 7 is a radical departure from current tax treatment of medical expenses and insurance coverage; and it is not justifiable, nor is it necessary, unfortunately, to prevent Federal funding of abortion.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this bill.

Today the House will consider H.R. 7—a bill that embraces the completely fictitious claim that legislation is needed to prevent federal funding of abortion services.

Congress already prohibits federal funding of abortion and has done so for more than thirty years. Many of us disagree with that decision. But regardless, there is no need for this bill, at least not to prevent federal funding of abortion.

Nor is the bill simply an effort to codify existing law. H.R. 7 modifies and extends current funding restrictions in the Hyde Amendment that are limited in time and scope, without any effort to determine how such a sweeping and permanent expansion would impact American women and their families.

If this were all, that would be reason enough to oppose it, but H.R. 7 actually goes much further. For the first time ever, anti-choice lawmakers are using the Federal tax code to penalize the purchase of insurance that covers abortion in certain circumstances. These penalties would apply when women and businesses use their own money—let me repeat that, their own money, not Federal funds—to purchase insurance that covers abortion.

In particular, H.R. 7 penalizes income-eligible women by denying them the tax credits that they are entitled to under the Affordable Care Act if they use their own money to purchase insurance that covers abortion. It similarly denies small businesses the tax credits that they are entitled to under the Affordable Care Act if the insurance they offer their employees includes abortion coverage.

The claim here is that a tax credit equals Federal funding. This is a completely new principle, asserted for the first and only time in this context. If we adopt this new theory—that granting tax relief is Federal funding—then how can tax relief for churches not be considered Federal funding in violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment? I am sure that many churches, synagogues, other houses of worship, and religiously-affiliated schools would be alarmed to discover this.

We all should be very careful about establishing this new principle.

Some additional tax penalties were in the bill when it was considered by the House Judiciary Committee. Those were removed and we now have new provisions that have never been considered by any Committee.

We have no idea who made these changes or why they were made. But they demonstrate the fiction and hypocrisy that underlies this bill.

This bill, unlike the version considered in the Judiciary Committee, no longer denies women who pay for abortion out-of-pocket the ability to claim those expenses as deductible medical expenses. And this version no longer taxes women when they use money they have set aside in flexible savings accounts or health savings accounts for abortion services. We welcome the removal of those tax penalty provisions, but these changes are not nearly enough.

This version, unlike the bill considered by House Judiciary, also adds a notice requirement that requires insurance companies to provide a false notice to policyholders that they will be forced to pay a so-called ''abortion surcharge'' if they are in a plan that covers abortion.

Existing law already requires plans to disclose to consumers whether a policy includes abortion. No further notice is necessary. And there is no surcharge for this coverage, as the new notice provision falsely suggests. The Affordable Care Act requires participating insurance plans to segregate monies for abortion services from all other funds, a measure my anti-choice colleagues insisted was necessary to prevent Federal funding of abortion. The segregation of a private dollar contribution of at least $1 a month is not a surcharge at all but merely a segregation of the premium. The new notice provision requires insurance companies to mislead consumers into mistakenly believing that they are paying a separate, additional charge for coverage of abortion and that they would pay a lesser premium for insurance that does not cover abortion.

The harms caused by this bill are compounded by the fact that we are being forced to consider it under a closed rule, with no opportunity for amendment.

The potential impact of this bill on the rights of individuals to spend their own funds to purchase comprehensive insurance that cover all of their health care needs (including the potential of an unplanned pregnancy) is significant.

Members should have been given the chance to consider amendments and debate the impact of this bill—and, in particular, its untested tax provisions—before taking an up or down vote on the whole package. This bill is too important, the impact on the rights of all Americans to spend their own money in ways see fit too great, simply to close the door to any debate.

I urge all my colleagues to vote no on this bill.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER).

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) for his leadership on this, and I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for sponsoring this bill.

Whether you are pro-choice or pro-life, I think we can all agree on this: it is wrong to spend hard-earned tax dollars to pay for abortions. Yet that is the policy of this administration through ObamaCare and what today's bill reverses. This commonsense provision ensures tax dollars are used wisely and government policy does not violate Americans' basic rights.

H.R. 7 brings a stop to government-subsidized abortion created through ObamaCare, creates transparency by ensuring citizens have the information they need regarding their insurance policy and whether it pays for abortion or not, and, ultimately, lessens the number of lives ended through abortion. This legislation is important for the future of our country and forces our government to no longer be complicit in taking the lives of millions of innocent babies.

We now live in a country that is trending pro-life, and a CNN poll shows that 61 percent of respondents oppose public funding for abortion. Forcing Americans to pay for services that they find morally unconscionable is wrong.

The pro-choice Alan Guttmacher Institute demonstrates that when tax dollars are used, abortions increase by 25 percent. Conversely, by ensuring tax dollars are not used for abortions, we can not only save hard-earned tax dollars, but we can save lives, and that is a policy we can all live with.

I ask my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 7.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased now to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON), a distinguished Judiciary Committee member.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act.

H.R. 7 is a dangerous bill, and it is an attack on women's health, particularly women who get subsidies based on their ability to purchase insurance under ObamaCare. This bill is also emblematic of a Republican Party that is utterly and completely out of touch with Americans.

□ 1615

Americans want to grow this economy. They want jobs. The response of the Republicans, however, is more anti-gay, anti-woman legislation. They have even referred to this as a job-creating bill. Not one job will be created by the bill. Why don't we focus on getting Americans back to work instead of doing everything we can to restrict women's health care choices? Let's focus on helping the 1.3 million Americans whose unemployment benefits lapsed a month ago today.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, may I ask how much time is remaining on each side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Virginia has 4 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Michigan has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. GOODLATTE. At this time, Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK).

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding time to me, and I thank Mr. SMITH for bringing this very important legislation here to the House.

I rise today in support of H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act—commonsense, bipartisan legislation that will protect American taxpayers from footing the bill for this barbaric practice of abortion, in turn helping to protect women's health and unborn life.

Now, despite the legislation's bipartisan support, we have heard more than a few mischaracterizations of this bill from our colleagues across the aisle, and as a woman, I reject these false attacks. This legislation is not about taking away anyone's choice. It is about giving choice to the nearly two-thirds of Americans who don't want their hard-earned tax dollars funding the destruction of innocent life.

Madam Speaker, as a nurse for over 40 years, I have seen countless births. I have seen the joy in a mother's eyes as she holds her newborn for the first time, and I have also seen a young woman lose her life to abortion.

Those experiences informed my belief that all life—born and unborn, mother and child—is a precious gift, and I hope to see the day that this truth is reflected in our Nation's laws. Until then, we can, at least, protect the values and conscience of millions of American taxpayers by passing this legislation.

I look forward to voting ''yes'' on the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU), a member of the Judiciary Committee.

Ms. CHU. Madam Speaker, new year, new Congress, but the same old political tricks. H.R. 7, the so-called No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, will not do anything further to stop tax dollars from funding abortions because tax dollars are already restricted from funding abortion and have been ever since the Hyde amendment was introduced in 1976.

As one of the five female members on the Judiciary Committee, I strongly oppose this bill that will undermine women from using their own private funds to buy their own private insurance for health coverage. This is a ploy to drive out abortion coverage in the private market. Millions of women who purchase health insurance in the private market will lose access to comprehensive health insurance.

It is time to end these games once and for all. Decisions about a woman's reproductive health belong between that woman and the doctor she trusts, not with politicians who would interfere with a woman's private decision.

I urge a ''no'' vote on this bill.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased now to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DELBENE), a member of the Judiciary Committee.

Ms. DELBENE. Madam Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to oppose this sweeping anti-choice bill which would deny premium tax credits to income-eligible women and their families if the insurance they obtain under the Affordable Care Act covers abortion—except in cases of rape, incest and when a woman's life is in danger.

What experts in the health care industry predict, and as one of the witnesses at this month's Judiciary hearing testified, is that the burdensome regulatory requirements contained in this bill would have a chilling effect and lead to insurers dropping abortion coverage from their plans.

While this bill provides a narrow exception if a woman's life is in danger, unfortunately, it would not allow any exceptions to protect a woman's health, even in circumstances where she needs an abortion to prevent severe, permanent damage to her health.

Each patient is different, and legislators cannot know the circumstances of every pregnancy. They should not interfere in personal, private medical decisions that should be made between a woman, her family and her doctor. I urge my colleagues to oppose H.R. 7.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), a member of the Judiciary Committee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, let me thank the gentleman who has served on this committee of opportunity, equality and justice for his entire career, among other committees, in the United States Congress. Let me thank the manager and chairman of the Judiciary Committee, as well.

We do not come to the floor in argument about each other's conscience. We respect the belief of others and the conscience of others and the integrity of the decision made by those who choose to stand for their positions. As a senior member of the Judiciary Committee, I only stand here on the basis

of equal protection under the law and the applying of the Constitution to every single person, which includes a woman's access to health care.

What H.R. 7 does beyond the Hyde amendment, which has been law and in law and adhered to for decades, one, that I would be reminded of the eloquence of Chairman Hyde, who would be on the floor discussing the continuation of his position.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. That is very kind, sir.

If, for example, you have pretax money for health care or a health savings account, you are taken care of, but if you live in the District of Columbia and you want to use local funds, you are left along the highway of unequalness. If you are in the United States military, you are left along the highway of unequalness. If, for example, you have been the victim of sexual assault that results in a situation that requires access to health care, you are left alone. Federal employees, you are left alone. Poor, you are left alone.

The bill that we have was just submitted to the Rules Committee. It was not before the House Judiciary Committee. We don't know what is in it.

So, Madam Speaker, I do not rise against a person's conscience. I rise and hold the Constitution in my hand, and that is that we have a right to privacy, and we have a right to use local or your own funds, and in this bill, all of that has been denied. I ask the question: Can we pass this legislation and deny Americans equal protection under the law?

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this legislation which is an assault on women; and ask that my colleagues also vote against H.R. 7, The No Taxpayer Funding For Abortion Act.

What we have before us in H.R. 7 is a dangerous and misleading bill which has one goal—eliminating abortion coverage in all of the insurance markets. And it is the reincarnation of H.R. 3 which was a featured bill in the last Congress.

And although some terrible things were in the bill have been removed—this bill is still an attack on women.

Let me be clear, if H.R. 7 were to become law, all women could either lose insurance coverage that includes abortion or be stigmatized while seeking such comprehensive insurance.

Mr. Speaker, I offered an amendment in the Rules Committee last night along with ALL of the women on the Judiciary Committee, which was summarily rejected as were all of the other amendments to this bill.

Our amendment would have corrected a shortcoming in the bill, which only considers a woman's health when she is faced with death.

I would like to thank all four women on the Judiciary Committee, KAREN BASS, JUDY CHU, SUSAN DELBENE, and ZOE LOFGREN who cosponsored this important amendment.

Every year, 10–15 million women suffer severe or long-lasting damage to their health during pregnancy.

This Congress should not be in business of interfering with a woman's health nor should we ever single out women who choose not to endure a long-lasting health defect or disease due to a pregnancy.

Without this amendment, this Congress would submit millions of women to face serious and long- lasting health issues.

Our amendment reflects the 1978 version of the Hyde Amendment by incorporating an exemption for severe and long-lasting damage to a woman's health in continuing a pregnancy.

This amendment is supported by the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Women must receive the best health care and disease prevention and have access to all medically appropriate legal medical procedures.

And Mr. Speaker it must be stated over and over that this is purely partisan and divisive legislation which:

1. Unduly burdens a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy and thus puts their lives at risk;

2. Does not contain exceptions for the health of the mother;

3. Unfairly targets the District of Columbia; and

4. Infringes upon women's right to privacy, which is guaranteed and protected by the U.S. Constitution.

The bill poses a nationwide threat to the health and wellbeing of American women and a direct challenge to the Supreme Court's ruling in Roe v. Wade.

One of the most detestable aspects of this bill is that it would curb access to care for women in the most desperate of circumstances.

Women like Danielle Deaver, who was 22 weeks pregnant when her water broke. Tests showed that Danielle had suffered anhydramnios, a premature rupture of the membranes before the fetus has achieved viability.

This condition meant that the fetus likely would be born with a shortening of muscle tissue that results in the inability to move limbs. In addition, Danielle's fetus likely would suffer deformities to the face and head, and the lungs were unlikely to devel beyond the 22-week point. There was less than a 10 percent chance that, if born, Danielle's baby would be able to breathe on its own and only a 2 percent chance the baby would be able to eat on its own.

H.R. 7 hurts women like Vikki Stella, a diabetic, who discovered months into her pregnancy that the fetus she was carrying suffered from several major anomalies and had no chance of survival. Because of Vikki's diabetes, her doctor determined that induced labor and Caesarian section were both riskier procedures for Vikki than an abortion.

Every pregnancy is different. No politician knows, or has the right to assume he knows, what is best for a woman and her family. These are decisions that properly must be left to women to make, in consultation with their partners, doctors, and their God.

H.R. lacks the necessary exceptions to protect the health and life of the mother.

H.R. 7 is an unconstitutional infringement on the right to privacy, as interpreted by the Supreme Court in a long line of cases going back to Griswold v. Connecticut in 1965 and Roe v. Wade decided in 1973.

In Roe v. Wade, the Court held that a state could prohibit a woman from exercising her right to terminate a pregnancy in order to protect her health prior to viability.

While many factors go into determining fetal viability, the consensus of the medical community is that viability is acknowledged as not occurring prior to 24 weeks gestation.

Supreme Court precedents make it clear that neither Congress nor a state legislature can declare any one element—"be it weeks of gestation or fetal weight or any other single factor—as the determinant" of viability. Colautti v. Franklin, 439 U.S. 379, 388–89 (1979).

The constitutionally protected right to privacy encompasses the right of women to choose to terminate a pregnancy before viability, and even later where continuing to term poses a threat to her health and safety.

This right of privacy was hard won and must be preserved inviolate. And again, our amendment would have helped to preserve this hard won right for women.

Let's not turn back the hands of time Mr. Speaker—vote "no" on H.R. 7.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), a distinguished member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, no child is unwanted. Let me repeat that. No child is unwanted. There are millions of American couples today that are waiting to give these unborn children a home—a loving home. I don't know all the circumstances, but I do know that a lot of the unborn are little girls and little boys. I don't know about my colleagues, but I believe that God has a plan for each of those unborn children, and I don't believe that that plan includes terminating their life.

Now, that may not be a popular thing to say. But can't we focus on the unborn and the fact that there are millions of families out there, many of them childless, that would love to have these little girls and boys in their home?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 2 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Virginia has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield briefly to the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to introduce a list of those opposing H.R. 7 into the RECORD.

ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSING H.R. 7, THE ''NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION ACT''

Advocates for Youth; American Association of University Women (AAUW); American Civil Liberties Union; American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; American Public Health Association; American Society for Reproductive Medicine; Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum; Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP); Black Women's Health Imperative, Catholics for Choice; Center for Reproductive Rights; Choice USA.

Feminist Majority; Guttmacher Institute; Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization

of America, Inc; Jewish Women International; Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs; Methodist Federation for Social Action; NARAL Pro-Choice America; National Abortion Federation; National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF); National Center for Lesbian Rights; National Council of Jewish Women; National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association; National Health Law Program; National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health.

National Organization for Women; National Partnership for Women & Families; National Women's Health Network; National Women's Law Center; People For the American Way; Physicians for Reproductive Health; Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Population Connection Action Fund; Population Institute; Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need; Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

Religious Institute; Reproductive Health Technologies Project; Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS); South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce; Third Way; Unitarian Universalist Association; Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation; United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased now to yield the remainder of the time to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN).

Ms. LOFGREN. Madam Speaker, there has been a lot said today about taxpayer money being used for abortion. I think it is important to note that that does not occur in America today. That decision was made a number of decades ago recognizing that taxpayer funds will not be used. So what are we doing here? What we are doing is making sure that abortion can't be offered in the private insurance market. That is what we are doing here.

It was said earlier that the CBO had indicated there would be a minimal impact from the tax increase on small businesses if a broad insurance plan was offered that included abortion. The reason for that is that it is anticipated that all of those small businesses will avoid the tax increase and drop the abortion coverage. So that is why there would not be a large impact, but there will be a large impact on women because, although there are exceptions for the life of the mother, there is no exception for the health of the mother, something that is required by the Constitution and our Supreme Court. In those cases, this can be a very expensive proposition.

I will just tell you an example of a person whom I know, Vicki, who, unfortunately, her much-wanted child, all of this child's brains formed outside of the cranium. There was no question this wanted child was not going to survive more than a minute or 2. Unfortunately for Vicki, without an abortion, the expectation was that her uterus would be destroyed and she would not be able to have other children—not that she would die, but that she would not be able to have other children that she and her husband wanted to have.

It is very expensive to get some of these procedures when your health is at risk. So, yes, we will not have increases on small businesses because they will drop these coverages, but the women of America are going to be told by this government, yes, we know better than you do. We are going to decide for you.

Vote ''no'' on this very wrongheaded bill.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I would say that the evidence is overwhelming that the American people do not support using taxpayer funds for abortion, and the evidence is very strong that that should not be allowed under ObamaCare, either, and it is also very strong that individuals have the opportunity with their own private funds to purchase a policy that provides for abortion. It might be a separate policy from the policy that provides their health insurance. It would be probably not very expensive. That is their choice. That is their conscience. That is not what the American people expect to see done with their taxpayer dollars.

In fact, as one of our committee witnesses pointed out, a majority of the public opposes government funding for abortion. Women oppose funding by a few percentage points more than men, and those who are poor and would presumably be those most likely to seek government funding for abortion oppose it more than those who are more affluent.

The bill before us today is supported by all segments of American society, and it should be supported by this House, as well. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. Let's pass it through the House.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMP. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7, the ''No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act.'' This legislation codifies the longstanding, bipartisan Hyde amendment, which prevents taxpayer funds from being used for abortion-related costs.

The legislation before us today imposes restrictions with respect to two ObamaCare-related tax benefits: the Exchange subsidies and the small business health insurance credit.

These two provisions were included in a broader bill passed in the 112th Congress. The legislation is necessary because the Democrats' health care law included a massive expansion of the IRS's authority and funneled taxpayer funds for various costs and procedures, including abortions.

This legislation will prevent the use of taxpayer funding for abortions—reflecting the spirit and the intent of the Hyde amendment.

However, I want to be clear about what the legislation would not do.

It would not affect either the ability of an individual to pay for an abortion (or for abortion coverage) through private funds, or the ability of an entity to provide separate abortion coverage.

It would not apply to abortions in cases of rape, incest or life-threatening physical condition of the mother.

It would not apply to treatment of injury, infection or other health problems resulting from an abortion.

Simply put, this bill is about making sure taxpayer funds are not used to pay for abortions and does not affect the use of private funds. As such, this legislation takes the necessary steps to codify the Hyde amendment in the tax code so that it appropriately reflects changes that have occurred as a result of ObamaCare.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 7, another thinly veiled attempt to limit American women from being able to access comprehensive health care.

It may be a new year, but 2014 clearly has not inspired new beginnings for the Majority leadership in this House of Representatives. Last year, under Republican leadership, we did not take up immigration reform, we did not overhaul No Child Left Behind, and we did not vote on legislation to create jobs, or help those who have been struggling to find work. In fact, Congress's failure to extend unemployment benefit left millions of Americans, including 90,000 New Jerseyans, without their benefits.

But instead of taking on these critical issues, we are here today considering a radical bill that failed in 2011, but has been resurrected by the Majority so they continue to pursue their war on women and their vendetta against the Affordable Care Act.

This deceptively named ''No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act'' is not about unauthorized use of taxpayer dollars. The purpose of this legislation is to permit the federal government to interfere with a woman's decision to use private dollars on legal health services. This dangerous legislation would jeopardize the availability of safe reproductive health care services for all American women. In addition to intentionally interfering with women's access to health services, this bill would result in higher taxes for small businesses, and permanently bar military service women, civil servants, D.C. residents, and low-income women from abortion coverage.

For 2014, I propose a New Year's resolution for this Congress. Let's cease the tired partisan ploys, and work together on legislation that expands—not limits—Americans' access to quality health care coverage. Let's work together to craft legislation that accelerates job growth, and let's work together to ensure that Americans get their unemployment benefits.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Madam Speaker, thank you for bringing this critical bill to the floor today. I'd also like to thank my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. SMITH, for authoring this legislation.

Coming on the heels of the 41st anniversary of Roe v. Wade, this bill signifies our staunch support of life and the importance of preventing taxpayers' funds from being used to pay for abortion.

For years, our government has had an uneven approach to federal funding of abortions. This bill would create a single, unified policy across all federal agencies. U.S. taxpayer funds are not to be used to pay for abortions whether it be funding for elective abortion coverage through any program funded through the annual Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Act; funding for health plans that include elective abortion coverage for Federal employees; congressionally appropriated funds for abortion in the District of Columbia; or funding through the Peace Corps or

federal prisons or federal immigration detention centers to pay for elective abortion.

The No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act will do just what the title says. It will ban the use of federal funds for abortion or health plans that cover abortion. H.R. 7 prohibits abortions at facilities owned or operated by the federal government, and prevents federal employees from performing abortions within the scope of their employment.

The founding fathers strongly believed that human beings are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, among which is the right to life, and therefore the right to life of each human being should be preserved and protected by every human being in the society and by the society as a whole. It is our duty as Members of Congress to protect those who cannot speak for themselves.

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7—the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act.

Our Founding Fathers, when writing the Declaration of Independence, listed three rights that this Congress has an obligation to protect, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I believe strongly that life begins at conception and thus it's our obligation to protect the right to life, especially for the most defenseless.

It's unconscionable to me that some would even consider using Federal dollars to perform these heinous acts against the unborn. Unfortunately, there are some who would like this practice to continue even though a majority of Americans don't believe that taxpayer funds should be used to abort a baby.

The bill that we're debating today prohibits taxpayer-funded abortions but leaves exceptions for rape, incest and the life of the mother. This legislation also holds the President's health care law to the same standard by making sure those receiving assistance to participate in the newly formed health care exchanges aren't able to receive abortion on demand.

Like many parents, I will never forget when I first heard my child's heart beat. It was a sign of a healthy, living child of God. It was a defining moment for me as a father knowing that my wife and I were bringing and responsible for another human being.

I strongly urge the House to pass this bill because we cannot and shouldn't accept abortion on demand with taxpayer dollars.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my opposition to H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act.

Longstanding federal policy explicitly prohibits the use of federal funds for abortions, except for certain narrow circumstances of rape, incest, or severe health complications that threaten the life of the mother. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) maintains this ban and a federal appeals court confirmed that no federal dollars may be used to pay for abortion services under the law.

Far more sweeping in scope than the title implies, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act goes well beyond codifying the Hyde amendment and protecting public funds. This bill intrudes on women's reproductive autonomy and access to health care, manipulates the tax code to put additional financial burdens on many women and small businesses, and unnecessarily restricts the private insurance choices available to consumers today.

The House of Representatives should be spending our time working to improve access to health care for all Americans, instead of deceptive legislation that interferes with a woman's ability to make personal, private medical decisions.

□ 1630

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 465, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

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. MOORE. Madam Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

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

Ms. MOORE. Yes, Madam Speaker, I am opposed to the bill.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

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

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. MOORE moves to recommit the bill H.R. 7 to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report the bill 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 III—RULE OF CONSTRUCTION

SEC. 301. PROTECTING THE MEDICAL PRIVACY OF WOMEN, INCLUDING VICTIMS OF RAPE AND INCEST.

Nothing in title I, section 201(b), or section 202 of this Act shall be construed to authorize any party to violate, directly or indirectly, the medical privacy of any woman, including the victims of rape or incest, with respect to her choice of or use of comprehensive health insurance coverage.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I reserve a point of order against the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A point of order is reserved.

Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin is recognized for 5 minutes in support of her motion.

Ms. MOORE. Madam Speaker, the motion to recommit is very simple, as the Clerk stated. It will ensure that nothing in this bill shall be construed to authorize any party to violate the medical privacy of any woman, including the victims of rape or incest with respect to her choice of or use of comprehensive health insurance.

Here we are today, Madam Speaker, on the day of the State of the Union when long-term unemployment insurance has lapsed, debating a recycled bill that attacks women's health care. This is truly an out-of-touch moment for the majority.

The legislation under consideration today fundamentally lacks compassion. Women's health advocates have expressed strong concerns about its impact on women's right to privacy when it comes to their medical care and decisions. This bill could have damaging effects on women who have been raped and victimized by incest, who suffer from debilitating illnesses like the one that the gentlelady from California described, Vicky, who want nothing more than their right to make their own personal health care decisions with their own private insurance.

I have heard people continuously say that this is a recodification of the Hyde amendment. We all abide by the Hyde amendment. This bill seeks to strip women of their rights to have insurance even in the private insurance market. That is why I invite my colleagues to join me in passing this motion to recommit today, to ensure that we do not unintentionally eviscerate protections that are fundamental to women's health and liberty.

We are greatly concerned about this legislation, that it would force women in private health insurance to have to ''justify'' their need for a full range of reproductive health care services even if their life is in danger or if they have been the victim of sexual assault or incest. This legislation, again, could remove the option for a health insurance company to choose to offer comprehensive women's health services.

Many of us remember, some of us on a very personal level, the egregious history of this issue. Many of us remember the shame and stigma that women—victims—faced, and still face when they come forward to seek services. Depending on how this bill is implemented, a woman could be required to provide extensive documentation to save her own life or even prove to her insurance company that she was assaulted. What will happen? Will she have to go to court, Madam Speaker? Will there be an IRS audit?

Madam Speaker, there are just so many unanswered questions, and the answers could have meaningful consequences for women across our entire country.

What kind of proof would a woman need to exercise options for health care? Who gets to determine whether or not a woman's sexual assault was a legitimate rape? What kind of intensively private information would be required to establish this proof? Who in the insurance company or other entity would be equipped to make a ruling on the validity laid out in the bill?

Oh, we remember our history as women, of humiliation and public degradation that forced victims of rape or incest to stay in the shadows rather than to get the health care they need and deserve, or to seek justice against their attacker.

This motion to recommit simply makes sure that we uphold our history of protecting the confidentiality and medical privacy of women, upholding women's constitutional right to health care, particularly those who are victims of terrible crimes. I urge my colleagues to adopt this motion to recommit.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I withdraw my point of order and rise in opposition to the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The point of order is withdrawn.

The gentlewoman from Tennessee is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I find it so interesting that we have an MTR when just 2 weeks ago we brought to this floor a bill that Chairman PITTS brought from Energy and Commerce that addressed the privacy issues and concerns of all Americans that have had to go to the healthcare.gov site. I would remind my colleagues that there were 67 Members of their caucus that crossed the aisle and voted with us. Privacy is an important issue, and we are concerned about that issue for all Americans.

I would also remind my colleagues who have inquired about the possibility of an IRS audit that we have seen many of those come out of this administration. I would remind them when they say we are remembering our history as women that we all stand and we remember that the first guarantee, the first right is the right to life. We have a responsibility as Members of the people's House to make certain we do the will of the people, and over 60 percent of all Americans say do not use my money. All money we have is taxpayer money, and do not use it to fund abortions. This is what we are doing.

I would remind all of my colleagues in the House that the bill that is before us today upholds and follows a longstanding principle that the American people and Members from both sides of the aisle have supported for decades, that is, that taxpayer dollars should not be spent on abortions and abortion coverage except in the instance of rape, incest, and life of the mother.

The vast majority of my colleagues, Democrat colleagues, voted for this same principle in last month's appropriations bill; yet this simple fact seems to be eluding most of them who have come to the floor today. I would encourage my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this motion to recommit and to vote for H.R. 7 and the underlying 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.

Ms. MOORE. Madam 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, this 15-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—yeas 192, nays 221, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 29]

YEAS—192

Andrews
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)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
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
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
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
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
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

NAYS—221

Aderholt
Amash
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
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
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)
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
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
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 (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
Rice (SC)
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
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Lipinski

NOT VOTING—17

Amodei
Blumenauer
Campbell
Chaffetz
Clay
Frelinghuysen
Hinojosa
Jones
LaMalfa
McCarthy (NY)
Miller (FL)
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Tipton
Westmoreland

□ 1704

Messrs. REED, BENTIVOLIO, DesJARLAIS, MURPHY of Pennsylvania, GOHMERT, RYAN of Wisconsin, and MESSER changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. WATERS, Messrs. GARAMENDI, HUFFMAN, Mses. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, SCHAKOWSKY, Messrs. MCINTYRE, RAHALL, and THOMPSON of Mississippi changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 29, I was unexpectedly detained and just missed the vote. Had I been present, I would have voted ''no.''

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.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 227, nays 188, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 30]

YEAS—227

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

NAYS—188

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

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Broun (GA)

NOT VOTING—15

Amodei	Jones	Ruppersberger
Blumenauer	McCarthy (NY)	Rush
Campbell	Miller (FL)	Sanchez, Loretta
Clay	Petri	Tipton
Hinojosa	Runyan	Westmoreland

□ 1712

Ms. SINEMA changed her vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

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 against:

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 30 I was not able to vote because I was home recovering from knee surgery and pneumonia. Had I been present, I would have voter ''no.''

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, due to being unavoidably detained, I missed the following rollcall votes: No. 26, No. 27, No. 28, No. 29, and No. 30 on January 28, 2014 (today).

If present, I would have voted: rollcall vote No. 26—H. Res. 465, On Ordering the Previous Question, ''aye;'' rollcall vote No. 27—H. Res. 465, On Agreeing to the Resolution, ''aye;'' rollcall vote No. 28—On Approving the Journal, ''nay;'' rollcall vote No. 29—H.R. 7, On Motion to Recommit, ''nay;'' rollcall vote No. 30—H.R. 7, No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, On Passage, ''aye.''

SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES-REPUBLIC OF KOREA CIVIL NUCLEAR COOPERATION ACT

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (S. 1901) to authorize the President to extend the term of the nuclear energy agreement with the Republic of Korea until March 19, 2016, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1901

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 ''Support for United States-Republic of Korea Civil Nuclear Cooperation Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) In the 60th year of the alliance, the relationship between the United States and the Republic of Korea could not be stronger. It is based on mutual sacrifice, mutual respect, shared interests, and shared responsibility to promote peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the world.

(2) North Korea's nuclear weapons programs, including uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing technologies, undermine security on the Korean Peninsula. The United States and the Republic of Korea have a shared interest in preventing further proliferation, including through the implementation of the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks.

(3) Both the United States and Republic of Korea have a shared objective in strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, done at London, Moscow, and Washington July 1, 1968, and a political and a commercial interest in working collaboratively to address challenges to their respective peaceful civil nuclear programs.

(4) The nuclear energy agreement referred to in section 3 is scheduled to expire on March 19, 2014. In order to maintain healthy and uninterrupted cooperation in this area between the two countries while a new agreement is being negotiated, Congress should authorize the President to extend the duration of the current agreement until March 19, 2016.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF NUCLEAR ENERGY AGREEMENT WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

Notwithstanding section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2153), the President is authorized to take such actions as may be required to extend the term of the Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Korea Concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy, done at Washington November 24, 1972 (24 UST 775; TIAS 7583), and amended on May 15, 1974 (25 UST 1102; TIAS 7842), to a date that is not later than March 19, 2016.

SEC. 4. REPORT TO CONGRESS ON PROGRESS OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter until a new Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Korea Concerning

Civil Uses of Nuclear Energy is submitted to Congress, the President shall provide to the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report on the progress of negotiations on a new civil nuclear cooperation agreement.

The bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 28, 2014.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House, H–232, United States Capitol,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER: Pursuant to Section 4(b) of House Resolution 5, 113th Congress, I am pleased to appoint the following members to the House Democracy Partnership:

The Honorable David E. Price of North Carolina
The Honorable Lois Capps of California
The Honorable Sam Farr of California
The Honorable Keith Ellison of Minnesota
The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard of California
The Honorable Susan Davis of California
The Honorable Gwen Moore of Wisconsin
The Honorable Jim McDermott of Washington
The Honorable Dina Titus of Nevada

Thank you for your attention to these appointments.

Sincerely,

NANCY PELOSI,
Democratic Leader.

□ 1715

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After consultation among the Speaker and the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent, the Chair announces that, when the two Houses meet tonight in joint session to hear an address by the President of the United States, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those immediately to his left and right will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House. Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly enforced. Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor. The cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of purporting to reserve seats prior to the joint session by placement of placards or personal items will not be allowed. Chamber Security may remove these items from the seats. Members may reserve their seats only by physical presence following the security sweep of the Chamber.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 8:35 p.m. for the purpose of receiving in joint session the President of the United States.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2041

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS PURSUANT TO HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 75 TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 8 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms, Ms. Kathleen Joyce, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate, who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The joint session will come to order.

The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort the President of the United States into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR);
The gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY);
The gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN);
The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD);
The gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS);
The gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX);
The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI);
The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);
The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN);
The gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA);
The gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY);
The gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL); and
The gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort the President of the United States into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);
The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN);
The Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER);
The Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY);
The Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET);
The Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW);
The Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH);
The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL);
The Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN);
The Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE);
The Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT); and
The Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO).

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador Hersey Kyota of the Republic of Palau.

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court.

The Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 9 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m., the Sergeant at Arms, the Honorable Paul D. Irving, announced the President of the United States.

The President of the United States, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

The SPEAKER. Members of the Congress, I have the high privilege and the distinct honor of presenting to you the President of the United States.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

The PRESIDENT. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, my fellow Americans:

Today in America, a teacher spent extra time with a student who needed it, and did her part to lift America's graduation rate to its highest levels in more than three decades.

An entrepreneur flipped on the lights in her tech startup, and did her part to

add to the more than 8 million new jobs our businesses have created over the past 4 years.

An autoworker fine-tuned some of the best, most fuel-efficient cars in the world, and did his part to help America wean itself off foreign oil.

A farmer prepared for the spring after the strongest 5-year stretch of farm exports in our history. A rural doctor gave a young child the first prescription to treat asthma that his mother could afford. A man took the bus home from the graveyard shift, bone-tired but dreaming big dreams for his son. And in tight-knit communities all across America, fathers and mothers will tuck in their kids, put an arm around their spouse, remember fallen comrades, and give thanks for being home from a war that, after 12 long years, is finally coming to an end.

Tonight, this Chamber speaks with one voice to the people we represent: it is you, our citizens, who make the state of our Union strong.

Here are the results of your efforts: the lowest unemployment rate in over 5 years. A rebounding housing market. A manufacturing sector that's adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. More oil produced at home than we buy from the rest of the world—the first time that's happened in nearly 20 years. Our deficits—cut by more than half. And for the first time in over a decade, business leaders around the world have declared that China is no longer the world's number one place to invest; America is.

That's why I believe this can be a breakthrough year for America. After 5 years of grit and determined effort, the United States is better positioned for the 21st century than any other nation on Earth.

The question for everyone in this Chamber, running through every decision we make this year, is whether we are going to help or hinder this progress. For several years now, this town has been consumed by a rancorous argument over the proper size of the Federal Government. It's an important debate—one that dates back to our very founding. But when that debate prevents us from carrying out even the most basic functions of our democracy—when our differences shut down government or threaten the full faith and credit of the United States—then we are not doing right by the American people.

As President, I am committed to making Washington work better and rebuilding the trust of the people who sent us here. And I believe most of you are too.

Last month, thanks to the work of Democrats and Republicans, Congress finally produced a budget that undoes some of last year's severe cuts to priorities like education. Nobody got everything they wanted, and we can still do more to invest in this country's future while bringing down our deficit in a balanced way, but the budget compromise should leave us freer to focus on creating new jobs, not creating new crises.

In the coming months, let's see where else we can make progress together. Let's make this a year of action. That is what most Americans want—for all of us in this Chamber to focus on their lives, their hopes, their aspirations; and what I believe unites the people of this Nation, regardless of race or region or party, young or old, rich or poor, is the simple, profound belief in opportunity for all—the notion that, if you work hard and take responsibility, you can get ahead in America.

Let's face it. That belief has suffered some serious blows. Over more than three decades, even before the Great Recession hit, massive shifts in technology and global competition had eliminated a lot of good, middle class jobs and weakened the economic foundations that families depend on.

Today, after 4 years of economic growth, corporate profits and stock prices have rarely been higher, and those at the top have never done better, but average wages have barely budged. Inequality has deepened. Upward mobility has stalled. The cold, hard fact is that, even in the midst of recovery, too many Americans are working more than ever just to get by, let alone to get ahead, and too many still aren't working at all.

So our job is to reverse these trends. It won't happen right away, and we won't agree on everything; but what I offer tonight is a set of concrete, practical proposals to speed up growth, strengthen the middle class, and build new ladders of opportunity into the middle class. Some require congressional action, and I am eager to work with all of you; but America does not stand still, and neither will I, so wherever and whenever I can take steps without legislation to expand opportunity for more American families, that is what I am going to do.

As usual, our First Lady sets a good example. Michelle's Let's Move partnership with schools, businesses, and local leaders has helped bring down childhood obesity rates for the first time in 30 years, and that is an achievement that will improve lives and reduce health care costs for decades to come. The Joining Forces alliance that Michelle and Jill Biden launched has already encouraged employers to hire or train nearly 400,000 veterans and military spouses. Taking a page from that playbook, the White House just organized a College Opportunity Summit where already 150 universities, businesses, and nonprofits have made concrete commitments to reduce inequality and access to higher education and to help every hard-working kid go to college and succeed when they get to campus. Across the country, we are partnering with mayors, Governors, and State legislatures on issues from homelessness to marriage equality.

The point is there are millions of Americans outside of Washington who are tired of stale political arguments and are moving this country forward. They believe and I believe that, here in America, our success should depend not on accident of birth but the strength of our work ethic and the scope of our dreams. That is what drew our forebears here. It is how the daughter of a factory worker is CEO of America's largest automaker, how the son of a barkeeper is Speaker of the House, how the son of a single mom can be President of the greatest Nation on Earth.

Now, opportunity is who we are, and the defining project of our generation must be to restore that promise.

We know where to start: the best measure of opportunity is access to a good job. With the economy picking up speed, companies say they intend to hire more people this year, and over half of big manufacturers say they are thinking of in-sourcing jobs from abroad.

So let's make that decision easier for more companies. Both Democrats and Republicans have argued that our Tax Code is riddled with wasteful, complicated loopholes that punish businesses investing here and reward companies that keep profits abroad. Let's flip that equation. Let's work together to close those loopholes, end those incentives to ship jobs overseas, and lower tax rates for businesses that create jobs right here at home.

Moreover, we can take the money we save with this transition to tax reform to create jobs rebuilding our roads, upgrading our ports, unclogging our commutes because, in today's global economy, first-class jobs gravitate to first-class infrastructure. We will need Congress to protect more than 3 million jobs by finishing transportation and waterways bills this summer—that can happen—but I will act on my own to slash bureaucracy and streamline the permitting process for key projects so we can get more construction workers on the job as fast as possible.

We also have the chance right now to beat other countries in the race for the next wave of high-tech manufacturing jobs. My administration has launched two hubs for high-tech manufacturing—in Raleigh, North Carolina, and in Youngstown, Ohio—where we have connected businesses to research universities that can help America lead the world in advanced technologies. Tonight, I am announcing we will launch six more this year. Bipartisan bills in both Houses could double the number of these hubs and the jobs they create. So get those bills to my desk. Put more Americans back to work.

Let's do more to help the entrepreneurs and small business owners who create most new jobs in America. Over the past 5 years, my administration has made more loans to small business owners than any other, and when 98 percent of our exporters are small businesses, new trade partnerships with Europe and the Asia-Pacific will help them create even more jobs. We need to work together on tools like

bipartisan trade promotion authority to protect our workers, protect our environment, and open new markets to new goods stamped ''Made in the USA.'' Listen, China and Europe aren't standing on the sidelines, and neither should we.

We know that the Nation that goes ''all in'' on innovation today will own the global economy tomorrow. This is an edge America cannot surrender. Federally funded research helped lead to the ideas and inventions behind Google and smartphones, and that is why Congress should undo the damage done by last year's cuts to basic research—so we can unleash the next great American discovery. There are entire industries to be built based on vaccines that stay ahead of drug-resistant bacteria or paper-thin material that is stronger than steel, and let's pass a patent reform bill that allows our businesses to stay focused on innovation, not costly and needless litigation.

Now, one of the biggest factors in bringing more jobs back is our commitment to American energy. The all-of-the-above energy strategy I announced a few years ago is working, and today, America is closer to energy independence than we have been in decades.

One of the reasons why is natural gas. If extracted safely, it is the bridge fuel that can power our economy with less of the carbon pollution that causes climate change. Businesses plan to invest almost $100 billion in new factories that use natural gas. I will cut red tape to help States get those factories built and put folks to work, and this Congress can help by putting people to work building fueling stations that shift more cars and trucks from foreign oil to American natural gas.

Meanwhile, my administration will keep working with the industry to sustain production and job growth while strengthening protection of our air, our water, and our communities. And while we are at it, I will use my authority to protect more of our pristine Federal lands for future generations.

It is not just oil and natural gas production that's booming. We are becoming a global leader in solar, too. Every 4 minutes, another American home or business goes solar, every panel pounded into place by a worker whose job cannot be outsourced. Let's continue that progress with a smarter tax policy that stops giving $4 billion a year to fossil fuel industries that don't need it so that we can invest more in fuels of the future that do.

And even as we have increased energy production, we have partnered with businesses, builders, and local communities to reduce the energy we consume. When we rescued our automakers, for example, we worked with them to set higher fuel-efficiency standards for our cars. In the coming months, I will build on that success by setting new standards for our trucks so we can keep driving down oil imports and what we pay at the pump.

Taken together, our energy policy is creating jobs and leading to a cleaner, safer planet. Over the past 8 years, the United States has reduced our total carbon pollution more than any other nation on Earth. But we have to act with more urgency because a changing climate is already harming Western communities struggling with drought and coastal cities dealing with floods. That's why I directed my administration to work with States, utilities, and others to set new standards on the amount of carbon pollution our power plants are allowed to dump into the air.

The shift to a cleaner energy economy won't happen overnight, and it will require some tough choices along the way. But the debate is settled. Climate change is a fact. And when our children's children look us in the eye and ask if we did all we could to leave them a safer, more stable world, with new sources of energy, I want us to be able to say, yes, we did.

Finally, if we are serious about economic growth, it is time to heed the call of business leaders, labor leaders, faith leaders, and law enforcement and fix our broken immigration system. Republicans and Democrats in the Senate have acted. I know that Members of both parties in the House want to do the same.

Independent economists say immigration reform will grow our economy and shrink our deficit by almost $1 trillion in the next two decades. And for good reason. When people come here to fulfill their dreams—to study, invent, and contribute to our culture—they make our country a more attractive place for businesses to locate and create jobs for everybody. So let's get immigration reform done this year. Let's get it done. It's time.

The ideas I have outlined so far can speed up growth and create more jobs. But in this rapidly changing economy, we have to make sure that every American has the skills to fill those jobs.

The good news is, we know how to do it. Two years ago, as the auto industry came roaring back, Andra Rush opened up a manufacturing firm in Detroit. She knew that Ford needed parts for the best-selling truck in America, and she knew how to make those parts. She just needed the workforce.

So she dialed up what we call an American Job Center—places where folks can walk in to get the help or training they need to find a new job, or a better job. She was flooded with new workers. And today, Detroit Manufacturing Systems has more than 700 employees.

What Andra and her employees experienced is how it should be for every employer—and every job seeker. So tonight, I have asked Vice President BIDEN to lead an across-the-board reform of America's training programs to make sure they have one mission: train Americans with the skills employers need and match them to good jobs that need to be filled right now. That means more on-the-job training and apprenticeships that set a young worker on a trajectory for life. It means connecting companies to community colleges that can help design training to fill their specific needs. And if Congress wants to help, you can concentrate funding on proven programs that connect more ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs.

I am also convinced we can help Americans return to the workforce faster by reforming unemployment insurance so that it is more effective in today's economy. But first, this Congress needs to restore the unemployment insurance you just let expire for 1.6 million people.

Let me tell you why.

Misty DeMars is a mother of two young boys. She had been steadily employed since she was a teenager. She put herself through college. She had never collected unemployment benefits—but she had been paying taxes.

In May, she and her husband used their life savings to buy their first home. A week later, budget cuts claimed the job she loved. Last month, when their unemployment insurance was cut off, she sat down and wrote me a letter—the kind I get every day.

''We are the face of the unemployment crisis,'' she wrote. ''I am not dependent on the government . . .Our country depends on people like us who build careers, contribute to society . . . care about our neighbors . . . I am confident that in time I will find a job . . . I will pay my taxes, and we will raise our children in their own home in the community we love. Please give us this chance.''

Congress, give these hardworking, responsible Americans that chance. Give them that chance. Give them the chance. They need our help right now, but more important, this country needs them in the game. That's why I've been asking CEOs to give more long-term unemployed workers a fair shot at new jobs, a new chance to support their families. And, in fact, this week many will come to the White House to make that commitment real. Tonight, I ask every business leader in America to join us and do the same, because we are stronger when America fields a full team.

Of course, it's not enough to train today's workforce. We also have to prepare tomorrow's workforce by guaranteeing every child access to a world-class education.

Estiven Rodriguez couldn't speak a word of English when he moved to New York City at age 9. But last month, thanks to the support of great teachers and an innovative tutoring program, he led a march of his classmates through a crowd of cheering parents and neighbors from their high school to the post office where they mailed off their college applications. And this son of a factory worker just found out he's going to college this fall.

Five years ago, we set out to change the odds for all our kids. We worked

with lenders to reform student loans; and, today, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before. Race to the Top, with the help of Governors from both parties, has helped States raise expectations and performance. Teachers and principals in schools from Tennessee to Washington, D.C., are making big strides in preparing students with the skills for the new economy, problem-solving, critical thinking, science, technology, engineering, math.

Now, some of this change is hard. It requires everything from more challenging curriculums and more demanding parents to better support for teachers and new ways to measure how well our kids think, not how well they can fill in a bubble on a test. But it is worth it, and it is working.

The problem is, we're still not reaching enough kids, and we're not reaching them in time, and that has to change.

Research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child's life is high-quality early education. Last year, I asked this Congress to help States make high-quality pre-K available to every 4-year-old; and as a parent, as well as the President, I repeat that request tonight. But in the meantime, 30 States have raised pre-K funding on their own. They know we can't wait. So just as we worked with States to reform our schools, this year we'll invest in new partnerships with States and communities across the country in a race to the top for our youngest children. And as Congress decides what it's going to do, I'm going to pull together a coalition of elected officials, business leaders, and philanthropists willing to help more kids access the high-quality pre-K that they need. It is right for America. We need to get this done.

Last year, I also pledged to connect 99 percent of our students to high-speed broadband over the next 4 years. Tonight, I can announce that, with the support of the FCC and companies like Apple, Microsoft, Sprint, and Verizon, we've got a down payment to start connecting more than 15,000 schools and 20 million students over the next 2 years, without adding a dime to the deficit.

We're working to redesign high schools and partner them with colleges and employers that offer the real-world education and hands-on training that can lead directly to a job and career. We're shaking up our system of higher education to give parents more information and colleges more incentives to offer better value, so that no middle class kid is priced out of a college education. We're offering millions the opportunity to cap their monthly student loan payments to 10 percent of their income, and I want to work with Congress to see how we can help even more Americans who feel trapped by student loan debt. And I'm reaching out to some of America's leading foundations and corporations on a new initiative to help more young men of color facing especially tough odds to stay on track and reach their full potential.

The bottom line is, Michelle and I want every child to have the same chance this country gave us; but we know our opportunity agenda won't be complete, and too many young people entering the workforce today will see the American Dream as an empty promise, unless we also do more to make sure our economy honors the dignity of work, and hard work pays off for every single American.

Now, today, women make up about half our workforce; but they still make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. That is wrong and, in 2014, it's an embarrassment. Women deserve equal pay for equal work. She deserves to have a baby without sacrificing her job. A mother deserves a day off to care for a sick child or a sick parent without running into hardship. And you know what? A father does too. It is time to do away with workplace policies that belong in a ''Mad Men'' episode. This year, let's all come together, Congress, the White House, businesses from Wall Street to Main Street, to give every woman the opportunity she deserves, because I believe when women succeed, America succeeds.

Now, women hold a majority of lower-wage jobs, but they're not the only ones stifled by stagnant wages. Americans understand that some people will earn more money than others, and we don't resent those who, by virtue of their efforts, achieve incredible success. That's what America's all about. But Americans overwhelmingly agree that no one who works full-time should ever have to raise a family in poverty.

In the year since I asked this Congress to raise the minimum wage, five States have passed laws to raise theirs. Many businesses have done it on their own. Nick Chute is here today with his boss, John Sorrano. John's an owner of Punch Pizza in Minneapolis, and Nick helps make the dough. Only now, he makes more of it. John just gave his employees a raise, to 10 bucks an hour, and that's a decision that has eased their financial stress and boosted their morale.

Tonight, I ask more of America's business leaders to follow John's lead. Do what you can to raise your employees' wages. It's good for the economy. It's good for America.

To every mayor, Governor, State legislator in America, I say, you don't have to wait for Congress to act. Americans will support you if you take this on. And as the Chief Executive, I intend to lead by example. Profitable corporations like Costco see higher wages as the smart way to boost productivity and reduce turnover. We should too.

In the coming weeks, I will issue an executive order requiring Federal contractors to pay their federally funded employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour—because if you cook our troops' meals or wash their dishes, you should not have to live in poverty.

Of course, to reach millions more, Congress does need to get onboard. Today, the Federal minimum wage is worth about 20 percent less than it was when Ronald Reagan first stood here. TOM HARKIN and GEORGE MILLER have a bill to fix that by lifting the minimum wage to $10.10. It is easy to remember—10, 10. This will help families. It will give businesses customers with more money to spend. It does not involve any new bureaucratic program. So join the rest of the country. Say ''yes.'' Give America a raise. Give them a raise.

There are other steps we can take to help families make ends meet, and few are more effective at reducing inequality and helping families pull themselves up through hard work than the earned income tax credit. Right now, it helps about half of all parents at some point. Think about that. It helps about half of all parents in America at some point in their lives. But I agree with Republicans like Senator RUBIO that it doesn't do enough for single workers who don't have kids. So let's work together to strengthen the credit, reward work, and help more Americans get ahead.

Let's do more to help Americans save for retirement. Today, most workers don't have a pension. A Social Security check often isn't enough on its own. And while the stock market has doubled over the last 5 years, that doesn't help folks who don't have 401(k)s.

That is why tomorrow, I will direct the Treasury to create a new way for working Americans to start their own retirement savings: MyRA. It is a new savings bond that encourages folks to build a nest egg. MyRA guarantees a decent return with no risk of losing what you put in. And if this Congress wants to help, work with me to fix an upside-down Tax Code that gives big tax breaks to help the wealthy save but does little to nothing for middle class Americans.

Offer every American access to an automatic IRA on the job so they can save at work, just like everybody in this Chamber can. And since the most important investment many families make is their home, send me legislation that protects taxpayers from footing the bill for a housing crisis ever again and keeps the dream of homeownership alive for future generations.

One last point on financial security. For decades, few things exposed hard-working families to economic hardship more than a broken health care system. And in case you haven't heard, we are in the process of fixing that.

A preexisting condition used to mean that someone like Amanda Shelley, a physician assistant and single mom from Arizona, couldn't get health insurance. But on January 1, she got covered. On January 3, she felt a sharp pain. On January 6, she had emergency surgery. Just 1 week earlier, Amanda said, that surgery would have meant bankruptcy. That is what health insurance reform is all about, the peace of mind that, if misfortune strikes, you don't have to lose everything.

Already, because of the Affordable Care Act, more than 3 million Americans under age 26 have gained coverage under their parents' plans. More than 9 million Americans have signed up for private health insurance or Medicaid coverage—9 million.

And here is another number: zero. Because of this law, no American—none, zero—can ever again be dropped or denied coverage for a preexisting condition like asthma or back pain or cancer. No woman can ever be charged more just because she is a woman. And we did all this while adding years to Medicare's finances, keeping Medicare premiums flat, and lowering prescription costs for millions of seniors.

Now, I do not expect to convince my Republican friends on the merits of this law, but I know that the American people are not interested in refighting old battles. So, again, if you have specific plans to cut costs, cover more people, and increase choice, tell America what you would do differently. Let's see if the numbers add up. But let's not have another 40-something votes to repeal a law that is already helping millions of Americans like Amanda. The first 40 were plenty. We all owe it to the American people to say what we are for, not just what we are against.

And if you want to know the real impact this law is having, just talk to Governor Steve Beshear of Kentucky who is here tonight. Now, Kentucky is not the most liberal part of the country. That is not where I got my highest vote totals. But he is like a man possessed when it comes to covering his Commonwealth's families. ''They are our neighbors and our friends,'' he said. ''They are people we shop and go to church with, farmers out on the tractors, grocery clerks. They are people who go to work every morning praying they don't get sick. No one deserves to live that way.''

Steve's right. And that's why, tonight, I ask every American who knows someone without health insurance to help them get covered by March 31. Help them get covered. Moms, get on your kids to sign up. Kids, call your mom and walk her through the application. It will give her some peace of mind—plus, she'll appreciate hearing from you.

After all, that's the spirit that has always moved this Nation forward. It's the spirit of citizenship, the recognition that through hard work and responsibility we can pursue our individual dreams but still come together as one American family to make sure the next generation can pursue its dreams as well.

Citizenship means standing up for everyone's right to vote. Last year, part of the Voting Rights Act was weakened, but conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats are working together to strengthen it. And the bipartisan commission I appointed, chaired by my campaign lawyer and Governor Romney's campaign lawyer, came together and has offered reforms so that no one has to wait for more than a half hour to vote. Let's support these efforts. It should be the power of our vote, not the size of our bank account, that drives our democracy.

Citizenship means standing up for the lives that gun violence steals from us each day. I have seen the courage of parents, students, pastors, and police officers all over this country who say ''we are not afraid,'' and I intend to keep trying, with or without Congress, to help stop more tragedies from visiting innocent Americans in our movie theaters, in our shopping malls, or schools like Sandy Hook.

Citizenship demands a sense of common purpose, participation in the hard work of self-government, an obligation to serve our communities. And I know this Chamber agrees that few Americans give more to their country than our diplomats and the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

Tonight, because of the extraordinary troops and civilians who risk and lay down their lives to keep us free, the United States is more secure. When I took office, nearly 180,000 Americans were serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, all our troops are out of Iraq. More than 60,000 of our troops have already come home from Afghanistan. With Afghan forces now in the lead for their own security, our troops have moved to a support role. Together with our allies, we will complete our mission there by the end of this year, and America's longest war will finally be over.

After 2014, we will support a unified Afghanistan as it takes responsibility for its own future. If the Afghan Government signs a security agreement that we have negotiated, a small force of Americans could remain in Afghanistan with NATO allies to carry out two narrow missions: training and assisting Afghan forces, and counterterrorism operations to pursue any remnants of al Qaeda. For while our relationship with Afghanistan will change, one thing will not: our resolve that terrorists do not launch attacks against our country.

The fact is that danger remains. While we have put al Qaeda's core leadership on a path to defeat, the threat has evolved as al Qaeda affiliates and other extremists take root in different parts of the world. In Yemen, Somalia, Iraq, and Mali, we have to keep working with partners to disrupt and disable those networks. In Syria, we'll support the opposition that rejects the agenda of terrorist networks. Here at home, we'll keep strengthening our defenses and combat new threats like cyberattacks. And as we reform our defense budget, we'll have to keep faith with our men and women in uniform and invest in the capabilities they need to succeed in future missions.

We have to remain vigilant. But I strongly believe our leadership and our security cannot depend on our outstanding military alone. As Commander in Chief, I have used force when needed to protect the American people, and I will never hesitate to do so as long as I hold this office. But I will not send our troops into harm's way unless it is truly necessary, nor will I allow our sons and daughters to be mired in open-ended conflicts. We must fight the battles that need to be fought, not those that terrorists prefer from us—large-scale deployments that drain our strength and may ultimately feed extremism.

So, even as we actively and aggressively pursue terrorist networks—through more targeted efforts and by building the capacity of our foreign partners—America must move off a permanent war footing. That's why I have imposed prudent limits on the use of drones, for we will not be safer if people abroad believe we strike within their countries without regard for the consequence. That's why, working with this Congress, I will reform our surveillance programs, because the vital work of our intelligence community depends on public confidence, here and abroad, that the privacy of ordinary people is not being violated.

And with the Afghan war ending, this needs to be the year Congress lifts the remaining restrictions on detainee transfers and we close the prison at Guantanamo Bay—because we counter terrorism not just through intelligence and military actions but by remaining true to our constitutional ideals and setting an example for the rest of the world.

You see, in a world of complex threats, our security and our leadership depends on all elements of our power, including strong and principled diplomacy. American diplomacy has rallied more than 50 countries to prevent nuclear materials from falling into the wrong hands and allowed us to reduce our own reliance on Cold War stockpiles. American diplomacy, backed by the threat of force, is why Syria's chemical weapons are being eliminated, and we will continue to work with the international community to usher in the future the Syrian people deserve—a future free of dictatorship, terror, and fear.

As we speak, American diplomacy is supporting Israelis and Palestinians as they engage in the difficult but necessary talks to end the conflict there; to achieve dignity and an independent state for Palestinians, and lasting peace and security for the State of Israel—a Jewish State that knows America will always be at their side.

And it is American diplomacy, backed by pressure, that has halted the progress of Iran's nuclear program—and rolled back parts of that program—for the very first time in a decade. As we gather here tonight, Iran has begun to eliminate its stockpile of higher levels of enriched uranium. It is not installing advanced centrifuges. Unprecedented inspections help the world verify, every day, that Iran is not building a bomb. And with our allies

and partners, we are engaged in negotiations to see if we can peacefully achieve a goal we all share: preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

These negotiations will be difficult. They may not succeed. We are clear-eyed about Iran's support for terrorist organizations like Hezbollah, which threaten our allies, and we are clear about the mistrust between our nations, mistrust that cannot be wished away. But these negotiations don't rely on trust; any long-term deal we agree to must be based on verifiable action that convinces us and the international community that Iran is not building a nuclear bomb. If John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan could negotiate with the Soviet Union, then surely a strong and confident America can negotiate with less powerful adversaries today.

The sanctions that we put in place helped make this opportunity possible. But let me be clear: if this Congress sends me a new sanctions bill now that threatens to derail these talks, I will veto it. For the sake of our national security, we must give diplomacy a chance to succeed. If Iran's leaders do not seize this opportunity, then I will be the first to call for more sanctions and stand ready to exercise all options to make sure Iran does not build a nuclear weapon. But if Iran's leaders do seize the chance—and we will know soon enough—then Iran could take an important step to rejoin the community of nations, and we will have resolved one of the leading security challenges of our time without the risks of war.

Finally, let's remember that our leadership is defined not just by our defense against threats, but by the enormous opportunities to do good and promote understanding around the globe—to forge greater cooperation, to expand new markets, to free people from fear and want. And no one is better positioned to take advantage of those opportunities than America.

Our alliance with Europe remains the strongest the world has ever known. From Tunisia to Burma, we are supporting those who are willing to do the hard work of building democracy. In Ukraine, we stand for the principle that all people have the right to express themselves freely and peacefully and have a say in their country's future. Across Africa, we are bringing together businesses and governments to double access to electricity and help end extreme poverty. In the Americas, we are building new ties of commerce, but we are also expanding cultural and educational exchanges among young people. And we will continue to focus on the Asia-Pacific, where we support our allies, shape a future of greater security and prosperity, and extend a hand to those devastated by disaster—as we did in the Philippines, when our marines and civilians rushed to aid those battered by a typhoon, and who were greeted with words like, ''We will never forget your kindness,'' and, ''God bless America.''

We do these things because they help promote our long-term security, and we do them because we believe in the inherent dignity and equality of every human being, regardless of race or religion, creed or sexual orientation. And next week, the world will see one expression of that commitment when Team USA marches the red, white, and blue into the Olympic Stadium and brings home the gold.

My fellow Americans, no other country in the world does what we do. On every issue, the world turns to us, not simply because of the size of our economy or our military might—but because of the ideals we stand for and the burdens we bear to advance them.

No one knows this better than those who serve in uniform. As this time of war draws to a close, a new generation of heroes returns to civilian life. We will keep slashing that backlog so our veterans receive the benefits they have earned and our wounded warriors receive the health care—including the mental health care—that they need. We will keep working to help all of our veterans translate their skills and leadership into jobs here at home, and we will all continue to join forces to honor and support our remarkable military families.

Let me tell you about one of those families I have come to know.

I first met Cory Remsburg, a proud Army Ranger, at Omaha Beach on the 65th anniversary of D-day. Along with some of his fellow Rangers, he walked me through the program. He was a strong, impressive young man with an easy manner. He was sharp as a tack. We joked around and took pictures, and I told him to stay in touch.

A few months later, on his 10th deployment, Cory was nearly killed by a massive roadside bomb in Afghanistan. His comrades found him in a canal, face down, under water, shrapnel in his brain.

For months, he lay in a coma. The next time I met him, in the hospital, he couldn't speak; he could barely move. Over the years, he has endured dozens of surgeries and procedures and hours of grueling rehab every day.

Even now, Cory is still blind in one eye. He still struggles on his left side. But slowly, steadily, with the support of caregivers like his dad, Craig, and the community around him, Cory has grown stronger. Day by day, he has learned to speak again and stand again and walk again—and he is working toward the day when he can serve his country again.

''My recovery has not been easy,'' he says. ''Nothing in life that's worth anything is easy.''

Cory is here tonight; and like the Army he loves, like the America he serves, Sergeant First Class Cory Remsburg never gives up, and he does not quit.

My fellow Americans, men and women like Cory remind us that America has never come easy. Our freedom, our democracy, has never been easy. Sometimes we stumble; we make mistakes; we get frustrated or discouraged. But for more than 200 years, we have put those things aside and placed our collective shoulder to the wheel of progress—to create and build and expand the possibilities of individual achievement; to free other nations from tyranny and fear; to promote justice and fairness and equality under the law, so that the words set to paper by our Founders are made real for every citizen. The America we want for our kids—a rising America where honest work is plentiful and communities are strong; where prosperity is widely shared and opportunity for all lets us go as far as our dreams and toil will take us—none of it is easy.

But if we work together, if we summon what is best in us, the way Cory summoned what was best in him, with our feet planted firmly in today but our eyes cast towards tomorrow, I know it is within our reach.

Believe it.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

At 10 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m., the President of the United States, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms escorted the invited guests from the Chamber in the following order:

The members of the President's Cabinet; the Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court; the Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

The SPEAKER. The Chair declares the joint session of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, at 10 o'clock and 27 minutes p.m., the joint session of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that the message of the President be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered printed.

The motion was agreed to.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. WESTMORELAND (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of medical reasons.

Mr. RUSH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for January 27 through January 29 on account of attending to family acute medical care and hospitalization.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 27 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, January 29, 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:

4578. A letter from the Director, Naval Reactors, Department of Defense, transmitting a report entitled, ''Environmental Monitoring and Disposal of Radioactive Wastes From U.S. Naval Nuclear-Powered Ships and Their Support Facilities''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4579. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting a proposal regarding the decision by the United States Court of Appeals in National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners v. United States Department of Energy (Nos. 11-1066 and 11-1068; D.C. Cir. 2013); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4580. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a Report to Congress on the Evaluation of the Medicaid Emergency Psychiatric Demonstration; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4581. A letter from the Deputy Bureau Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Rural Call Completion [WC Docket No.: 13-39] received January 16, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4582. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting Periodic Report on the National Emergency Caused by the Lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979 for February 26, 2013–August 25, 2013; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4583. A letter from the Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting the semiannual report on the activities of the Inspector General and the semiannual management report for the period ending September 30, 2013; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4584. A letter from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting a semiannual management report to the Congress for the period April 1, 2013 to September 30, 2013; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4585. A letter from the Chairman, Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting a report entitled ''Preserving the Integrity of the Federal Merit Systems: Understanding and Addressing Perceptions of Favoritism'', pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 1204(a)(3); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4586. A letter from the Clerk, Court of Appeals, transmitting an opinion of the United States Court of Appeals regarding Katherine Elizabeth Barnet, docket no. 13-612; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4587. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's report entitled, ''2013 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges and Transit: Conditions and Performance''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4588. A letter from the Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Loan Guaranty: Minimum Property and Construction Requirements (RIN: 2900-AO67) received January 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

4589. A letter from the Director, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — VA Compensation Service and Pension and Fiduciary Service Nomenclature Changes (RIN: 2900-AO64) received January 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

4590. A letter from the Chief, Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Import Restrictions Imposed on Certain Archaeological and Ecclesiastical Ethnological Material from Bulgaria [CBP Dec. 14-01] (RIN: 1515-AD95) received January 15, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4591. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Prevailing State Assumed Interest Rates (Rev. Rule. 2014-4) received January 15, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4592. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Current Refundings of Recovery Zone Facility Bonds [Notice 2014-9] received January 15, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4593. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Sales-Based Royalties and Vendor Allowances [TD: 9652] (RIN: 1545-BI57) received January 15, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4594. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Computation of, and Rules Relating to, Medical Loss Ratio [TD 9651] (RIN: 1545-BL05) received January 15, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4595. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Exclusion from Income of Payments to Care Providers from Medicaid Waiver Programs [Notice 2014-7] received January 15, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4596. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Bond Premium Carryforward [TD 9653] (RIN: 1545-BL28) received January 15, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

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 Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself and Mr. LEVIN):

H.R. 3936. A bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, 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. GRAVES of Missouri (for himself and Mr. TERRY):

H.R. 3937. A bill to evaluate and report on the feasibility and effectiveness of using natural gas as a fuel source in long haul trucks; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 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. GRAVES of Missouri (for himself and Mr. TERRY):

H.R. 3938. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to designate natural gas fueling corridors in the United States for long haul truck traffic, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. NEAL:

H.R. 3939. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to jumpstart the sluggish economy, finance critical infrastructure investments, fight income inequality and create jobs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, and Education and the Workforce, 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 (for himself and Mr. TERRY):

H.R. 3940. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, with respect to weight limitations for natural gas vehicles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3941. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year the deduction for mortgage insurance premiums; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3942. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year the deduction of state and local general sales taxes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3943. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year the above-the-line deduction for qualified tuition and related expenses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3944. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year tax-free distributions from individual retirement plans for charitable purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3945. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year the business research credit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3946. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year the employer wage credit for employees who are active duty members of the uniformed services; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3947. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year the work opportunity tax credit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3948. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year the 15-year straight-line cost recovery for qualified leasehold improvements, qualified restaurant buildings and improvements, and qualified retail improvements; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3949. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year the enhanced charitable deduction for contributions of food inventory; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3950. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year the credit for energy-efficient existing homes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3951. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year the credit for energy-efficient new homes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3952. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend for one year the credits for energy-efficient appliances; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 3953. A bill to amend title I of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act concerning the notice requirements regarding the extent of health plan coverage of abortion; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. BEATTY (for herself, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H.R. 3954. A bill to provide for systemic research, surveillance, treatment, prevention, awareness, development of rules of play, standards, and dissemination of information with respect to sports-related and other concussions; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, and Education and the Workforce, 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 Ms. KELLY of Illinois:

H.R. 3955. A bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to establish a pilot program through the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to provide older individuals with training in computer literacy, advanced computer operations, and resume writing; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois:

H.R. 3956. A bill to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to authorize the Small Business Administrator to make grants for economic growth, business retention and business recruitment to economically underserved communities; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. MEEKS (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. ISRAEL, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Ms. MENG, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. NADLER, Mr. GRIMM, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. ENGEL, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. TONKO, Mr. OWENS, Mr. HANNA, Mr. REED, Mr. MAFFEI, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. HIGGINS):

H.R. 3957. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 218-10 Merrick Boulevard in Springfield Gardens, New York, as the ''Cynthia Jenkins Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

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 Mr. VAN HOLLEN:

H.R. 3936.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 3937.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

''. . . to regulate commerce . . . among the several States . . .''

''. . . to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers . . .''

This legislation seeks to promote the use of natural gas in the trucking industry, a vital mode of transporting goods across the country. The use of such a cheap, domestic source of energy will be beneficial to both businesses and consumers. Therefore, it will affect the commerce of the U.S. in a positive way.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 3938.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

''. . . to regulate commerce . . . among the several States . . .''

''. . . to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers . . .''

This legislation seeks to promote the use of natural gas in the trucking industry, a vital mode of transporting goods across the country. The use of such a cheap, domestic source of energy will be beneficial to both businesses and consumers. Therefore, it will affect the commerce of the U.S. in a positive way.

By Mr. NEAL:

H.R. 3939.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article 1 and the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 3940.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

''. . . to regulate commerce . . . among the several States . . .''

''. . . to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers . . .''

This legislation seeks to promote the use of natural gas in the trucking industry, a vital mode of transporting goods across the country. The use of such a cheap, domestic source of energy will be beneficial to both businesses and consumers. Therefore, it will affect the commerce of the U.S. in a positive way.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3941.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3942.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3943.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3944.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3945.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3946.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3947.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3948.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3949.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3950.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3951.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3952.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 3953.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (relating to the power of Congress to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.)

By Mrs. BEATTY:

H.R. 3954.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and within the Indian Tribes, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois:

H.R. 3955.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois:

H.R. 3956.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. MEEKS:

H.R. 3957.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 7

Congress shall have the power to establish Post Offices and post roads.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 351: Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 366: Mr. ROTHFUS and Mr. SHIMKUS.
H.R. 422: Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 425: Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.
H.R. 435: Mr. CASTRO of Texas.
H.R. 436: Mr. MCHENRY.
H.R. 455: Ms. DELBENE, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. LEWIS, and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 543: Mr. FINCHER.
H.R. 562: Mr. HINOJOSA.
H.R. 610: Mr. REED.
H.R. 611: Mr. REED.
H.R. 628: Mr. LEWIS, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 645: Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 713: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. CAPUANO, and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.
H.R. 719: Mr. GRIMM.
H.R. 792: Mr. COTTON.
H.R. 809: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.
H.R. 831: Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Mr. COOPER.
H.R. 921: Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD.
H.R. 924: Mr. MEEKS.
H.R. 938: Mr. BYRNE.
H.R. 962: Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 1010: Ms. DUCKWORTH and Mr. COOPER.
H.R. 1015: Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 1078: Mr. SCHOCK.
H.R. 1089: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 1091: Mr. ROTHFUS and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.
H.R. 1129: Mr. BARROW of Georgia.
H.R. 1130: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.
H.R. 1146: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 1148: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 1209: Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 1213: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 1254: Mr. BENTIVOLIO.
H.R. 1280: Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 1281: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 1339: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 1507: Ms. KELLY of Illinois and Mr. COFFMAN.
H.R. 1515: Mr. CRENSHAW.
H.R. 1528: Mr. COBLE.
H.R. 1666: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 1690: Ms. TITUS.
H.R. 1701: Mr. CRAWFORD.
H.R. 1726: Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. NUNES, and Mr. RAHALL.
H.R. 1732: Mr. BARROW of Georgia and Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 1750: Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. PERRY, and Mr. LANKFORD.
H.R. 1755: Mr. GRIMM.
H.R. 1812: Mr. RANGEL and Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.
H.R. 1830: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 1852: Ms. DELBENE.
H.R. 1869: Mr. GARCIA.
H.R. 1918: Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. NUNES, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Mr. JONES.
H.R. 2029: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 2037: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 2058: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 2123: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 2203: Mr. FARENTHOLD.
H.R. 2220: Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.
H.R. 2235: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 2509: Mr. HONDA and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
H.R. 2548: Mr. PERRY.
H.R. 2616: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 2643: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri and Mr. BARBER.
H.R. 2647: Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia.
H.R. 2663: Ms. ESTY and Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 2710: Mr. STEWART.
H.R. 2737: Mr. NEAL.
H.R. 2801: Mr. POMPEO and Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 2892: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 2907: Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 2990: Mr. ENYART, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 3015: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
H.R. 3077: Mr. COTTON, Mr. PEARCE, and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 3303: Mr. GUTHRIE and Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 3306: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.
H.R. 3318: Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 3322: Mr. CAPUANO and Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 3344: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 3361: Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mr. GARRETT.
H.R. 3367: Mr. MCINTYRE and Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.
H.R. 3370: Mr. KIND.
H.R. 3395: Mrs. ELLMERS.
H.R. 3461: Ms. BROWNLEY of California and Mr. BISHOP of New York.
H.R. 3485: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 3489: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 3493: Mr. DENHAM.
H.R. 3505: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Mr. RUNYAN.
H.R. 3508: Mr. KIND.
H.R. 3530: Mr. ROSKAM.
H.R. 3578: Mr. SMITH of Texas.
H.R. 3590: Mr. YOUNG of Indiana and Mr. NUNNELEE.
H.R. 3600: Mrs. ELLMERS.
H.R. 3635: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia, and Mr. NUNNELEE.
H.R. 3649: Mr. CARSON of Indiana and Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 3658: Mr. WOLF.
H.R. 3685: Mrs. ROBY and Mr. NUNNELEE.
H.R. 3689: Mr. LONG, Mr. JONES, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. CARTER, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. BENTIVOLIO, and Mr. CRENSHAW.
H.R. 3718: Mr. HECK of Nevada.
H.R. 3726: Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 3734: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 3738: Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 3740: Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 3741: Ms. NORTON and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 3792: Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 3810: Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 3824: Mr. PASTOR of Arizona.
H.R. 3852: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 3854: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 3855: Mr. HOLT, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. JONES, Mr. HONDA, Mr. RIBBLE, Ms. LOFGREN, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 3857: Mr. LANCE.
H.R. 3864: Mr. TIBERI.
H.R. 3865: Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. CARTER, Mr. OLSON, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. SCALISE, Mr. NUNNELEE, and Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 3867: Mr. POCAN, Mr. RIBBLE, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. PIERLUISI.
H.R. 3876: Mr. LEWIS.
H.R. 3878: Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. FARR, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 3899: Mr. HONDA, Ms. MATSUI, and Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 3914: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. HONDA, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. FARR, and Ms. EDWARDS.
H.R. 3921: Ms. TITUS, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. VARGAS, and Ms. LEE of California.
H.R. 3930: Mr. NUGENT, Mr. STEWART, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. WALZ, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. DENT, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, and Mr. HUNTER.
H.R. 3931: Mr. MARINO and Mr. PERRY.
H. J. Res. 34: Mr. SCHNEIDER.
H. Con. Res. 52: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H. Con. Res. 78: Mr. VARGAS and Mr. SERRANO.
H. Res. 109: Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA and Mr. CAPUANO.
H. Res. 190: Mr. NEAL.
H. Res. 302: Mr. TERRY and Mr. VISCLOSKY.
H. Res. 387: Mr. PITTENGER.
H. Res. 442: Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. DAINES, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. SHUSTER, and Mr. GRAVES of Georgia.
H. Res. 447: Ms. DELAURO, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. TONKO, Mr. HIMES, Mr. RANGEL, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. ESTY, and Mr. FITZPATRICK.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 1094: Mr. PAULSEN.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

68. The SPEAKER presented a petition of Washington Township, Long Valley, New Jersey, relative to Resolution No. R-166-13 urging the Congress to invest additional federal dollars in maintaining the highways and improving the transportation infrastructure in the State of New Jersey; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2014 *No. 16*

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You are always right, just, and fair. We sing of Your steadfast love and proclaim Your faithfulness to all generations. Today, inspire our lawmakers to walk in the light of Your countenance. Abide with them so that they will not be brought to grief but will avoid the pitfalls that lead to ruin. Lord, empower them to glorify You in all they think, say, and do as they remember that all they have and are is a gift from You. This is the day that You have made. We will rejoice and be glad in You, the source of our hope and joy.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1926, the flood insurance bill, postcloture.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 today to allow for our weekly caucus meetings.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1963

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand that S. 1963 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1963) to repeal Section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, could I ask who the sponsors of this legislation are? Who is sponsoring it?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senators PRYOR, HAGAN, SHAHEEN, and BEGICH.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to this bill.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

TRIBUTE TO DIANE SKVARLA, SENATE CURATOR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I congratulate Diane Skvarla on her retirement after 20 years of service dedicated service as the Senate Curator.

Every day people from across the country—students on field trips, tourists, dignitaries, staffers and Senators alike—appreciate the historic treasures displayed in the hallways of the Capitol.

These works of fine art and craftsmanship are symbols of our democracy. For two decades Diane has been the steward of these treasures.

I thank Diane for her dedication, and I wish her the best in her future endeavors.

FLOOD INSURANCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am gratified that we were able to get enough votes on the flood insurance bill to get us this far. We have been trying to get to it for a long time. We are very close to a consent agreement to move forward on the bill with a few relevant amendments.

We are going to move forward with the consent agreement or move forward with the bill. This bill is going to move forward this week. I hope we can work out something today to move forward. Once again, I commend Senators MENENDEZ, LANDRIEU, and ISAKSON for their hard work.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Republican leader is recognized.

STATE OF THE UNION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, tonight Members of both parties will welcome the President to the Capitol as he lays out his plans for the year. We look forward to hearing what he has to say. We also look forward to hearing what Congresswoman MCMORRIS RODGERS has to say, too. She is a leader in our party with a compelling story, someone who truly understands what it means to overcome adversity, someone who is dedicated to helping every single American realize her greatest potential. The people of Washington's Fifth District are lucky to have her, and so are we.

As for the President's speech, this is a pivotal moment in the Obama Presidency. We are now entering our sixth year with President Obama at the helm of our economy, the sixth year of his economic policies. At this point we have seen just about everything in the President's tool box. We had a years-long clinic on the failures of liberalism: the government stimulus, the taxes, the regulations, the centralization, and the government control. It just has not worked.

So 74 percent of the American people say it still feels as if the country is in

a recession because to them it still feels like it. As the majority leader likes to say, the rich have gotten richer and the poor have gotten poorer, and ladders into the middle class have been kicked away, sawed off, and literally regulated into oblivion.

This is the legacy of the Obama economy, as we stand here at the start of 2014. But it does not have to be the legacy President Obama leaves behind in January of 2017, and that is why tonight's address is so important—because it will give us the clearest indication yet of whether the President is ready to embrace the future or whether he will, once again, take the easy route, the sort of reflexive liberal route, and just pivot back to the failed policies of the past. The choice the President now confronts is a pretty basic one. Does he want to be a hero to the left or a champion for the middle class? He can't be both. He has to choose.

He could double down on the failed policies that brought us to this point. It would make his base pretty happy, I am sure, but we certainly know where that path leads for the middle class. Folks can try to package it any way they like—say it is a new focus on income stagnation that has gotten so much worse under this President's watch. But it is essentially the same path we have been on since he took office. The point is this. Americans do not need a new message; they need a new direction. The problem is not the packaging. It never has been. It is the policies themselves, and President Obama is the only person who can force that turn in direction. He is the only one who can lead it.

He could reach to the center tonight and embrace change over the broken status quo, embrace hope over stale ideology—ideology that has led not just to stagnant incomes but to lower median incomes, to dramatic increases in the number of folks forced to take part-time work when what they really want is full-time work, to greater long-term unemployment, and to more poverty. He could ask Members of both parties to help him make 2014 a year of real action rather than just a talking point.

If he does, he is going to find he has a lot of support from Republicans because we want to work with him to get things done, and we always have. We will be listening closely to see if he is finally prepared to meet us in the political middle so we can finally get some important work done for the middle class. Let's be honest; there is a lot that can be done.

For instance, he could call on Senate Democrats to stop blocking all the job-creation bills the House of Representatives has already passed. He could call for revenue-neutral tax reform that would abolish loopholes, lower tax rates for everyone, and jump-start job creation where it counts—in the private sector. He could push his party to join Republicans supporting bipartisan trade promotion legislation, something the President has said is a priority, and work aggressively to clinch the kind of job-creating trade agreements our allies in places such as Canada and Europe and Australia have already been seeking.

He could work with us to reduce the debt and deficit to ensure the programs Americans count on will be there when they retire, to make government smarter and leaner, and to unshackle the growth potential of small businesses and entrepreneurs to address the massive dissatisfaction out there with the size and the scope of government.

If President Obama wants to score an easy win for the middle class, he could simply put the politics aside and approve the Keystone pipeline. The Keystone pipeline is thousands of American jobs very soon. With regard to the Keystone pipeline, he will not even need to use the phone—just the pen. One stroke and the Keystone pipeline is approved.

I know the Keystone issue is difficult for him because it involves a choice between pleasing the left and helping the middle class, but that is exactly the type of decision he needs to make. He needs to make it now. It is emblematic of the larger choices he will need to make about the direction of our country too, because for all of his talk of going around Congress, he would not have to if he actually tried to work with the people's elected representatives every now and then. I am saying don't talk about using the phone, just use the phone and please be serious when you call.

Take the income inequality issue we hear he will address tonight. Is this going to be all rhetoric or is he actually serious, because he is correct to point out that the past few years have been very tough on the middle class. As I indicated, median household income has dropped by thousands since he took office. Republicans want to work with him on this issue but only if he is serious about it. He could show us he is by calling for more choices for underprivileged children trapped in failing schools or he could agree to work with Senator RAND and me to implement Economic Freedom Zones in our poorest communities.

Here is something else: He could work with us to relieve the pain ObamaCare is causing for so many Americans across the country, across all income brackets. I asked him last year to prepare Americans for the consequences of this law. He did not do it. Today those consequences are plain for anyone to see.

Just last night I hosted a tele-townhall meeting where Kentuckians shared their stories about the stress that ObamaCare is causing them and their families: restricted access to doctors and hospitals, lost jobs, lower wages, fewer choices, and higher costs. I assure you these folks will not be applauding when the President is trying to spin this law as a success tonight. More than a quarter million Kentuckians lost the plans that they had and presumably wanted to keep, despite the President's promises to the contrary. This is a law that caused premiums to increase an average of 47 percent in Kentucky and in some cases more than 100 percent. This is a law that in some parts of my State is limiting choices to health care coverage to just two companies in the individual exchange market.

At what cost to the taxpayer for all of this? It is $253 million. That is how much Washington has spent so far for these results in my State—a quarter of a billion dollars to essentially limit care, cancel plans, and increase costs.

Kentucky has gotten more money to set up its exchange than every State except for California, New York, Oregon, and Washington—that is a lot of money—and they still only enrolled 30 percent of the people they were supposed to at this point. How in the world could that be considered a success?

So President Obama and Governor Beshear can keep telling Americans to ''get over it'' if they don't like this law, but sooner or later they are going to have to come to terms with reality. They are going to have to accept that ObamaCare hasn't worked as the administration promised in Kentucky and across America, and it is time to start over with real reform.

That is why tonight I hope the President will make change. I hope he will announce his willingness to work with both parties to start over with real bipartisan reform that can actually lower costs and improve quality of care. That is the kind of reform Kentuckians and Americans want, and that is the way President Obama can show he is serious about having a year of action. This time next year we will be able to judge if he was serious.

If the President is still talking about unemployment benefits next January rather than how to manage new growth, if he is still forced to address the pain of ObamaCare rather than touting the benefits of bipartisan health care reform, if we are trapped in these endless cul de sacs of Keystone and trade and tax reform, then we will know what choice the President made. We will know the special interests won and the middle class lost.

I hope we won't get there. I hope he will reach out tonight. I hope he will be serious. I hope he will help us chart a new path for the American people both parties can support. That may sound like a fantasy to some on the hard left who think tonight is all about them, but the fact is there have always been good ideas the two parties can agree on in Washington—ideas that would make life easier, not harder, for working Americans. Until now the President has mostly chosen to ignore them. Here is hoping for something different tonight.

TRIBUTE TO DIANE SKVARLA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to say a fond farewell to the Senate's long-term curator Diane Skvarla, who has been such a tremendous asset to the institution over the years and a very good friend to our office as well. All of our dealings with Diane over the years have been marked by her great professionalism and her deep knowledge of and respect for the Senate and its history.

Diane and her staff have been invaluable in the multiyear restoration of the Strom Thurmond room and keeping up the rest of our historic suite. My staff has always enjoyed working with Diane and her staff, and I hope we have been as gracious in return.

For a lot of young people who wring their hands or wander around for a while after college, Diane started working full time in the Senate the Monday after she graduated and has been here off and on ever since.

She witnessed a lot of changes in the curator's office over the years. When Diane started here full time in 1979, there were only three staffers in the office, but in the years leading up to and after the Nation's bicentennial when preservation came back into vogue, there was no shortage of new work.

Diane went on to earn a master's degree in museum studies from George Washington University in 1987, and it paid off when she helped put together a major exhibit for the Senate's own bicentennial in 1989. Diane collaborated on the exhibit with Don Ritchie, and together they set a new high standard for projects of this kind. At the time Diane was the associate curator and Don was the associate historian. They both rose through the ranks of their respective offices, so it has been a fruitful collaboration for many years.

Diane spent most of her early childhood in England where she first learned the sport of dressage. She gave up horses during college at Colgate University in upstate New York and went back to England in 1991 to become certified in teaching the sport. She kept up her riding after she returned to the States and came back to the Senate as head curator in late 1994, replacing the widely admired Jim Ketchum.

With Jim's support and encouragement, Diane learned the ropes and has doggedly pursued the legislative mandate of the Senate curator's office ever since, and that mandate is to protect, preserve, and educate.

Some of the biggest challenges Diane has faced have involved dealing with disasters. In 1983, a bomb planted near the Senate Chamber destroyed portions of the corridor—including a portrait of Daniel Webster. Under Diane's supervision, a conservator put the pieces back together and restored it.

Other projects Diane has been particularly proud of over the years include the publication of the U.S. Senate Catalogue of Fine Art, a 481-page book that took years to complete, and the restoration of a giant portrait of Henry Clay, from my State, that was given to the Senate after being discovered in the basement of a historical society. This magnificent painting of Clay now hangs in the stairway off the Brumidi corridor. The restoration of the Old Senate Chamber was also a proud achievement.

The entire Senate family is grateful to Diane for her many years of devoted service to this institution. Through her work, she has helped preserve and bring to life the shared objects of our collective history as a people—precious objects that belong to all Americans and to our posterity. Her legacy is literally all around us.

We thank her for her work and wish her and her husband Chris all the very best in the years ahead.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY 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. 1926, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 294, S. 1926, a bill to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I wish to speak for up to 10 minutes. I think we are in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is moving to proceed to consider S. 1926.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Wonderful. I thank the Presiding Officer. I will then speak on the bill that is before us.

I appreciate the cooperation of so many Members who voted last night to move forward on the debate of the fix to Biggert-Waters. We had a very strong and very impressive vote. I think 83 Members, Republicans and Democrats, came together from all parts of the country, from all different areas and districts and backgrounds to vote to move forward on the debate on flood insurance. I am grateful.

We have been working on this for about a year and a half. It has been a tough slog because 2 years ago a bill called Biggert-Waters was passed, named after the two cosponsors in the House, Congresswoman Biggert and Congresswoman WATERS. They passed a bill with very good intentions. They were thinking they were going to strengthen the flood insurance program. The bill had wonderful intentions, but unfortunately, the way it was drafted in the conference committee has resulted in disastrous results.

Some of us knew that 2 years ago and started working literally the moment the conference bill was passed to begin changing it. So we have worked diligently and together and built a great coalition. I thank the 200 organizations that quickly came together over the last year and a half—as quickly as any of these things can happen in a practical sense—to understand what went wrong in the first bill and how we could fix it so we could accomplish two important goals for the National Flood Insurance Program: first, that the program could be self-sustaining. In other words, it could pay for itself with limited or minimal taxpayer burden.

The other equally important goal—and the Presiding Officer, who represents New Jersey, knows, as I do, how important this is—is that the program would be affordable to middle-class families. If it is not affordable to middle-class families, they will not participate in it and the program will go bankrupt due to lack of participation.

The idea of insurance is to have a large pool to spread the risk, and that is how an insurance system works. If we don't fix it, it is going to make that pool get smaller and smaller and smaller. Because people will not be able to afford it, the program will collapse and the taxpayers will be saddled with debt.

The goal of our coalition—led by Senator MENENDEZ, the senior Senator from New Jersey who is on the Banking Committee and has been one of the great spokesmen and leaders for this bill, and Senator ISAKSON from Georgia, who is literally the most respected Member in this whole body on issues related to real estate because he had one of the largest real estate companies in Atlanta and knows the issue well. He is very respected on both sides of the aisle. These two gentlemen have led this effort and have built a bipartisan coalition.

So we are now ready this week, of all weeks. It is the State of the Union week. We would have probably preferred another week, but that is how this worked out. We are ready to debate the bill on the floor of the Senate. At last count, when we left, there were about six or seven relevant amendments. We are only going to accept relevant amendments to this bill. We are not going to accept amendments on other subjects by Members who are attempting to derail the Senate, get us off topic, et cetera, et cetera. We will only accept relevant amendments to this bill.

The happy thing is we think we only have about seven or eight amendments. Some amendments are Republican, some amendments are Democratic.

We just received an amendment from one of the opponents of our bill, the good Senator from Pennsylvania, who has not been supportive of our bill and

has not worked with the coalition and has not cooperated in any way. We got his amendment an hour ago. We have been actually waiting for a year and a half.

Last May he opposed the bill, and we couldn't even get to the debate because he wasn't happy with the direction we were going. So that happened in May. What is this month? It is January. We are now in the month of January, and he opposed the bill in May. It set us back 7 months. We tried to explain to the Senator from Pennsylvania that 74,000 people in his State have these policies and they too need help. Whether he has been able to reconcile that with his constituents I don't know, but we literally asked him to please let us know what we could do. We told him we would be happy to meet with him. The homebuilders and the realtors were willing to sit down and speak to him. We finally got a draft of his amendment in the last hour. We are literally reading it for the first time. I don't think that is cooperation, but he may have a different definition of it. We are reading that amendment now. I don't believe this amendment is going to help our cause. I think it is going to undermine what we are trying to do.

I will have more comments about the specifics of it, but the Senator from Pennsylvania, for whatever reason, has not been cooperative the whole time. We will be happy to vote on his amendment. I think the amendment is going to do great harm to the bill, and I think I would urge our coalition at this point to vote no, but I am going to look at it.

Senator ISAKSON has just received a copy of it in the last hour, and all I can do is ask our colleagues to be patient while we review his 13-page amendment. We have 200 organizations that have been working on this. We are trying to be fair and get their input, and then we will know how to proceed.

The bottom line is this: This week we are going to pass a flood insurance relief bill off the floor of the Senate. I wish to put everybody on notice that we have run out of patience. We have been working on this for a year and a half. We were told before Christmas we could have a vote, and then we were told we could have a vote when we got back. Then we were told we could have a vote before we left.

This is it. There is no more time. We are voting on this legislation this week. We are either going to do it the easy way or the hard way. We are either going to have a few amendments the Republicans put up, the Democrats put up, and we get back to legislating as we should or the leader is going to file cloture on this bill and we are going to pass it without an amendment. If one single Republican comes to this floor and says they did not have time to discuss their amendment, we will debate until the cows come home because I am not leaving this floor until every single person in America knows the games that can be played here.

I have been more than transparent. I have been more than honest. I have come here more than any Senator. I don't know if this is good or bad; it is the only way I know how to lead, which is to be forthright and honest with myself, with my constituents, and with people who need to know what in the heck is going on. I don't know how else to do it. I am not going to apologize. I am not going to read about how to do this in a book. There are no books on this. This is about leadership from the inside, and the only people who taught me this were my parents.

I am just saying, if anyone in this Chamber thinks they are going to get away with trying to give some flimsy-limsy excuse about how they didn't get their amendment considered, how they are upset with the leader, they will have to go through me, and I am not moving because I have people all over this country who are desperate. We passed the wrong bill. We should not have passed it. We must fix it, and we are going to fix it this week in the Senate.

What the House does, what Speaker BOEHNER does—he made some negative comments about the bill last week. My comments back were the Speaker has his hands full. He has been busy. I understand it. I wouldn't want his job. He has a tough job with a lot of issues to juggle. But I said, and I will say again, when this bill goes to the House, which it will after it passes the Senate this week, he will hear from millions and millions of Americans who paid their mortgage every month, who went to work every day, who honor their family by building homes in places they have been for generations, and they are about ready to take those front-door keys and turn them in to the local bank and walk away from their house. Speaker BOEHNER is going to hear that. I hope those words, those expressions, those pictures, those letters will hit his heart the way they have hit mine and that he will have a softened heart and an open mind and he will consider what we are trying to do.

I realize our way may not be the most perfect way, but it is a good way, and if somebody wants to improve it, fine. But don't scuttle it, pretending to be helping. Don't scuttle it by pretending to be for some kind of better approach. If there was a better approach, we would have found it in the last year and a half we have been searching. We are not going to find it in the last 3 minutes of this debate.

We are reviewing the Toomey amendment. He has been the lead opponent of our effort. I don't believe his amendment is helpful, but until I read it, I will not be able to give a definitive assessment. Senator ISAKSON will have to give his views on it, as will Senator MENENDEZ, and we will figure it out. But we are going to bring relief to the 5 million people who have done nothing wrong—middle-class families, some of them very poor families—who have been living in these places for generations, and because FEMA can't get its flood maps right, because FEMA can't get the affordability study done, they are going to be kicked out of their homes.

Talk about misguided regulation. I hope MITCH MCCONNELL, our Republican leader, talking about misguided regulation, will put a little muscle into helping us. He has been cooperative, and I thank him. Senator REID has been putting a lot of muscle into this, and I thank him.

I hope people will come to the floor and speak about the importance of this bill. We will figure out this amendment process—all germane amendments—and get the final vote this week. This is going to get done this week, the easy way or the hard way, and we are done. The vote is going to happen this week. We are going to move this bill from the floor to the President, who put out a statement—and his administration—they didn't have many positive things to say about this. Let me just say I think their statement is misinformed. It is misguided. I am hoping the White House will reconsider. The President is coming here tonight to speak about the importance of strengthening the middle class. I would think that allowing middle-class people to stay in their homes would be a good place to start. So I hope the administration will take a second look and join us and help us to let middle-class families stay in their homes.

Let me conclude. Colorado is a beautiful State. I have been there many times. However, not everybody can live in the mountains of Colorado. There are some of us who have to live along rivers and streams and ports to build and to support the infrastructure that helps to make this country grow. My people who fish every day, who harvest the oysters, who put seafood on the table, who bring those huge and magnificent barges up and down the river, can't live in Vail, CO. I am sorry. They don't like the snow and they couldn't afford to live there anyway. They live in little places such as Burris and Venice and Plackman, and the lower ninth ward that got flooded out, every single home destroyed. They can go back if we use our science, our engineering, our brains, and lead with our hearts and our heads. This can work. But if people are playing political games, if they are trying to score political points or if they are not working hard enough to understand the issue, then I feel sorry for them because the public needs our help.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I have come to the floor to talk about the

Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act. This bill is a bill that is designed to fix the damage that has been done by the Biggert-Waters Act, and this damage is extensive. This bill would freeze dramatic rate hikes, and these rate hikes have several impacts.

We have, of course, the impact on families who currently have flood insurance who will be paying much higher levels than they bargained for when they bought their home and may not be able to afford those much higher levels, raising questions about their ability to stay in those homes.

We have the impact on commercial enterprises and the fact that now that they are paying higher rates, they may not feel they can add on to their business in that location.

Then we have the impact, of course, on selling your property, whether you are a homeowner or you are a business, because the folks who might be buying might have to jump to a full rate that would be many times—in some cases 10 times—the price the current owner is paying, and when that happens the property becomes unaffordable and, therefore, the value that one has in their home or business drops dramatically.

All of this is of great concern, and we need to reverse the features of Biggert-Waters that are causing this economic havoc.

This bill comes out of discussions that were in my Subcommittee on Economic Policy several months ago. This discussion is now led by Senator MENENDEZ, and he has been ably assisted and partnered with Senator MARY LANDRIEU and Senator ISAKSON and Senator VITTER and I compliment them all for being vocal advocates and instrumental in helping to move this bill forward.

The Biggert-Waters Act, while well intentioned, is creating massive burdens for our middle-class homeowners in Oregon and certainly across the Nation. Flooding is something of an equal opportunity disaster. For some, it is the coastlines. For others, it is broad flood plains along major rivers. For others, it is narrow valleys and flash floods. But in all of these situations, the common impact is dramatic devastation.

Something is very wrong though when families are more worried about dramatic spikes in their flood insurance premiums than they are worried about dramatic floods, and that is where my Oregon families are right now. I wish to share a letter from Kelly. She lives in Tigard. She says, in her own words, she is ''a middle class, single mother currently working to get [her] daughter through college.''

She bought her home 13 years ago to provide stability for her daughter. This is a goal of so many parents, to have a piece of the American dream, to have the stability that goes with home ownership, to have the equity that you build in your home as a financial reservoir with which to assist your children going forward in life.

She thought about selling a few years ago but decided to stay in that house and keep that financial foundation. But now, with Biggert-Waters going into effect, she has been caught between two bad choices. If she stays in her home, her flood insurance rates will go up precipitously, making her home increasingly unaffordable and squeezing an already tight budget. But should she try to sell, the new owner will face annual flood insurance premiums of $15,000 or more, making her home completely unaffordable for middle-class buyers.

Keep this in mind: For every $1,000 a buyer pays in flood insurance per year, the value of a home drops by about $20,000. So if the flood insurance is $15,000, we are talking about a value of a home dropping $300,000. Many middle-class homes in Oregon are not priced at $300,000. They might be valued at $200,000 or $220,000 or $250,000 or, in more rural areas, $150,000 or $175,000. So we can wipe out the complete value of a home and certainly easily wipe out the equity a homeowner has built over a number of years. Essentially, you have to give the home away. That makes no sense.

To read from Kelly's letter, she says:

Here is where I see a problem. There is an old saying, ''you can't get blood from a stone.''

She continues:

I know I am not alone in my predicament of barely getting by financially.

Middle income folks like me are squeezed from all sides. . . .

While living expenses rise every year, our income generally does not raise enough to make up for it. . . .

We tighten our belts and wait for better times. So, the problem here is, we can't afford to pay these, much higher rates. We just don't have the money.

She continues in her analysis:

There are options, of course. We can come up with many 10's of thousands of dollars to raise our houses up and make them flood friendly. . . .

But wait—we don't have 10's of thousands of dollars. And, we can't sell—that's the beauty here. Who will buy a small, middle income type home that has a flood insurance bill annually of 15–30k [a year]?

She continues:

So what will we do, the over 1 million homeowners in this situation? To our utter frustration and humiliation, many of us have no choice but to walk away. . . .

Whatever the attitudes about us are, most of us are good Americans who believe in paying our debts. We have worked hard our entire lives, and asked for little or no help along the way.

This will crush us, and since we don't have the money to give, there is no benefit to be had.

That is how she concludes her letter: ''This will crush us. . . . '' She is right. It will crush her family. It will crush millions of families across this country. It will include foreclosures. It will include equity wiped out. It will result in families having to walk away from their home and hope they are not pursued by their mortgage company that will be unable to sell the home on a secondary market for the debt owed and, therefore, could pursue the owners.

It is wrong and counterproductive to squeeze middle-class homeowners such as Kelly when it will only result in more foreclosures or families trapped in their homes unable to sell them.

Making flood insurance more solvent is a laudable goal, but it is one we have to approach in a manner that involves fairness over time. Achieving solvency by putting a huge burden, a huge financial shock on the backs of our middle-class families is not just wrong, it is a financial disaster that is unfolding now and will continue to unfold across this country.

We cannot get to solvency by asking families to pay sums they simply do not have or, as Kelly said, ''You can't get blood from a stone.''

We need to immediately stop these dramatic rate hikes for our homeowners and our businesses while FEMA goes back to the drawing board to figure out how to make this program affordable and effective for our middle-class families.

That is exactly what this bill does. This bill has several important provisions that help ensure affordability and fairness for our middle-class families.

The first is it delays implementation of flood insurance rate increases. It does so on primary residences and on businesses until FEMA can complete an affordability study, propose regulations to address the problem of affordability, and give Congress time to weigh in.

Second, unlike Biggert-Waters, the bill ensures that FEMA will truly have the funding they need to complete a comprehensive affordability study.

Third, this bill takes on a catch-22 in the current system, which is that when homeowners face unaffordable rates that they think are inaccurate, they have to pay out of their pocket for a flood map appeal to prove that their premiums should be lowered. So when someone else makes a mistake, they have to pay for that mistake, and that is wrong.

The studies necessary for an appeal can cost between $500 and $2,000. It is a prohibitive cost for many families to undertake. This bill ensures that any homeowner who can successfully appeal a flood map finding will be reimbursed by FEMA for their expense, making the system fairer for the homeowner and giving FEMA an added incentive to get it right.

Finally, this bill does something very important in creating a flood insurance rate map advocate within FEMA, someone to educate and advocate for homeowners. One of the complaints my office has heard is that FEMA has not been responsive to homeowners' concerns or questions about changes in their policy.

It creates this position. An advocate will do several things. The advocate will educate policyholders about their flood risks and their options in choosing a policy. The advocate will assist

those who believe a flood map is wrong and assist them through the appeal process. The advocate will improve outreach and coordination with local officials, community leaders, and Congress.

My colleagues Senators HOEVEN and HEITKAMP have also done great work on this bill to ensure that homeowners in certain communities are not hit by unfair rules on how their basements impact a flood policy.

I would like to address one other issue that is not in this bill that hopefully I will be able to offer an amendment on; that is, protection for consumers whose policies are purchased by their mortgage servicer or their bank rather than by themselves. This is the issue of predatory force-placed premiums.

Let me explain. Let's say, for example, that you are notified by your servicer that they have reviewed the records and they now consider you to be in a flood plain they had not noticed before and you have to get flood insurance. But that flood insurance, unsubsidized, is so expensive you cannot afford it. So then the servicer says: Well, we are going to put on flood insurance for you. The rate might be 5 to 10 times the market rate. In other words, the homeowner who already cannot afford flood insurance is gouged by predatory premiums on force-placed insurance.

Let's consider that perhaps you had a transition in your family. Maybe you have one partner paying the bills and another partner takes it over while the first partner is sick and you miss the fact that your annual premium was due on your flood insurance. So what happens? That lapse can trigger much higher rates that you cannot afford. Then suddenly you are in the situation of force-placed insurance.

How about if new maps are issued. The new maps now put you into a 100-year flood plain that you were not in previously. It is not that the geography changed; it is that a different set of engineers, doing a different study, different assumptions about where the rain will fail, which creek will swell the quickest, puts you into this 100-year flood plain.

So now what are you going to do? You are going to be in this situation. You cannot afford that insurance, that newly placed requirement for insurance, so the servicer or bank puts it on for you. Well, they should put it in at a fair market rate, not at a rate which is 5 to 10 times the fair market rate and which is designed to gouge.

I have an amendment that addresses this by saying the servicers or banks cannot take fees—or, as some would say, ''kickbacks''—for placing this insurance and therefore have an incentive to do a nonmarket rate policy that is 5 or 10 times higher than the actual market rate.

This is a significant problem in force-placed home insurance. Certainly, we do not need to add to this problem by allowing predatory premiums on force-placed policies in the realm of flood insurance. I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to take a look at this issue, to support banning the anti-competitive features of the market that have led to these predatory premiums on force-placed flood insurance.

In closing, I again thank my colleagues who have worked so hard. This is an important issue, an incredibly important issue for families across Oregon. Let's stop these dramatic rate hikes. Let's work together for an affordable flood insurance program that will be effective and fair for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The Senator from Iowa.

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

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

INCOME INEQUALITY

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent that the letters I will be speaking about be printed in the RECORD at the end of my remarks.

Recently the Obama administration has been talking a lot about income inequality and poverty. Yesterday I spoke about the issue, about the war on poverty, its successes and its failures. As I said yesterday, the United States has spent trillions of dollars in the last 50 years fighting the so-called war on poverty. I said yesterday that the results have been marginal, in some cases successful, reducing the poverty rate from 19 percent down to the 15 percent it is now. But a lot more needs to be done.

Now, in the fight against the war on poverty, this administration, like a lot of administrations, wants to spend more money on more programs. Some of that may be justified, but that does not seem to fix the problems. If you just hand this money out with no strings and no oversight, it gets diverted and misused. That is the purpose of my speaking today on the subject of public housing.

Wasted money does not help the poor. There are a lot of people who make a nice profit from the poverty of others. This administration has been helping a number of these profiteers while the poor suffer. I want to be clear as to some of these issues I am talking about—their genesis goes back to previous administrations as well. Through my oversight work, I have seen this happen over and over, that a few people profit from trying to help the poor, but the money does not go there. The Department of Housing and Urban Development hands out $4 billion in Federal money every year to local housing authorities. This money is supposed to help provide clean, affordable, safe housing for the poor. But, while no one is watching, much of the money gets spent on high salaries and perks for the people who run the housing authorities. These housing authorities have other sources of money. For most of them, up to 90 percent of their total funding comes from the $4 billion contributed by the Federal taxpayers.

Housing and Urban Development argues that because housing authorities are State and local government entities, there is no reason to scrutinize them from here in Washington, DC. As far as I am concerned, HUD is missing the point for 4 billion reasons. Those are dollar reasons. Taxpayer money should come with Federal oversight. We need to make sure that the Federal authorities who disburse it make sure they oversee that it is spent in the legal way—to help the people who need the help.

I have been conducting oversight of the wasteful spending at housing authorities for almost 4 years. I have been urging the Obama administration to look at what is happening and to take action. But there is little if any interest in the oversight of these Federal dollars by the folks writing the checks here in Washington, DC. They just want to send the checks and pat themselves on the back. They do not want to talk about what actually happens to the money once it is disbursed.

Federal funds end up feathering the nests of local housing bureaucrats instead of housing the poor. I will show you how that is done. Here are some of the most egregious examples of how ineffective the Department of Housing and Urban Development has been at policing local housing authorities.

Bradenton, FL, is an area of the country which was hit extremely hard during the foreclosure crisis, but employees at Bradenton Housing Authority only have to work 4 days a week. They get 2 weeks off at Christmas, bonuses in June and December, and the option to cash out up to a month of sick leave twice per year. They get free use of a car purchased by the housing authority. After 15 years of employment, they get to keep the car when they leave or take $10,000 instead; it is their choice.

There are generous fringe benefits, but many housing authorities also provide very lucrative salaries. These salaries far exceed the salaries of Federal employees right here in Washington, DC, who hand out the taxpayers' money to the housing authorities. The biggest salary jackpot winner I have encountered so far is the Atlanta Housing Authority. At least 22 employees there earn between $150,000 and $303,000 per year. The Atlanta Housing Authority benefits from a special HUD designation called ''moving to work.'' That program exempts designated housing authorities from certain requirements, including salary justification. This is not just an isolated example. The executive director of the Raleigh, NC, housing authority receives about $280,000 in salary and benefits, plus up to 30 vacation days. He also accumulates comp time for any hours he works over 7½ hours per day. He has used over 20 days of comp time per year since 2009. Add that to his regular vacation time, and he is out of the office

nearly 3 months per year. Nine months of work for $280,000 is an annualized salary of $375,000 per year. Very few taxpayer-funded jobs pay anything close to that amount.

So what is the justification for such high salaries, particularly considering the fact that they are supposed to provide safe, affordable housing for low-income people? After years of ignoring the issue, HUD finally capped Federal funding for executive salaries at $155,500 per employee. Of course, this was only after various local media and I exposed deep-rooted problems and pushed the Department of Housing and Urban Development to act. But now housing authority executives have turned to creative accounting tricks to get around that limit of $155,500 per employee. Since some of their money comes from other sources, the housing authorities simply claim that any salary over the Federal limit comes from one of those other sources, whereas the money from those other sources ought to be used to help low-income people have affordable, clean, and safe housing.

Because of my oversight letters on this subject, HUD recently notified the housing authorities that they must document the original source of the funding used to pay salaries over the Federal limit. That is good news, but there are still larger problems. The Department is still not making this salary data public in a reasonable timeframe. I will give an example. This administration refused to release the 2010 set of data for almost a year. I hope we do not have to wait a year to get the most recent data.

Like many of our Federal agencies, some housing authorities spend large amounts of money on travel for conferences and training. Some of that may be legitimate, but I am raising questions about the extent to which it is done and the amount of money that is consumed. Staff and board members often attend the same conferences throughout the United States year after year. They often attend multiple conferences in a single year. In addition to travel costs, housing authorities must pay a conference fee for each attendee they send, often ranging from $400 at the low end to $1,000 per employee at the higher end.

That money could easily be used to improve conditions and make needed repairs in public housing facilities. Instead, it is frittered away on conferences. In other words, forget the low-income people they are supposed to be helping and spend the money someplace else.

The Tampa Housing Authority has spent more than $860,000 since 2009 for staff and board members to attend various conferences, seminars, and training programs—$860,000 that could have been used to provide affordable housing for low-income people. Tampa also has been sending 20 or more employees per year to conferences sponsored by the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials. That alone costs more than $177,000 per year.

The Atlanta Housing Authority spent more than $480,000 since 2009 for the employees to attend conferences and training sessions. In fact, the housing authority paid over $68,000 in conference fees to a software company after giving them a multimillion-dollar contract for a new computer system.

I wonder—I don't know, but I think it is legitimate to question—if the housing authority executive director thought to ask for a discount. Many of the housing authorities with questionable spending don't limit the abuses to salaries or travel.

The Tampa Housing Authority purchased a new $7 million administrative office that includes nearly $3 million in renovations and upgrades. That could have helped hundreds, if not thousands, of poor people needing the housing. They are also paying nearly $800,000 in salary and benefits for a public relations department while at the same time paying an employee another $170,369 as a PR consultant.

Other housing authorities are also spending exorbitant amounts for outside consultants. Some of these consultants are former employees of the local housing authority.

In 2013, the Pittsburgh Housing Authority retained 10 law firms for a total of $3.5 million over 3 years. One law firm has been representing the housing authority during inquiries by the Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Inspector General and the city controller.

Think about that. It is bad enough that taxpayers' money meant to help the poor is wasted, but when the taxpayer also pays the lawyers to defend the very organization from scrutiny about whether the taxpayers' money was wasted is even more outrageous. Of course, that adds insult to injury.

In Philadelphia, outside lawyers blocked the inspector general's office from assessing spending data for months, and that cost the taxpayers millions of dollars.

The Pittsburgh Housing Authority also paid an outside consulting firm $1.25 million in the year 2012. The vice president at the consulting company billed the housing authority $404,000 for 2,400 hours of work. That is 48 hours a week for a year. It is more than double the $168,000 salary of the housing authority executive director.

Harris County, TX, is one of the most egregious examples of out-of-control spending. In 2013, the HUD inspector general questioned the mismanagement of over $27 million in Federal funding for Harris County. The IG provided the following examples of fraud and abuse: over $1.7 million in excessive payroll expenses; $190,000 for statues and monuments; $66,000 for employees' shirts embossed with logos; $27,000 for trophies, plaques, and awards; $14,500 for a helicopter, a chartered bus, and golf cart rentals for a grand opening; and $18,000 for letters written by Abraham Lincoln.

I continue to send my oversight letters to the Senate appropriators and the Senate banking committee. These are the letters I received permission to put in the RECORD at the end of my statement.

The Senate appropriators and the Senate banking committee members have jurisdiction over the Department of Housing and Urban Development. They have the authority to do something about these abuses. My colleagues need to know the extent of the problems, and that I am ready to work with the Members of this body to address these issues.

Employment at public housing authorities should be about public service. That is why we have a program serving the needs of low-income people. It is supposed to be providing clean, safe, affordable housing for those in need, not helping bureaucrats live high on the hog on the taxpayers' dime.

As I said in my opening, this problem didn't start with this administration. There is a culture here that had to start back a long time ago. But now, bringing these problems to the attention of this administration, I hope it will take them seriously. If this administration is truly serious about income inequality—and not only using it for political purposes—it would stop shoveling taxpayers' money out the door with practically no oversight, no controls, no limits, and the waste of money I have just expressed. If President Obama is truly serious about income inequality, he would take the money high-income public housing authorities waste and give it to the benefit of low-income patrons of public housing to provide what the law is meant to provide these people: safe, affordable, healthy housing.

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

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, July 16, 2013.

Hon. SHAUN DONOVAN,
Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY DONOVAN: The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded high performer status to the Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA) ''for eight consecutive years'' between 2004 and 2011. In the 2009 Consolidated On-Site Review, the HUD field office director, Dan Rodriguez, even stated that, HCHA ''practices are some of the best throughout our region.'' Following revelations of possible mismanagement in 2012, Mr. Rodriguez then told the Houston Chronicle, ''We didn't expect that anything was actually going on here of concern.'' He further stated, ''We in the field office here have always had the privilege of having one of the highest-performing housing authorities in the country.''

On June 19, 2013, the HUD Office of Inspector General (OIG) released an audit report raising concerns about HCHA mismanagement of over $27 million in federal funding. In addition to over $7 million spent on an unauthorized disaster assessment and over $8 million for the now-defunct Patriots on the Lake development, the OIG provided numerous examples of fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars. These include:

Over $1.7 million in excessive payroll expenses;

$190,000 for statues and monuments;

$66,000 for employee shirts embossed with HCHA logos;

$54,000 for apartment rental for housing consultants;

$24,000 for a book writing project about disaster housing;

$27,000 for trophies, plaques and awards;

$14,500 for helicopter, chartered bus and golf cart rentals for a grand opening;

$18,000 for letters written by Abraham Lincoln; and

Over $150,000 in missing electronic equipment including computers and electronic tablets.

The OIG found that both HCHA management and the Board failed to fulfill their oversight responsibilities. Specifically, ''the Authority expended funds for many items that were not reasonable or necessary and did not support the Authority's mission.'' Moreover, ''they neglected their management and oversight responsibilities; wasted Authority funds, at times for personal gain; circumvented existing internal controls; and manipulated accounting records. These conditions occurred because the Authority's management and Board failed to exercise their fiduciary responsibilities and did not act in the best interest of the Authority.''

HUD also failed to ensure that millions in Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP) funding, awarded following Hurricane Ike, were used properly or as intended. Instead, HCHA awarded a lucrative consulting contract to the former HCHA Board chairman Odysseus Lanier's firm just two months after he resigned from the Board. The conflict-of-interest waiting period is one year. Mr. Lanier's consulting firm received ''$11.3 million from HCHA, according to agency director Tom McCasland, most of it for work on some sort of multi-state disaster response survey that nobody wanted. Harris County tried to get $7 million in reimbursement for it from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but was denied, according to the audit.'' Additionally, in 2008 the housing authority purchased at least five high-end SUVs which were subsequently donated to the Harris County Office of Emergency Management and earmarked for five specific employees.

Purchasing $18,000 historic documents, spending $190,000 on statues and monuments, and paying for chartered helicopter flights is not a hallmark of ''one of the highest performing housing authorities in the country.'' This is money that should have been used to provide clean, safe, and affordable housing for those in need. HUD must take greater steps to safeguard taxpayer dollars, especially during this time of budget cuts due to sequestration. Please provide the following information:

1. What steps are being taken by HUD to recoup as much of the $27 million in questionable spending outlined in the OIG audit report?

Given the efforts that Mr. Rankin and other officials at HCHA took to hide their questionable spending, have criminal referrals been made to the Department of Justice? If so, for what offenses? Who has been referred?

2. I have raised concerns about unreported conflicts-of-interest at HCHA and other housing authorities that have cost taxpayers millions. What steps are being taken by HUD to tighten up conflict-of-interest reporting requirements and increased oversight to reduce the questionable payments in the future?

3. It is my understanding that HUD has conducted no oversight of the billions in Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP) funding granted to HCHA and other housing authorities along the Gulf Coast impacted by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike. Please explain why this has not been done and, given the recent financial problems at HCHA and billions provided for Hurricane Sandy efforts, when we might expect an audit to be conducted?

4. It is my understanding that neither the former HCHA executive director, Guy Rankin IV, nor his new company, International Housing Solutions, has been suspended or disbarred from receiving federal funding through HUD. In fact, Mr. Rankin may be trying to obtain or has already received Hurricane Sandy funding even after allegedly wasting millions in Hurricane Ike funding.

Please state whether HUD has suspended or disbarred Mr. Rankin and/or International Housing Solutions, as well as other bad housing authority actors, from receiving federal funding.

Please also explain what steps HUD is taking to ensure that Hurricane Sandy funding is used as Congress intended and not lost to waste, fraud and abuse.

5. What specific changes have been and will be made to the housing authority assessment program that will address the many deficiencies in the current self-assessment program? When will these changes be fully implemented?

6. Currently, the housing authorities' financial and management audits are paid for by the housing authorities themselves, which may result in conflicts of interest. What alternatives to auditor contracting awards and payments are being considered by in order to ensure that the auditors are serving the taxpayers instead of housing authority management?

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. I would appreciate receiving your response to this matter by July 31, 2013. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Janet Drew of my staff.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Ranking Member,
Committee on the Judiciary.

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, November 20, 2013

Hon. SHAUN DONOVAN,
Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY DONOVAN: I have been raising concerns about questionable spending at public housing authorities (PHA) across the United States. I have questioned excessive travel spending at public housing authorities in the past, but the Tampa Housing Authority (THA), a HUD high performer, appears to have far surpassed those housing authorities in travel and conference spending.

Recent investigative reports by Channel 10 News in Tampa found that THA has spent in excess of $860,000 since 2009 for staff and Board members to attend various conferences, seminars and training programs. According to travel documents provided by THA (see attached), staff and board members often attend the same conferences throughout the United States, some for the same organizations year after year, and often attend multiple conferences in a single year. In addition to travel costs, THA pays a conference fee for each attendee, ranging between $400 and $1000. Every dollar that goes to airfare, meals, lodging and conference fees, is another dollar that cannot be used to help house homeless Tampa Bay residents.

Additionally, these trips amount to thousands of man hours spent away from the office and not serving the citizens of Tampa. According to the travel documents, THA staff and board members annually spend more than 500 work days outside the office. While THA may argue the necessity for the conference and training attendance, a vast majority of these trips appear to be non-critical to housing authority business and give the impression of being an excuse to take expensive vacations paid for with taxpayer dollars.

Like other housing authorities I have been investigating, THA has been spending limited federal funding for other questionable expenses. The executive director, Jerome Ryans, receives an annual salary of $214,000 plus a compensation package which puts him well over the $155,500 salary cap. Additional examples include: a new $7 million administrative office with nearly $3 million in renovations and upgrades, nearly $800,000 on salary and benefits for the public relations department while paying $170,369 for a PR consultant, $2.8 million in outside legal fees since 2009 while one outside lawyer is also married to a housing authority employee.

In August, Executive Director Ryans complained that ''the agency will also lose approximately 1 million dollars in administrative fees that cover operational costs due to sequestration.'' He also stated that ''it is our goal to continually find ways or opportunities to reduce overall departmental costs.'' I strongly suggest that Mr. Ryans and HUD start by curtailing attendance at conferences and training seminars, excessive salaries, consulting and legal fees.

Please provide the following:

1. Please describe the steps being taken by HUD to rein in excessive spending on travel, conferences and training at THA and other housing authorities across the country and explain why those steps have been ineffective in preventing the abuses described above.

2. The complete annual compensation packages of all THA employees, including salaries, bonuses and any other compensation (health care, retirement, etc).

3. A copy of most recent employment contracts for the executive director and all THA financial statements filed with HUD, including any statements made about executive director salary and all benefits.

4. Complete documentation of the remodeling expenditures for the new headquarters building.

5. The total number of credit cards issued to THA, including any provided to THA board members.

6. All legal bills and professional service and consulting fees paid by the PHAs. Please also document all conflict of interest waivers.

7. A list of all take-home vehicles provided by the housing authorities and the names of the employees who drive them.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. I would appreciate your response by December 6, 2013. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Janet Drew of my staff.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Ranking Member.

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, January 8, 2014.

Hon. SHAUN DONOVAN,
Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY DONOVAN: The Dayton Daily News recently reported questionable management decisions at the Dayton (Ohio) Housing Authority, renamed Greater Dayton Premier Management (GDPM). I want to ensure that HUD taxpayer dollars are used for safe, affordable housing instead of questionable compensation packages.

According to the article, the GDPM Board of Commissioners recently fired the interim CEO, Al Prude. Mr. Prude was removed by a Board resolution which stated that the housing authority ''is going to a 'new business model' that consists of four agency directors acting as a team that will meet twice a day to run the agency.'' Instead of hiring a new CEO immediately, the housing authority is paying the four department heads each an additional $1,000 per week to cover the CEO duties. At that rate, the housing authority is spending $16,000 per month or $192,000 per year for the department directors to cover the CEO duties, with no time frame for naming a replacement. The former CEO was paid just over $123,000 per year which now looks like a bargain.

It also appears that prior to his removal, Mr. Prude received two very lucrative pay raises on one day last year. The first bumped his salary ''from $98,542 to $123,157 on Aug. 30, 2012, along with a check for back pay through June 1, when he was appointed interim CEO.'' The second was an increase ''from $81,000 to $98,542, retroactive to the date of his hire on Jan. 31, 2011.'' He also received a lump-sum payment for back pay back to his hire date. The raises were signed by himself, the board chairman and the chief financial officer.

Although the GDPM Board decided to terminate Mr. Prude, the decision to pay the department heads to cover his duties indefinitely appears to be even more expensive than the previous CEO. Therefore, I am requesting the following information for the period of 2008 to the present:

1. Please provide an explanation for why a housing authority is allowed to pay an additional $16,000 per month for four individuals to act as CEO. Please also document how HUD intends to enforce the $155,000 salary limit when the duties are split among several individuals.

2. The complete annual compensation packages of all GDPM employees, including salaries, bonuses, retroactive pay, separation pay and any other compensation (health care, retirement, etc.).

3. Provide a list of all legal bills and professional service and consulting fees paid by GDPM.

4. Please document any Conflict of Interest waivers filed by the GDPM and Board of Commissioners with HUD.

5. What additional oversight is being conducted by HUD regarding payments to outside consultants and law firms by all housing authorities across the country to ensure that all federal funds, including stimulus and disaster funds, are protected against waste, fraud and abuse? Please be specific.

6. Provide all travel records for all employees at GDPM as well as the GDPM Board members.

7. Please provide the names of all nonprofit affiliates with ties to GDPM. Please include the names of all officers and their salary/benefit packages.

Accordingly, please provide responses by no later than January 24, 2014. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please have your respective staff members contact Janet Drew.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Ranking Member.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, January 9, 2014.

Hon. SHAUN DONOVAN,
Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY DONOVAN: Recent reports in the Raleigh News & Observer, which we have attached to this letter, have shone a light on the situation surrounding the executive director of the Raleigh, North Carolina Housing Authority (RHA) and his extremely generous salary and fringe benefits. Specifically, we are concerned that the RHA—a HUD ''high performer''—allows its executive director, Steve Beam, to be on paid vacation from the housing authority for nearly three months a year to pursue his outside hobbies and interests.

According to the article, Mr. Beam is one of the most highly paid housing authority executive directors in the country. His compensation package, which includes ''salary, bonuses, longevity payments and car allowance,'' totals approximately $280,000 per year. This year, the RHA board also increased his annual vacation time from 24 days to 30 days per year. In return for the high salary, Mr. Beam is only required to work 7.5 hours per day.

In addition to the generous salary and vacation days he receives through his contract, Mr. Beam also accumulates comp-time for any hours he works over 7.5 hours. This benefit is extremely unusual for such a highly paid manager and Mr. Beam has used it to rack up over four months of paid vacation from 2010 to the present. In fact, because of Mr. Beam's unique 7.5 hour work day, over the course of one year he accrues an additional two weeks of comp-time simply by working a traditional eight hour day. All told, he used 22.5 comp days in 2009, 23.5 in 2010, 20 in 2011, 20.5 in 2012, and only 14 through October 2013.

It appears however, that despite these extremely generous benefits, Mr. Beam still uses government funded time to indulge his interest in magic tricks, which he referred to as his ''business/hobby'' in a statement to the News & Observer. The newspaper spotlighted several examples of Mr. Beam's using work time to pursue his hobby including posting to a website called ''The Magic Café.'' Given that the RHA board specifically gives Mr. Beam months of vacation unavailable to other housing authority executives in order to pursue his interest in magic, it is extremely concerning that Mr. Beam was unable to confine his ''business/hobby'' to his multiple months of vacation which suggests the RHA does not have sufficient oversight controls over Mr. Beam's activities.

The RHA executive director and board believe that RHA functions well while the executive director is away from the office for nearly three months a year mainly because RHA has a ''capable'' deputy executive director to pick up the slack. As the RHA receives the vast majority of its funds from HUD, it is important for HUD to hold Mr. Beam and the RHA board accountable for their actions. To examine the extent of HUD's oversight over Mr. Beam in the RHA, please answer the following questions and provide the requested documents:

1. An explanation for why Mr. Beam is allowed to accumulate up to three weeks of comp time while working less than the standard 40 hour work week.

2. An explanation for how RHA is deemed a ''high performer'' when the executive director is away from the office for nearly three months per year.

3. The complete list of annual compensation packages of all RHA employees, including salaries, bonuses, longevity pay, car allowance and/or take-home vehicle, vacation and comp time and any other compensation (health care, retirement, etc).

4. Please review and document the executive director's use of RHA office equipment to conduct non-RHA business.

5. Provide a list of all legal bills and professional service and consulting fees paid by RHA.

6. Please provide copies of all employee financial disclosure forms and document any Conflict of Interest waivers filed by the RHA and RHA board with HUD.

7. Provide all travel records for all employees at RHA as well as the RHA board members.

8. Please provide the names of all nonprofit affiliates with ties to RHA. Please include the names of all officers and their salary/benefit packages.

Accordingly, please provide responses by no later than January 24, 2014. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please have your respective staff members contact Janet Drew with Senator Grassley or Kris Denzel with Congressman Holding.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
U.S. Senator.
GEORGE HOLDING,
U.S. Congressman.

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, January 16, 2014.

Hon. SHAUN DONOVAN,
Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY DONOVAN: A recent series of articles in the Bradenton Herald describe very serious financial mismanagement issues at the Bradenton (Florida) Housing Authority (BHA). Specifically BHA—a HUD ''high performer''—has provided lucrative employee compensation packages that helped put the housing authority $400,000 in debt. HUD has already removed both employees for attendance and vacation time infractions, but there appear to be other financial and management problems as well.

The BHA employee manual contains very questionable provisions for take-home vehicles, lucrative bonus and leave policies, and retirement benefits. According to an October 6, 2013 Bradenton Herald article, at least half of the ten person staff have take-home vehicles. According to page 49 of the BHA employee handbook, the take-home vehicles are ''available for both business and personal use,'' and ''BHA issues a fuel credit card for each vehicle user.'' Additionally, the employee is required to ''arrange for routine vehicle servicing . . . through the Development Director'' and the vehicle must be ''cleaned every other week inside and out at a designated car wash.''

If employees with fifteen or more years of service like their take-home vehicles, they have the option of keeping them when they retire or voluntarily leave. According to the employee handbook, the employee ''will be entitled to either the vehicle that they are driving at the time of the separation or $10,000.'' Moreover, the policy provides that ''if said vehicle is leased, the Housing Authority will immediately pay the lease in full.'' Interestingly, the policy places no limit on the value of the vehicle or the lease to be paid off.

Most BHA employees are given two bonuses every year, one in June and one in December. According to the employee handbook, employees who have been with BHA for at least a year are eligible for a bonus of up to ten percent which is determined by the executive director. The bonus is paid in June and even employees who retire or voluntarily leave during the year receive a prorated bonus. According to an October 20, 2013, Bradenton Herald article, BHA instituted a new bonus policy in February 2013, without Board approval, that gave every employee a ten percent raise in March 2013. The second bonus, a longevity award, is paid in December of each year (see Table below). Even employees who voluntarily left BHA after five or more years of employment are paid a prorated amount.

For service of at least:	But less than:	The Amount is:
2 years	3 years	$100
3 years	4 years	$200
4 years	5 years	$300
5 years	10 years	1 Weeks Pay
10 years	15 years	Two Weeks Pay
15 years	20 years	Three Weeks Pay
20 years		4 Weeks Pay

The BHA has very liberal leave policies including 15 hours of vacation and 15 hours of sick leave per month and bonus vacation hours after five years of service. Although the employee handbook allows for two days off for Christmas and one for New Year's Day, BHA had been closing between December 20th and January 2nd for the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Plus, an employee can, according to the employee handbook, cash out between 40 and 160 sick leave hours twice per year and may convert vacation hours to sick leave hours in order to cash them out. In fact, the Bradenton Herald estimates that the former executive could cash out ''between $7127.50 and $28,510 at a time'' so he could have pocketed an extra $14,225 to $57,020 per year.

Meanwhile, BHA board members failed due diligence and oversight responsibilities. The board consistently passed ''resolutions without seeing the language'' and the chairman now wants to review employee policies only after the executive director was fired. Another board member stated ''HUD is the official agency.'' And, ''They didn't call me and say, 'Did you know your budget is in deficit.' ''

To examine the extent of HUD's oversight over BHA management, please answer the following questions and provide the requested documents from years 2008 to present:

1. A copy of the former BHA executive director's most recent employment contract.
2. The total amount of salary and compensation paid to the former executive director.
3. The complete annual compensation payments to all BHA employees, including salaries, bonuses, longevity awards and cashed out sick time any other compensation (health care, retirement, take-home vehicle).
4. The total number and description of BHA take-home vehicles. The number of BHA vehicles or $10,000 payments given as a retirement/separation benefit, as well as whether or not the housing authority paid off the vehicle lease.
5. The total number of fuel and other credit cards authorized by BHA. Please include the names of each employee provided with a fuel or other credit card, and the monthly fuel charges paid by BHA.
6. In addition to every Friday, please document every week day (both full and half) per year that the BHA has been closed and for what reason.
7. A list of all legal bills and professional service and consulting fees paid by BHA, including all vehicle service bills.
8. Please provide all financial disclosure forms completed by BHA employees and document any Conflict of Interest waivers filed by the BHA and Board of Commissioners with HUD.
9. Provide all travel records for employees at BHA as well as the BHA Board members.

Accordingly, please provide responses by no later than January 31, 2014. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please have your respective staff members contact Janet Drew.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Ranking Member.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WOMEN'S HEALTH PROTECTION ACT

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, this month we recognize the 41st anniversary of the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade, a ruling that assured every woman her constitutional right to make her own decision about whether and when to have a child based on her fundamental right to have her privacy protected.

I had the honor to clerk for the author of Roe v. Wade, Justice Harry Blackmun, shortly after that decision in 1974. Few of us expected we would be here 41 years later facing the kind of attacks—in fact, the onslaught on women's health care and on their right to privacy—that we see again and again and again on the part of States, and even in this Congress.

Today the House of Representatives will debate and probably vote on a bill that would severely restrict—very practically constrict—a women's right to choose. H.R. 7 is a threat to that right of privacy. Instead of moving forward in protecting women's health, all too often we have seen ongoing attacks. After four decades, this judgment is threatened by onerous and ongoing limitations repeatedly passed by State legislators and this body.

I am very proud to be joined today by two of my most distinguished colleagues, Senator MURRAY of the State of Washington and Senator BALDWIN of Wisconsin, who have been tireless champions for women's rights—for our constitutional rights—and for women's health care. I am humbled and admiring of the work they have already done and the work we have ahead of us.

With their support, I have introduced—particularly with the active work of Senator BALDWIN—a measure that will proactively and preventively protect women's rights against this onslaught at the State level.

The Women's Health Protection Act is designed to stop restrictions that purportedly protect women's health but really use that cause as a ruse and a ploy to impose physical layouts on clinics, admitting privileges on doctors, and other kinds of severely burdensome restrictions—such as ultrasound requirements when there is no real medical reason for them—and basically apply to abortion health care the same kinds of restrictions with no more limitations than are required for medically comparable procedures. That is the basic principle.

The goal is to push back the offensive onslaught on women's health care. We want to be on the offense rather than the defense because undoubtedly most of these restrictions, if not all, will eventually be struck down by the courts. The resources which are required are burdensome on the organizations and groups and individuals who are forced to carry on that fight.

I know about that fight because I helped to wage it as an attorney general in the State of Connecticut for 20 years. I am very proud that I enforced many of the laws that are designed to protect a woman's right to choose, including the FACE statute. I was the first attorney general to enforce the FACE statute.

We have many issues that are now before the Supreme Court, such as the McCullen v. Coakley case—which I hope will be decided—to uphold the buffer zone that makes women's rights real against the intimidation and deterrents that anti-choice groups try to bring.

Making these rights real—the right of privacy, the right to be left alone—is the fundamental reason that we have introduced the Women's Health Protection Act.

The President tonight will talk about many of the most important issues that matter to this country, including economic opportunity, job creation, recovery from the deepest recession in recent history; giving people a greater sense of confidence and trust in their ability to gain the skills they need to move forward in their lives. Economic mobility in this country is one of the greatest challenges we face for our children and our grandchildren. Those issues of job creation and economic growth are what we should be debating, not H.R. 7, not the restrictions at the State level that seek to inhibit and impede the ability of a woman to exercise her fundamental right to privacy. Let's keep in mind what is important to the American people who sense deeply, because it is part of our cultural DNA, part of our fundamental reason for being as a nation, that we have a right to privacy over a personal decision that should be made by a woman in consultation with her doctor, her health care provider, and her family, without interference from government bureaucrats or politicians. That is what is important. Ending the chilling effect of those State restrictions is also one of the goals—the chilling effect that deters women from exercising those rights, making those rights real, protecting a woman's right to decide whether and when to have a child. Every pregnant woman faces her own unique circumstances and challenges, and she has a right to make her own decision based on her own values, guidance from a physician she trusts, a family member she loves and her personal goals and what is right for her family.

In the 40 years since Roe v. Wade, the attacks on this right have not been slowed; they have merely evolved, and they have taken new forms. I stand with my colleagues today and ask that we recognize together these pervasive threats, that we counter them and stand together in fighting back.

I am very proud to stand with Senator BALDWIN and Senator MURRAY,

and I am proud to yield for Senator BALDWIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Connecticut.

Last week marked the 41st anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade, which affirmed that women have the right to make their own personal health care decisions and to have access to safe and legal reproductive care.

The anniversary of Roe should commemorate how far our country has progressed in the last 40 years in safeguarding women's reproductive freedoms and access to quality health care. But today I rise to recognize that history has been made in another way; that is, turning back the clock.

Americans across the country expect to have access to high-quality, dependable health care when they and their families need it. Unfortunately, for women across this country, this access has come under attack.

As my colleagues and I have worked to reform our health care system, to expand access to quality, affordable health care, too many States have enacted record numbers of laws that restrict a woman's access to comprehensive reproductive health services and the freedom to make her own health care decisions. In the past 3 years, States across the country have enacted a total of 205 provisions that restrict women's access to safe abortion services. In 2013 alone, States enacted 70 of these measures.

In my home State of Wisconsin, we are now ranked as one of the worst States when it comes to a woman's reproductive rights, thanks to our Republican Governor and legislature. Wisconsin women, families, and their doctors are facing a slew of new and radical restrictions to health services mandated by one-party—Republican—rule in my State.

Most recently, our Governor has enacted four new restrictions on women's access to safe and legal abortion care in our State. For one, he signed a law that not only forces women to undergo unnecessary medical procedures but also imposes unreasonable requirements on doctors who deliver care to women.

I recently heard from a mother in Middleton, WI. She found out her baby had severe fetal anomalies and would not survive delivery. She had to undergo an emergency termination, and a clinic in Milwaukee was the only place that would do the procedure. But because the Governor was set to sign this law imposing unreasonable requirements on providers, the clinic was preparing to close its doors and wouldn't schedule her for an appointment. She and her husband were forced to find childcare for their two sons and leave the State and travel to Minnesota just to get the medical care she needed. If not for a Federal court order blocking the law shortly after the Governor signed it, the admitting privileges provision would have reduced women's access to safe and legal abortions in Wisconsin by 66 percent, closing several health care clinics and leaving women out in the cold. But unfortunately for this woman in Middleton, the court order did not come fast enough and the Governor's law disrupted her family during a deeply personal and trying time.

The threat in Wisconsin and in States across the country is clear. Politicians are doing this because they think they know better than women and their doctors. The fact is they don't. It is not the job of politicians to play doctor and to dictate how these professionals practice medicine, nor is it their job to intrude in the private lives and important health decisions of American families.

That is why I am proud to stand with my colleagues, including my good friend from Connecticut and my good friend from Washington State, and challenge these attacks on women's freedoms. I am proud to have introduced the Women's Health Protection Act because every American woman deserves the freedom to exercise her constitutional rights by making personal health decisions for herself and for her family with a trusted doctor and without political interference.

Our bill makes it clear that States can no longer enact laws that unduly limit access to reproductive health care and that do nothing to further women's health or safety. The Women's Health Protection Act creates Federal protections against State restrictions that fail to ensure women's health and intrude upon personal decisionmaking. It promotes and protects a woman's individual constitutional rights and guarantees that she can make her own responsible health care decisions no matter where she lives.

Elected officials should not put politics before women's health and women's safety. Women are more than capable of making their own personal medical decisions without consulting their legislator. Every woman in America deserves the freedom to plan her own family, to make her own health care decisions, and to have access to essential and quality women's health care services. We need to act now to guarantee that women will continue to have that freedom.

Today I stand with 33 of my Senate colleagues and 99 Members of the House of Representatives to move our country forward with the Women's Health Protection Act and to safeguard women's constitutional rights under Roe. We need to act now to protect a woman's access to care and her constitutional rights, no matter where she lives, by enacting the Women's Health Protection Act.

Again, I thank my colleagues, in particular my good friend from Connecticut, in leading us in this discussion on the Senate floor but also with the introduction of the bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I thank my colleagues from Connecticut and Wisconsin for their strong voices in support of a woman's right to make her own health care decisions in this country. I appreciate them being here today to talk about that and to stand with me to remind our colleagues that 41 years ago last week, just about 400 yards from where we are standing today, the course of history for women in the United States was changed forever.

After over one century of struggle, a new generation of American women had access to safe and legal abortion. With one case, American women gained the ability to make their own decisions about their own health care and their own bodies. At a time when some Members of this body were far too young to remember, women stood up to the restrictive laws of States and the Federal Government and to the men who at that time wrote them.

I would like to think that after four decades, many of those who want to make women's health care decisions for them have come to grips with the fact that Roe v. Wade is settled law. But unfortunately that notion is quickly shattered with one look at our legislatures across the country and efforts right here in Congress. In fact, tomorrow the House of Representatives is slated to vote on their misleadingly named ''No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act.'' That bill severely undermines a woman's access to insurance coverage of comprehensive health care and fails to allow her to get the care she needs, even when her own health is at risk. It is nothing more than an attempt to eliminate access to abortion services while restricting a woman's ability to make personal decisions about her own care. I guess we shouldn't be surprised.

The truth is that the tide of these politically driven, extreme, and unconstitutional laws continues to rise. In 2013, our Nation saw yet another record-breaking year of State legislatures passing restrictive legislation barring women's access to abortion services. In fact, in the past 3 years, the United States has enacted more of these restrictions than in the previous 10 years combined. That means that now, more than ever, it is our job to protect this decision for women, to fight for women's health, and to ensure that women's health does not become a political football.

For that reason today I will, along with 18 other Members of my caucus, file a brief with the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc., v. Sebelius. Just as in the many attempts before this case, there are those out there who would like the American public to believe that this conversation is anything but an attack on women's health care. To

them, it is a debate about freedom—except, of course, for the freedom of women to access their own care.

It is no different than when we are told that attacks on abortion rights aren't an infringement on a woman's right to choose, they are about religion or States' rights, or when we are told that restricting emergency contraception isn't about limiting women's ability to make their own family planning decisions, it is about protecting pharmacists, or when last week we were told that a certain former Republican Governor's comments about women's libido was a ''tone'' issue rather than a direct reflection of the Republican Party's misguided and arcane policies.

The truth is this is about contraception. This is an attempt to limit a woman's ability to access care. This is about women.

Allowing a woman's boss to call the shots about her access to birth control should be inconceivable to all Americans in this day and age and takes us back to a place in history when women had no voice or no choice.

In fact, contraception was included as a required preventive service in the Affordable Care Act on the recommendation of the independent, nonprofit Institute of Medicine and other medical experts because it is essential to the health of women and their families. After many years of research, we know ensuring access for effective birth control has a direct impact on improving the lives of women and families in America. We have been able to directly link it to declines in maternal and infant mortality, reduced risk of ovarian cancer, better overall health care outcomes for women, and far fewer unintended pregnancies and abortions, which is a goal we should all share.

But what is at stake in this case before the Supreme Court is whether a CEO's personal belief trumps a woman's right to access free or low-cost contraception under the Affordable Care Act. Every American deserves to have access to high-quality health care coverage, regardless of where they work, and each of us should have the right to make our own medical and religious decisions without being dictated to or limited by our employer. Contraceptive coverage is supported by the vast majority of Americans who understand how important it is for women and families.

In weighing this case, my hope is the Court realizes that women working for private companies should be afforded the same access to medical care regardless of who signs their paycheck.

We cannot allow for-profit, secular corporations or their shareholders to deny female employees' access to comprehensive women's health care under the guise of a religious exemption. It is as if we are saying that because you are a CEO or a shareholder in a corporation, your rights are more important than your employees who happen to be women. That is a very slippery slope that could lead to employers cutting off coverage for childhood immunizations, if they object to it, or prenatal care for children born to unmarried parents, if they thought that was wrong, or an employee's ability to access HIV treatment.

I am proud to be joined in this effort by 18 other Senators who were here when Congress enacted the religious protections through the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 1993 and who also were here when Congress made access to women's health available through the Affordable Care Act in 2010. They are Senators who know that Congress never intended for a corporation—or furthermore, its shareholders—to restrict a woman's access to preventive health care, because we all know that improving access to birth control is good health policy and good economic policy. We know it will mean healthier women, healthier children, and healthier families. And we know it will save money for businesses and consumers.

So today we are taking another step forward to uphold the promise we made to women and provide this access broadly, and I believe our Nation will be better for it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for no longer than 15 minutes.

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

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, tonight the President of the United States will come before the Congress and make his State of the Union Address. That is an annual ritual we go through around here every year, and I have been through State of the Union speeches through multiple administrations. I sort of liken them to somebody making New Year's resolutions at the beginning of the new year, filled with lots of rhetoric and promises, most of which get left on the cutting-room floor when the speech concludes. But that being said, it is something that gives the President an opportunity to lay out his agenda for the coming year.

Rumor has it that this year the President's speech is going to focus on income inequality and economic opportunity. Well, that is good to hear because these last 5 years of the Obama administration have been devastating to Americans who are trying to advance economically.

Nobody can deny that the President inherited a difficult economic situation. I think we would all concede that at the very outset. But he has had now 5 years, going on 6, to make things better. Unfortunately, he has not made much progress.

For the majority of Americans, things do not look much better today than they did 5 years ago. The economy still is not working; unemployment remains at historic recession-level highs; income inequality is at the highest point literally in 86 years; household income has dropped by nearly $4,000 since the President took office.

I would like to quote from a piece that was published on Sunday. It said this:

> The last five years have been cataclysmic. . . . The average income of the top 1 percent of earners increased about 31.4 percent from 2009 to 2012, while wages for the other 99 percent essentially stood still. The proportion of economic gains going to the very wealthy under the Obama administration is greater than it was under Mr. Bush.

Those are not Republican talking points. That is from a column published in the New York Times. The column goes on to state:

> The rich-poor gap in the United States is now greater than in any other industrialized country. Upward mobility, a staple of the American Dream, is eroding compared with more than a few nations.

That again is from the New York Times.

Whether the author intended it that way, it is a pretty damning indictment of the economic policies of the past 5 years.

So I am glad to hear that the President is planning to focus on income inequality and economic opportunity tonight. These statistics make it very clear just how important it is we have that discussion right now. And they also make it clear we cannot continue the economic policies of the past 5 years because these policies have clearly failed.

The President has tried throwing taxpayer money at the problem—witness the failed trillion-dollar stimulus bill. He has tried economic bandaids that attempt to alleviate some of the symptoms of economic stagnation without doing anything to address the cause. Neither of those strategies has been successful in doing the one thing that will turn our economy around; that is, creating full-time, well-paying jobs for the American people.

Extending unemployment benefits or offering food stamps may provide short-term relief, but no government assistance is going to provide a stable, secure, prosperous future like a good job will. Real long-term economic security and prosperity comes when families have access to stable well-paying jobs, with the potential for advancement.

If we really want to help Americans, if we really want to get our economy growing, that is where our focus needs to be: creating the kind of environment where job creation can flourish. That means making it easier and less expensive for businesses—particularly small businesses, which create a majority of the jobs in this country—to expand and hire new workers.

Unfortunately, the President has spent much of his Presidency making it more difficult. ObamaCare, for example, saddled businesses with a host of new taxes and regulations that have

made it difficult or in some cases impossible for businesses to hire new employees.

CBS reported in December that—and I quote—''Nearly half of U.S. companies said they are reluctant to hire full-time employees because of the [ObamaCare] law.'' That is not how you want businesses to feel if you are looking to encourage them to grow and create jobs.

So I am hoping that this evening the President will turn away from the policies that have made nearly half of U.S. companies too worried to hire new full-time employees and turn toward policies that will enable real job creation in our economy.

According to his advisors, the President wants 2014 to be a year of action. Republicans could not agree more, and there are a number of actions we think the President can take, and I hope he will announce them tonight.

One thing Republicans and Democrats agree on, and would like the President to do, is grant immediate approval of the Keystone pipeline. According to the President's own State Department, the Keystone pipeline would support 42,000 jobs that would provide $2 billion—$2 billion—in wages and earnings without taxpayers having to spend a dime. All that is required for the creation of these jobs is the President's approval, which he has inexplicably delayed now for 5 years, despite numerous reports testifying to the benefits of the project and its low environmental impact.

The President's staff has spent a lot of time over the last week talking about the President's intention of acting without Congress when Congress disagrees with him. Well, here is something the President can legitimately do unilaterally. He has the authority to open the door to these 42,000 jobs, and I hope this evening he will announce his intention of acting on approval of the Keystone pipeline.

Another thing I hope the President will do tonight is encourage the majority leader to take up dozens of jobs bills that have been passed by the House of Representatives. Many of these bills passed the House with bipartisan support and could pass the Senate the same way. There is no good reason why the majority leader has decided to let them languish. Surely we could take up a few of those bills. The President ought to call on his party to pass these bills to get Americans back to work.

In the same spirit, I hope the President will call on his party in the Senate to approve trade promotion authority legislation, which would help create U.S. jobs by giving farmers, ranchers, entrepreneurs, and job creators in this country access to 1 billion new consumers around the globe.

Republicans hope the President will use that phone of his that he keeps talking about to call the majority leader here in the Senate and encourage him to pass trade promotion authority as soon as possible.

Of course, no discussion of relief for middle-class Americans and job creators is complete without discussing ObamaCare, which is putting an intolerable burden on middle-class families and small businesses.

I am not very hopeful that the President is going to announce his intention tonight of working with Congress to repair some of the worst parts of his signature law, but for all Americans' sake, I hope he does.

Around the country, families are reeling under the impact of ObamaCare: higher insurance premiums, higher out-of-pocket costs, reduced access to doctors and hospitals. Meanwhile, businesses are cutting workers' hours, eliminating health care plans, or declining to expand their businesses to protect themselves from ObamaCare's burdensome taxes and regulations.

There is bipartisan support for more than one change to ObamaCare, and there is particularly strong support for repealing the job-killing medical device tax, which is forcing medical device companies to send American jobs overseas.

In March of last year, the Senate voted 79 to 20—79 to 20—against the tax. More than 30 Democrats voted for repeal. If the President is really serious about putting Americans back to work, he will announce his intention of working with Congress to repeal this job-destroying portion of his legislation.

Last month almost 350,000 Americans gave up looking for jobs and dropped out of the labor force altogether. That is 350,000 Americans in 1 month—1 month—who gave up looking for a job.

The labor force participation rate is at its lowest level in 36 years. More than 10 million Americans are looking for work, and nearly 4 million of them have been unemployed for more than 6 months. In fact, if you had the labor participation rate today that we had when the President took office, the unemployment rate today would be about 11 percent.

It is definitely—it is definitely—time for a year of action. It is time to leave behind the economic bandaids of the past 5 years and focus on policies that will not address just the symptoms but the cause of our weak economic growth.

We need to remove the obstacles facing our Nation's job creators so that struggling Americans can finally get back to work. We need to help create a future where every American has the opportunity for a well-paying, full-time job, with the possibility of advancement. You are not going to see that as long as the policies coming out of Washington, DC, and this administration make it more expensive and more difficult to create jobs for the American people.

And you are not going to do anything about income inequality if you drive people's cost of living higher, which is what ObamaCare's premium increases, higher out-of-pocket increases, energy-cost increases—there are new regulations coming out today that are going to put new requirements and regulations on existing coal-fired powerplants that are going to drive electricity costs through the roof for people whom I represent in South Dakota.

Fifty percent of the electricity in South Dakota comes from coal-fired power. We are told the administration is coming out with regulations that are going to apply those same things that apply to new plants to existing coal-fired power. So you are going to have not only new plants that are going to be prevented from being constructed but those that are existing that are going to have to modify their plants at enormous cost, in many cases with technologies that do not exist. All that does is put people out of work and makes it more expensive for middle-class Americans to make ends meet.

If you want to do something about income inequality, provide good-paying jobs for middle-class families in this country. Put policies in place that make it less expensive, less difficult to create those jobs, and then drive down the cost for middle-class Americans rather than raising them—rather than having higher energy costs, higher health care costs, higher this, higher that, all because of policies coming out of Washington.

We can do better. The President has not always shown his eagerness to work with Congress in the past. I am told that tonight he is going to talk about all the things he can do unilaterally. I hope that tonight's State of the Union Address will mark a new start. Republicans are ready to get to work. I hope the President is too. I yield the floor.

RECESS

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

There upon, the Senate, at 12:45 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR KIDS ACT

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, this morning the Senator from South Carolina, Mr. SCOTT, and I went to the American Enterprise Institute and outlined two bills that together represent the most ambitious proposals ever to enable States to use Federal dollars to allow parents to find a better school for their child.

I would like to take a few minutes to talk about my proposal, which is called the Scholarships for Kids Act, and the context in which we find ourselves today as we look forward to the President's State of the Union address. I would also like to briefly mention the

proposal of Senator SCOTT from South Carolina. He has already introduced his bill. He will be on the floor at another time to talk about it. But these are big ideas. Together they represent redirecting about 35 billion Federal dollars that are now being spent through a series of programs and instead spend them in a way that better fits the age in which we find ourselves, an age in which the best Federal investments can be made in things that enable Americans to do things for ourselves to make our lives better and happier and safer and longer.

Let me talk first about Scholarships for Kids. I ask unanimous consent that an article describing the bill be printed following my remarks.

The legislation that I am introducing today would allow approximately 11 million new Federal scholarships to follow low-income children to any school their parents choose as long as it is accredited. It is not a Federal mandate. It would enable States to create those choice options. But it would mean about a $2,100 scholarship of Federal dollars on top of the money that States already spend on elementary and secondary education for each child.

The State of Tennessee, for example, spends nearly $8,000 per child on public elementary and secondary education. This would be providing a $2,100 scholarship to the one-fifth of students who are low income and allowing that money to follow them to the school they attend.

Our country is united, not by race, but by a set of principles upon which we agree. One of the most important of these is the principle of equal opportunity. For me, equal opportunity means creating an environment where the largest number of people can begin at the same starting line. I believe this is a real answer to the inequality in America that we hear so much about, giving children more opportunity to attend a better school.

The Scholarships for Kids Act will cost $24 billion a year. It will be paid for by redirecting about 41 percent of all the dollars we now directly spend on Federal elementary and secondary education programs. About 90 percent of all of the spending on our elementary and secondary schools is State and local spending, and about 10 percent is Federal spending. This is 41 percent of that 10 percent.

It includes all of the money the Federal Government spends on elementary and secondary education except money for children with disabilities—and Senator SCOTT's legislation addresses that. It does not touch the Student School Lunch Program. It does not affect Federal research in education, and it does not affect Impact Aid.

The whole purpose of Federal aid to elementary and secondary education is to help low-income students. But unfortunately, often the Federal dollars are diverted to schools with wealthier students. The left and the right both have noticed this and would like to change it.

Scholarships for Kids would benefit only children that fit the Federal definition of ''poverty'' which is about one-fifth of all school children. That is because it would pin the $2,100 scholarship to the blouse or the shirt of the child, and it would follow that child to the school the child attends.

Allowing Federal dollars to follow students to a school has been a successful strategy in American education for more than 70 years. Last year, $33 billion in Federal Pell Grants and $106 billion in Federal loans followed students to the public and private colleges of their choice. Since the GI bill began in 1944, these vouchers—that is what they are—have helped to create a marketplace of about 6,000 autonomous institutions and a higher education system that is regarded by almost everyone as the best in the world.

Our elementary and secondary education system is not the best in the world. U.S. 15-year-olds rank 28th in science and 36th in math. I believe one reason for this is that more than 93 percent of the dollars that we spend through the Federal Government for higher education follows students to the colleges of their choice, but Federal dollars do not automatically follow students to the elementary or secondary school of their choice.

Instead, with our elementary schools and our middle schools and our high schools, money is sent directly to the schools. Local government monopolies run most of those schools. They tell most students exactly which school to attend. There is little choice and no K-through-12 marketplace as there is in higher education. Again, in higher education, you have 6,000 autonomous institutions. You have generous amounts of Federal dollars. They can follow you to the college or university of your choice, whether it is public or private or nonprofit or for-profit, as long as it is accredited. So students may go to Harvard, Yeshiva or Notre Dame, or to Nashville's Auto Diesel College or to the University of Tennessee or to the community college nearby. The former Librarian of Congress, Daniel Boorstin, often wrote that American creativity has flourished during ''fertile verges,'' times when Americans became more self-aware and creative.

In his book, ''Breakout,'' Newt Gingrich argues that society is on the edge of such an era, the Internet age, an age where everything will change, like everything changed at the time of the new internal combustion engine.

Newt Gingrich in his book cites computer handbook writer Tim O'Reilly for his suggestion about how the Internet could transform government. Here is how Tim O'Reilly says we ought to do our job as we try to help use the government to help Americans during this period of time:

> The best way for government to operate is to figure out what kinds of things are enablers of society and make investments in those things. The same way that Apple figured out, ''If we turn the IPhone into a platform, outside developers will bring hundreds of thousands of applications to the table.''

Already 16 States have begun a variety of innovative programs supporting private school choice. Private organizations in many parts of our country supplement these efforts. Scholarships For Kids, allowing $2,100 Federal scholarships to follow 11 million children, would enable other school choice innovations in the same way that developers rushed to provide applications for the iPhone platform.

Senator TIM SCOTT has proposed what he calls the CHOICE Act. It would allow 11 billion other Federal dollars that the Federal Government now spends through programs for children with disabilities to follow these 6 million children to the schools their parents believe provide the best services.

So there might be a child in Tennessee or Wisconsin or South Carolina who is eligible for both—the Scholarship For Kids, because he or she comes from a family that fits the Federal poverty definition. So there is $2,100. Then, if that child is also disabled, the child might be eligible for a scholarship under the CHOICE Act of several thousand dollars. That would then be in addition to the amount of money that South Carolina, let's say, spends on education per child, which is in the neighborhood of $9,000.

So to take the case of Tennessee again, $8,000 or so for the State, $2,100 more Federal dollars through Scholarship For Kids, a few more thousand dollars, depending upon circumstances, for the scholarship under Senator SCOTT's proposal, and you have a significant amount of money that a parent could use to follow a child to the school that helps that child succeed.

Especially in the case of children with disabilities, that seems to make so much good sense to me. Senator SCOTT tells a poignant story of a young girl in South Carolina who was in a kindergarten. She has Down syndrome. She was in a kindergarten that helped her succeed. But then her parents moved. They had to fight for a year to get her new school to treat her in a mainstream way. Then they realized that the school they had been fighting for a year was the one they were counting on.

Why not let that family take the $13,000, $14,000, $15,000 or $16,000 for that child with Down syndrome, pick a school that treasures that child, and let the money follow the child to the school the child attends.

So a student with a disability and from a low-income family would benefit under both programs. As I said when I began my remarks, taken together with Senator SCOTT's proposal, Scholarship For Kids constitutes the most ambitious proposal ever to use existing Federal dollars to enable States to expand school choice.

Importantly, this is not a Federal mandate. Washington is full of politicians who fly an hour or an hour and a half from their home town, and they

get here and think they have suddenly gotten smarter. They have a good idea and they say: Oh, let's apply that in Wisconsin and in Tennessee and in South Carolina. I try not to do that. I am a very strong believer, for example, in teacher evaluations. I led the fight for teacher evaluations as Governor of Tennessee 30 years ago. We were the first State to do it. When I came to Washington people said: Well then, you will want to make everybody do that? My answer was no, I will not. States have the opportunity to be right, and they have the opportunity to be wrong.

The last thing Tennessee needs is the Federal Government peering over the shoulders of communities and school districts and legislators and governors and school boards who are trying to work out the very difficult problem of teacher evaluations. It is the holy grail of education reform as far as I am concerned, but it should not be mandated from Washington. I very much believe in school choice, but it should not be mandated from Washington. So under Scholarships For Kids, States still would govern pupil assignments, deciding, for example, whether parents could choose private schools.

When I was Secretary of Education years ago, Milwaukee was in the midst of a major program to try to give low-income parents more choice of schools, including private schools. So along with President George H. W. Bush, we proposed what we called a GI bill for kids to allow Milwaukee and Wisconsin to do it if it wished to do it. But it did not impose what we thought was a good idea from Washington. Under Scholarship For Kids, schools that parents chose for their child with their $2,100 scholarship would have to be accredited. Federal civil rights rules would apply. My proposal does not affect school lunches. There also is an independent evaluation after 5 years so that Congress can assess the effectiveness of the new tool for innovation.

In remarks that Senator SCOTT and I made this morning, the issue of private schools came up, which always does when we talk about expanding school choice. But in this case, we are not necessarily talking about private schools. Most schools are public schools. I would assume that most of these $2,100 scholarships would follow students to the school they attend, which would be a public school.

So if a State chose to create a program whereby its low-income citizens could choose a private school, as long as it was accredited, that would be appropriate under the law. Why shouldn't a low-income family have the same opportunities for a better school for its child that a wealthier family, who may move to a different part of town or may be able to afford a private school, does?

The idea of allowing dollars to follow students to the school of their choice has not exclusively been an idea of the left or of the right in our country. In the late 1960s, the most conspicuous proposal for school choice was from Ted Sizer, then Harvard University's education dean. He suggested a $5,000 scholarship in his poor children's bill of rights. That $5,000 scholarship would be worth two or three times as much today.

In 1992, when I was the U.S. Secretary of Education, President George H. W. Bush proposed a GI bill for kids, a $½ billion Federal pilot program for States creating school choice opportunities. Yet despite its success in higher education, and despite the fact that it has had powerful advocates on both the left and the right, the word ''voucher'' remains a bad word among most of the kindergarten-through-12th-grade education establishment, and the idea has not spread widely. Equal opportunity in America should mean that everyone, as much as possible, has the same starting line.

During this week celebrating school choice, there would be no better way to help children move up from the back of the line than by allowing States to use Federal dollars to create 11 million opportunities to choose a better school.

STATE OF THE NATION

If I may conclude with a word about the context in which we find ourselves today, Senator SCOTT and I made our remarks today at American Enterprise Institute. I am speaking on the floor of the Senate on a very important day in our country's history. It is not only National School Choice Week, but it is the day the President of the United States makes his annual state of the Union address. Every President has done that except two—as the Senate historian told us today—and those two died before it was time to make the address, so it is a tradition that goes back to the beginning of the country. We will all go over to the House of Representatives, listen carefully, and the country will watch to listen to what the President has to say.

We are told the issue the President will address is the one of income inequality. If that is what he does, that is certainly an appropriate issue for any American President. Because if equal opportunity is central to the American character, so is the idea of the American dream, the idea that anything is possible, that anyone can go from the back to the front of the line with hard work; and equal opportunity, therefore, helps to create a starting line from which we move.

If the President makes that proposal, I think we know the kind of agenda we are likely to hear. It will have to do with a higher minimum wage that would actually cost jobs. It will have to do with more compensation for perpetual unemployment. It will have to do with canceling more health insurance policies, which is what ObamaCare will be doing in 2014—much more so than it did in 2013.

There is another agenda, another picture, another vision of how we can help the largest number of Americans realize the American dream; that is, more jobs, more job training, and more choices for low-income parents of better schools for their children so they can get a better job.

Instead of a higher minimum wage, which actually reduces the number of jobs, we would liberate the free enterprise system of the wet blanket of ObamaCare, other Obama rules and regulations, and create many more jobs with good wages. Instead of more compensation for long-term unemployment, we would say let's have more job training so they can take one of these good new jobs we propose to create.

Then, instead of directing the money to a model that hasn't worked as well over the last 70 years, let us take the Federal dollars we are now spending on elementary and secondary education and let them follow low-income children and disabled children to the schools of their parents' choice, So they have an opportunity to go to a better school, just as children who aren't disabled and with parents who have more money do.

We will be arguing that a better agenda for income equality to realize the American dream, to help Americans move from the back to the front of the line, is more jobs, more job opportunities, and more choices of better schools for low-income children. That agenda is especially right for the age we are in.

I mentioned the discussion Daniel Boorstin had about America's fertile verges, Newt Gingrich's new book, and the suggestion by the computer programmer that the best way for government to operate is not with Washington mandates or Washington programs but to spend money on things that enable each of us as Americans to do things for ourselves—to live a happier life, to live a better life, to live a wealthier life, to live a safer life.

I hope in the remarks I have made today that I have done that, because we have 70 years of experience with such programs in education. I would argue there may be no more successful social program in American history than the GI bill for veterans. It began 70 years ago in 1944. It did not send money to the University of Chicago, Tennessee, Michigan, and Harvard. It followed the soldier, the airman, and the Navy veteran to the college of his or her choice. We began that practice in 1944. We continue it with the Pell grants today. We continue it with the student loans today. Why should we not follow it with the Federal dollars we spend for elementary and secondary education?

If Federal dollars following students to the colleges of their choice helped to produce the finest higher education system in the world, why should we not allow States to try to create the best schools in the world for our children—especially our low-income children?

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will recognize this isn't the proposal of the left or the right. I don't know many Democrats who want to get

rid of Pell grants or student loans. They are vouchers, pure and simple, that have lasted for 70 years and may be the most successful social program we have. Why not allow States in this Internet age to take the Federal dollars we are already spending for low-income children and make sure the money gets directly to them—and for disabled children, and make sure it goes to directly to them—and give their parents an opportunity to exercise the same kinds of decisions wealthier parents do? They would say: What school would be the best school for my child.

Would that not be a way to help a young American get a leg up on moving to the same starting line that children from wealthier families have—and maybe even a chance to move to the head of the line?

I hope my colleagues and American people will take a good look at the Scholarships for Kids Act, and Senator SCOTT's CHOICE Act. Together they constitute the most ambitious proposal ever to use existing Federal dollars to enable States, and to allow parents—especially low-income parents—to choose a better school for their child. There is no better way to create opportunity in America.

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

11 MILLION $2,100 ''SCHOLARSHIPS FOR KIDS'': A REAL ANSWER TO INEQUALITY

Today I am introducing legislation that would allow $2,100 federal scholarships to follow 11 million low-income children to any public or private accredited school of their parents' choice.

This is a real answer to inequality in America: giving more children more opportunity to attend a better school.

The ''Scholarships for Kids Act'' will cost $24 billion a year—paid for by redirecting 41 percent of the dollars now directly spent on federal K–12 education programs. Often these dollars are diverted to wealthier schools. ''Scholarships for Kids'' would benefit only children of families that fit the federal definition of poverty, which is about one-fifth of all school children.

Allowing federal dollars to follow students has been a successful strategy in American education for 70 years. Last year, $33 billion in federal Pell grants and $106 billion in loans followed students to public and private colleges. Since the GI Bill began in 1944, these vouchers have helped create a marketplace of 6,000 autonomous higher education institutions—the best in the world.

Our elementary and secondary education system is not the best in the world. U.S. 15-year olds rank 28th in science and 36th in math. I believe one reason for this is that while more than 93 percent of federal dollars spent for higher education follow students to colleges of their choice, federal dollars do not automatically follow K–12 students to schools of their choice.

Instead, money is sent directly to schools. Local government monopolies run most schools and tell most students which school to attend. There is little choice and no K–12 marketplace as there is in higher education.

Former Librarian of Congress Daniel Boorstin often wrote that American creativity has flourished during ''fertile verges,'' times when citizens became more self-aware and creative. In his book Breakout, Newt Gingrich argues that society is on the edge of such an era and cites computer handbook writer Tim O'Reilly's suggestion for how the Internet could transform government.

''The best way for government to operate,'' O'Reilly says, ''is to figure out what kinds of things are enablers of society and make investments in those things. The same way that Apple figured out, 'If we turn the iPhone into a platform, outside developers will bring hundreds of thousands of applications to the table.' ''

Already 16 states have begun a variety of innovative programs supporting private school choice. Private organizations supplement these efforts. Allowing $2,100 federal scholarships to follow 11 million children would enable other school choice innovations, in the same way that developers rushed to provide applications for the iPhone platform.

Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) has proposed the CHOICE Act, allowing 11 billion other dollars the federal government now spends through the program for children with disabilities to follow those 6 million children to the schools their parents believe provide the best services.

A student who is both low income and has a disability would benefit under both programs. Especially when taken together with Sen. Scott's proposal, ''Scholarships for Kids'' constitutes the most ambitious proposal ever to use existing federal dollars to enable states to expand school choice.

Under ''Scholarships for Kids,'' states still would govern pupil assignment, deciding, for example, whether parents could choose private schools. Schools chosen would have to be accredited. Federal civil rights rules would apply. The proposal does not affect school lunches. So that Congress can assess the effectiveness of this new tool for innovation, there is an independent evaluation after five years.

In the late 1960s, Ted Sizer, then Harvard University's education dean, suggested a $5,000 scholarship in his ''Poor Children's Bill of Rights.'' In 1992, when I was U.S. education secretary, President George H.W. Bush proposed a ''GI Bill for Kids,'' a half-billion-federal-dollar pilot program for states creating school choice opportunities. Yet, despite its success in higher education, voucher remains a bad word among most of the K–12 educational establishment and the idea has not spread widely.

Equal opportunity in America should mean that everyone has the same starting line. During this week celebrating school choice, there would be no better way to help children move up from the back of the line than by allowing states to use federal dollars to create 11 million new opportunities to choose a better school.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I yield the floor.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, it has been 1,406 days since the President signed into law the Affordable Care Act. Since that time, about 10 million Americans who have not had access to affordable insurance have gotten it and patients have been reempowered, along with their doctors, to take control of their own health care, taking power away from the insurance company which had run our medical lives for too long.

The Presiding Officer and I lived through dozens of votes in the House of Representatives to repeal the bill, as the Senate saw as well, but absolutely no genuine effort to replace the health care bill. I was sitting in the Chair yesterday when one of our colleagues, Senator HATCH, came to the floor to talk about a new proposal—I would probably argue the first proposal from Republicans in 1,406 days to actually talk about what their vision—what Republicans' vision—for health care reform would be. This is just a framework, not a bill, that has been suggested by our colleagues, Senator HATCH and Senator COBURN and Senator BURR. So I wanted to come to the floor to talk about the implications of this framework for affordability and patient protections all across this country.

First of all, I give some credit to our colleagues because it has been 1,406 days of complaints, of politics, of obfuscation, of obstruction. So for the first time we are at least beginning to see what the Republican vision is for the future of health care in this country. Although we don't have a bill—all we have at this point is a framework—it is a pretty scary future because the proposal from our Republican colleagues would dramatically increase the cost of health care for millions of Americans and would put the insurance companies back in charge of our health care.

So for a few minutes I wish to talk in real terms about what this proposal will actually do for health care in this country. I only have a few minutes, so it is hard to go through the litany of backward steps we would take were we to adopt the proposal that has been laid out by a couple of our very brave Republican colleagues.

But the first thing it would do is it would reinstate the fact that being a woman for decades in this country was considered to be a preexisting condition. The health care reform bill says very simply there can be no difference in the amount of money one pays for health care based on gender. The facts are plain: Women have historically paid 50 percent more in terms of health care costs than men have across this country; $1 billion more is the total amount of money women have paid more than men simply because insurance companies believe that being a woman is a preexisting condition. That is no longer the law of the land. Women pay the same rate as men. There is no difference based on gender. But that would be eliminated by this plan. Once again, being a woman could be considered a preexisting condition.

Second, annual limits on the ability to recoup the cost of your health care from your insurance company would be reimposed. The health care bill says: Listen. It isn't fair that you buy an insurance policy, and when you get very sick, you are told at some point midway through the year your insurance is up. That is not real insurance. The idea of insurance is that we all pool our risks together, and then if one of us, through no fault of our own, gets sick, we actually get those insurance bills paid.

The Affordable Care Act says there can't be any more of those annual limits, but the proposal from our Republican friends says that annual limits can come back from insurance companies. To someone such as Debra Gauvin from Connecticut, who had a $20,000 limit and who was diagnosed with stage II breast cancer and hit her limit about halfway through the year and then incurred about $18,000 of additional costs, causing her to basically forgo treatment, that was a painful reality of an insurance plan not delivering on insurance simply because she got so sick she had big costs. That would once again be the reality. The Republican plan would once again allow for annual limits.

Our friends talk about the fact that they address the issue of preexisting conditions, but they don't. They truly don't. Because all their plan says is that if you switch plans and you have no gap, the new plan has to cover whatever illness you may have. But that is not how life works. There are 89 million Americans, in an average year, who have at least a 1-month gap in coverage. That 1-month gap in coverage under the Republican plan—the one shown to us in a basic framework—would allow for preexisting condition discrimination to once again be the law.

Betty Berger, one of my constituents, had insurance her entire life except for basically about a 1- or 2-month period of time where her husband was switching jobs. During that time, their son was diagnosed with cancer. The new insurance company at her husband's new employer wouldn't cover the preexisting condition, and the Bergers lost everything. They lost their home, they lost their savings, and their lives were financially ruined.

The Affordable Care Act ends that nightmare for families. Fifty percent of bankruptcies in this country are caused by medical debt. The Republican plan does not fix the preexisting condition discrimination. All it says is, if you don't have any change, any gap in your coverage, then the new insurance company has to cover your preexisting condition. But for millions of families that is not how life works.

Lastly, although the Republican plan does acknowledge the basic underlying wisdom of the Affordable Care Act is right, in that the best way to get coverage to people is to give them a tax credit with which to go buy private insurance—that is the foundation of the Affordable Care Act, and the Republican alternative that our colleagues introduced basically adopts that as their framework for expanding coverage as well—it is at a much lesser subsidy rate, with much greater tax consequences to Americans than the Affordable Care Act has in it.

For instance, the Republican alternative says, if you hit 300 percent of the poverty level, that is it, no more subsidy. Well, 300 percent sounds like a lot. Three hundred is a big number. But the poverty level is pretty measly in this country. If someone is making 300 percent of the poverty level, they are making $34,000 a year. I don't know about the State of the Presiding Officer, but in Connecticut it is hard to put food on the table on a consistent basis at $34,000 a year. Then to have no help from the government to buy insurance essentially means we will have a huge class of people making $30,000 to $40,000 a year who under the Affordable Care Act are getting helped by insurance but whom under this alternative plan will get no help.

But here is how it is even worse. The Republican alternative we have seen this framework on says that one of the ways we are going to pay for this is by taxing people for the health care they are getting. Right now, if someone gets health care coverage through their employer, which 150 million Americans do, they get to essentially exclude that money from taxation. They get those benefits in pretax dollars. The Republicans have said: Well, we are going to allow that to happen but only for about 65 percent of your benefit. So just under half of your health care is now going to be taxable. That is a massive tax increase on the people of this country.

We can debate whether there is policy wisdom in limiting the tax exclusion of health care, but let us just admit that if you are going to fund your proposal based on eliminating the tax exclusion of employer-sponsored benefits to employees, then you are dramatically raising taxes on middle-class Americans all across this country.

So while I give a lot of credit to the Senators who have put this framework out there, because it is the first time we have seen any alternative, it is a pretty miserable alternative for consumers all across this country who have finally for the first time, because of the Affordable Care Act, gotten access to affordable insurance and for countless more Americans who have been insured and who finally feel as though all of the tricks and the gimmicks they have seen from insurance companies, such as excluding people from coverage because of a preexisting condition or putting an annual limit on their coverage, that those days are over.

So as we go into the debate about the effective implementation of the Affordable Care Act and as we talk about these alternatives that are now being promoted, it is important we do that with eyes wide open. Nobody on our side of the aisle who supported the health care bill is going to tell you it is perfect. No one on our side of the aisle is going to defend every step of the implementation, but it is changing the lives of millions of Americans. It is reducing the overall health care expenditure of this government, and it is putting Americans back in charge of their health care.

Now is not the time to be discussing going back to the good old days when millions of Americans were left out of the rolls and the ranks of those who are insured and insurance companies dictated the day-to-day, week-to-week, and month-to-month health care that is so critical to the lives of middle-class families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, tonight President Obama is going to deliver his State of the Union Address. It will be in front of Congress and the TV cameras, and he will be talking to the American people as well. He and his advisers are probably working right now on some last-minute sound bites and applause lines. But I would say, instead of that, they should be working on an agenda that actually helps unemployed Americans, an agenda that will get our economy back on track.

The President doesn't have very many big opportunities left to do this. He is quickly becoming a lameduck President. The President is going to become a lameduck even faster if he comes to the Capitol tonight and delivers a lengthy speech that just attacks Republicans.

The economic recession ended 4½ years ago. Many Americans have still not seen their careers or their finances or their quality of life improve. That is what Americans are looking for. Unfortunately, they haven't found it because of the Obama economy. That is what the Obama economy has done to Americans.

Millions of Americans have actually, regrettably, given up looking for work. They are falling further and further behind, further and further away from achieving the dreams they have had. Is the President going to tell those people he has no new ideas about how to actually help them?

President Obama is failing. He is failing to make it easier for the American economy to recover and he is failing to help Americans who desperately want to work. He is failing because he is focused on things such as extending emergency unemployment benefits and raising the minimum wage. While an unemployment check can be a vital safety net for families, it is not a long-term solution for what is becoming a part-time economy under President Obama.

Tonight the President can deliver yet another partisan political speech—he may get a standing ovation here and there from the most liberal side of the aisle—or he can do what he should do as President: focus on solutions with proven bipartisan support.

The President has made a point of saying lately that 2014 will be, as he calls it, a year of action. He said he intends to act on his own, without waiting for Congress. I believe that would be the wrong course. President Obama has had trouble getting some of his policies through Congress, and the main reason is the American people do

not support his policies. He should use this speech tonight to move to the center, to show he is willing to work with others. He shouldn't give a speech that shows he is moving further to the left. We have had too much of the President's politics of division.

The politics of division is hurting the economy and it is hurting the country. Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill already agree on ideas to get America and Americans back to work.

There are many policies that President Obama can talk about in his speech tonight that will not require him to go around Congress but, rather, to come to Congress. I would like to suggest three of them that he should announce tonight.

First is the Keystone XL Pipeline. The President should say he will stop blocking construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline. His own State Department says that the pipeline construction could support over 42,000 jobs across the country, and a bipartisan group of 62 Senators, 62 Members of this body, backs the project. Early in 2013 President Obama met with Senate Republicans. He told us we would have an answer about the pipeline by the end of the year. That was 2013. The year has come, gone, and the Keystone XL Pipeline approval is still sitting on the President's desk. The American people deserve an answer, and the answer should be yes.

Second, the President really should address his reckless Environmental Protection Agency—the EPA—and how its regulations are putting Americans out of work. Recently the EPA released new requirements for powerplants. The requirements are unachievable and they are unnecessary. Ironically, the EPA did this on the exact same day as the 50th anniversary of the start of the war on poverty declared by LBJ. These harsh new regulations are going to cause energy costs to go up, and they are going to cause people to lose their jobs as coal plants are forced to close. The job losses and higher prices are going to fall most heavily on people struggling in Appalachia and across coal country. Higher energy costs clearly hurt our economy. The President must sensibly rein in his EPA before it does even more economic damage.

Third, the President should support bipartisan efforts to repeal his medical device tax. This is a destructive tax, and it was part of the health care law. It has been estimated by some that the tax puts thousands of American jobs at risk because it helps to push manufacturing overseas. An amendment to repeal that medical device tax passed right here in the Senate last year with a bipartisan vote of 79 to 20. With all the changes President Obama has made to his health care law, it is barely recognizable. Repealing this tax would be a change that actually helps Americans and not just the President's poll numbers.

There are many things the President can talk about tonight that have this sort of bipartisan support. These are just three, but they would be a good place to start.

When the President leaves here after the State of the Union, he is going to go visit four States: Maryland, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and then Tennessee—four States, eight U.S. Senators. When we take a look at who they are, four are Republicans, four are Democrats. All 8 of them—4 Democrats and 4 Republicans—were part of the 79 Members of this body who voted to repeal the medical device tax.

When the President's spokesman the other day on Sunday's TV shows said the President is going to use his phone and his pen, I would say he ought to use the phone to call the eight Senators to say: I am going to use my pen, after you vote to repeal the medical device tax, to sign that into law. That is something which would show bipartisanship on the part of the President as well as really help with our economy.

Nearly 21 million Americans are out of work or they are trapped in part-time jobs. It is time for President Obama to talk less about divisive ways to redistribute Americans' prosperity and more about helping all Americans increase their own prosperity. America is a strong and resilient nation. We can overcome the Obama economy, and we will. We can overcome—and we will—the bad policies of this administration. The President should come tonight to the Capitol and say he is willing to help Americans return to prosperity.

If the President announces these three policies tonight, the country and the economy will benefit and a bipartisan group of Republicans and Democrats will all be able to stand and applaud.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN.) The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would also like to address the matter of the President's State of the Union speech tonight. I am sure that, as has been the rule, President Obama will make an eloquent speech. He is very good at that. There is just one problem: The President's credibility has been shattered. Indeed, on issue after issue we see a massive gap between his rhetoric and the reality. You might say that the two biggest challenges the President faces tonight are those two challenges. One is to his credibility, and the other is to his competence and the competence of the Federal Government, actually, to be able to deliver on the promises it makes.

The most obvious example is the health care law, which we have heard a lot about and will continue to hear a lot about in this ensuing year. I was visiting with one health insurance company executive who told me that basically the bad news is going to continue to unroll and unravel over the coming months. There will be nowhere to hide.

Perhaps what people want most from Washington, DC, is accountability. I hear it all the time. People say what does it take to get fired? Do people promise the Sun and the Moon and deliver nothing without any consequences? How about people who were charged with implementing the policies of the administration, whether it is the Web site contractor or whomever. The Web site contractor finally did get fired and a new one hired, so I assume that sooner or later the Web site will actually work as advertised. But that still leaves us with the flaws in the underlying policy, which will not work. The American people understand that and they are looking to Washington for help, saying please deliver us from this epic failure which is not what we were promised. In the event there is not a response to that that they deem credible, I promise there will be an accounting come November 2014.

The President said repeatedly that under his signature health care law, if you liked the coverage you had you could keep it. Public opinion polls then showed that roughly 90 percent of the American people liked their health care coverage. Why in the world did we undermine or did ObamaCare undermine the existing coverage people liked just in order to cover more people, which in fact it did not do. We know ObamaCare has forced millions of Americans to lose their preferred coverage, the coverage they said they liked back in 2009. The President repeatedly said ObamaCare will reduce your premiums, make them lower—for a family of 4, about $2,500. The stories we see, day after day, of American citizens signing up on the health care exchanges is just the opposite. They are experiencing premium shock, and the fact is it is going to continue to get nothing but worse as people realize that the ones who are signing up for ObamaCare are older, sicker Americans and that young healthy Americans are simply taking a pass, saying I cannot afford it and if I have a problem I will take care of it later.

Premiums are going to continue to skyrocket, and Americans who are looking for more affordable health care coverage will find out that indeed it has been priced beyond their ability to pay.

Here is the rub. The President said—and I think this was the implicit, underlying promise of ObamaCare: If you pass ObamaCare, Congress, everybody will have coverage. We will have universal coverage. The Congressional Budget Office has projected that ObamaCare, even if it were implemented to perfection, exactly as the proponents and the President had expected, it would still leave 30 million people uninsured—30 million people uninsured.

The President said this new law would bring a greater sense of certainty to the U.S. health care system. Instead, we see one of the credit rating agencies actually slashing the credit rating of America's health insurers,

citing the uncertainty generated by the implementation of ObamaCare—the opposite, again, of what was promised.

The President also said the Web site, when you plug in your personal information—your Social Security number, your health information that is protected already by Federal law—if you plug it into the ObamaCare Web site it is going to be safe and secure. Cyber experts have testified, particularly in the House of Representatives, that the security of the Web site is worse today than it was several months ago. There is no guarantee that if you put your personal information, your private information, your confidential information into the Web site, it is going to be protected.

Here is the real surprise: I remember when Secretary Sebelius appeared before the Senate Finance Committee just a couple of months ago. I asked her about the navigator program. You remember, the navigator program was supposed to get people to help you sign up for ObamaCare. I said: There is no background check, is there, to be a navigator.

She said no.

I asked: So is it possible that a convicted felon could be a navigator, somebody you are giving your personal information to, to help you sign up for ObamaCare?

To her credit she said, in all candor: Yes; that is possible.

I nearly fell out of my chair.

ObamaCare's broken promises have caused enormous pain and anxiety in millions of Americans in Texas and all around the country. We see from the Wall Street Journal poll that came out this morning, which had to be a wake-up call to the administration and its allies, the American people are anxious, they are dissatisfied, they are wondering what has gone so terribly wrong in Washington, DC, and ObamaCare is exhibit 1. That is why we are committed on this side of the aisle to working with our colleagues, when they are ready to talk to us, and to replacing ObamaCare with patient-centered alternatives that will actually bring down the cost and make it more affordable.

What better way to get more people covered than to make it more affordable and to make sure government does not make these private decisions for us and our family when it comes to health care but that we, families, get to make that decision in consultation with their family doctor.

When you begin to scrape the surface, the President's problem of credibility and competence—those are the two crises he confronts tonight as he addresses the Nation—all we have to do, beyond ObamaCare, is look at what is happening in the economy. After raising taxes $1.7 trillion, that was about 1 year ago, during the time President Obama has been President of the United States, the national debt has gone up $6.6 trillion. But my friends across the aisle, many of them—I would exclude the present occupant of the Chair who I know is concerned about this—my friends across the aisle think nothing of bringing legislation to the floor that is unpaid for that would add to the national deficit and national debt. That is the reason we now have a national debt in excess of $17 trillion.

That is more than any of us can possibly conceive. When President Obama became President, the national debt was about $10 trillion. That is bad enough. But in the last 5 years it has gone up $6.6 trillion—or more than $6.6 trillion. It is no coincidence that he has presided over the weakest recovery and highest unemployment since the Great Depression back in the 1930s.

President Obama has this very strange idea that the best way to get the economy going is to raise taxes and spend more money. It is just not working. As a matter of fact, we have great debates in Congress about the role and the size of the Federal Government. But perhaps the best example of why big government does not work has been the lousy economy, the slow economic growth, the high unemployment, and the number of people who have actually dropped out of the workforce.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics has this figure that it calculates. It is called the labor participation rate. You can Google Bureau of Labor Statistics or labor participation rate. That will show you that the percentage of people between the ages of 25 and 54 who are actively engaged and looking for work is lower today than it was at the height of the recession in 2008. Another 347,000 people dropped out of the workforce in December alone.

I know when we look at the unemployment rates that are released from time to time, we see the rate coming down a little bit, and we say: That is great. The unemployment rate is coming down. The problem is that in December alone almost 350,000 people quit looking for work. They gave up. We know that nearly 4 million people who are still looking for work have been out of a job for more than 6 months. That is not an economy to be proud of.

Let me just contrast that with what happened in the 1980s during the Reagan recovery. Typically, what economists will tell you is that when we have a recession, it is sort of a V shape. So when it hits bottom, it actually bounces up pretty quickly because there is nothing but the upside left to go. Yet this recession has been more of a U shape. In other words, we hit bottom, and we are still bouncing along the bottom. We haven't seen the kind of economic growth that we need to get people back to work, to grow our economy, and to get our budget balanced. I think the reason for that is some of the very policies I talked about a moment ago. It is due to the same misguided policies that the President has advocated and will no doubt talk about again tonight in his State of the Union Address.

I heard my colleague Senator BARRASSO from Wyoming talk about the Keystone XL Pipeline. The President likes to say: I have a pen, I have a phone, and I'm going to go it alone. Of course he can't do that under our Constitution. We all learned in high school about the checks and balances of the three coequal branches of government. The President can't spend a penny without Congress appropriating the money.

If we take him at his word, and he really wants to do something about the economy and reduce our dependence on imported oil from dangerous sources abroad, he could use that pen he talked about to authorize the Canadian-American connection of the Keystone XL Pipeline. You would then see a lot of the oil and energy produced in Canada, which is combined with the energy added to that pipeline, make its way down to southeast Texas where the refineries will turn it into gasoline and jet fuel, and in the process create thousands of new jobs.

Rather than using that pen to put people back to work and make sure that we have safe sources of energy, his administration is working behind the scenes to kill the Keystone XL Pipeline. Politics is the only explanation.

The President should not be surprised at what this Wall Street Journal poll showed this morning—that most of the voters disapprove of how he handled the economy. Likewise, he should not be surprised that trust in the Federal Government has also fallen to historic lows; that is the credibility problem. You can't promise the Sun and the Moon and deliver squat and expect people to trust you next time when you make another promise.

Then there is this. The Obama administration has repeatedly ignored or waived laws that prove inconvenient—from ObamaCare to immigration to welfare reform to education, energy, and drug policy.

One of the most frequent questions my constituents ask me back home in Texas is: How can the President do that? I thought we were a Nation that believed in the rule of law, that the law applied to everybody in America no matter how humble your station in life or how exalted—whether you are the commander in chief. I guess we have to revisit that when the President picks and chooses which laws he wants to enforce. Of course, Congress can pass laws. That is what Congress does.

The executive branch is the one that is supposed to enforce the law. So unless someone files a lawsuit—not Eric Holder in the Department of Justice, one of the most politicized Departments of Justice I can even remember. When some private organization or individual—such as the one who recently challenged the contraception mandate in ObamaCare that was recently stayed by the Supreme Court of the United States—or some association or business files a lawsuit that culminates in a judgment of a court years later, but

for that, there really isn't much of a check on President Obama. But that can change, and the voters know how to do it: By changing who is in charge in the Senate in November.

Here is another place where the President overreached and recently had his hands slapped by the courts. This had to do with his claimed authority to do another end run around Congress to make recessed appointments. We all know that under the Constitution the advise and consent function of the Senate is to act on the President's nominees and to vote to confirm them or not. Again, in a case of the President trying to go it alone, the court of appeals slapped down his attempt to do this end run around the Constitution and the advise and consent rule of the Senate. But that didn't stop him. Now he is threatening to take even more unilateral action: I have my phone, I have a pen—he is ready to do it again. That is not how the Federal Government is supposed to operate.

For example, after the President made these unconstitutional recess appointments, the DC Circuit of Appeals ruled on them and said: If the President's claim to make that appointment would be upheld, it would ''eviscerate the Constitution's separation of powers''—the three coequal branches of government, checks and balances. What could be more fundamental to our form of government? The court of appeals said that if they upheld the President's claimed power to make those appointments, it would ''eviscerate the Constitution's separation of powers.''

We know how important the role of checks and balances is in our form of government and in our democracy. Indeed, our democracy would not be able to survive without them. The people who founded this great country knew that the greatest threat to their freedom and their individual liberties and their most basic rights was the concentration of power, so that is why they separated power at the Federal and State level in the Tenth Amendment, but they also separated the power at the Federal level between the judicial, executive, and the legislative branches. Yet this President and his administration have shown repeated contempt for the checks and balances that are so essential to our form of government.

I have said many times that no President has the authority to disregard or selectively enforce the law based on political expediency. If he or she can, then we are nothing better than a banana republic. We are no longer a Nation that believes in the rule of law, which has really been the competitive edge that this country has had over other countries. People know if you come and do business in the United States, you are going to have access to the courts, your contracts are going to be enforced, and the laws that are written will actually be enforced by an impartial judiciary. That gives us a competitive advantage economically, morally, and otherwise, but it is being undermined.

Republicans are not the only ones that are worried about the President's willingness to bypass the normal legislative process. Yesterday my colleague from Maine, a Democratic caucus member, urged the White House not to treat Congress as—what he called—an afterthought.

In that spirit, I would like to remind the President of something he said just a few months ago. He said:

> We've got this Constitution; we've got this whole thing about separation of powers. So there is no shortcut to politics, and there's no shortcut to democracy.

That is what the President of the United States said just a few months ago. Yet now he is claiming: I have a phone, I have a pen, and I'm going to go it alone. I would like to remind him of something he also said back in 2006, which is very similar. He said:

> The Founders designed this system, as frustrating as it is, to make sure that there's a broad consensus before the country moves forward.

I couldn't agree more with the Barack Obama of 2006 or the Barack Obama of a few months ago, but I couldn't disagree more with President Barack Obama of today who somehow has this fantasy—it is nothing better than a fantasy—that somehow he can rise above Congress and the Constitution and the separation of powers and don the robe of a virtual dictator, force new laws down our throat or force the country in a direction that it doesn't want to go. It is a fantasy. It ain't gonna happen.

Yet on issue after issue the President still likes to tell the American people that he can move forward without any regard to consensus or constitutional checks and balances. It is a terrible mistake, and I wish he would reconsider.

In addition to its assault on the separation of powers, this administration has targeted other enemies, such as its intrusive monitoring of journalists' phone records. It has attempted to shake down private companies to get them to fund ObamaCare. It has fostered a culture of intimidation and punished whistleblowers. There have been scandals from Benghazi to Fast and Furious and those responsible for the attempt to intimidate the American people—or some part of the American people—from participating in the political process through the IRS scandal.

We know this administration has repeatedly obstructed the investigations and refused to cooperate with the inquiries that would bring the facts out into the light of day so we can all know what happened, make sure that those responsible are held accountable and, more importantly, make sure it never happens again.

I am confident that this is not the record President Obama will talk about tonight. Although this is his record, it is not too late to change. His own record is what has destroyed his credibility, as well as caused people to question his competence and the Federal Government's ability to actually deliver on the extravagant promises he has made time and time again.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. DURBIN. Mr. President, I grew up in East Saint Louis, IL, on the banks of the Mississippi River. As a child, it was a dominant feature in my life—crossing that river, watching that river. It didn't take long as I grew up to realize that that river has a mind of its own.

Last year, because of drought conditions in the Midwest, the Mississippi River was so low in January and February of 2013 that the Army Corps of Engineers had to come out on an emergency basis and literally scour the bottom of the river of rock formation so that navigation could continue. We were worried that we would have to shut down this major economic artery in the Midwest because the river was so low. The Army did a great job. The navigation continued with only slight delays and no major interruptions. Within 60 to 90 days, that same river was at flood stage. That is what those of us who grew up in the Midwest come to expect and understand—the unpredictability of that river. As we grew up and started to look around, we realized there were bluffs behind us that at one point were the banks of this great river and that we were living in the flood plain, if you will—that area close to the river that once was totally under water, way back when.

So there were flooding episodes, as most communities went through, and efforts made to deal with that flooding, including the building of levees. Those levees, for the most part, on the Illinois side of the river have been reliable. Some have questioned whether they can meet 500-year standards or these epic floods, and I think the question is well worth asking. But the fact is that the efforts made on the Illinois side—I can't speak for others, but at least in that region—have really been up to the task and we have not had serious flooding in a long time in that part of the world.

Because of concerns raised by the Army Corps of Engineers about whether these levees that protect the towns and businesses and families were up to the job, something remarkable occurred. Leaders who lived in the counties—and I will be more specific in a moment—closest to that area got together and said, We are not going to

wait on the Federal Government. We are going to impose a tax on ourselves and raise tens of millions of dollars to start fortifying these levees to protect our towns and businesses. I don't know if that has ever happened anywhere else. We have to salute them. They weren't waiting for Uncle Sam to show up and ride to the rescue; they took it into their own hands. Well, I salute them because they did raise the money and they are prepared and they are fortifying those levees.

I love the Army Corps of Engineers. They came to our rescue last year. But the locals have asked the Army Corps of Engineers to come in and certify these levees, that they are stronger now than they ever were, and the Army Corps has been slow to do it. It is frustrating. The locals are doing everything we could ask of them and they aren't getting at least a timely response from the Army Corps of Engineers. So, as a consequence, we are living in this uncertain world.

All of these businesses, all of these towns, all of these families in this so-called flood plain believe they are protected by the levees, the levees have not been certified by the Corps, and now comes the new National Flood Insurance Program which says to the people living there that they are going to have to pay higher premiums for flood protection in the future. The people rightly said, Wait a minute. We are paying higher sales taxes; we voted to pay higher sales taxes to protect ourselves, and now we are being told we still have to pay higher premiums. That gets to the heart of why we are on the floor discussing the National Flood Insurance Program.

Now I wish to say a few words about my position on this issue because it is one I have struggled with, to try to find the right answer in light of what I think is an extraordinary, if not heroic, effort by local people to address their problem and not wait for the Federal Government, their frustration of not having at least a timely cooperation by the Army Corps of Engineers, and now the prospect that the premiums for their flood insurance are going to go up despite their best efforts to protect themselves. If they were doing nothing, standing back and saying, This isn't our worry; if something bad happens, Washington will ride to the rescue, that is one thing. But they are doing something specific that costs them money and they are trying to protect themselves.

Rapid increases in flood insurance premiums, which are on the horizon, are hard for many people in my State. For the people in Metro East, which is the area I just described which is on the eastern side of the Mississippi River across from St. Louis—the southwestern part of Illinois—for many of them this increase in these premiums would be impossible for them to pay. Forty percent of the Metro East I have just described is mapped as flood plain, and most of the National Flood Insurance Program policyholders there have their premiums subsidized. This meant that instead of paying $500 a year, they were paying about $150. It made it more affordable to them. However, the new increases that are anticipated could be as much as 400 percent.

In Granite City, IL, policyholders paid $585 last year for flood insurance, but with the new increases, the premiums are expected to rise to $1,500 or even $2,000 a year. For some people, $2,000 a year may not sound like a sacrifice. But for hard-working families in small homes they have worked hard to buy and build, another $2,000 a year can make some real impact on their lives.

Additionally, 30,000 new structures in Metro East could be newly mapped into a flood plain when FEMA finally finalizes its flood maps. These homeowners could end up paying $500 to $2,000 a year for flood insurance. Allowing their premiums to rise so high so quickly is unacceptable, especially given how the people in Metro East have worked together over the last 7 years at significant expense to themselves to improve the 74-mile levee system.

In 2007, the Army Corps notified Metro East locals that their levees needed improvement. The next year FEMA notified them that much of the area would be mapped into a flood plain, triggering mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements unless the levee was improved. In response, the three Metro East counties I mentioned earlier—Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair, where I grew up—taxed themselves to pay for the improvements to their levees. They raised $150 million. I believe this type of local commitment is unprecedented. I don't know if anyone else is doing this. They did it.

There have been a number of setbacks, but when they occurred, I have tried to work with the Army Corps and with my colleagues in Congress to get these projects back on track. I commend the people in Metro East for working together to honestly address the threat of flooding. No community wants to go through the pain and loss of damaging flooding. The Presiding Officer has been through it in West Virginia. I have been through it. Twenty years ago, in 1993, there was horrific flooding on the Mississippi River and there have been several instances since. I was out there piling up the sandbags with a lot of folks trying to protect homes and businesses.

These communities in Metro East are actively doing something to prevent the recurrence of that kind of a disaster. So while the locals continue to work with the Army Corps to achieve the highest level of levee protection as quickly as possible, I am going to continue to make their work a priority in my efforts. Because the residents of Metro East have taken on a significant financial commitment to protect homes and businesses, I will work to ensure that flood insurance premiums are affordable.

I wanted to draw attention to the way the residents of Metro East have taken the initiative to help protect themselves from the risk of flooding, because not every community is engaged as directly with this threat as they have been. My constituents in this part of the country, for the most part, cannot afford to buy flood insurance at the new levels and the new rates.

I agree with the effort underway by Senators MENENDEZ, ISAKSON, LANDRIEU, and others to slow down these increases, and that is why I am supporting their effort. But we need to do this with our eyes wide open. The National Flood Insurance Program is not going to keep up with the costs of recovery from severe weather events that we see on the horizon.

The National Flood Insurance Program provides nearly 6 million business owners, homeowners, and renters $1.2 trillion in coverage. The problem is the program simply doesn't collect enough money to cover the costs of rebuilding communities from floods, hurricanes, and other disasters.

The flood insurance program will be more than $20 billion in debt after making payments for Superstorm Sandy. If we in Congress continue to ignore the structural weakness in the flood insurance program, that deficit, that debt, that shortfall is going to grow in the future. We can and should, sadly, expect more intense extreme weather events. According to computer models, the changing climate means the storms we are seeing will become stronger and more extreme in the future, causing even greater amounts of damage. Nationwide, the financial consequences of weather-related disasters and climate change hit an historic high in 2012, causing over $55 billion in damages.

I had a hearing on this issue, and I thought: If I bring in environmentalists, a lot of folks will discount it completely when they start talking about climate change. They may not attend. They may walk out of the room. So instead I brought in people from the property and casualty industry, the insurance industry. What do they do for a living? They watch the weather. They watch it more closely than any politician ever did, and they decide adequate premiums to cover the reserves needed to protect from these weather disasters.

The story they told us was: Get ready. The weather is going to get more extreme, and the costs and damages are going to grow dramatically. Some insurance companies—major insurance companies—have walked away from States, saying: There is just too much exposure there. We cannot charge premiums and collect enough to create a reserve in the instance of a natural disaster.

Now, that is the reality of the private sector analysis of this issue. This is not some—pejorative term—tree-hugging environmentalist musing about possibilities. These are hard-hearted actuaries and accountants taking a hard look at what the future

holds. The private insurance industry has looked at the scientific data, and they have made changes in the way they do business. They are adjusting their operations to prepare for worse weather and bigger losses. They have begun raising premiums for wind, earthquake, and flood insurance in areas where disasters are likely, ensuring the rates accurately reflect the risk of damage. The industry has also begun to refuse insuring properties in states where there is just too much risk. In contrast, the Federal Government has not adequately prepared to handle the growing number of severe weather events.

Well, Senator DURBIN, where does this leave you? You do not think your people can afford to pay the higher premiums, and yet you do not think the reserves set aside for the flood insurance program are adequate.

I think that is the reality of what this political vote is likely to show.

Yesterday the vote on the floor was an overwhelming bipartisan vote to go forward on this measure. We know the Flood Insurance Program will not be able to keep up with the damage inflicted on our communities. The cost—asking homeowners and businesses to pay dramatically more in flood insurance premiums—is too high to make the National Flood Insurance Program viable in the near future.

We need to recognize that losses from future floods will likely cost more than the National Flood Insurance Program can cover. And then—and that is why I think we need a dose of reality in this Chamber and on Capitol Hill—Congress has to step up. That is a reality. We know these disasters are likely to occur, and we cannot—will not—collect the premiums necessary to create the reserves to cover them. It will be our responsibility to ensure that help is there. Whether that disaster is in Kansas, Illinois, West Virginia, or anywhere across the United States, Congress cannot deny that help.

It is time that we seriously address the effects of climate change and rethink how we protect and provide disaster assistance to communities on a regular basis. Those who choose to ignore the overwhelming scientific evidence of climate change cannot ignore the overwhelming accounting evidence that the National Flood Insurance Program will not be able to meet the increasing expense of natural flooding disasters.

Our votes—if we pass this measure before us—may spare families from an unacceptable financial burden if flood premiums skyrocket, but they do not spare us from the reality that the damages from future flooding disasters will be nationalized, as the damages of Katrina and Sandy were.

Those who vote for this Menendez-Isakson-Landrieu measure—as I will—are voting at the same time to nationalize the cost and damages of future disasters, to say that this is going to be something we will respond to as needed. I have done that throughout my congressional career in the House and Senate, stood up to help those regions of the country in trouble, from California all the way to the east coast, and I will do it again because I think it is an American family responsibility. There is a limitation to what this National Flood Insurance Program can achieve. There is certainly a limit to how much working families can pay for these premiums. And we have to accept the reality that when these flooding events occur, when these disasters occur, we have to accept that responsibility.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Kansas.

FARM BILL

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the Agriculture Act of 2014. That is the new name of the farm bill.

After over 3 years of hard work by the House and Senate Agriculture Committees and other interested Members, we are finally nearing the finish line for this version of the Nation's farm and food policy.

As all Kansans and all farmers and ranchers from every State know, the farm bill impacts not only our farmers and ranchers but also businesses up and down Main Street, as well as families in our rural towns and urban cities.

Everyone in Kansas, people who work in agriculture or are impacted by its success—which, by the way, is every single American—and my colleagues in the Congress deserve to know why I was the only Senator on the conference committee not to sign the conference report as of last night. I am here today to fully explain my reasoning and why I cannot and will not vote for this legislation.

It all comes down to this simple question: Does the new farm bill improve agriculture in America? I believe the answer is, unfortunately, no.

While we all want to provide long-overdue certainty to producers—something lacking for over 400 days, for 2 years; a record—the conference missed an opportunity for greater and necessary reforms to our Nation's farm programs, Federal nutrition programs, and burdensome regulations.

We should not march backward and pass a farm bill with more government subsidies, more regulations, and more waste.

How on Earth did we get to this point today?

Back in 2011 Chairperson STABENOW and I started the process of writing a new farm bill with a field hearing in her home State of Michigan. Later that year we held another successful hearing in Wichita, KS. After more formal hearings in the Senate and conversations with Kansas producers, Michigan producers, producers all over this country, it was clear to me that this farm bill would have to be reform-oriented, reduce the deficit, and be responsible—not only to farmers and ranchers but also to consumers and taxpayers. Unfortunately, as I stand here today, this farm bill does not meet those standards, and, taken as a whole, the conference report fails to move both Federal farm and food programs forward.

I previously voted against the Senate bill, which looked too much in the rearview mirror for outdated programs, but this report is even worse. Just listen to this: Last year's House bill was officially called the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act—''reform,'' ''risk management''—and here in the Senate we passed the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act. The final report now is reduced to the Agriculture Act, the farm bill.

Today I will focus my comments on my three biggest concerns: commodity subsidy programs, nutrition program spending, and the lack of regulatory reforms so sorely needed.

Considering we all commonly refer to the legislation as the farm bill, my first concern and criticism is the new price loss coverage program. The acronym for that is PLC. It is a subsidy program.

Back in 2012, 2 years ago, I was pleased that the Senate Agriculture Committee and the full Senate passed a bipartisan commodity title that contained real reform. We ended the current countercyclical commodity subsidy program and got the government out of the business of sending signals to producers essentially telling them which crops to plant by setting target price guarantees for producers—farming for the government, not farming for the market. Unfortunately, that reform was replaced in the latest Senate bill with a new target price subsidy program, doubled down in the House version with even higher target prices, and manipulated even more in the conference report to suit the desire of specific crops over the objections of others in different regions.

The new Price Loss Coverage Program repeats a classic government subsidy mistake: setting high fixed target prices or subsidies, which only guarantees overproduction, with long periods of low crop prices, leading to more expensive farm programs funded directly by taxpayers.

Why do we have to go down that road again? I have yet to hear one legitimate explanation for why Congress is about to tell all producers across this country that the Federal Government will guarantee the price of your wheat at $5.50 per bushel—by the way, it is a little over $6 right now at the country elevator in Dodge City—and rice at $14 per hundredweight for the next 5 years regardless of what happens in the market. We have done this before, and we know it creates planting and marketing distortions instead of letting our producers respond to market conditions.

After the World Trade Organization—the WTO—ruled against the United States for our cotton programs, I thought we had learned a lesson. I have

said it before and will say it again: The WTO stove is hot. Why would we reach out and touch it again? Remember that we are still required to pay Brazil millions of dollars a year under that decision.

The Amber Box subsidy programs in this bill will open American agriculture to global trade disputes—which we have already lost and will likely lose again if challenged.

To date, objections and solutions from me and my colleagues—ranging from South Dakota, Senator THUNE; Nebraska, Senator JOHANNS; Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY; and even Ohio, Representative BOB GIBBS—have all fallen on deaf and stubborn ears. Our efforts to add market orientation to the price loss coverage subsidy program, as well as attempts to end it outright, have all been blocked and are certainly not reflected in the final report.

I am equally unhappy with the final outcome of the nutrition title of the farm bill.

Partisan politics has unnecessarily infiltrated this debate, with many Members on the other side of the aisle drawing a line in the sand at zero savings or real reform to the expensive and unrestricted Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. That is called SNAP. It is really the food stamp program. Facts are stubborn things. Despite good intentions, SNAP—food stamps—now makes up more than 80 percent of the Department of Agriculture's budget and was previously exempted from across-the-board sequestration cuts.

What we have here today is a ballooning and expensive set of Federal nutrition programs, with a patchwork of eligibility standards, loopholes, and, frankly, unneeded bonuses to State governments for simply administering the program. If you administer the program right, you get a bonus.

I understand and sympathize with the need for nutrition assistance for hard-working families. I have championed their efforts. However, we cannot and simply should not box off SNAP from unnecessary and timely reforms.

While the Senate version of the bill in 2012 and 2013 did tighten the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program—LIHEAP—loophole to save roughly $4 billion over 10 years, there have always been additional needed reforms to the program.

At the end of the 2012 Senate bill, I included my personal views in the report. I identified eight additional ways to rein in the out-of-control spending and reinstitute program integrity for the SNAP program.

Last year, in 2013, I introduced a stand-alone piece of legislation that would have saved a total of $36 billion in SNAP without ever touching individual monthly benefits, and it failed on a party-line vote.

Eventually, the House of Representatives passed nearly $40 billion in savings—after intense debate over there—within the SNAP program. That is a 5-percent reduction over a 10-year period. I do not see how the final legislation, amounting to a 1-percent reduction in SNAP spending, is a fair compromise between both versions of the legislation. This just does not add up.

In every single one of my townhall meetings in Kansas—and I know the Presiding Officer from West Virginia finds the same thing true in his home State—the first question fed-up producers and business owners ask is, How can we stop or even slow down the onslaught—the onslaught—of regulations?

This farm bill had great potential to help producers and ranchers and all of agriculture with reducing the crushing regulatory burden from the government's rules and requirements. They just want relief.

Despite years of work in both committees and strong provisions in the House-passed farm bill, the final legislation lacks key, commonsense, and sound science regulatory reforms.

I am more than disappointed that a WTO-compliant resolution to mandatory country-of-origin labeling—it is called COOL—was not reached. As a result, our livestock producers who were already facing drought and high feed prices, now are going to have to worry about retaliatory actions by the Governments of Canada and Mexico.

Our ranchers are equally troubled that provisions in the House bill directing the USDA to refocus their efforts on the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Act, the acronym for that is GIPSA, they were excluded. Another regulatory relief provision was already cleared by the full House and the Senate ag committee would have ended the duplicative National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. I will not try the acronym for that.

These are pesticide permits required by the Environmental Protection Agency. We had an opportunity to protect human health and eliminate duplicative, unnecessary regulatory actions, and instead, despite all of our commitments to work together to resolve the issue, we were all blocked from including the simple and necessary regulatory relief.

Each of these regulatory reforms had bipartisan support. But now producers across the country are left without an explanation and, much worse, no needed relief. I am shocked at how far some Members will go to protect this administration's regulatory agenda instead of protecting real hard-working Americans.

After all of that, let me point out that with any large piece of legislation one can usually find some positives to point to and today's farm bill is no different. While I support many of the programs in the less talked about titles of the farm bill, I am especially appreciative of the inclusion of strong crop insurance provisions and livestock disaster programs. The No. 1 issue we heard over and over again from our producers across the country and in every corner of Kansas was that crop insurance was their No. 1 one priority for the farm bill; secondly, they said get the regulations off our backs.

The policies in the final bill protect the commitment to producers by strengthening crop insurance as the cornerstone of our farm safety net, regardless of the size of their farm or the commodity they grow. As this bill moves forward, the Risk Management Agency, RMA, will be busy offering expanded coverage for commodities such as cotton that have not traditionally participated in the program as much as other crops.

However, I am concerned that the conservation compliance requirement included in the legislation on crop insurance, not on cropping operations, not on being a farmer but on crop insurance, will unnecessarily burden producers who are already good stewards of their land and already subjected to conservation requirements in the commodity programs. This is a duplication—more paperwork.

As the western half of Kansas continues to linger in a historic drought, the lack of livestock disaster programs that expired in 2011 is truly upsetting. We should have never let the programs expire in the first place. We had an opportunity in 2012 to reauthorize them, but the Senate failed to act, over my calls of action.

All of the livestock disaster programs are finally retroactively authorized. But the assistance will be too little and too late in many parts of cattle country. Some have lost part of their herds and even strains of cattle genetics.

Unfortunately, as a Kansan, as well as a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee and the farm bill conference committee, I am disappointed to say that the final policies of this farm bill do not outweigh the positives. While we all want to provide certainty to producers, the conference has missed an opportunity for greater and necessary reforms to our Nation's farm programs, Federal nutrition programs, and burdensome regulations.

After over 3 years of debate, the challenges that agriculture faces at home and across the world have only continued to grow. We need 21st century policies and innovative solutions. Instead, this bill misses the mark and goes backward to protectionist programs.

The issues I raise deserve to be debated fully and publicly. I know time is of the essence. Yet the full conference committee met only once for opening statements last October. With all of the ramifications of the farm bill, we met once last October—for 3 minutes apiece.

In truth, the majority of this bill was negotiated behind closed doors without the opportunity for votes, amendments or discussion. There is too much of that around here. Producers, consumers, and our global trading partners expected more. Unfortunately, the

U.S. taxpayers deserve better than this conference report. I did not sign this conference report last night and cannot in good conscience vote for this legislation.

But I will promise this to all of the Members who worked so hard to at least get a bill. I will continue to work and advocate on behalf of advancing agriculture.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in America, education is one of the keys to success—but too many Kentucky children are trapped in failing schools. This week is National School Choice Week, an ideal time to remember that school choice can be an important option for children living in poverty.

Over 10,000 young Kentuckians a year drop out of school, with little likelihood to return and reduced prospects for the future. Dropping out before graduating high school very often subjects kids to added hardship. Studies by the U.S. Census Bureau show that the average high school dropout earns 42 percent less than a high school graduate without a college degree. And these failures of our school system fall hardest on minority and low-income children.

But the big government-educational complex too often cares more about the bricks and mortar of a failing school than the children attending it. Special interests, like those of unions, can outweigh the interests of individual students.

We need to provide increased opportunities for families to choose the education environment that best meets the needs of their children. School choice programs do just that—they empower parents.

There are two types of school choice programs. One program provides financial assistance for disadvantaged students to enroll in private schools. The second charter schools—are public schools that are entrepreneurial and free from many of the constraints of school district bureaucracies. Rather than focusing on red tape, they are singularly focused on academic achievement, and give parents the opportunity to choose the best school for their child.

Both types of programs offer families the opportunity to send their child to safer schools with a proven track record of success. They allow public education dollars to follow the student to the school of their parents' choosing and improve student performance. Surely parents, not bureaucrats, are the best judges of what school is right for their child.

In Washington, DC, studies have shown that the city's private school scholarship program has increased graduation rates by 21 percent. In Indiana, enrollment in the State's private school scholarship program has more than doubled this year, to nearly 20,000 students. Clearly parents in Indiana are pleased with the availability of this option.

Indiana charter school students also saw improvements in learning for math and reading compared to their traditional public school counterparts. If Indiana and Washington, DC, can offer their children better choices, why can't Kentucky do the same?

A recent poll shows that 72 percent of Kentuckians favor charter schools, and yet Kentucky is one of only seven States that does not allow them. I agree with the vast majority of Kentuckians who favor charter schools and have supported Federal incentives for States that permit them, and will continue to do so.

For these reasons, I am a proud sponsor of legislation in the Senate that would expand school choice and allow 11 million low-income students to take Federal funding to the public or private school they choose. This would give parents, not Washington or bloated school bureaucracies, the power to decide how to best use the education money allocated for their children. It would also ensure that students trapped in failing schools don't have to wait for those schools to get better to get a quality education.

While I was encouraged to see Kentucky's ranking among States has improved, more is still needed. Last year, 18 of Kentucky's 22 failing schools were in Jefferson County. Students trapped in failing schools, such as those in the Louisville area, need options before they fall too far behind.

School choice is a way out. For low-income families, it can break the cycle of poverty. Thanks to school choice, many young men and women who would otherwise not have had the opportunity to excel can grow up to become leaders in their communities and their country.

The current one-size-fits-all education system is not the best approach. Our Commonwealth needs to make fundamental changes so that that every child has the opportunity to leave a failing school. I'm grateful for the organizations across the Bluegrass State which are fighting to make that happen. Kentucky's school children are capable of great things; let's make sure we empower their parents to help their children succeed.

TRIBUTE TO DR. LOUIS ARNOLD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor today in celebration of the anniversary of Dr. Louis Arnold's birth. Dr. Arnold, or ''the Flying Evangelist'' as he is known by many in our home State, was born 100 years ago on January 19, 1914, in Buckeye, KY, and has spent his life in service to the Baptist church. He is the founding pastor of Clays Mill Road Baptist Church.

Dr. Arnold felt the call to preach early in life. At age 11, he began preaching to his classmates while they walked to and from school. Then, at 19, he publicly announced his call to preach and held his first sermon in the Mitchellsburg Baptist Church. Following that first sermon—the story goes—he gazed up into the stars with a Bible in hand and said, ''Lord, I'd rather be a preacher than to be President of the United States.''

Dr. Arnold got the nickname ''the Flying Evangelist'' during the second World War. Already the pastor of a church in Lexington, KY, he was called to pastor another church in Cincinnati, OH. The churches were separated by 85 miles of country road—too far of a drive to be able to preach at both Sunday services. Undeterred, Dr. Arnold bought an interest in a small plane and learned to fly. Now, not only could he easily commute between the two churches, but he could also fly to revivals and churches across the region. He even equipped his plane with a loudspeaker so he could preach from the sky over cities and towns.

Although Dr. Arnold was born in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, his message has spread far and wide. He has his own radio broadcast, ''Preaching at Your Church,'' and his paper, ''The Arnold Report,'' is mailed to all 50 States. He's organized churches and revivals in his home State of Kentucky as well as travelled abroad to places such as Mexico, Central America, Europe, and the Bahamas. He's written numerous books of sermon and Bible study, and dozens of inspirational novels which have sold in all 50 States and several foreign countries.

Dr. Arnold celebrated his 100th birthday by preaching at the Clays Mill Road Baptist Church; a remarkable testament to his conviction and faith that have not wavered in the more than 80 years since his first sermon. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Louis Arnold, an upstanding Kentucky citizen, on the occasion of his 100 years of life and his unwavering devotion to his faith.

TRIBUTE TO IRENE GAINER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to congratulate Irene Gainer on her upcoming retirement from Federal service. Most of my colleagues know Irene through her husband, Senate Sergeant at Arms Terry Gainer, but today Irene gets the spotlight as I take a few minutes to recognize her impressive career.

Many great things come from Chicago, including Irene, who was born and raised in Chicago. Chicago is also where she met her husband Terry and started her first career as a nurse. She attended the College of St. Francis and St. Bernard's School of Nursing. During the early years of their marriage, Irene joined Terry as the Navy moved them around the country from Rhode Island to Virginia and then to California. In each State Irene worked as a nurse, and to this day she maintains her licenses and professional credentials in all three States.

Irene also worked in Illinois hospitals, including St. Bernard's Hospital, Christ Hospital, Central Community Hospital, and for 14 years at the Little Company of Mary Hospital.

In 1988, Irene started her second career—she began law school at John Marshall. Irene attended law school during the day, continued working nights as a nurse at Little Company of Mary Hospital, and—did I mention?—she and her husband were raising their six children.

After law school graduation in 1990, Irene accepted a job as Clerk in the Circuit Court of Cook County. She also worked for the State of Illinois as Assistant Director of Health and Energy Policy, served as General Counsel and Executive Director of the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association, and as an associate in a law firm.

Irene and Terry moved to Washington, DC in 1998. While living here in DC, Irene has worked for the National Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities, Sibley Memorial Hospital, and the Peace Corps. And for the past 5 years, she has been Director of the Hearing Office for the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals.

If Irene's busy career is any indication, there is little chance she will spend much idle time in retirement. Between volunteering with her local Catholic church and staying in touch with her six children spread around the world, she is sure to stay active.

I thank Irene for her many years of Federal service and wish her all the best in retirement. And I especially hope that she and Terry find lots of time to spend with their 14 grandchildren.

REMEMBERING ALEXIS ''LEXIE'' KAMERMAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on January 17, just days before our Nation observed a day in remembrance of Martin Luther King, Jr., a man recognized for his nonviolent activism during the civil rights movement, a restaurant in Kabul, Afghanistan, popular with foreigners and expatriates, including Americans, was rocked by a terrorist attack, killing 21 people.

Tragically, we lost one of our own from Illinois during this act of senseless violence: Ms. Alexis ''Lexie'' Kamerman, a Chicago native who for years had dedicated herself to serving others and only the year prior had moved to Afghanistan, working with the American University there to help increase access to education for Afghan girls and women.

Lexie grew up in Chicago in my home State. She was a 2004 graduate of the Latin School of Chicago, a 2008 graduate of Knox College—where she was also an all-star conference water polo player—and she went on to receive her Masters in Higher Education from the University of Arizona.

Countless friends and family have described Lexie as generous, fearless, and passionate about helping to create a better world. It's no surprise that the 27-year-old found herself in Kabul, working as a student development specialist with American University of Afghanistan. American University of Afghanistan has been committed for years to extend high-quality, affordable education for Afghans, especially girls, who may not have had access to it otherwise.

Sadly, American University of Afghanistan lost another member of its family in the same attack: 29-year-old political science professor Alexandros Petersen from Washington, DC. He and Lexie both were too young, too bright, and too dedicated to helping others to be leaving the world so soon.

Afghanistan has seen many ups and downs over the years. But these heinous attacks on innocent civilians, people such as Lexie who work every day to help the Afghan people achieve a better future, are among the lowest of lows.

My deepest sympathies go out to Lexie's parents, Jack and Alison, and the rest of her family, as well as the family at American University of Afghanistan and to all victims of the attack and their loved ones. It is only fitting that Knox College has created a scholarship in Lexie's name, a well-deserved tribute for a young woman who was so dedicated to others and to the value of education during her all-too-short life.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MEDICAL RESEARCH

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I rise today to correct some unfortunate remarks made on the floor this month and reaffirm my long-standing support for the medical research programs at the Department of Defense, most of which fall under the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program, or CDMRP. This program has led to major scientific breakthroughs since its creation in 1992 and it is one of my proudest accomplishments here in the U.S. Senate.

This program was created by me and together with my Defense Appropriations colleagues Senator Ted Stevens and Senator Daniel Inouye specifically in response to grassroots advocacy spearheaded by those who suffer from breast cancer, those who have survived it, and their families. The Department of Defense runs one of the largest health systems in the country, serving 9.6 million servicemembers, their families and military retirees, and as a result offered a unique opportunity to undertake Breast Cancer Research. Military families suffer from the same conditions and diseases that affect our society at large, and they also have disproportionate rates of some diseases as a result of their service. My colleagues and I believed that offering potentially lifesaving research specifically focused on this population was a logical step.

So we started with Breast Cancer research in 1992. In the 22 years this program has been funded, we have spent almost $3 billion on Breast Cancer research, and $7.5 billion overall on important research on numerous conditions through the Department of Defense. Millions of Americans, including those who receive their health care from DOD, have been touched by conditions such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis—or Lou Gehrig's disease—autism, lung cancer, multiple sclerosis, neurofibromatosis, ovarian cancer, prostate cancer, tuberous sclerosis complex and many others.

And what has that investment yielded? It has paid dividends, with breakthroughs in our understanding of breast cancer. It led to the development of the revolutionary drug Herceptin that is saving and prolonging the lives of millions of American women every day. DOD breast cancer research directly contributed to the discovery of a frequently mutated gene that contributes to several cancers and the OncoVue breast cancer risk assessment test.

But this program's payoff has not been limited to breast cancer: Those who receive Coenzyme Q10 treatment for gulf war illness can thank DOD medical research. The prostate cancer treatment Zytiga received FDA approval in 2011 due to the rapid early-phase clinical testing funded by DOD. Research jointly funded by CDMRP, the National Institutes of Health—NIH—and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency are creating advanced prosthetics that are accurately recreating the movement of the human hand—which in recent trial allowed a quadriplegic to feed herself for the first time in years. These are just a few small examples of the many research, diagnosis, and treatment breakthroughs this research has brought about.

DOD medical research has also made direct contributions to the understanding and treatment of medical conditions that uniquely or acutely affect those who serve. In addition to the research on gulf war illness, servicemembers and veterans who suffer from traumatic brain injury, tinnitus, or vision problems know that they can receive the most advanced treatment possible thanks to this medical research. DOD medical research is also finding biomarkers to better treat mental illness, so individual servicemembers do not have to go through the trial and error of being prescribed psychotropic medications that may or may not be effective for them. These research programs are helping to provide a better quality of life for those who have recently served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For a number of years now, some in Congress have made the argument that this program does not belong at the Department of Defense, suggesting that these programs are duplicative and that this funding should be spent elsewhere. In fact, the medical research done at the Department of Defense is complementary to and coordinated with the research done at NIH, and other Federal agencies including the Department of Veterans Affairs. While the medical research done at DOD and NIH may have overlapping goals, including many research grants that have been jointly funded, CDMRP has a different mandate, uses different criteria in selecting grants, and uses a unique two-tiered review process that assures high quality of research.

I simply say to those critics of the program, the outcomes speak for themselves. Any suggestion that I believe this program should have been created elsewhere or should be moved is incorrect, and I want to make sure the RECORD is clear on this point.

I thank my colleagues on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Chairman DURBIN and Ranking Member COCHRAN, and the chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY, for providing $1.55 billion in funding for these critical and successful medical research programs in Fiscal Year 2014. I look forward to many more years of breakthrough medical research conducted by the DOD that will directly address the needs of our military members and that will have broad application to millions of Americans.

MENTAL EXERCISES FOR SENIORS

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, today I wish to call attention to the ACTIVE, or Advanced Cognitive Training for Independent and Vital Elderly, study on mental exercises for seniors. The study, conducted by researchers at the University of Florida College of Public Health and Health Professions, showed that older adults who receive cognitive training can significantly improve their reasoning and mental processing skills. Elderly patients were coached and assessed in memory, reasoning, and processing speed at baseline. The study participants were then reassessed at intervals of 2, 3, 5, and 10 years. The result was that participants who received cognitive training reported significantly less difficulty with activities of daily living. Most patients achieved improved reasoning and mental processing speed at the end of the study, the results of which may be found in the January 13 online issue of the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society.

These results echo findings from Senate Special Committee on Aging in its recent work on improving quality of life for seniors who suffer from Alzheimer's and dementia. The Committee's 2012 report, entitled ''Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia: A Comparison of International Approaches,'' stated that ''individuals who are cognitively active—such as individuals who regularly read or do crossword puzzles—are at a lower risk of developing mild cognitive impairment (MCI)—an early symptom of dementia and AD, Alzheimer's disease—because they have increased cognitive reserve.''

The Senate Special Committee on Aging is also committed to embracing innovative brain health care advances for seniors. During our committee's recent Healthy Aging Forum, various groups invested in senior health care shared novel ideas for better mental health care and quality of life. These included research and medical technology devices that sharpen senior memory, thinking, and cognitive processing skills. Among these were Microsoft Kinect software, which uses cognitive and mental diagnostic, rehabilitative, and routine mental game-based exercises to help improve senior brain health and fine motor skills. Loneliness, which adversely impacts brain health and increases risk for dementia in seniors, can be minimized by engaging seniors with the Gerijoy avatar—also showcased at the Healthy Aging Forum—an interactive virtual pet companion that strengthens seniors' mental capabilities by providing opportunities for meaningful interaction.

The University of Florida Institute on Aging, another invited exhibitor at the Senate Health Aging Forum, is currently conducting a LIFE, Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders, study in which the effect of physical activity and/or aging health education on senior mobility and independence are being assessed. Cognitive function and impairment are also being examined as a part of the study.

The Senate Special Committee on Aging has conducted numerous hearings on Alzheimer's in recent years, coinciding with my cosponsorship of the HOPE for Alzheimer's Act, S.709/H.R.1507, which will improve diagnosis and care planning services for patients with Alzheimer's. A panel of witnesses from the government, academia, and the Alzheimer's Association discussed recent advancements in these areas in an April 2013 hearing entitled, ''The National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease: Are We On Track to 2025?'' An updated 2013 version of the national plan also highlights anticipated milestones in prevention of the disease. Lifestyle modifications and identification of Alzheimer's and dementia risk factors are included as part of the plan.

I have long been a tireless advocate in the fight against Alzheimer's and dementia. As the chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, I am committed to doing whatever I can to ensure the health and well-being of our seniors. Although much progress has been made, we still have a long way to go in ensuring the best possible quality of life for Americans in their later years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL CATHERINE M. BLACK

• Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to my constituent LTC Catherine M. Black for her exemplary dedication and service to the United States Army and to the United States of America. She has served for the last 2 years as a congressional budget liaison for the Secretary of the Army.

A native of Chicago, IL, Lieutenant Colonel Black enlisted in the Army in the summer of 1994. She was selected as the Soldier of the Year at Fort Gordon, GA, and was subsequently selected for the Officer Candidate School, earning a commission as a finance officer in April 1997.

Lieutenant Colonel Black has served in a broad range of duty stations and assignments over her two decades of service. As a Lieutenant, she served as a disbursing officer in a finance group at Fort Bragg, NC. This culminated in a rotation through the U.S. Army Forces Center in Doha, Qatar. Following the horrific attacks on September 11, 2011, she provided financial management services during the ground invasion in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

As a Captain, Catherine Black served as a finance detachment commander and battalion operations officer at Fort Richardson, AK, and later as a financial management operations officer at Fort Belvoir, VA. After promotion to major, she commanded the 126th Financial Management Unit for a year and a half, while simultaneously serving as the Battalion Executive Officer for the Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade at Fort Riley, KS. She trained and deployed her three financial management detachments to both Iraq and Afghanistan. She then deployed her headquarters to Kandahar, Afghanistan and stood up financial operations throughout southern Afghanistan. There she provided finance support to joint and coalition

forces and developed financial management infrastructure for the nation of Afghanistan.

Lieutenant Colonel Black was selected to serve as a congressional budget liaison officer in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for financial management and comptroller. She managed the Army's military personnel and operations and maintenance accounts, the Working Capital Fund, and activity at the depots and arsenals that support the Nation's organic industrial base, including Illinois' Rock Island Arsenal.

Lieutenant Colonel Black's leadership throughout her career has positively impacted her soldiers, peers, and superiors. As a budget liaison officer, she worked directly with the Senate and House Appropriations Committees to educate and inform Senators, Representatives, and staff for the United States Army.

Mr. President, on behalf of a grateful Nation, I thank and commend LTC Catherine Black for two decades of service to her country. I wish Catherine, her husband Geert Jacobs, and her sons Alexander, Achilles, and Elias all the best as they continue their journey of service.●

VERMONT ESSAY WINNERS

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD finalist essays written by Vermont High School students as part of the Fourth Annual State of the Union Essay contest conducted by my office. These 9 finalists were selected from over 380 entries.

The essays follow:

CARLY NEELD, CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 11 (FINALIST)

It is a great privilege to be a citizen of the United States. As citizens, we have a responsibility to ensure that our government is used to improve lives. Although this country has achieved much, there are many aspects that can be improved. In particular, we need to work towards reducing the unemployment rate and take meaningful steps to stop climate change. Addressing these two issues now will go a long way towards helping current and future generations.

The unemployment rate is at seven percent. It is our obligation, as a nation, to lower this rate. By lowering the unemployment rate, we could see a drop in crime and a reduction in poverty as more people are earning a steady income. Because of this steady income, there will be more tax revenue which could then support safety net programs that help the impoverished. An increased employment rate will also cause an increased access to health care and other necessities to living, strengthening families and communities.

In order to decrease the unemployment rate, there are things in our country that will need improvement and our support. Affordable childcare can benefit the employment rate, as it allows parents to be free to go to work. Access to higher education is also essential in increasing the employment rate, as more people will be able to obtain higher paying jobs or start businesses that create jobs. Quality public education, especially early childhood education, will build a strong workforce as jobs are created. It is important to acknowledge the small businesses that provide countless jobs and to ensure that the government is giving these businesses the support they need to sustain their existence.

Climate change is a pressing issue the world is now facing and, as the United States, we need to lead the world in a greener direction. Carbon dioxide emissions are growing exponentially and are hurting our environment and our people's health. We need to take meaningful steps to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions and put our energy and resources into renewable energy technologies. Not only will the environment benefit, but we will benefit economically as the prices of energy will be stable and affordable.

These goals may be difficult to achieve; however, the result will benefit the country immensely and place us as a world leader in many aspects. These issues must be addressed, as they will improve the lives of every citizen and will allow us to strengthen our union.

REBECCA PAIGE, SOUTH ROYALTON SCHOOL, GRADE 12 (FINALIST)

The rising cost of a college education is becoming a chronic problem for everyone. We want everyone to become a well-educated, informed citizen, but are doing so at a steep price. We are paying an exorbitant amount of money and are being left with large amounts of debt.

For many families, having a high school senior in the household brings mixed feelings towards college. There is the excitement towards experiencing new things, but also the concern for how they will be able to afford a college education. The worries start right at the beginning, before the senior is even accepted. Having just finished my college application, I estimate that I paid about $600 for application and testing fees. What do these fees do to help with post-secondary education? Nothing. These fees are being used as a gamble for the right to a college education. There is nothing saying that the applicant will be guaranteed admittance to college, only the chance of it. There should be a movement passed that will eliminate all application, testing, and other miscellaneous fees associated with the application process, so students have a chance to apply to the college they want without money to limit them in the pursuit of a higher education.

Even once students have been accepted to a college or university, the tuition should be lowered or subsidized by the government. Pursuing education beyond high school serves to help better society and, in turn, will help us out of the unstable state in which we find ourselves. There are many positive aspects about pursuing education beyond high school, but they are being outweighed by the financial repercussions of the decision to do so. This is not how the system should be run. We should not have to cringe at the word college; we should embrace it because of the plethora of opportunities that it will provide us.

There seems to be a double standard in this country. We want our citizens to pursue a higher education because the country will reap the benefits, yet we still limit the post-secondary education to those that can afford it and not let everyone have the opportunity to a higher education. There needs to be a change, if anything is going to move forward. Therefore, let all fees be eliminated, let there be lower tuition costs, and allow all people a chance for a college education without having to sign over their life in order to get one.

KENDALL SPAULDING, MISSISQUOI VALLEY UNION MIDDLE, HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 11 (FINALIST)

''Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts,'' said Winston Churchill. Churchill's quote links two controversial issues that our country is now facing, education and unemployment. We have to think about the people in our state and their futures. How will they continue to succeed? If people want to continue seeking jobs, they must go through a schooling process in order for them to feel satisfied. We want to grow strong and protect our views, so, taking control of our future will make it stronger and brighter as a country. We have to start to address these topics first, so they won't become a failure, but a success for our country.

I believe education should be the government's biggest concern because of what it can push our nation to accomplish. We have to make the common core strong, so that students know what to expect. We cannot just give up after a failure, we have to be determined and think more about of our future. Marion Brady, who is a classroom teacher, asked, ''What knowledge is absolutely essential for every learner?'' His question is what we think the curriculum should be to everyone. I believe if any student is strong in a core of truly essential skills, they can succeed in anything they want in their future. I believe enforcing the common core will help achieve our goals and lead to courageous decisions.

Building a successful education program will begin to strengthen the unemployment rate in our country. I think benefits being extended isn't the right solution because there are so many opportunities to go towards to be successful. If the government chooses to extend the benefits, we would be spending billions of dollars in a short amount of time, which would not help our economy. We have to think about what's best for the individual, as well as the whole country. It's best if we continue to persevere by going to a job training facility to be more successful. Making no extensions would lead people to create a successful life on their own, gain confidence, and rely on only themselves. Leading people to search for a job is in their own hands and they need to have courage in order to succeed in life.

To conclude, our country has to continue to grow as a whole in order to solve the controversial issues. Making successful decisions can permanently change the way the country grows. Also, creating a confident country leads to less room for failure in the long run. Let's believe we can create a strong common core plan for education and a non-extendable unemployment plan. I believe it can be done, it just takes time and hard work to get them. Let these two topics not be an issue anymore and finally resolve them, so we all can grow to our best.

ERIC TUCKER, SPAULDING HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 11 (FINALIST)

The year 2013 was a period of progress and setback. The government was shut down for sixteen days, the unemployment rate decreased to seven percent, the lowest unemployment rate in five years, The Affordable Care Act (ObamaCare) was passed with mixed initial success, and many other influential achievements and failures occurred. A new year is here, and now is the time to further develop 2013's successes and solve its problems. The best way to turn 2014 into a year of achievement is to unite Americans and Congress by offering multiple solutions to common disagreements and by discovering a series of common goals with the support of the entire nation.

One of the catastrophically unsolved problems in 2013 was the gap between Republicans and Democrats in America. The government was shut down from October 1st to October 16th, and it nearly defaulted on its bills during this harsh debt-ceiling debate.

This could have been avoided, if multiple choices were offered during these debates. For example, the main reason the Republicans did not want to re-open the government is they strongly opposed the Democratic principle of a government-controlled health insurance system (ObamaCare). One compromise, which could have solved this dilemma, is making ObamaCare optional. This compromise never occurred because the Democrats wanted ObamaCare nationalized with a fine on those who did not enlist and the Republicans wanted complete abolishment. Middle ground must be reached.

Further connecting Congress and America will also help eliminate some of 2013's largest problems. Sometimes Congress is split because each Congressperson is acting on behalf of his or her voters. At other times, such as the government shutdown, Republicans and Democrats disagree on the best ways to solve a problem. If Congress and the White House listened to the public more, then America can help its leaders tackle America's most difficult problems. Utilize Facebook, utilize Twitter, utilize easy, accessible websites and conduct multiple surveys concerning many issues the country faces. Have America decide if the debt ceiling should be raised; have America decide if ObamaCare should be mandatory and existent; have America become one of the mediators of public dilemma. Stop having Republicans elect Republicans and Democrats elect Democrats; have Americans elect Americans.

Unification and success can also be created through generating nationally common goals. For example, the issue of clean energy is a project being half-heartedly tackled by the government. Turn 2014 into the year that the United States of America leads the world to a greener Earth. Begin the movement that creates 4.5 million jobs, stimulates the economy, and eliminates 1.2 billion tons of carbon emissions per year by 2030. This single goal can cause America to reap the benefits of economic stimulation, energy-efficiency, and national unification.

It is time for America to raise itself to new heights as a truly united nation. Allowing the public to help its leaders compromise and work on common goals will bring this country together. Now is the time to unite the United States of America.

MADISON GILLEY, MOUTH ABRAHAM UNION MIDDLE, HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 9 (FINALIST)

There are many factors that impact our environment. Air pollution, deforestation, and climate change are just a few. These specific problems are caused by humans. We have a responsibility to our planet, ourselves, and to the other species that live here with us. Senator BERNIE SANDERS should take a stronger stance in protecting the environment because it is important to the state and the world.

Air pollution has a vast effect on climate change and the environment. In 2012 alone, the world produced 9.7 billion metric tons of CO_2 emissions (CO_2Now). All of the carbon emissions that go into the air cause climate change because the atmosphere traps the CO_2, which causes all the extra heat. The air, in many places, is not very clean because of air pollution and smog. Some factories use green energy so they do not put out as much pollution as other factories.

Deforestation, caused by logging, farming, mining, and development is also another immense problem that needs to be addressed. Rain forests are being cut down at an alarming rate. These rainforests need to be protected. Madagascar has lost 95% of its rainforests. Sumatra only has 15% of its rainforests left. The Atlantic coast of Brazil has lost 90–95% of its rainforest (Mongabay). Rainforests are important because they provide a habitat for plants and animals, they regulate our climate, they help to prevent soil erosion, and they provide a home for indigenous people. BERNIE SANDERS needs to help protect the forests not just in Vermont, but all around the world.

Different environments around the world are in danger because of climate change. One way that climate change is caused is by carbon emissions. Air pollution causes climate change because when the air is polluted by all the CO_2 that we are producing, it damages the ozone layer. Climate change also affects forests which causes damage to the animal population and their homes. The earth isn't an unlimited supply; we need to use what we have carefully and conscientiously.

Senator BERNIE SANDERS should take a stronger stance in protecting the environment because climate change, deforestation and air pollution are major problems damaging our environment. These are all environmental issues that have social and economic impacts. We only have one planet and we need to use what we have carefully.

KYLEE DIMAGGIO, MISSISQUOI VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 11 (FINALIST)

Barack Obama once said, ''Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.'' The American dream that many strive for is currently far out of reach for most. Our current economy is in such a dire state that some are even predicting another economic depression. This economic issue is vital to our future as a nation and impacts United States citizens directly. I also fear that if this issue is not addressed before long the consequences may be great. Fossil fuel usage (along with other things) have aided in the increase of unemployment rates in the United States and the poor economy. I believe that if the president were to focus on the state of the economy many other issues in the United States could be addressed as well.

Although I believe that many people blame the state of the economy on an excess of government spending, a huge expenditure of the government is in the subsidization of fossil fuels. Not only are fossil fuels harmful to the environment, but they are extremely costly. With the current economy, many citizens struggle to afford the prices of this resource. Furthermore, the large amount of dependence on fossil fuels leaves this resource an unreachable necessity. It is vital for the president to search for an alternative resource because fossil fuels are currently too costly for average citizens to afford. The president should be focused on finding an alternative resource for fossil fuels to decrease government spending and, in turn, improve the economy.

As a result of a poor economy, citizens are finding it hard to live comfortably and fulfill their ideas of the American dream. Government spending reduces the amount of money the government is able or willing to provide to the unemployed. Theodore Roosevelt said, ''Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people.'' In saying this, Roosevelt infers that the president is not to blame, it is the politicians below him that do not allow him to make change. I believe that the government as a whole should be concerned with the outcome of such a poor economy. For example, jobs are extremely limited, leaving unemployment rates higher than the United States have seen in years. The unemployed are finding it hard to live comfortably on the current unemployment benefits. Therefore, the government, as a whole, should be focused on extending unemployment benefits to those in need. Citizens are suffering because of the poor economy and the government needs to take action to avoid this.

The United States economy must improve the state of our union. Government spending must also decrease to make room for citizens in need of assistance. Without government assistance the citizens turn against their government and grow unhappy. The United States should focus on decreasing government spending to improve the economy because without a stable economy, citizens suffer and the state of the union crumbles.

TREVOR MCNANEY, MILTON HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 12 (FINALIST)

Amidst not only our challenges in the past year, but in our progress as well, we as a nation have proved our unity and strength. We have confronted issues, such as gun control and gay marriage and have worked hard to figure out how to best deal with issues like these. We have proved ourselves as pioneers; we have explored the wonders of space and have developed amazing technologies new to the world. I ask the American people, with their strength and their unity, to confront an entirely different issue. One that is so intertwined with our lives and society, yet one that is so ignored. I ask the people to confront a world issue. Today, I ask that each and every individual of this nation to consider the impacts that our society has on the environment.

We as a nation have come to understand that in order to prosper, we need to work, produce, and consume with our earnings. Companies produce goods that are meant to be broken and thrown away so that consumers will simply buy more of their product. I argue that we are smarter. A society that values monetary gain at the demise and destruction of the environment is one that will not last. Without a healthy environment, we cannot have a healthy society. We are too scared to look at the destruction and pollution that we are causing as a society and as a global economic system. I ask what is more fearful, deciding to make progress today or ignoring the issues of tomorrow? Ignoring until there are no longer any issues to worry about, until the Earth itself has perished along with its inhabitants. Now is our gateway and foundation to the future. We must change the way we live in order to live.

The exciting possibility is that we can change. We hold more knowledge and resources than we ever have before. America, it is time that we put the environment first. It is time that we alter the way that we view and interact with the world around us. By 2026, every home needs a solar panel and seventy percent of the buildings we use need to use gray water. And by 2030, seventy-five percent of the transportation industry needs to use bio-fuels. By 2035, seventy percent of vehicles need to be electric and seventy percent of America needs to be powered by clean renewable energy and resources. Dismiss the idea that it cannot be done, that we as a society and the world cannot solve the problems that we have created. And most of all, dismiss the notion that ''it is not your problem.'' The problems are here, they are real, and they are now. This world is our home, let's treat it like one.

EMIL KOENIG, VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL, GRADE 12 (FINALIST)

This past year has posed many serious national security and foreign policy challenges for the United States. The nation encountered various issues like the Edward Snowden's NSA leaks, chemical weapons uses in the Syrian civil war, and a government closing. While all of these issues are

significant and have captured the headlines of the news media, we must also keep in mind the small issues that can potentially transform into global conflicts.

Currently, for example, one of the seemingly more exotic issues threatening world peace involves the disputed Diaoyu (or Senkaku) Islands in the South China Sea. Although these barren rocks might seem truly worthless, as they are uninhabited and lack natural resources, this fact did not stop China, Japan or South Korea from staking conflicting claims and angrily criticizing each other, escalating a small territorial issue into a potentially larger crisis. While China flaunts its growing dominance in the region, the South Koreans and Japanese reject Beijing's territorial claims.

In my conversations with various Chinese people during my last year studying abroad in Beijing, most people strongly sided with their government's territorial claims. In almost the same breath, they catalogued a long list of grievances from the turbulent history of Sino-Japanese relations. Many still vividly recalled earlier atrocities, such as the ''Rape of Nanjing,'' When Japanese troops stormed Nanjing, raping women and burying people alive.

Chinese authorities play on these popular fears, disseminating propaganda that blames Japan for countless issues. Debates about truly useless ocean rocks, therefore, become conflated with deeply felt passions from the past, which is why it is important to understand the cultural and historical backgrounds of various conflicts in order to resolve them.

Because the situation now brewing in the South China Sea stems from deeply felt cultural and historical origins, the situation is extremely volatile. When the United States flew two bombers over the islands to demonstrate close ties with Japan, we may have raised the level of tension to a still higher level. Following the flights by our bombers, the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Koreans all sent planes to fly over the islands, to demonstrate their respective ownership claims over of the islands.

As a nation, if we want to avoid potential wars, the government should consider more peaceful options, such as encouraging negotiations, before sending in war planes. The government must practice more diplomatic conversations with Chinese, Japanese and Korean partners in order to reduce the likelihood of war. Flying war planes over disputed islands never solves issues; it mainly risks causing more tensions.

In sum, to avoid international incidents, the United States must practice a more responsible system of foreign policy. The tension of the East Asian region is only one example of when America used force prior to engaging in other forms of international communication. Instead, the US government must assess historical and cultural backgrounds of various conflicts and first try to resolve them through peaceful means, rather than skyrocket the likelihood of starting wars.

ABIGAIL MORRIS, CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 11 (FINALIST)

Many United States issues have been the subject of attention from the media, citizens and officials. However, in my opinion the environmental issues in the US have not had their share of the spotlight. Small measures, whether involving policy or simple publicity, could change the US environment for the better. One of these measures is increased regulation of the fracking industry.

Hydraulic fracturing or ''fracking'' is the process of gathering oil by forcing highly pressurized fluid into oil or gas formations, so that the oil or gas flows to the surface. The use of fracking has jumped to 25% of oil production, up from 1% in 2000. It has spurred hopes of an energy independent United States, but there are many drawbacks, especially where the environment is concerned. Fracking endangers plants, livestock, and most importantly, human beings. Refusal or reluctance to crack down on the fracking industry could seriously harm the health of the United States and its people. We must not let ourselves be lured by the economic benefits of fracking, and instead must examine it closely to determine if energy independence is worth the risk.

Of the 750 chemicals that can be used in fracking fluid, 29 are carcinogens. In Wyoming, Pennsylvania and other states, these chemicals have contaminated drinking water in residential areas. If there is no way to change the chemical makeup of fracking fluid or illegalize fracking completely, making sure the fracking industry is subject to strict regulation is the next best course of action.

Progress is being made, however. The FRAC (Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals) Act was introduced in 2011, which shows that the issue has caught the attention of Congress. However, both the House and Senate versions have yet to be passed. These bills need to be brought back to the attention of Congress, because as long as the fracking industry is not subject to the same regulation as every other, the natural environment and citizens of the United States will continue to be at risk.●

REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE UNION DELIVERED TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS ON JANUARY 28, 2014—PM 27

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was ordered to lie on the table:

To the Congress of the United States:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, my fellow Americans:

Today in America, a teacher spent extra time with a student who needed it, and did her part to lift America's graduation rate to its highest level in more than three decades.

An entrepreneur flipped on the lights in her tech startup, and did her part to add to the more than eight million new jobs our businesses have created over the past 4 years.

An autoworker fine-tuned some of the best, most fuel-efficient cars in the world, and did his part to help America wean itself off foreign oil.

A farmer prepared for the spring after the strongest five-year stretch of farm exports in our history. A rural doctor gave a young child the first prescription to treat asthma that his mother could afford. A man took the bus home from the graveyard shift, bone-tired but dreaming big dreams for his son. And in tight-knit communities across America, fathers and mothers will tuck in their kids, put an arm around their spouse, remember fallen comrades, and give thanks for being home from a war that, after 12 long years, is finally coming to an end.

Tonight, this chamber speaks with one voice to the people we represent: it is you, our citizens, who make the state of our Union strong.

Here are the results of your efforts: The lowest unemployment rate in over 5 years. A rebounding housing market. A manufacturing sector that's adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. More oil produced at home than we buy from the rest of the world—the first time that's happened in nearly 20 years. Our deficits—cut by more than half. And for the first time in over a decade, business leaders around the world have declared that China is no longer the world's number one place to invest; America is.

That's why I believe this can be a breakthrough year for America. After 5 years of grit and determined effort, the United States is better-positioned for the 21st century than any other nation on Earth.

The question for everyone in this chamber, running through every decision we make this year, is whether we are going to help or hinder this progress. For several years now, this town has been consumed by a rancorous argument over the proper size of the Federal Government. It's an important debate—one that dates back to our very founding. But when that debate prevents us from carrying out even the most basic functions of our democracy—when our differences shut down government or threaten the full faith and credit of the United States—then we are not doing right by the American people.

As President, I'm committed to making Washington work better, and rebuilding the trust of the people who sent us here. I believe most of you are, too. Last month, thanks to the work of Democrats and Republicans, this Congress finally produced a budget that undoes some of last year's severe cuts to priorities like education. Nobody got everything they wanted, and we can still do more to invest in this country's future while bringing down our deficit in a balanced way. But the budget compromise should leave us freer to focus on creating new jobs, not creating new crises.

In the coming months, let's see where else we can make progress together. Let's make this a year of action. That's what most Americans want—for all of us in this chamber to focus on their lives, their hopes, their aspirations. And what I believe unites the people of this Nation, regardless of race or region or party, young or old, rich or poor, is the simple, profound belief in opportunity for all—the notion that if you work hard and take responsibility, you can get ahead.

Let's face it: that belief has suffered some serious blows. Over more than three decades, even before the Great Recession hit, massive shifts in technology and global competition had eliminated a lot of good, middle-class jobs, and weakened the economic foundations that families depend on.

Today, after 4 years of economic growth, corporate profits and stock prices have rarely been higher, and those at the top have never done better. But average wages have barely budged. Inequality has deepened. Upward mobility has stalled. The cold, hard fact is that even in the midst of recovery, too many Americans are working more than ever just to get by—let alone get ahead. And too many still aren't working at all.

Our job is to reverse these trends. It won't happen right away, and we won't agree on everything. But what I offer tonight is a set of concrete, practical proposals to speed up growth, strengthen the middle class, and build new ladders of opportunity into the middle class. Some require Congressional action, and I'm eager to work with all of you. But America does not stand still—and neither will I. So wherever and whenever I can take steps without legislation to expand opportunity for more American families, that's what I'm going to do.

As usual, our First Lady sets a good example. Michelle's Let's Move partnership with schools, businesses, and local leaders has helped bring down childhood obesity rates for the first time in 30 years—an achievement that will improve lives and reduce health care costs for decades to come. The Joining Forces alliance that Michelle and Jill Biden launched has already encouraged employers to hire or train nearly 400,000 veterans and military spouses. Taking a page from that playbook, the White House just organized a College Opportunity Summit where already, 150 universities, businesses, and nonprofits have made concrete commitments to reduce inequality in access to higher education—and help every hardworking kid go to college and succeed when they get to campus. Across the country, we're partnering with mayors, governors, and state legislatures on issues from homelessness to marriage equality.

The point is, there are millions of Americans outside Washington who are tired of stale political arguments, and are moving this country forward. They believe, and I believe, that here in America, our success should depend not on accident of birth, but the strength of our work ethic and the scope of our dreams. That's what drew our forebears here. It's how the daughter of a factory worker is CEO of America's largest automaker; how the son of a barkeeper is Speaker of the House; how the son of a single mom can be President of the greatest nation on Earth. Opportunity is who we are. And the defining project of our generation is to restore that promise.

We know where to start: the best measure of opportunity is access to a good job. With the economy picking up speed, companies say they intend to hire more people this year. And over half of big manufacturers say they're thinking of insourcing jobs from abroad.

So let's make that decision easier for more companies. Both Democrats and Republicans have argued that our tax code is riddled with wasteful, complicated loopholes that punish businesses investing here, and reward companies that keep profits abroad. Let's flip that equation. Let's work together to close those loopholes, end those incentives to ship jobs overseas, and lower tax rates for businesses that create jobs here at home.

Moreover, we can take the money we save with this transition to tax reform to create jobs rebuilding our roads, upgrading our ports, unclogging our commutes—because in today's global economy, first-class jobs gravitate to first-class infrastructure. We'll need Congress to protect more than three million jobs by finishing transportation and waterways bills this summer. But I will act on my own to slash bureaucracy and streamline the permitting process for key projects, so we can get more construction workers on the job as fast as possible.

We also have the chance, right now, to beat other countries in the race for the next wave of high-tech manufacturing jobs. My Administration has launched two hubs for high-tech manufacturing in Raleigh and Youngstown, where we've connected businesses to research universities that can help America lead the world in advanced technologies. Tonight, I'm announcing we'll launch six more this year. Bipartisan bills in both houses could double the number of these hubs and the jobs they create. So get those bills to my desk and put more Americans back to work.

Let's do more to help the entrepreneurs and small business owners who create most new jobs in America. Over the past 5 years, my Administration has made more loans to small business owners than any other. And when 98% of our exporters are small businesses, new trade partnerships with Europe and the Asia-Pacific will help them create more jobs. We need to work together on tools like bipartisan trade promotion authority to protect our workers, protect our environment, and open new markets to new goods stamped ''Made in the USA.'' China and Europe aren't standing on the sidelines. Neither should we.

We know that the nation that goes all-in on innovation today will own the global economy tomorrow. This is an edge America cannot surrender. Federally-funded research helped lead to the ideas and inventions behind Google and smartphones. That's why Congress should undo the damage done by last year's cuts to basic research so we can unleash the next great American discovery—whether it's vaccines that stay ahead of drug-resistant bacteria, or paper-thin material that's stronger than steel. And let's pass a patent reform bill that allows our businesses to stay focused on innovation, not costly, needless litigation.

Now, one of the biggest factors in bringing more jobs back is our commitment to American energy. The all-of-the-above energy strategy I announced a few years ago is working, and today, America is closer to energy independence than we've been in decades.

One of the reasons why is natural gas—if extracted safely, it's the bridge fuel that can power our economy with less of the carbon pollution that causes climate change. Businesses plan to invest almost $100 billion in new factories that use natural gas. I'll cut red tape to help States get those factories built, and this Congress can help by putting people to work building fueling stations that shift more cars and trucks from foreign oil to American natural gas. My Administration will keep working with the industry to sustain production and job growth while strengthening protection of our air, our water, and our communities. And while we're at it, I'll use my authority to protect more of our pristine Federal lands for future generations.

It's not just oil and natural gas production that's booming; we're becoming a global leader in solar, too. Every 4 minutes, another American home or business goes solar; every panel pounded into place by a worker whose job can't be outsourced. Let's continue that progress with a smarter tax policy that stops giving $4 billion a year to fossil fuel industries that don't need it, so that we can invest more in fuels of the future that do.

And even as we've increased energy production, we've partnered with businesses, builders, and local communities to reduce the energy we consume. When we rescued our automakers, for example, we worked with them to set higher fuel efficiency standards for our cars. In the coming months, I'll build on that success by setting new standards for our trucks, so we can keep driving down oil imports and what we pay at the pump.

Taken together, our energy policy is creating jobs and leading to a cleaner, safer planet. Over the past 8 years, the United States has reduced our total carbon pollution more than any other nation on Earth. But we have to act with more urgency—because a changing climate is already harming western communities struggling with drought, and coastal cities dealing with floods. That's why I directed my Administration to work with States, utilities, and others to set new standards on the amount of carbon pollution our power plants are allowed to dump into the air. The shift to a cleaner energy economy won't happen overnight, and it will require tough choices along the way. But the debate is settled. Climate change is a fact. And when our children's children look us in the eye and ask if we did all we could to leave them a safer, more stable world, with new sources of energy, I want us to be able to say yes, we did.

Finally, if we are serious about economic growth, it is time to heed the call of business leaders, labor leaders, faith leaders, and law enforcement—

and fix our broken immigration system. Republicans and Democrats in the Senate have acted. I know that members of both parties in the House want to do the same. Independent economists say immigration reform will grow our economy and shrink our deficits by almost $1 trillion in the next two decades. And for good reason: When people come here to fulfill their dreams—to study, invent, and contribute to our culture—they make our country a more attractive place for businesses to locate and create jobs for everyone. So let's get immigration reform done this year.

The ideas I've outlined so far can speed up growth and create more jobs. But in this rapidly-changing economy, we have to make sure that every American has the skills to fill those jobs.

The good news is, we know how to do it. Two years ago, as the auto industry came roaring back, Andra Rush opened up a manufacturing firm in Detroit. She knew that Ford needed parts for the best-selling truck in America, and she knew how to make them. She just needed the workforce. So she dialed up what we call an American Job Center—places where folks can walk in to get the help or training they need to find a new job, or better job. She was flooded with new workers. And today, Detroit Manufacturing Systems has more than 700 employees.

What Andra and her employees experienced is how it should be for every employer—and every job seeker. So tonight, I've asked Vice President BIDEN to lead an across-the-board reform of America's training programs to make sure they have one mission: Train Americans with the skills employers need, and match them to good jobs that need to be filled right now. That means more on-the-job training, and more apprenticeships that set a young worker on an upward trajectory for life. It means connecting companies to community colleges that can help design training to fill their specific needs. And if Congress wants to help, you can concentrate funding on proven programs that connect more ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs.

I'm also convinced we can help Americans return to the workforce faster by reforming unemployment insurance so that it's more effective in today's economy. But first, this Congress needs to restore the unemployment insurance you just let expire for 1.6 million people.

Let me tell you why.

Misty DeMars is a mother of two young boys. She'd been steadily employed since she was a teenager. She put herself through college. She'd never collected unemployment benefits. In May, she and her husband used their life savings to buy their first home. A week later, budget cuts claimed the job she loved. Last month, when their unemployment insurance was cut off, she sat down and wrote me a letter—the kind I get every day. ''We are the face of the unemployment crisis,'' she wrote. ''I am not dependent on the government. . . . Our country depends on people like us who build careers, contribute to society . . . care about our neighbors . . . I am confident that in time I will find a job . . . I will pay my taxes, and we will raise our children in their own home in the community we love. Please give us this chance.''

Congress, give these hardworking, responsible Americans that chance. They need our help, but more important, this country needs them in the game. That's why I've been asking CEOs to give more long-term unemployed workers a fair shot at that new job and new chance to support their families; this week, many will come to the White House to make that commitment real. Tonight, I ask every business leader in America to join us and to do the same—because we are stronger when America fields a full team.

Of course, it's not enough to train today's workforce. We also have to prepare tomorrow's workforce, by guaranteeing every child access to a world-class education.

Estiven Rodriguez couldn't speak a word of English when he moved to New York City at age nine. But last month, thanks to the support of great teachers and an innovative tutoring program, he led a march of his classmates—through a crowd of cheering parents and neighbors—from their high school to the post office, where they mailed off their college applications. And this son of a factory worker just found out he's going to college this fall.

Five years ago, we set out to change the odds for all our kids. We worked with lenders to reform student loans, and today, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before. Race to the Top, with the help of governors from both parties, has helped States raise expectations and performance. Teachers and principals in schools from Tennessee to Washington, D.C. are making big strides in preparing students with skills for the new economy—problem solving, critical thinking, science, technology, engineering, and math. Some of this change is hard. It requires everything from more challenging curriculums and more demanding parents to better support for teachers and new ways to measure how well our kids think, not how well they can fill in a bubble on a test. But it's worth it—and it's working.

The problem is we're still not reaching enough kids, and we're not reaching them in time. That has to change.

Research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child's life is high-quality early education. Last year, I asked this Congress to help States make high-quality pre-K available to every four-year-old. As a parent as well as a President, I repeat that request tonight. But in the meantime, 30 states have raised pre-K funding on their own. They know we can't wait. So just as we worked with States to reform our schools, this year, we'll invest in new partnerships with States and communities across the country in a race to the top for our youngest children. And as Congress decides what it's going to do, I'm going to pull together a coalition of elected officials, business leaders, and philanthropists willing to help more kids access the high-quality pre-K they need.

Last year, I also pledged to connect 99 percent of our students to high-speed broadband over the next 4 years. Tonight, I can announce that with the support of the FCC and companies like Apple, Microsoft, Sprint, and Verizon, we've got a down payment to start connecting more than 15,000 schools and 20 million students over the next 2 years, without adding a dime to the deficit.

We're working to redesign high schools and partner them with colleges and employers that offer the real-world education and hands-on training that can lead directly to a job and career. We're shaking up our system of higher education to give parents more information, and colleges more incentives to offer better value, so that no middle-class kid is priced out of a college education. We're offering millions the opportunity to cap their monthly student loan payments to 10 percent of their income, and I want to work with Congress to see how we can help even more Americans who feel trapped by student. loan debt. And I'm reaching out to some of America's leading foundations and corporations on a new initiative to help more young men of color facing tough odds stay on track and reach their full potential.

The bottom line is, Michelle and I want every child to have the same chance this country gave us. But we know our opportunity agenda won't be complete—and too many young people entering the workforce today will see the American Dream as an empty promise—unless we do more to make sure our economy honors the dignity of work, and hard work pays off for every single American.

Today, women make up about half our workforce. But they still make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. That is wrong, and in 2014, it's an embarrassment. A woman deserves equal pay for equal work. She deserves to have a baby without sacrificing her job. A mother deserves a day off to care for a sick child or sick parent without running into hardship—and you know what, a father does, too. It's time to do away with workplace policies that belong in a ''Mad Men'' episode. This year, let's all come together—Congress, the White House, and businesses from Wall Street to Main Street—to give every woman the opportunity she deserves. Because I firmly believe when women succeed, America succeeds.

Now, women hold a majority of lower-wage jobs—but they're not the only ones stifled by stagnant wages. Americans understand that some people will earn more than others, and we

don't resent those who, by virtue of their efforts, achieve incredible success. But Americans overwhelmingly agree that no one who works full time should ever have to raise a family in poverty.

In the year since I asked this Congress to raise the minimum wage, five States have passed laws to raise theirs. Many businesses have done it on their own. Nick Chute is here tonight with his boss, John Soranno. John's an owner of Punch Pizza in Minneapolis, and Nick helps make the dough. Only now he makes more of it: John just gave his employees a raise, to ten bucks an hour—a decision that eased their financial stress and boosted their morale.

Tonight, I ask more of America's business leaders to follow John's lead and do what you can to raise your employees' wages. To every mayor, governor, and state legislator in America, I say, you don't have to wait for Congress to act; Americans will support you if you take this on. And as a chief executive, I intend to lead by example. Profitable corporations like Costco see higher wages as the smart way to boost productivity and reduce turnover. We should too. In the coming weeks, I will issue an Executive Order requiring Federal contractors to pay their federally-funded employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour—because if you cook our troops' meals or wash their dishes, you shouldn't have to live in poverty.

Of course, to reach millions more, Congress needs to get on board. Today, the Federal minimum wage is worth about 20 percent less than it was when Ronald Reagan first stood here. TOM HARKIN and GEORGE MILLER have a bill to fix that by lifting the minimum wage to $10.10. This will help families. It will give businesses customers with more money to spend. It doesn't involve any new bureaucratic program. So join the rest of the country. Say yes. Give America a raise.

There are other steps we can take to help families make ends meet, and few are more effective at reducing inequality and helping families pull themselves up through hard work than the Earned Income Tax Credit. Right now, it helps about half of all parents at some point. But I agree with Republicans like Senator RUBIO that it doesn't do enough for single workers who don't have kids, So let's work together to strengthen the credit, reward work, and help more Americans get ahead.

Let's do more to help Americans save for retirement. Today, most workers don't have a pension. A Social Security check often isn't enough on its own. And while the stock market has doubled over the last 5 years, that doesn't help folks who don't have 401Ks. That's why, tomorrow, I will direct the Treasury to create a new way for working Americans to start their own retirement savings: MyRA. It's a new savings bond that encourages folks to build a nest egg. MyRA guarantees a decent return with no risk of losing what you put in. And if this Congress wants to help, work with me to fix an upside-down tax code that gives big tax breaks to help the wealthy save, but does little to nothing for middle-class Americans. Offer every American access to an automatic IRA on the job, so they can save at work just like everyone in this Chamber can. And since the most important investment many families make is their home, send me legislation that protects taxpayers from footing the bill for a housing crisis ever again, and keeps the dream of homeownership alive for future generations of Americans.

One last point on financial security. For decades, few things exposed hard-working families to economic hardship more than a broken health care system. And in case you haven't heard, we're in the process of fixing that.

A pre-existing condition used to mean that someone like Amanda Shelley, a physician assistant and single mom from Arizona, couldn't get health insurance. But on January 1st, she got covered. On January 3rd, she felt a sharp pain. On January 6th, she had emergency surgery. Just one week earlier, Amanda said, that surgery would've meant bankruptcy.

That's what health insurance reform is all about—the peace of mind that if misfortune strikes, you don't have to lose everything.

Already, because of the Affordable Care Act, more than 3 million Americans under age 26 have gained coverage under their parents' plans.

More than nine million Americans have signed up for private health insurance or Medicaid coverage.

And here's another number: zero. Because of this law, no American can ever again be dropped or denied coverage for a preexisting condition like asthma, back pain, or cancer. No woman can ever be charged more just because she's a woman. And we did all this while adding years to Medicare's finances, keeping Medicare premiums flat, and lowering prescription costs for millions of seniors.

Now, I don't expect to convince my Republican friends on the merits of this law. But I know that the American people aren't interested in refighting old battles. So again, if you have specific plans to cut costs, cover more people, and increase choice—tell America what you'd do differently. Let's see if the numbers add up. But let's not have another forty-something votes to repeal a law that's already helping millions of Americans like Amanda. The first forty were plenty. We got it. We all owe it to the American people to say what we're for, not just what we're against.

And if you want to know the real impact this law is having, just talk to Governor Steve Beshear of Kentucky, who's here tonight. Kentucky's not the most liberal part of the country, but he's like a man possessed when it comes to covering his commonwealth's families. ''They are our friends and neighbors,'' he said. ''They are people we shop and go to church with—farmers out on the tractors—grocery clerks—they are people who go to work every morning praying they don't get sick. No one deserves to live that way.''

Steve's right. That's why, tonight, I ask every American who knows someone without health insurance to help them get covered by March 31st. Moms, get on your kids to sign up. Kids, call your mom and walk her through the application. It will give her some peace of mind—plus, she'll appreciate hearing from you.

After all, that's the spirit that has always moved this Nation forward. It's the spirit of citizenship—the recognition that through hard work and responsibility, we can pursue our individual dreams, but still come together as one American family to make sure the next generation can pursue its dreams as well.

Citizenship means standing up for everyone's right to vote. Last year, part of the Voting Rights Act was weakened. But conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats are working together to strengthen it; and the bipartisan commission I appointed last year has offered reforms so that no one has to wait more than a half hour to vote. Let's support these efforts. It should be the power of our vote, not the size of our bank account, that drives our democracy.

Citizenship means standing up for the lives that gun violence steals from us each day. I have seen the courage of parents, students, pastors, and police officers all over this country who say ''we are not afraid,'' and I intend to keep trying, with or without Congress, to help stop more tragedies from visiting innocent Americans in our movie theaters, shopping malls, or schools like Sandy Hook.

Citizenship demands a sense of common cause; participation in the hard work of self-government; an obligation to serve to our communities. And I know this chamber agrees that few Americans give more to their country than our diplomats and the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

Tonight, because of the extraordinary troops and civilians who risk and lay down their lives to keep us free, the United States is more secure. When I took office, nearly 180,000 Americans were serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, all our troops are out of Iraq. More than 60,000 of our troops have already come home from Afghanistan. With Afghan forces now in the lead for their own security, our troops have moved to a support role. Together with our allies, we will complete our mission there by the end of this year, and America's longest war will finally be over.

After 2014, we will support a unified Afghanistan as it takes responsibility

for its own future. If the Afghan government signs a security agreement that we have negotiated, a small force of Americans could remain in Afghanistan with NATO allies to carry out two narrow missions: training and assisting Afghan forces, and counterterrorism operations to pursue any remnants of al Qaeda. For while our relationship with Afghanistan will change, one thing will not: our resolve that terrorists do not launch attacks against our country.

The fact is, that danger remains. While we have put al Qaeda's core leadership on a path to defeat, the threat has evolved, as al Qaeda affiliates and other extremists take root in different parts of the world. In Yemen, Somalia, Iraq, and Mali, we have to keep working with partners to disrupt and disable these networks. In Syria, we'll support the opposition that rejects the agenda of terrorist networks. Here at home, we'll keep strengthening our defenses, and combat new threats like cyberattacks. And as we reform our defense budget, we have to keep faith with our men and women in uniform, and invest in the capabilities they need to succeed in future missions.

We have to remain vigilant. But I strongly believe our leadership and our security cannot depend on our military alone. As Commander in Chief, I have used force when needed to protect the American people, and I will never hesitate to do so as long as I hold this office. But I will not send our troops into harm's way unless it's truly necessary; nor will I allow our sons and daughters to be mired in open-ended conflicts. We must fight the battles that need to be fought, not those that terrorists prefer from us—large-scale deployments that drain our strength and may ultimately feed extremism.

So, even as we aggressively pursue terrorist networks—through more targeted efforts and by building the capacity of our foreign partners—America must move off a permanent war footing. That's why I've imposed prudent limits on the use of drones—for we will not be safer if people abroad believe we strike within their countries without regard for the consequence. That's why, working with this Congress, I will reform our surveillance programs—because the vital work of our intelligence community depends on public confidence, here and abroad, that the privacy of ordinary people is not being violated. And with the Afghan war ending, this needs to be the year Congress lifts the remaining restrictions on detainee transfers and we close the prison at Guantanamo Bay—because we counter terrorism not just through intelligence and military action, but by remaining true to our Constitutional ideals, and setting an example for the rest of the world.

You see, in a world of complex threats, our security and leadership depends on all elements of our power—including strong and principled diplomacy. American diplomacy has rallied more than 50 countries to prevent nuclear materials from falling into the wrong hands, and allowed us to reduce our own reliance on Cold War stockpiles. American diplomacy, backed by the threat of force, is why Syria's chemical weapons are being eliminated, and we will continue to work with the international community to usher in the future the Syrian people deserve—a future free of dictatorship, terror and fear. As we speak, American diplomacy is supporting Israelis and Palestinians as they engage in difficult but necessary talks to end the conflict there; to achieve dignity and an independent state for Palestinians, and lasting peace and security for the State of Israel—a Jewish state that knows America will always be at their side.

And it is American diplomacy, backed by pressure, that has halted the progress of Iran's nuclear program—and rolled parts of that program back—for the very first time in a decade. As we gather here tonight, Iran has begun to eliminate its stockpile of higher levels of enriched uranium. It is not installing advanced centrifuges. Unprecedented inspections help the world verify, every day, that Iran is not building a bomb. And with our allies and partners, we're engaged in negotiations to see if we can peacefully achieve a goal we all share: preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

These negotiations will be difficult. They may not succeed. We are clear-eyed about Iran's support for terrorist organizations like Hezbollah, which threaten our allies; and the mistrust between our nations cannot be wished away. But these negotiations do not rely on trust; any long-term deal we agree to must be based on verifiable action that convinces us and the international community that Iran is not building a nuclear bomb. It John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan could negotiate with the Soviet Union, then surely a strong and confident America can negotiate with less powerful adversaries today.

The sanctions that we put in place helped make this opportunity possible. But let me be clear: if this Congress sends me a new sanctions bill now that threatens to derail these talks, I will veto it. For the sake of our national security, we must give diplomacy a chance to succeed. If Iran's leaders do not seize this opportunity, then I will be the first to call for more sanctions, and stand ready to exercise all options to make sure Iran does not build a nuclear weapon. But if Iran's leaders do seize the chance, then Iran could take an important step to rejoin the community of nations, and we will have resolved one of the leading security challenges of our time without the risks of war.

Finally, let's remember that our leadership is defined not just by our defense against threats, but by the enormous opportunities to do good and promote understanding around the globe—to forge greater cooperation, to expand new markets, to free people from fear and want. And no one is better positioned to take advantage of those opportunities than America.

Our alliance with Europe remains the strongest the world has ever known. From Tunisia to Burma, we're supporting those who are willing to do the hard work of building democracy. In Ukraine, we stand for the principle that all people have the right to express themselves freely and peacefully, and have a say in their country's future. Across Africa, we're bringing together businesses and governments to double access to electricity and help end extreme poverty. In the Americas, we are building new ties of commerce, but we're also expanding cultural and educational exchanges among young people. And we will continue to focus on the Asia-Pacific, where we support our allies, shape a future of greater security and prosperity, and extend a hand to those devastated by disaster—as we did in the Philippines, when our Marines and civilians rushed to aid those battered by a typhoon, and were greeted with words like, ''We will never forget your kindness'' and ''God bless America!''

We do these things because they help promote our long-term security. And we do them because we believe in the inherent dignity and equality of every human being, regardless of race or religion, creed or sexual orientation. And next week, the world will see one expression of that commitment—when Team USA marches the red, white, and blue into the Olympic Stadium—and brings home the gold.

My fellow Americans, no other country in the world does what we do. On every issue, the world turns to us, not simply because of the size of our economy or our military might—but because of the ideals we stand for, and the burdens we bear to advance them.

No one knows this better than those who serve in uniform. As this time of war draws to a close, a new generation of heroes returns to civilian life. We'll keep slashing that backlog so our veterans receive the benefits they've earned, and our wounded warriors receive the health care—including the mental health care—that they need. We'll keep working to help all our veterans translate their skills and leadership into jobs here at home. And we all continue to join forces to honor and support our remarkable military families.

Let me tell you about one of those families I've come to know.

I first met Cory Remsburg, a proud Army Ranger, at Omaha Beach on the 65th anniversary of D-Day. Along with some of his fellow Rangers, he walked me through the program—a strong, impressive young man, with an easy manner, sharp as a tack. We joked around, and took pictures, and T. told him to stay in touch.

A few months later, on his tenth deployment, Cory was nearly killed by a massive roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

His comrades found him in a canal, face down, underwater, shrapnel in his brain.

For months, he lay in a coma. The next time I met him, in the hospital, he couldn't speak; he could barely move. Over the years, he's endured dozens of surgeries and procedures, and hours of grueling rehab every day.

Even now, Cory is still blind in one eye. He still struggles on his left side. But slowly, steadily, with the support of caregivers like his dad Craig, and the community around him, Cory has grown stronger. Day by day, he's learned to speak again and stand again and walk again—and he's working toward the day when he can serve his country again.

''My recovery has not been easy,'' he says. ''Nothing in life that's worth anything is easy.''

Cory is here tonight. And like the Army he loves, like the America he serves, Sergeant First Class Cory Remsburg never gives up, and he does not quit.

My fellow Americans, men and women like Cory remind us that America has never come easy. Our freedom, our democracy, has never been easy. Sometimes we stumble; we make mistakes; we get frustrated or discouraged. But for more than 200 years, we have put those things aside and placed our collective shoulder to the wheel of progress—to create and build and expand the possibilities of individual achievement; to free other nations from tyranny and fear; to promote justice, and fairness, and equality under the law, so that the words set to paper by our founders are made real for every citizen. The America we want for our kids—a rising America where honest work is plentiful and communities are strong; where prosperity is widely shared and opportunity for all lets us go as far as our dreams and toil will take us—none of it is easy. But if we work together; if we summon what is best in us, with our feet planted firmly in today but our eyes cast towards tomorrow—I know it's within our reach.

Believe it.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *January 28, 2014*.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:08 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1684. An act to convey certain property to the State of Wyoming to consolidate the historic Ranch A, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2166. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture to expedite access to certain Federal lands under the administrative jurisdiction of each Secretary for good Samaritan search-and-recovery missions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3008. An act to provide for the conveyance of a small parcel of National Forest System land in Los Padres National Forest in California, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 1684. An act to convey certain property to the State of Wyoming to consolidate the historic Ranch A, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 2166. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture to expedite access to certain Federal lands under the administrative jurisdiction of each Secretary for good Samaritan search-and-recovery missions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 3008. An act to provide for the conveyance of a small parcel of National Forest System land in Los Padres National Forest in California, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 1963. A bill to repeal section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

EC–4441. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, an interim response to the Conference Report 112–705 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2013, Section 737; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4442. A communication from the President of the United States of America, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the continuation of the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 12947 with respect to terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4443. A communication from the Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Registration of Municipal Advisors'' (RIN3235–AK86) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4444. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Flood Elevation Determinations'' ((44 CFR Part 67) (Docket No. FEMA–2013–0002)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4445. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Executive Compensation'' (RIN2590–AA12) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4446. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Golden Parachute Payments'' (RIN2590–AA08) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4447. A communication from the Director of Human Resources, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, three (3) reports relative to vacancies in the Environmental Protection Agency, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4448. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Species; Designation of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Central Valley Spring-Run Chinook Salmon Below Friant Dam in the San Joaquin River, CA'' (RIN0648–BC68) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4449. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Bond Premium Carryforward'' ((RIN1545–BL28) (TD 9653)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4450. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Sales-Based Royalties and Vendor Allowances'' ((RIN1545–BI57) (TD 9652)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4451. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Computation of, and Rules Relating to, Medical Loss Ratio'' ((RIN1545–BL05) (TD 9651)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4452. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2014 Prevailing State Assumed Interest Rates'' (Rev. Rul. 2014–4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4453. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Exclusion from Income of Payments to Care Providers from Medicaid Waiver Programs'' (Notice 2014–7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4454. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Current Refundings of Recovery Zone Facility Bonds'' (Notice 2014–9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4455. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-

Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification, of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country regarding any possible affects such a sale might have relating to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge over military threats to Israel (OSS–2014–0042); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4456. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to groups designated by the Secretary of State as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (OSS 2014–0043); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4457. A communication from the Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency's response to the GAO report entitled ''Central America: U.S. Agencies Considered Various Factors in Funding Security Activities, but Need to Assess Progress in Achieving Interagency Objectives''; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4458. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 13–155); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4459. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, twenty-nine (29) reports relative to vacancies in the Department of State, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4460. A communication from the Chairman of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to Congress on the Current Disposition of Highly Enriched Uranium Exports Used as Fuel or Targets in Nuclear Research or Test Reactors''; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4461. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2014–0001—2014–0010); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4462. A communication from the Executive Analyst, Office of the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, four (4) reports relative to vacancies in the Department of Health and Human Services; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4463. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medical Devices; Pediatric Uses of Devices; Requirement for Submission of Information on Pediatric Subpopulations That Suffer From a Disease or Condition That a Device Is Intended To Treat, Diagnose, or Cure'' ((RIN0910–AG29) (Docket No. FDA–2009–N–0458)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 17, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4464. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Payment of Premiums; Large-Plan Flat-Rate Premium'' (RIN1212–AB26) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 611. A bill to make a technical amendment to the T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area Act, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–136).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. LEVIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

*Brad R. Carson, of Oklahoma, to be Under Secretary of the Army.

*William A. LaPlante, Jr., of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force.

*Madelyn R. Creedon, of Indiana, to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration.

Air Force nomination of Col. Donald R. Lindberg, to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nomination of Brig. Gen. William D. Cobetto, to be Major General.

Air Force nomination of Brig. Gen. Bart O. Iddins, to be Major General.

Air Force nominations beginning with Colonel Roy-Alan C. Agustin and ending with Colonel Stephen C. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 7, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Colonel Dennis J. Gallegos and ending with Colonel John S. Tuohy, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Colonel Paul D. Jacobs and ending with Colonel Andrew E. Salas, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Brigadier General Jon K. Kelk and ending with Brigadier General Kenneth W. Wisian, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Brigadier General Daryl L. Bohac and ending with Brigadier General Robert S. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Brigadier General Christopher J. Bence and ending with Brigadier General Mark W. Westergren, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nomination of Col. Paul W. Tibbets IV, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Lt. Gen. David D. Halverson, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Col. Stuart W. Risch, to be Brigadier General, Judge Advocate General's Corps.

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

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

Air Force nomination of Teresa G. Paris, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Joel K. Warren, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jeffrey P. Tan and ending with Cristalle A. Cox, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 7, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Robert D. Coxwell and ending with Scot L. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 7, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Therese A. Bohusch and ending with James A. Stephenson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Richard T. Barker and ending with Ian P. Wiechert, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jenara L. Allen and ending with Derrick A. Zech, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Erin E. Artz and ending with Todd K. Zuber, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Air Force nominations beginning with Adam L. Ackerman and ending with Kristen P. Zeligs, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Army nomination of David W. Bryant, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Joseph B. Berger III and ending with William D. Smoot III, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 7, 2014.

Army nominations beginning with Joseph A. Anderson and ending with D011695, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Army nominations beginning with Victor M. Anda and ending with Joshua A. Worley, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Army nominations beginning with Tracy K. Abenoja and ending with Daniel J. Yourk, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Army nominations beginning with Harris A. Abbasi and ending with David M. Zupancic, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 9, 2014.

Army nominations beginning with Stephen E. Forsyth, Jr. and ending with Eric J. Frye, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 16, 2014.

*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. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 1965. A bill 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; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BARRASSO:

S. 1966. A bill to provide for the restoration of the economic and ecological health of National Forest System land and rural communities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BARRASSO:

S. 1967. A bill to provide for the management of certain inventoried roadless areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. COATS, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. VITTER):

S. 1968. A bill to allow States to let Federal funds for the education of disadvantaged children follow low-income children to the accredited or otherwise State-approved public school, private school, or supplemental educational services program they attend; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. Res. 340. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that all necessary measures should be taken to protect children in the United States from human trafficking, especially during the upcoming Super Bowl, an event around which many children are trafficked for sex; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 162

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 162, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act of 2004.

S. 655

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 655, a bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to authorize the Secretary of Labor to provide grants for Urban Jobs Programs, and for other purposes.

S. 738

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 738, a bill to grant the Secretary of the Interior permanent authority to authorize States to issue electronic duck stamps, and for other purposes.

S. 913

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 913, a bill to amend the National Oilheat Research Alliance Act of 2000 to reauthorize and improve that Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1012

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1012, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve operations of recovery auditors under the Medicare integrity program, to increase transparency and accuracy in audits conducted by contractors, and for other purposes.

S. 1022

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1022, a bill to amend title 46, United States Code, to extend the exemption from the fire-retardant materials construction requirement for vessels operating within the Boundary Line.

S. 1137

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1137, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to modernize payments for ambulatory surgical centers under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 1174

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) 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. 1186

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1186, a bill to reauthorize the Essex National Heritage Area.

S. 1406

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1406, a bill to amend the Horse Protection Act to designate additional unlawful acts under the Act, strengthen penalties for violations of the Act, improve Department of Agriculture enforcement of the Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1456

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1456, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Shimon Peres.

S. 1507

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1507, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the treatment of general welfare benefits provided by Indian tribes.

S. 1658

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1658, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent certain small business tax provisions, and for other purposes.

S. 1697

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1697, a bill to support early learning.

S. 1704

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1704, a bill to expand the use of open textbooks in order to achieve savings for students.

S. 1862

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) 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. 1896

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1896, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the new markets tax credit and provide designated allocations for areas impacted by a decline in manufacturing.

S. 1902

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1902, a bill to require notification of individuals of breaches of personally identifiable information through Exchanges under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 1923

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) 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. 1926

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) were added as cosponsors of S. 1926, a bill to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes.

S. 1950

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. 1950, a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 1956

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1956, a bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to review the discharge characterization of former members of the Armed Forces who were discharged by reason of the sexual orientation of the member, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 26

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 26, a concurrent resolution recognizing the need to improve physical access to many federally funded facilities for all people of the United States, particularly people with disabilities.

S. RES. 333

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 333, a resolution strongly recommending that the United States renegotiate the return of the Iraqi Jewish Archive to Iraq.

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 333, supra.

S. RES. 339

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 339, a resolution commemorating the 150th anniversary of Mayo Clinic.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 340—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT ALL NECESSARY MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES FROM HUMAN TRAFFICKING, ESPECIALLY DURING THE UPCOMING SUPER BOWL, AN EVENT AROUND WHICH MANY CHILDREN ARE TRAFFICKED FOR SEX

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 340

Whereas according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 children in the United States are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation;

Whereas the average age of victims at the time of their entry into sex trafficking is between just 12 and 14 years old;

Whereas sex trafficking victims are often abducted or lured into running away by traffickers;

Whereas sex trafficking victims are routinely raped and beaten, and sometimes even branded;

Whereas the vast majority of child victims of sex trafficking are children from the foster care system, where they have often been failed by the officials entrusted to protect them;

Whereas instances of sex trafficking occur in every state, and tens of thousands of men, women, and children are brought to the United States every year and exploited for sex and labor by traffickers;

Whereas it is widely recognized that the beloved American tradition of the Super Bowl, an event that draws tens of thousands of fans to the host city, like other major recreational events, leads to a surge in the sex trafficking of underage girls and boys in the host city; and

Whereas traffickers aggressively advertise and sell sex trafficking victims on websites like Backpage.com during the Super Bowl in order to meet the increased demand from visitors to the host city: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) law enforcement officers, the juvenile justice system, social services, and the public should recognize and treat all children being trafficked for sex as victims of human trafficking each and every day of the year; and

(2) Federal and State law enforcement agencies should take all necessary measures to protect children in the United States from harm, including arresting and prosecuting both traffickers and buyers of children for sex in accordance with the applicable State and Federal laws against child abuse, statutory rape, and human trafficking, particularly during the festivities surrounding Super Bowl XLVIII.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2692. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2693. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2694. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2695. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2696. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2697. Mr. COBURN (for himself and Mr. McCAIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2698. Mr. BLUNT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2699. Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. WICKER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2700. Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2701. Mr. REID (for Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. HATCH)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1302, to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans.

SA 2702. Mrs. HAGAN (for herself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2703. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2704. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2705. Mr. KING (for himself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2706. Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2707. Mr. TOOMEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2708. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2709. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2692. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 9, line 8, strike ''18 months'' and insert ''3 months''.

SA 2693. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, insert the following:

SEC. 110. PREDISASTER HAZARD MITIGATION FUNDING.

Section 203(g) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5133(g)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (9), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (10) as paragraph (11); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (9) the following:

''(10) the number of properties in the State or in a community located in an area represented by the local government with a risk premium rate for flood insurance coverage provided under the National Flood Insurance Program (as established under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.)) of not less than $10,000 per year; and''.

SA 2694. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 5, line 3, after the period insert the following: ''The prohibition established under this paragraph shall not apply to any residential property which is not the primary residence of an individual or any business property.''.

SA 2695. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 6, between lines 4 and 5, insert the following:

(4) ELIMINATION OF OUTSTANDING SUBSIDIES FOR PRE-FIRM PROPERTIES.—

(A) ELIMINATION OF SUBSIDY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, upon the expiration of the period set forth under paragraph (3), the Administrator may not estimate any risk premium rate for flood insurance for any property subject to paragraph (2) of section 1307(a) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4014(a)(2)) and not otherwise described in subparagraphs (A) through (E) of such paragraph, if such rate is less than that estimated under paragraph (1) of such section 1307(a).

(B) PHASE-IN OF CHARGEABLE RISK PREMIUM RATE.—Upon the expiration of the period set forth under paragraph (3), the chargeable risk premium rate for flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 for any property described under subparagraph (A) shall be increased by 20 percent each year, until the risk premium rate for such property is equal to the full actuarial risk premium rate for that property.

SA 2696. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTION ALLOWED WITH RESPECT TO BOATS ONLY IF BOAT IS USED AS THE PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE OF THE TAXPAYER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subclause (II) of section 163(h)(4)(A)(i) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting ''(other than a boat)'' after ''1 other residence of the taxpayer''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to indebtedness incurred after the date that is 3 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) SPECIAL RULE FOR REFINANCINGS.—For purposes of this subsection, indebtedness resulting from the refinancing of indebtedness shall be treated as incurred on the date the refinanced indebtedness was incurred (taking into account the application of this paragraph in the case of multiple refinancings) but only to the extent the indebtedness resulting from such refinancing does not exceed the refinanced indebtedness.

SA 2697. Mr. COBURN (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of section 330 of subtitle C of title III of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, as added by section 202(a), insert the following:

''(c) STATE OPT-OUT-RIGHTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Any State, as described in section 333(9)(A), may elect not to participate in the Association, and insurance producers doing business in that State shall be subject to all otherwise applicable insurance-related laws, rules, and regulations of that State.

''(2) PROCEDURE.—A State, as described in section 333(9)(A), that elects not to participate in the Association under paragraph (1) shall do so by enacting legislation indicating such election.

''(3) EFFECTIVE DATE OF OPT-OUT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the effective date of an election by a State, as described in section 333(9)(A), not to participate in the Association under paragraph (1) is 2 years after the date on which the State enacts legislation under paragraph (2).

''(B) IMMEDIATELY EFFECTIVE OPT-OUT.—An election by a State, as described in section 333(9)(A), not to participate in the Association under paragraph (1) shall take effect upon the enactment of legislation under paragraph (2) if such legislation is enacted not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

''(4) EXCLUSION OF INSURANCE PRODUCERS.—No insurance producer, the home State, as described in section 333(9)(A), of which has made an election not to participate in the Association under paragraph (1), may become a member of the Association.

''(5) NOTIFICATION OF OPT-OUT.—A State, as described in section 333(9)(A), that elects not to participate in the Association under paragraph (1) shall notify the Board and the primary insurance regulatory authority of each State of such election.

''(6) CHANGE IN ELECTION.—

''(A) OPT-IN.—A State, as described in section 333(9)(A), that has elected not to participate in the Association under paragraph (1) may elect to participate in the Association by enacting legislation indicating such election.

''(B) EFFECTIVE DATE OF OPT-IN.—An election by a State, as described in section 333(9)(A), to participate in the Association under subparagraph (A) shall take effect upon the enactment of the legislation indicating such election.

''(C) NOTIFICATION OF OPT-IN.—A State, as described in section 333(9)(A), that has elected to participate in the Association under subparagraph (A) shall notify the Board and the primary insurance regulatory authority of each State of such election.

In section 334 of subtitle C of title III of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, as added by section 202(a), strike paragraph (9) and insert the following:

''(9) STATE.—The term 'State'—

''(A) means any State, the District of Columbia, any territory of the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands; and

''(B) does not include any State (as described in subparagraph (A)) that has made an election not to participate in the Association under section 330(c)(1).

SA 2698. Mr. BLUNT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1___. HOME IMPROVEMENT FAIRNESS.

Section 1307(a)(2)(E)(ii) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4014(a)(2)(E)(ii)) is amended by striking ''30 percent'' and inserting ''50 percent''.

SA 2699. Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. WICKER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. REPEAL OF REDUCTIONS MADE BY BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013.

(a) REPEALS.—

(1) ADJUSTMENT OF RETIREMENT PAY.—Section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 is repealed as of the date of the enactment of such Act.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Title X of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2014 (division C of Public Law 113–76) is hereby repealed.

(b) SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER REQUIRED TO CLAIM THE REFUNDABLE PORTION OF THE CHILD TAX CREDIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (e) of section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(e) IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT WITH RESPECT TO QUALIFYING CHILDREN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), no credit shall be allowed under this section to a taxpayer with respect to any qualifying child unless the taxpayer includes the name and taxpayer identification number of such qualifying child on the return of tax for the taxable year.

''(2) REFUNDABLE PORTION.—Subsection (d)(1) shall not apply to any taxpayer with respect to any qualifying child unless the taxpayer includes the name and social security number of such qualifying child on the return of tax for the taxable year.''.

(2) OMISSION TREATED AS MATHEMATICAL OR CLERICAL ERROR.—Subparagraph (I) of section 6213(g)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(I) an omission of a correct TIN under section 24(e)(1) (relating to child tax credit) or a correct Social Security number required under section 24(e)(2) (relating to refundable portion of child tax credit), to be included on a return,''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2700. Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1___. AUTHORITY OF STATES TO REGULATE PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE.

Section 102(b)(7) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(b)(7)) is amended to read as follows:

''(7) PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'private flood insurance' means an insurance policy that—

''(A) provides flood insurance coverage;

''(B) is issued by an insurance company that is—

''(i) licensed, admitted, or otherwise approved to engage in the business of insurance in the State or jurisdiction in which the insured building is located, by the insurance regulator of that State or jurisdiction; or

''(ii) eligible as a nonadmitted insurer to provide insurance in the State or jurisdiction where the property to be insured is located, in accordance with section 524 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (15 U.S.C. 8204); and

''(C) is issued by an insurance company that is not otherwise disapproved as a surplus lines insurer by the insurance regulator of the State or jurisdiction where the property to be insured is located.''.

SA 2701. Mr. REID (for Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. HATCH)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1302, to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans; as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Cooperative and Small Employer Charity Pension Flexibility Act''.

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

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS OF POLICY.

Congress finds as follows:

(1) Defined benefit pension plans are a cost-effective way for cooperative associations and charities to provide their employees with economic security in retirement.

(2) Many cooperative associations and charitable organizations are only able to provide their employees with defined benefit pension plans because those organizations are able to pool their resources using the multiple employer plan structure.

(3) The pension funding rules should encourage cooperative associations and charities to continue to provide their employees with pension benefits.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

Unless otherwise specified in this Act, the provisions of this Act shall apply to years beginning after December 31, 2013.

TITLE I—AMENDMENTS TO EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY ACT OF 1974 AND OTHER PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. DEFINITION OF COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION PLANS.

Section 210 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1060) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f) COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION PLANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this title, except as provided in this subsection, a CSEC plan is an employee pension benefit plan (other than a multiemployer plan) that is a defined benefit plan—

''(A) to which section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 applies, without regard to—

''(i) section 104(a)(2) of such Act;

''(ii) the amendments to such section 104 by section 202(b) of the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act of 2010; and

''(iii) paragraph (3)(B); or

''(B) that, as of June 25, 2010, was maintained by more than one employer and all of the employers were organizations described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(2) AGGREGATION.—All employers that are treated as a single employer under subsection (b) or (c) of section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be treated as a single employer for purposes of determining if a plan was maintained by more than one employer under paragraph (1)(B).''.

SEC. 102. FUNDING RULES APPLICABLE TO COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION PLANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part 3 of title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1081 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 306. MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARDS.

''(a) GENERAL RULE.—For purposes of section 302, the term 'accumulated funding deficiency' for a CSEC plan means the excess of the total charges to the funding standard account for all plan years (beginning with the first plan year to which section 302 applies) over the total credits to such account for such years or, if less, the excess of the total charges to the alternative minimum funding standard account for such plan years over the total credits to such account for such years.

''(b) FUNDING STANDARD ACCOUNT.—

''(1) ACCOUNT REQUIRED.—Each plan to which this section applies shall establish and maintain a funding standard account. Such account shall be credited and charged solely as provided in this section.

''(2) CHARGES TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year, the funding standard account shall be charged with the sum of—

''(A) the normal cost of the plan for the plan year,

''(B) the amounts necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized)—

''(i) in the case of a plan in existence on January 1, 1974, the unfunded past service liability under the plan on the first day of the first plan year to which section 302 applies, over a period of 40 plan years,

''(ii) in the case of a plan which comes into existence after January 1, 1974, but before the first day of the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, the unfunded past service liability under the plan on the first day of the first plan year to which section 302 applies, over a period of 30 plan years,

''(iii) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net increase (if any) in unfunded past service liability under the plan arising from plan amendments adopted in such year, over a period of 15 plan years,

''(iv) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net experience loss (if any) under the plan, over a period of 5 plan years, and

''(v) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net loss (if any) resulting from changes in actuarial assumptions used under the plan, over a period of 10 plan years,

''(C) the amount necessary to amortize each waived funding deficiency (within the meaning of section 302(c)(3)) for each prior plan year in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 5 plan years,

''(D) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 5 plan years any amount credited to the funding standard account under paragraph (3)(D), and

''(E) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 20 years the contributions which would be required to be made under the plan but for the provisions of section 302(c)(7)(A)(i)(I) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006).

''(3) CREDITS TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year, the funding standard account shall be credited with the sum of—

''(A) the amount considered contributed by the employer to or under the plan for the plan year,

''(B) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized)—

''(i) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net decrease (if any) in unfunded past service liability under the plan arising from plan amendments adopted in such year, over a period of 15 plan years,

''(ii) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net experience gain (if any) under the plan, over a period of 5 plan years, and

''(iii) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net gain (if any) resulting from changes in actuarial assumptions used under the plan, over a period of 10 plan years,

''(C) the amount of the waived funding deficiency (within the meaning of section 302(c)(3)) for the plan year, and

''(D) in the case of a plan year for which the accumulated funding deficiency is determined under the funding standard account if such plan year follows a plan year for which such deficiency was determined under the alternative minimum funding standard, the excess (if any) of any debit balance in the funding standard account (determined without regard to this subparagraph) over any debit balance in the alternative minimum funding standard account.

''(4) COMBINING AND OFFSETTING AMOUNTS TO BE AMORTIZED.—Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury, amounts required to be amortized under paragraph (2) or paragraph (3), as the case may be—

''(A) may be combined into one amount under such paragraph to be amortized over a period determined on the basis of the remaining amortization period for all items entering into such combined amount, and

''(B) may be offset against amounts required to be amortized under the other such paragraph, with the resulting amount to be amortized over a period determined on the basis of the remaining amortization periods for all items entering into whichever of the two amounts being offset is the greater.

''(5) INTEREST.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the funding standard account (and items therein) shall be charged or credited (as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury) with interest at the appropriate rate consistent with the rate or rates of interest used under the plan to determine costs.

''(B) EXCEPTION.—The interest rate used for purposes of computing the amortization charge described in subsection (b)(2)(C) or for purposes of any arrangement under subsection (d) for any plan year shall be the greater of—

''(i) 150 percent of the Federal mid-term rate (as in effect under section 1274 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for the 1st month of such plan year), or

''(ii) the rate of interest determined under subparagraph (A).

''(6) AMORTIZATION SCHEDULES IN EFFECT.—Amortization schedules for amounts described in paragraphs (2) and (3) that are in effect as of the last day of the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, by reason of section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 shall remain in effect pursuant to their terms and this section, except that such amounts shall not be amortized again under this section.

''(c) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(1) DETERMINATIONS TO BE MADE UNDER FUNDING METHOD.—For purposes of this section, normal costs, accrued liability, past service liabilities, and experience gains and losses shall be determined under the funding method used to determine costs under the plan.

''(2) VALUATION OF ASSETS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, the value of the plan's assets shall be determined on the basis of any reasonable actuarial method of valuation which takes into account fair market value and which is permitted under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(B) DEDICATED BOND PORTFOLIO.—The Secretary of the Treasury may by regulations provide that the value of any dedicated bond portfolio of a plan shall be determined by using the interest rate under section 302(b)(5) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006).

''(3) ACTUARIAL ASSUMPTIONS MUST BE REASONABLE.—For purposes of this section, all costs, liabilities, rates of interest, and other factors under the plan shall be determined on the basis of actuarial assumptions and methods—

''(A) each of which is reasonable (taking into account the experience of the plan and reasonable expectations), and

''(B) which, in combination, offer the actuary's best estimate of anticipated experience under the plan.

''(4) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN CHANGES AS EXPERIENCE GAIN OR LOSS.—For purposes of this section, if—

''(A) a change in benefits under the Social Security Act or in other retirement benefits created under Federal or State law, or

''(B) a change in the definition of the term 'wages' under section 3121 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or a change in the amount of such wages taken into account under regulations prescribed for purposes of section 401(a)(5) of such Code,

results in an increase or decrease in accrued liability under a plan, such increase or decrease shall be treated as an experience loss or gain.

''(5) FUNDING METHOD AND PLAN YEAR.—

''(A) FUNDING METHODS AVAILABLE.—All funding methods available to CSEC plans under section 302 (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006) shall continue to be available under this section.

''(B) CHANGES.—If the funding method for a plan is changed, the new funding method shall become the funding method used to determine costs and liabilities under the plan only if the change is approved by the Secretary of the Treasury. If the plan year for a plan is changed, the new plan year shall become the plan year for the plan only if the change is approved by the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(C) APPROVAL REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS BY CERTAIN SINGLE-EMPLOYER PLANS SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIREMENT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—No actuarial assumption (other than the assumptions described in subsection (h)(3)) used to determine the current liability for a plan to which this subparagraph applies may be changed without the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(ii) PLANS TO WHICH SUBPARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This subparagraph shall apply to a plan only if—

''(I) the plan is a CSEC plan,

''(II) the aggregate unfunded vested benefits as of the close of the preceding plan year (as determined under section 4006(a)(3)(E)(iii)) of such plan and all other plans maintained by the contributing sponsors (as defined in section 4001(a)(13)) and members of such sponsors' controlled groups (as defined in section 4001(a)(14)) which are covered by title IV (disregarding plans with no unfunded vested benefits) exceed $50,000,000, and

''(III) the change in assumptions (determined after taking into account any changes in interest rate and mortality table) results in a decrease in the funding shortfall of the plan for the current plan year that exceeds $50,000,000, or that exceeds $5,000,000 and that is 5 percent or more of the current liability of the plan before such change.

''(6) FULL FUNDING.—If, as of the close of a plan year, a plan would (without regard to this paragraph) have an accumulated funding deficiency (determined without regard to the alternative minimum funding standard account permitted under subsection (e)) in excess of the full funding limitation—

''(A) the funding standard account shall be credited with the amount of such excess, and

''(B) all amounts described in paragraphs (2)(B), (C), and (D) and (3)(B) of subsection (b) which are required to be amortized shall be considered fully amortized for purposes of such paragraphs.

''(7) FULL-FUNDING LIMITATION.—For purposes of paragraph (6), the term 'full-funding limitation' means the excess (if any) of—

''(A) the accrued liability (including normal cost) under the plan (determined under the entry age normal funding method if such accrued liability cannot be directly calculated under the funding method used for the plan), over

''(B) the lesser of—

''(i) the fair market value of the plan's assets, or

''(ii) the value of such assets determined under paragraph (2).

''(C) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In no event shall the full-funding limitation determined under subparagraph (A) be less than the excess (if any) of—

''(I) 90 percent of the current liability (determined without regard to paragraph (4) of subsection (h)) of the plan (including the expected increase in such current liability due to benefits accruing during the plan year), over

''(II) the value of the plan's assets determined under paragraph (2).

''(ii) ASSETS.—For purposes of clause (i), assets shall not be reduced by any credit balance in the funding standard account.

''(8) ANNUAL VALUATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, a determination of experience gains and losses and a valuation of the plan's liability shall be made not less frequently than once every year, except that such determination shall be made more frequently to the extent required in particular cases under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(B) VALUATION DATE.—

''(i) CURRENT YEAR.—Except as provided in clause (ii), the valuation referred to in subparagraph (A) shall be made as of a date within the plan year to which the valuation refers or within one month prior to the beginning of such year.

''(ii) USE OF PRIOR YEAR VALUATION.—The valuation referred to in subparagraph (A) may be made as of a date within the plan year prior to the year to which the valuation refers if, as of such date, the value of the assets of the plan are not less than 100 percent of the plan's current liability.

''(iii) ADJUSTMENTS.—Information under clause (ii) shall, in accordance with regulations, be actuarially adjusted to reflect significant differences in participants.

''(iv) LIMITATION.—A change in funding method to use a prior year valuation, as provided in clause (ii), may not be made unless as of the valuation date within the prior plan year, the value of the assets of the plan are not less than 125 percent of the plan's current liability.

''(9) TIME WHEN CERTAIN CONTRIBUTIONS DEEMED MADE.—For purposes of this section, any contributions for a plan year made by an employer during the period—

''(A) beginning on the day after the last day of such plan year, and

''(B) ending on the day which is 8½ months after the close of the plan year,

shall be deemed to have been made on such last day.

''(10) ANTICIPATION OF BENEFIT INCREASES EFFECTIVE IN THE FUTURE.—In determining projected benefits, the funding method of a collectively bargained CSEC plan described in section 413(a) of the Internal Revenue

Code of 1986 shall anticipate benefit increases scheduled to take effect during the term of the collective bargaining agreement applicable to the plan.

''(d) EXTENSION OF AMORTIZATION PERIODS.—The period of years required to amortize any unfunded liability (described in any clause of subsection (b)(2)(B)) of any plan may be extended by the Secretary of the Treasury for a period of time (not in excess of 10 years) if such Secretary determines that such extension would carry out the purposes of this Act and provide adequate protection for participants under the plan and their beneficiaries, and if such Secretary determines that the failure to permit such extension would result in—

''(1) a substantial risk to the voluntary continuation of the plan, or

''(2) a substantial curtailment of pension benefit levels or employee compensation.

''(e) ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARD.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A CSEC plan which uses a funding method that requires contributions in all years not less than those required under the entry age normal funding method may maintain an alternative minimum funding standard account for any plan year. Such account shall be credited and charged solely as provided in this subsection.

''(2) CHARGES AND CREDITS TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year the alternative minimum funding standard account shall be—

''(A) charged with the sum of—

''(i) the lesser of normal cost under the funding method used under the plan or normal cost determined under the unit credit method,

''(ii) the excess, if any, of the present value of accrued benefits under the plan over the fair market value of the assets, and

''(iii) an amount equal to the excess (if any) of credits to the alternative minimum standard account for all prior plan years over charges to such account for all such years, and

''(B) credited with the amount considered contributed by the employer to or under the plan for the plan year.

''(3) INTEREST.—The alternative minimum funding standard account (and items therein) shall be charged or credited with interest in the manner provided under subsection (b)(5) with respect to the funding standard account.

''(f) QUARTERLY CONTRIBUTIONS REQUIRED.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If a CSEC plan which has a funded current liability percentage for the preceding plan year of less than 100 percent fails to pay the full amount of a required installment for the plan year, then the rate of interest charged to the funding standard account under subsection (b)(5) with respect to the amount of the underpayment for the period of the underpayment shall be equal to the greater of—

''(A) 175 percent of the Federal mid-term rate (as in effect under section 1274 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for the 1st month of such plan year), or

''(B) the rate of interest used under the plan in determining costs.

''(2) AMOUNT OF UNDERPAYMENT, PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—For purposes of paragraph (1)—

''(A) AMOUNT.—The amount of the underpayment shall be the excess of—

''(i) the required installment, over

''(ii) the amount (if any) of the installment contributed to or under the plan on or before the due date for the installment.

''(B) PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—The period for which interest is charged under this subsection with regard to any portion of the underpayment shall run from the due date for the installment to the date on which such portion is contributed to or under the plan (determined without regard to subsection (c)(9)).

''(C) ORDER OF CREDITING CONTRIBUTIONS.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(ii), contributions shall be credited against unpaid required installments in the order in which such installments are required to be paid.

''(3) NUMBER OF REQUIRED INSTALLMENTS; DUE DATES.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) PAYABLE IN 4 INSTALLMENTS.—There shall be 4 required installments for each plan year.

''(B) TIME FOR PAYMENT OF INSTALLMENTS.—

"In the case of the following required installments:	The due date is:
1st	April 15
2nd	July 15
3rd	October 15
4th	January 15 of the following year.

''(4) AMOUNT OF REQUIRED INSTALLMENT.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The amount of any required installment shall be 25 percent of the required annual payment.

''(B) REQUIRED ANNUAL PAYMENT.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'required annual payment' means the lesser of—

''(i) 90 percent of the amount required to be contributed to or under the plan by the employer for the plan year under section 302 (without regard to any waiver under subsection (c) thereof), or

''(ii) 100 percent of the amount so required for the preceding plan year.

Clause (ii) shall not apply if the preceding plan year was not a year of 12 months.

''(5) LIQUIDITY REQUIREMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A plan to which this paragraph applies shall be treated as failing to pay the full amount of any required installment to the extent that the value of the liquid assets paid in such installment is less than the liquidity shortfall (whether or not such liquidity shortfall exceeds the amount of such installment required to be paid but for this paragraph).

''(B) PLANS TO WHICH PARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This paragraph shall apply to a CSEC plan other than a plan described in section 302(d)(6)(A) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006) which—

''(i) is required to pay installments under this subsection for a plan year, and

''(ii) has a liquidity shortfall for any quarter during such plan year.

''(C) PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—For purposes of paragraph (1), any portion of an installment that is treated as not paid under subparagraph (A) shall continue to be treated as unpaid until the close of the quarter in which the due date for such installment occurs.

''(D) LIMITATION ON INCREASE.—If the amount of any required installment is increased by reason of subparagraph (A), in no event shall such increase exceed the amount which, when added to prior installments for the plan year, is necessary to increase the funded current liability percentage (taking into account the expected increase in current liability due to benefits accruing during the plan year) to 100 percent.

''(E) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this paragraph—

''(i) LIQUIDITY SHORTFALL.—The term 'liquidity shortfall' means, with respect to any required installment, an amount equal to the excess (as of the last day of the quarter for which such installment is made) of the base amount with respect to such quarter over the value (as of such last day) of the plan's liquid assets.

''(ii) BASE AMOUNT.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—The term 'base amount' means, with respect to any quarter, an amount equal to 3 times the sum of the adjusted disbursements from the plan for the 12 months ending on the last day of such quarter.

''(II) SPECIAL RULE.—If the amount determined under subclause (I) exceeds an amount equal to 2 times the sum of the adjusted disbursements from the plan for the 36 months ending on the last day of the quarter and an enrolled actuary certifies to the satisfaction of the Secretary of the Treasury that such excess is the result of nonrecurring circumstances, the base amount with respect to such quarter shall be determined without regard to amounts related to those nonrecurring circumstances.

''(iii) DISBURSEMENTS FROM THE PLAN.—The term 'disbursements from the plan' means all disbursements from the trust, including purchases of annuities, payments of single sums and other benefits, and administrative expenses.

''(iv) ADJUSTED DISBURSEMENTS.—The term 'adjusted disbursements' means disbursements from the plan reduced by the product of—

''(I) the plan's funded current liability percentage for the plan year, and

''(II) the sum of the purchases of annuities, payments of single sums, and such other disbursements as the Secretary of the Treasury shall provide in regulations.

''(v) LIQUID ASSETS.—The term 'liquid assets' means cash, marketable securities and such other assets as specified by the Secretary of the Treasury in regulations.

''(vi) QUARTER.—The term 'quarter' means, with respect to any required installment, the 3-month period preceding the month in which the due date for such installment occurs.

''(F) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe such regulations as are necessary to carry out this paragraph.

''(6) FISCAL YEARS AND SHORT YEARS.—

''(A) FISCAL YEARS.—In applying this subsection to a plan year beginning on any date other than January 1, there shall be substituted for the months specified in this subsection, the months which correspond thereto.

''(B) SHORT PLAN YEAR.—This subsection shall be applied to plan years of less than 12 months in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(g) IMPOSITION OF LIEN WHERE FAILURE TO MAKE REQUIRED CONTRIBUTIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a plan to which this section applies, if—

''(A) any person fails to make a required installment under subsection (f) or any other payment required under this section before the due date for such installment or other payment, and

''(B) the unpaid balance of such installment or other payment (including interest), when added to the aggregate unpaid balance of all preceding such installments or other payments for which payment was not made before the due date (including interest), exceeds $1,000,000,

then there shall be a lien in favor of the plan in the amount determined under paragraph (3) upon all property and rights to property, whether real or personal, belonging to such person and any other person who is a member of the same controlled group of which such person is a member.

''(2) PLANS TO WHICH SUBSECTION APPLIES.—This subsection shall apply to a CSEC plan for any plan year for which the funded current liability percentage of such plan is less than 100 percent. This subsection shall not apply to any plan to which section 4021 does not apply (as such section is in effect on the date of the enactment of the Retirement Protection Act of 1994).

''(3) AMOUNT OF LIEN.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the amount of the lien shall be equal to the aggregate unpaid balance of required installments and other payments required under this section (including interest)—

''(A) for plan years beginning after 1987, and

''(B) for which payment has not been made before the due date.

''(4) NOTICE OF FAILURE; LIEN.—

''(A) NOTICE OF FAILURE.—A person committing a failure described in paragraph (1) shall notify the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation of such failure within 10 days of the due date for the required installment or other payment.

''(B) PERIOD OF LIEN.—The lien imposed by paragraph (1) shall arise on the due date for the required installment or other payment and shall continue until the last day of the first plan year in which the plan ceases to be described in paragraph (1)(B). Such lien shall continue to run without regard to whether such plan continues to be described in paragraph (2) during the period referred to in the preceding sentence.

''(C) CERTAIN RULES TO APPLY.—Any amount with respect to which a lien is imposed under paragraph (1) shall be treated as taxes due and owing the United States and rules similar to the rules of subsections (c), (d), and (e) of section 4068 shall apply with respect to a lien imposed by subsection (a) and the amount with respect to such lien.

''(5) ENFORCEMENT.—Any lien created under paragraph (1) may be perfected and enforced only by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, or at the direction of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, by any contributing employer (or any member of the controlled group of the contributing employer).

''(6) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) DUE DATE; REQUIRED INSTALLMENT.—The terms 'due date' and 'required installment' have the meanings given such terms by subsection (f), except that in the case of a payment other than a required installment, the due date shall be the date such payment is required to be made under this section.

''(B) CONTROLLED GROUP.—The term 'controlled group' means any group treated as a single employer under subsections (b), (c), (m), and (o) of section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(h) CURRENT LIABILITY.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'current liability' means all liabilities to employees and their beneficiaries under the plan.

''(2) TREATMENT OF UNPREDICTABLE CONTINGENT EVENT BENEFITS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of paragraph (1), any unpredictable contingent event benefit shall not be taken into account until the event on which the benefit is contingent occurs.

''(B) UNPREDICTABLE CONTINGENT EVENT BENEFIT.—The term 'unpredictable contingent event benefit' means any benefit contingent on an event other than—

''(i) age, service, compensation, death, or disability, or

''(ii) an event which is reasonably and reliably predictable (as determined by the Secretary of the Treasury).

''(3) INTEREST RATE AND MORTALITY ASSUMPTIONS USED.—

''(A) INTEREST RATE.—The rate of interest used to determine current liability under this section shall be the third segment rate determined under section 303(h)(2)(C).

''(B) MORTALITY TABLES.—

''(i) SECRETARIAL AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of the Treasury may by regulation prescribe mortality tables to be used in determining current liability under this subsection. Such tables shall be based upon the actual experience of pension plans and projected trends in such experience. In prescribing such tables, the Secretary of the Treasury shall take into account results of available independent studies of mortality of individuals covered by pension plans.

''(ii) PERIODIC REVIEW.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall periodically (at least every 5 years) review any tables in effect under this subsection and shall, to the extent the Secretary of the Treasury determines necessary, by regulation update the tables to reflect the actual experience of pension plans and projected trends in such experience.

''(C) SEPARATE MORTALITY TABLES FOR THE DISABLED.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (B)—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of plan years beginning after December 31, 1995, the Secretary of the Treasury shall establish mortality tables which may be used (in lieu of the tables under subparagraph (B)) to determine current liability under this subsection for individuals who are entitled to benefits under the plan on account of disability. The Secretary of the Treasury shall establish separate tables for individuals whose disabilities occur in plan years beginning before January 1, 1995, and for individuals whose disabilities occur in plan years beginning on or after such date.

''(ii) SPECIAL RULE FOR DISABILITIES OCCURRING AFTER 1994.—In the case of disabilities occurring in plan years beginning after December 31, 1994, the tables under clause (i) shall apply only with respect to individuals described in such subclause who are disabled within the meaning of title II of the Social Security Act and the regulations thereunder.

''(4) CERTAIN SERVICE DISREGARDED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a participant to whom this paragraph applies, only the applicable percentage of the years of service before such individual became a participant shall be taken into account in computing the current liability of the plan.

''(B) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the applicable percentage shall be determined as follows:

''If the years of participation are:	**The applicable percentage is:**
1	20
2	40
3	60
4	80
5 or more	100.

''(C) PARTICIPANTS TO WHOM PARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This subparagraph shall apply to any participant who, at the time of becoming a participant—

''(i) has not accrued any other benefit under any defined benefit plan (whether or not terminated) maintained by the employer or a member of the same controlled group of which the employer is a member,

''(ii) who first becomes a participant under the plan in a plan year beginning after December 31, 1987, and

''(iii) has years of service greater than the minimum years of service necessary for eligibility to participate in the plan.

''(D) ELECTION.—An employer may elect not to have this subparagraph apply. Such an election, once made, may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(i) FUNDED CURRENT LIABILITY PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of this section, the term 'funded current liability percentage' means, with respect to any plan year, the percentage which—

''(1) the value of the plan's assets determined under subsection (c)(2), is of

''(2) the current liability under the plan.

''(j) FUNDING RESTORATION STATUS.—Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section—

''(1) NORMAL COST PAYMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a CSEC plan that is in funding restoration status for a plan year, for purposes of section 302, the term 'accumulated funding deficiency' means, for such plan year, the greater of—

''(i) the amount described in subsection (a), or

''(ii) the excess of the normal cost of the plan for the plan year over the amount actually contributed to or under the plan for the plan year.

''(B) NORMAL COST.—In the case of a CSEC plan that uses a spread gain funding method, for purposes of this subsection, the term 'normal cost' means normal cost as determined under the entry age normal funding method.

''(2) PLAN AMENDMENTS.—In the case of a CSEC plan that is in funding restoration status for a plan year, no amendment to such plan may take effect during such plan year if such amendment has the effect of increasing liabilities of the plan by means of increases in benefits, establishment of new benefits, changing the rate of benefit accrual, or changing the rate at which benefits become nonforfeitable. This paragraph shall not apply to any plan amendment that is required to comply with any applicable law. This paragraph shall cease to apply with respect to any plan year, effective as of the first day of the plan year (or if later, the effective date of the amendment) upon payment by the plan sponsor of a contribution to the plan (in addition to any contribution required under this section without regard to this paragraph) in an amount equal to the increase in the funding liability of the plan attributable to the plan amendment.

''(3) FUNDING RESTORATION PLAN.—The sponsor of a CSEC plan shall establish a written funding restoration plan within 180 days of the receipt by the plan sponsor of a certification from the plan actuary that the plan is in funding restoration status for a plan year. Such funding restoration plan shall consist of actions that are calculated, based on reasonably anticipated experience and reasonable actuarial assumptions, to increase the plan's funded percentage to 100 percent over a period that is not longer than the greater of 7 years or the shortest amount of time practicable. Such funding restoration plan shall take into account contributions required under this section (without regard to this paragraph). If a plan remains in funding restoration status for 2 or more years, such funding restoration plan shall be updated each year after the 1st such year within 180 days of receipt by the plan sponsor of a certification from the plan actuary that the plan remains in funding restoration status for the plan year.

''(4) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION BY PLAN ACTUARY.—Not later than the 90th day of each plan year of a CSEC plan, the plan actuary shall certify to the plan sponsor whether or not the plan is in funding restoration status for the plan year, based on the plan's funded percentage as of the beginning of the plan year. For this purpose, the actuary may conclusively rely on an estimate of—

''(A) the plan's funding liability, based on the funding liability of the plan for the preceding plan year and on reasonable actuarial estimates, assumptions, and methods, and

''(B) the amount of any contributions reasonably anticipated to be made for the preceding plan year.

Contributions described in subparagraph (B) shall be taken into account in determining the plan's funded percentage as of the beginning of the plan year.

''(5) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) FUNDING RESTORATION STATUS.—A CSEC plan shall be treated as in funding restoration status for a plan year if the plan's funded percentage as of the beginning of such plan year is less than 80 percent.

''(B) FUNDED PERCENTAGE.—The term 'funded percentage' means the ratio (expressed as a percentage) which—

''(i) the value of plan assets (as determined under subsection (c)(2)), bears to

''(ii) the plan's funding liability.

''(C) FUNDING LIABILITY.—The term 'funding liability' for a plan year means the present value of all benefits accrued or earned under the plan as of the beginning of the plan year, based on the assumptions used by the plan pursuant to this section, including the interest rate described in subsection (b)(5)(A) (without regard to subsection (b)(5)(B)).

''(D) SPREAD GAIN FUNDING METHOD.—The term 'spread gain funding method' has the meaning given such term under rules and forms issued by the Secretary of the Treasury.''.

(b) SEPARATE RULES FOR CSEC PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 302(a) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1082(a)) is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (C) and inserting '', and'', and by inserting at the end thereof the following new subparagraph:

''(D) in the case of a CSEC plan, the employers make contributions to or under the plan for any plan year which, in the aggregate, are sufficient to ensure that the plan does not have an accumulated funding deficiency under section 306 as of the end of the plan year.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 302 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1082) is amended—

(A) by striking ''multiemployer plan'' the first place it appears in clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(A) and the last place it appears in paragraph (2) of subsection (d), and inserting ''multiemployer plan or a CSEC plan'',

(B) by striking ''303(j)'' in paragraph (1) of subsection (b) and inserting ''303(j) or under section 306(f)'',

(C)(i) by striking ''and'' at the end of clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(B),

(ii) by striking the period at the end of clause (ii) of subsection (c)(1)(B), and inserting '', and'', and

(iii) by inserting the following new clause after clause (ii) of subsection (c)(1)(B):

''(iii) in the case of a CSEC plan, the funding standard account shall be credited under section 306(b)(3)(C) with the amount of the waived funding deficiency and such amount shall be amortized as required under section 306(b)(2)(C).'',

(D) by striking ''under paragraph (1)'' in clause (i) of subsection (c)(4)(A) and inserting ''under paragraph (1) or for granting an extension under section 306(d)'',

(E) by striking ''waiver under this subsection'' in subparagraph (B) of subsection (c)(4) and inserting ''waiver under this subsection or an extension under 306(d)'',

(F) by striking ''waiver or modification'' in subclause (I) of subsection (c)(4)(B)(i) and inserting ''waiver, modification, or extension'',

(G) by striking ''waivers'' in the heading of subsection (c)(4)(C) and of clause (ii) of subsection (c)(4)(C) and inserting ''waivers or extensions'',

(H) by striking ''section 304(d)'' in subparagraph (A) of subsection (c)(7) and in paragraph (2) of subsection (d) and inserting ''section 304(d) or section 306(d)'',

(I) by striking ''and'' at the end of subclause (I) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) and adding ''or the accumulated funding deficiency under section 306, whichever is applicable,'',

(J) by striking ''303(e)(2),'' in subclause (II) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) and inserting ''303(e)(2) or 306(b)(2)(C), whichever is applicable, and'',

(K) by adding immediately after subclause (II) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) the following new subclause:

''(III) the total amounts not paid by reason of an extension in effect under section 306(d),'',

(L) by striking ''for waivers of'' in clause (ii) of subsection (c)(4)(C) and inserting ''for waivers or extensions with respect to'', and

(M) by striking ''single-employer plan'' in subparagraph (A) of subsection (a)(2) and in clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(B) and inserting ''single-employer plan (other than a CSEC plan)''.

(3) BENEFIT RESTRICTIONS.—Subsection (g) of section 206 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1056) is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new paragraph:

''(12) CSEC PLANS.—This subsection shall not apply to a CSEC plan (as defined in section 210(f)).''.

(4) BENEFIT INCREASES.—Paragraph (3) of section 204(i) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1054(i)) is amended by striking ''multiemployer plans'' and inserting ''multiemployer plans or CSEC plans''.

(5) SECTION 103.—Subparagraph (B) of section 103(d)(8) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1023(d)(8)) is amended by striking ''303(h) and 304(c)(3)'' and inserting ''303(h), 304(c)(3), and 306(c)(3)''.

(6) SECTION 502.—Subsection (c) of section 502 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 is amended—

(A) by redesignating the last paragraph as paragraph (11), and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(12) The Secretary may assess a civil penalty against any sponsor of a CSEC plan of up to $100 a day from the date of the plan sponsor's failure to comply with the requirements of section 306(j)(3) to establish or update a funding restoration plan.''.

(7) SECTION 4003.—Subparagraph (B) of section 4003(e)(1) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1303(e)(1)) is amended by striking ''303(k)(1)(A) and (B) of this Act or section 430(k)(1)(A) and (B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986'' and inserting ''303(k)(1)(A) and (B) or 306(g)(1)(A) and (B) of this Act or section 430(k)(1)(A) and (B) or 433(g)(1)(A) and (B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986''.

(8) SECTION 4010.—Paragraph (2) of section 4010(b) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1310(b)) is amended by striking ''303(k)(1)(A) and (B) of this Act or section 430(k)(1)(A) and (B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986'' and inserting ''303(k)(1)(A) and (B) or 306(g)(1)(A) and (B) of this Act or section 430(k)(1)(A) and (B) or 433(g)(1)(A) and (B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986''.

(9) SECTION 4071.—Section 4071 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1371) is amended by striking ''section 303(k)(4)'' and inserting ''section 303(k)(4) or 306(g)(4)''.

SEC. 103. ELECTIONS.

(a) ELECTION NOT TO BE TREATED AS A CSEC PLAN.—Subsection (f) of section 210 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as added by section 101, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) ELECTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If a plan falls within the definition of a CSEC plan under this subsection (without regard to this paragraph), such plan shall be a CSEC plan unless the plan sponsor elects not later than the close of the first plan year of the plan beginning after December 31, 2013, not to be treated as a CSEC plan. An election under the preceding sentence shall take effect for such plan year and, once made, may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(B) SPECIAL RULE.—If a plan described in subparagraph (A) is treated as a CSEC plan, section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, as amended by the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and

Pension Relief Act of 2010, shall cease to apply to such plan as of the first date as of which such plan is treated as a CSEC plan.''.

(b) ELECTION TO CEASE TO BE TREATED AS AN ELIGIBLE CHARITY PLAN.—Subsection (d) of section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, as added by section 202 of the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act of 2010, is amended—

(1) by striking ''For purposes of'' and inserting ''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of'', and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) ELECTION NOT TO BE AN ELIGIBLE CHARITY PLAN.—A plan sponsor may elect for a plan to cease to be treated as an eligible charity plan for plan years beginning after December 31, 2013. Such election shall be made at such time and in such form and manner as shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. Any such election may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(3) ELECTION TO USE FUNDING OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO OTHER PLAN SPONSORS.—

''(A) A plan sponsor that makes the election described in paragraph (2) may elect for a plan to apply the rules described in subparagraphs (B), (C), and (D) for plan years beginning after December 31, 2013. Such election shall be made at such time and in such form and manner as shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. Any such election may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(B) Under the rules described in this subparagraph, for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, a plan has—

''(i) an 11-year shortfall amortization base,

''(ii) a 12-year shortfall amortization base, and

''(iii) a 7-year shortfall amortization base.

''(C) Under the rules described in this subparagraph, section 303(c)(2)(A) and (B) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and section 430(c)(2)(A) and (B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be applied by—

''(i) in the case of an 11-year shortfall amortization base, substituting '11-plan-year period' for '7-plan-year period' wherever such phrase appears, and

''(ii) in the case of a 12-year shortfall amortization base, substituting '12-plan-year period' for '7-plan-year period' wherever such phrase appears.

''(D) Under the rules described in this subparagraph, section 303(c)(7) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and section 430(c)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall apply to a plan for which an election has been made under subparagraph (A). Such provisions shall apply in the following manner:

''(i) The first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, shall be treated as an election year, and no other plan years shall be so treated.

''(ii) All references in section 303(c)(7) of such Act and section 430(c)(7) of such Code to 'February 28, 2010' or 'March 1, 2010' shall be treated as references to 'February 28, 2013' or 'March 1, 2013', respectively.

''(E) For purposes of this paragraph, the 11-year amortization base is an amount, determined for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, equal to the unamortized principal amount of the shortfall amortization base (as defined in section 303(c)(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and section 430(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) that would have applied to the plan for the first plan beginning after December 31, 2009, if—

''(i) the plan had never been an eligible charity plan,

''(ii) the plan sponsor had made the election described in section 303(c)(2)(D)(i) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and in section 430(c)(2)(D)(i) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to have section 303(c)(2)(D)(i) of such Act and section 430(c)(2)(D)(iii) of such Code apply with respect to the shortfall amortization base for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2009, and

''(iii) no event had occurred under paragraph (6) or (7) of section 303(c) of such Act or paragraph (6) or (7) of section 430(c) of such Code that, as of the first day of the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, would have modified the shortfall amortization base or the shortfall amortization installments with respect to the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2009.

''(F) For purposes of this paragraph, the 12-year amortization base is an amount, determined for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, equal to the unamortized principal amount of the shortfall amortization base (as defined in section 303(c)(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and section 430(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) that would have applied to the plan for the first plan beginning after December 31, 2010, if—

''(i) the plan had never been an eligible charity plan,

''(ii) the plan sponsor had made the election described in section 303(c)(2)(D)(i) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and in section 430(c)(2)(D)(i) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to have section 303(c)(2)(D)(i) of such Act and section 430(c)(2)(D)(iii) of such Code apply with respect to the shortfall amortization base for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2010, and

''(iii) no event had occurred under paragraph (6) or (7) of section 303(c) of such Act or paragraph (6) or (7) of section 430(c) of such Code that, as of the first day of the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, would have modified the shortfall amortization base or the shortfall amortization installments with respect to the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2010.

''(G) For purposes of this paragraph, the 7-year shortfall amortization base is an amount, determined for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, equal to—

''(i) the shortfall amortization base for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, without regard to this paragraph, minus

''(ii) the sum of the 11-year shortfall amortization base and the 12-year shortfall amortization base.

''(4) RETROACTIVE ELECTION.—Not later than December 31, 2014, a plan sponsor may make a one-time, irrevocable, retroactive election to not be treated as an eligible charity plan. Such election shall be effective for plan years beginning after December 31, 2007, and shall be made by providing reasonable notice to the Secretary of the Treasury.''.

(c) DEEMED ELECTION.—For purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, sections 4(b)(2) and 4021(b)(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and all other purposes, a plan shall be deemed to have made an irrevocable election under section 410(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 if—

(1) the plan was established before January 1, 2014;

(2) the plan falls within the definition of a CSEC plan;

(3) the plan sponsor does not make an election under section 210(f)(3)(A) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and section 414(y)(3)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as added by this Act; and

(4) the plan, plan sponsor, administrator, or fiduciary remits one or more premium payments for the plan to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation for a plan year beginning after December 31, 2013.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply as of the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 104. TRANSPARENCY.

(a) NOTICE TO PARTICIPANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 101(f) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1021(f)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(E) EFFECT OF CSEC PLAN RULES ON PLAN FUNDING.—In the case of a CSEC plan, each notice under paragraph (1) shall include—

''(i) a statement that different rules apply to CSEC plans than apply to single-employer plans,

''(ii) for the first 2 plan years beginning after December 31, 2013, a statement that, as a result of changes in the law made by the Cooperative and Small Employer Charity Pension Flexibility Act, the contributions to the plan may have changed, and

''(iii) in the case of a CSEC plan that is in funding restoration status for the plan year, a statement that the plan is in funding restoration status for such plan year.

A copy of the statement required under clause (iii) shall be provided to the Secretary, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.''.

(2) MODEL NOTICE.—The Secretary of Labor may modify the model notice required to be published under section 501(c) of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 to include the information described in section 101(f)(2)(E) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as added by this subsection.

(b) NOTICE OF FAILURE TO MEET MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARDS.—

(1) PENDING WAIVERS.—Paragraph (2) of section 101(d) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1021(d)) is amended by striking ''303'' and inserting ''303 or 306''.

(2) DEFINITIONS.—Paragraph (3) of section 101(d) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (21 U.S.C. 1021(d)) is amended by striking ''303(j)'' and inserting ''303(j) or 306(f), whichever is applicable''.

(c) ADDITIONAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Section 103 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1023) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(g) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WITH RESPECT TO MULTIPLE EMPLOYER PLANS.—With respect to any multiple employer plan, an annual report under this section for a plan year shall include a list of participating employers and a good faith estimate of the percentage of total contributions made by such participating employers during the plan year.''.

SEC. 105. SPONSOR EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''CSEC plan'' has the meaning given that term in subsection (f)(1) of section 210 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1060(f)(1)) (as added by this Act).

(b) EDUCATION.—The Participant and Plan Sponsor Advocate established under section 4004 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1304) shall make itself available to assist CSEC plan sponsors and participants as part of the duties it performs under the general supervision of the Board of Directors under section 4004(b) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 1304(b)).

TITLE II—AMENDMENTS TO INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986

SEC. 201. DEFINITION OF COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION PLANS.

Section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(y) COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION PLANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this title, except as provided in this subsection, a CSEC plan is a defined benefit plan (other than a multiemployer plan)—

''(A) to which section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 applies, without regard to—

''(i) section 104(a)(2) of such Act;

''(ii) the amendments to such section 104 by section 202(b) of the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act of 2010; and

''(iii) paragraph (3)(B); or

''(B) that, as of June 25, 2010, was maintained by more than one employer and all of the employers were organizations described in section 501(c)(3).

''(2) AGGREGATION.—All employers that are treated as a single employer under subsection (b) or (c) shall be treated as a single employer for purposes of determining if a plan was maintained by more than one employer under paragraph (1)(B).''.

SEC. 202. FUNDING RULES APPLICABLE TO COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION PLANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart A of part III of subchapter D of chapter 1 of subtitle A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 433. MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARDS.

''(a) GENERAL RULE.—For purposes of section 412, the term 'accumulated funding deficiency' for a CSEC plan means the excess of the total charges to the funding standard account for all plan years (beginning with the first plan year to which section 412 applies) over the total credits to such account for such years or, if less, the excess of the total charges to the alternative minimum funding standard account for such plan years over the total credits to such account for such years.

''(b) FUNDING STANDARD ACCOUNT.—

''(1) ACCOUNT REQUIRED.—Each plan to which this section applies shall establish and maintain a funding standard account. Such account shall be credited and charged solely as provided in this section.

''(2) CHARGES TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year, the funding standard account shall be charged with the sum of—

''(A) the normal cost of the plan for the plan year,

''(B) the amounts necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized)—

''(i) in the case of a plan in existence on January 1, 1974, the unfunded past service liability under the plan on the first day of the first plan year to which section 412 applies, over a period of 40 plan years,

''(ii) in the case of a plan which comes into existence after January 1, 1974, but before the first day of the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, the unfunded past service liability under the plan on the first day of the first plan year to which section 412 applies, over a period of 30 plan years,

''(iii) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net increase (if any) in unfunded past service liability under the plan arising from plan amendments adopted in such year, over a period of 15 plan years,

''(iv) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net experience loss (if any) under the plan, over a period of 5 plan years, and

''(v) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net loss (if any) resulting from changes in actuarial assumptions used under the plan, over a period of 10 plan years,

''(C) the amount necessary to amortize each waived funding deficiency (within the meaning of section 412(c)(3)) for each prior plan year in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 5 plan years,

''(D) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 5 plan years any amount credited to the funding standard account under paragraph (3)(D), and

''(E) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 20 years the contributions which would be required to be made under the plan but for the provisions of section 412(c)(7)(A)(i)(I) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006).

''(3) CREDITS TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year, the funding standard account shall be credited with the sum of—

''(A) the amount considered contributed by the employer to or under the plan for the plan year,

''(B) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized)—

''(i) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net decrease (if any) in unfunded past service liability under the plan arising from plan amendments adopted in such year, over a period of 15 plan years,

''(ii) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net experience gain (if any) under the plan, over a period of 5 plan years, and

''(iii) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net gain (if any) resulting from changes in actuarial assumptions used under the plan, over a period of 10 plan years,

''(C) the amount of the waived funding deficiency (within the meaning of section 412(c)(3)) for the plan year, and

''(D) in the case of a plan year for which the accumulated funding deficiency is determined under the funding standard account if such plan year follows a plan year for which such deficiency was determined under the alternative minimum funding standard, the excess (if any) of any debit balance in the funding standard account (determined without regard to this subparagraph) over any debit balance in the alternative minimum funding standard account.

''(4) COMBINING AND OFFSETTING AMOUNTS TO BE AMORTIZED.—Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary, amounts required to be amortized under paragraph (2) or paragraph (3), as the case may be—

''(A) may be combined into one amount under such paragraph to be amortized over a period determined on the basis of the remaining amortization period for all items entering into such combined amount, and

''(B) may be offset against amounts required to be amortized under the other such paragraph, with the resulting amount to be amortized over a period determined on the basis of the remaining amortization periods for all items entering into whichever of the two amounts being offset is the greater.

''(5) INTEREST.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the funding standard account (and items therein) shall be charged or credited (as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary) with interest at the appropriate rate consistent with the rate or rates of interest used under the plan to determine costs.

''(B) EXCEPTION.—The interest rate used for purposes of computing the amortization charge described in subsection (b)(2)(C) or for purposes of any arrangement under subsection (d) for any plan year shall be the greater of—

''(i) 150 percent of the Federal mid-term rate (as in effect under section 1274 for the 1st month of such plan year), or

''(ii) the rate of interest determined under subparagraph (A).

''(6) AMORTIZATION SCHEDULES IN EFFECT.—Amortization schedules for amounts described in paragraphs (2) and (3) that are in effect as of the last day of the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, by reason of section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 shall remain in effect pursuant to their terms and this section, except that such amounts shall not be amortized again under this section.

''(c) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(1) DETERMINATIONS TO BE MADE UNDER FUNDING METHOD.—For purposes of this section, normal costs, accrued liability, past service liabilities, and experience gains and losses shall be determined under the funding method used to determine costs under the plan.

''(2) VALUATION OF ASSETS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, the value of the plan's assets shall be determined on the basis of any reasonable actuarial method of valuation which takes into account fair market value and which is permitted under regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

''(B) DEDICATED BOND PORTFOLIO.—The Secretary may by regulations provide that the value of any dedicated bond portfolio of a plan shall be determined by using the interest rate under section 412(b)(5) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006).

''(3) ACTUARIAL ASSUMPTIONS MUST BE REASONABLE.—For purposes of this section, all costs, liabilities, rates of interest, and other factors under the plan shall be determined on the basis of actuarial assumptions and methods—

''(A) each of which is reasonable (taking into account the experience of the plan and reasonable expectations), and

''(B) which, in combination, offer the actuary's best estimate of anticipated experience under the plan.

''(4) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN CHANGES AS EXPERIENCE GAIN OR LOSS.—For purposes of this section, if—

''(A) a change in benefits under the Social Security Act or in other retirement benefits created under Federal or State law, or

''(B) a change in the definition of the term 'wages' under section 3121 or a change in the amount of such wages taken into account under regulations prescribed for purposes of section 401(a)(5),

results in an increase or decrease in accrued liability under a plan, such increase or decrease shall be treated as an experience loss or gain.

''(5) FUNDING METHOD AND PLAN YEAR.—

''(A) FUNDING METHODS AVAILABLE.—All funding methods available to CSEC plans under section 412 (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006) shall continue to be available under this section.

''(B) CHANGES.—If the funding method for a plan is changed, the new funding method shall become the funding method used to determine costs and liabilities under the plan only if the change is approved by the Secretary. If the plan year for a plan is changed, the new plan year shall become the plan year for the plan only if the change is approved by the Secretary.

''(C) APPROVAL REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS BY CERTAIN SINGLE-EMPLOYER PLANS SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIREMENT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—No actuarial assumption (other than the assumptions described in subsection (h)(3)) used to determine the current liability for a plan to which this subparagraph applies may be changed without the approval of the Secretary.

''(ii) PLANS TO WHICH SUBPARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This subparagraph shall apply to a plan only if—

''(I) the plan is a CSEC plan,

''(II) the aggregate unfunded vested benefits as of the close of the preceding plan year (as determined under section 4006(a)(3)(E)(iii) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974) of such plan and all other plans maintained by the contributing sponsors (as defined in section 4001(a)(13) of such Act) and members of such sponsors' controlled groups (as defined in section 4001(a)(14) of such Act) which are covered by title IV (disregarding plans with no unfunded vested benefits) exceed $50,000,000, and

''(III) the change in assumptions (determined after taking into account any changes in interest rate and mortality table) results in a decrease in the funding shortfall of the plan for the current plan year that exceeds $50,000,000, or that exceeds $5,000,000 and that is 5 percent or more of the current liability of the plan before such change.

''(6) FULL FUNDING.—If, as of the close of a plan year, a plan would (without regard to this paragraph) have an accumulated funding deficiency (determined without regard to the alternative minimum funding standard account permitted under subsection (e)) in excess of the full funding limitation—

''(A) the funding standard account shall be credited with the amount of such excess, and

''(B) all amounts described in paragraphs (2)(B), (C), and (D) and (3)(B) of subsection (b) which are required to be amortized shall be considered fully amortized for purposes of such paragraphs.

''(7) FULL-FUNDING LIMITATION.—For purposes of paragraph (6), the term 'full-funding limitation' means the excess (if any) of—

''(A) the accrued liability (including normal cost) under the plan (determined under the entry age normal funding method if such accrued liability cannot be directly calculated under the funding method used for the plan), over

''(B) the lesser of—

''(i) the fair market value of the plan's assets, or

''(ii) the value of such assets determined under paragraph (2).

''(C) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In no event shall the full-funding limitation determined under subparagraph (A) be less than the excess (if any) of—

''(I) 90 percent of the current liability (determined without regard to paragraph (4) of subsection (h)) of the plan (including the expected increase in such current liability due to benefits accruing during the plan year), over

''(II) the value of the plan's assets determined under paragraph (2).

''(ii) ASSETS.—For purposes of clause (i), assets shall not be reduced by any credit balance in the funding standard account.

''(8) ANNUAL VALUATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, a determination of experience gains and losses and a valuation of the plan's liability shall be made not less frequently than once every year, except that such determination shall be made more frequently to the extent required in particular cases under regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

''(B) VALUATION DATE.—

''(i) CURRENT YEAR.—Except as provided in clause (ii), the valuation referred to in subparagraph (A) shall be made as of a date within the plan year to which the valuation refers or within one month prior to the beginning of such year.

''(ii) USE OF PRIOR YEAR VALUATION.—The valuation referred to in subparagraph (A) may be made as of a date within the plan year prior to the year to which the valuation refers if, as of such date, the value of the assets of the plan are not less than 100 percent of the plan's current liability.

''(iii) ADJUSTMENTS.—Information under clause (ii) shall, in accordance with regulations, be actuarially adjusted to reflect significant differences in participants.

''(iv) LIMITATION.—A change in funding method to use a prior year valuation, as provided in clause (ii), may not be made unless as of the valuation date within the prior plan year, the value of the assets of the plan are not less than 125 percent of the plan's current liability.

''(9) TIME WHEN CERTAIN CONTRIBUTIONS DEEMED MADE.—For purposes of this section, any contributions for a plan year made by an employer during the period—

''(A) beginning on the day after the last day of such plan year, and

''(B) ending on the day which is 8½ months after the close of the plan year,

shall be deemed to have been made on such last day.

''(10) ANTICIPATION OF BENEFIT INCREASES EFFECTIVE IN THE FUTURE.—In determining projected benefits, the funding method of a collectively bargained CSEC plan described in section 413(a) shall anticipate benefit increases scheduled to take effect during the term of the collective bargaining agreement applicable to the plan.

''(d) EXTENSION OF AMORTIZATION PERIODS.—The period of years required to amortize any unfunded liability (described in any clause of subsection (b)(2)(B)) of any plan may be extended by the Secretary for a period of time (not in excess of 10 years) if the Secretary determines that such extension would carry out the purposes of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and provide adequate protection for participants under the plan and their beneficiaries, and if the Secretary determines that the failure to permit such extension would result in—

''(1) a substantial risk to the voluntary continuation of the plan, or

''(2) a substantial curtailment of pension benefit levels or employee compensation.

''(e) ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARD.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A CSEC plan which uses a funding method that requires contributions in all years not less than those required under the entry age normal funding method may maintain an alternative minimum funding standard account for any plan year. Such account shall be credited and charged solely as provided in this subsection.

''(2) CHARGES AND CREDITS TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year the alternative minimum funding standard account shall be—

''(A) charged with the sum of—

''(i) the lesser of normal cost under the funding method used under the plan or normal cost determined under the unit credit method,

''(ii) the excess, if any, of the present value of accrued benefits under the plan over the fair market value of the assets, and

''(iii) an amount equal to the excess (if any) of credits to the alternative minimum standard account for all prior plan years over charges to such account for all such years, and

''(B) credited with the amount considered contributed by the employer to or under the plan for the plan year.

''(3) INTEREST.—The alternative minimum funding standard account (and items therein) shall be charged or credited with interest in the manner provided under subsection (b)(5) with respect to the funding standard account.

''(f) QUARTERLY CONTRIBUTIONS REQUIRED.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If a CSEC plan which has a funded current liability percentage for the preceding plan year of less than 100 percent fails to pay the full amount of a required installment for the plan year, then the rate of interest charged to the funding standard account under subsection (b)(5) with respect to the amount of the underpayment for the period of the underpayment shall be equal to the greater of—

''(A) 175 percent of the Federal mid-term rate (as in effect under section 1274 for the 1st month of such plan year), or

''(B) the rate of interest used under the plan in determining costs.

''(2) AMOUNT OF UNDERPAYMENT, PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—For purposes of paragraph (1)—

''(A) AMOUNT.—The amount of the underpayment shall be the excess of—

''(i) the required installment, over

''(ii) the amount (if any) of the installment contributed to or under the plan on or before the due date for the installment.

''(B) PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—The period for which interest is charged under this subsection with regard to any portion of the underpayment shall run from the due date for the installment to the date on which such portion is contributed to or under the plan (determined without regard to subsection (c)(9)).

''(C) ORDER OF CREDITING CONTRIBUTIONS.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(ii), contributions shall be credited against unpaid required installments in the order in which such installments are required to be paid.

''(3) NUMBER OF REQUIRED INSTALLMENTS; DUE DATES.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) PAYABLE IN 4 INSTALLMENTS.—There shall be 4 required installments for each plan year.

''(B) TIME FOR PAYMENT OF INSTALLMENTS.—

"In the case of the following required installments:	The due date is:
1st	April 15
2nd	July 15
3rd	October 15
4th	January 15 of the following year.

''(4) AMOUNT OF REQUIRED INSTALLMENT.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The amount of any required installment shall be 25 percent of the required annual payment.

''(B) REQUIRED ANNUAL PAYMENT.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'required annual payment' means the lesser of—

''(i) 90 percent of the amount required to be contributed to or under the plan by the employer for the plan year under section 412 (without regard to any waiver under subsection (c) thereof), or

''(ii) 100 percent of the amount so required for the preceding plan year.

Clause (ii) shall not apply if the preceding plan year was not a year of 12 months.

''(5) LIQUIDITY REQUIREMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A plan to which this paragraph applies shall be treated as failing to pay the full amount of any required installment to the extent that the value of the liquid assets paid in such installment is less than the liquidity shortfall (whether or not such liquidity shortfall exceeds the amount of such installment required to be paid but for this paragraph).

''(B) PLANS TO WHICH PARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This paragraph shall apply to a CSEC plan other than a plan described in section 412(l)(6)(A) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006) which—

''(i) is required to pay installments under this subsection for a plan year, and

''(ii) has a liquidity shortfall for any quarter during such plan year.

''(C) PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—For purposes of paragraph (1), any portion of an installment that is treated as not paid under subparagraph (A) shall continue to be treated as unpaid until the close of the quarter in which the due date for such installment occurs.

''(D) LIMITATION ON INCREASE.—If the amount of any required installment is increased by reason of subparagraph (A), in no event shall such increase exceed the amount which, when added to prior installments for the plan year, is necessary to increase the funded current liability percentage (taking into account the expected increase in current liability due to benefits accruing during the plan year) to 100 percent.

''(E) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this paragraph—

''(i) LIQUIDITY SHORTFALL.—The term 'liquidity shortfall' means, with respect to any required installment, an amount equal to the excess (as of the last day of the quarter for which such installment is made) of the base amount with respect to such quarter over the value (as of such last day) of the plan's liquid assets.

''(ii) BASE AMOUNT.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—The term 'base amount' means, with respect to any quarter, an amount equal to 3 times the sum of the adjusted disbursements from the plan for the 12 months ending on the last day of such quarter.

''(II) SPECIAL RULE.—If the amount determined under subclause (I) exceeds an amount equal to 2 times the sum of the adjusted disbursements from the plan for the 36 months ending on the last day of the quarter and an enrolled actuary certifies to the satisfaction of the Secretary that such excess is the result of nonrecurring circumstances, the base amount with respect to such quarter shall be determined without regard to amounts related to those nonrecurring circumstances.

''(iii) DISBURSEMENTS FROM THE PLAN.—The term 'disbursements from the plan' means all disbursements from the trust, including purchases of annuities, payments of single sums and other benefits, and administrative expenses.

''(iv) ADJUSTED DISBURSEMENTS.—The term 'adjusted disbursements' means disbursements from the plan reduced by the product of—

''(I) the plan's funded current liability percentage for the plan year, and

''(II) the sum of the purchases of annuities, payments of single sums, and such other disbursements as the Secretary shall provide in regulations.

''(v) LIQUID ASSETS.—The term 'liquid assets' means cash, marketable securities and such other assets as specified by the Secretary in regulations.

''(vi) QUARTER.—The term 'quarter' means, with respect to any required installment, the 3-month period preceding the month in which the due date for such installment occurs.

''(F) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary may prescribe such regulations as are necessary to carry out this paragraph.

''(6) FISCAL YEARS AND SHORT YEARS.—

''(A) FISCAL YEARS.—In applying this subsection to a plan year beginning on any date other than January 1, there shall be substituted for the months specified in this subsection, the months which correspond thereto.

''(B) SHORT PLAN YEAR.—This subsection shall be applied to plan years of less than 12 months in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

''(g) IMPOSITION OF LIEN WHERE FAILURE TO MAKE REQUIRED CONTRIBUTIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a plan to which this section applies, if—

''(A) any person fails to make a required installment under subsection (f) or any other payment required under this section before the due date for such installment or other payment, and

''(B) the unpaid balance of such installment or other payment (including interest), when added to the aggregate unpaid balance of all preceding such installments or other payments for which payment was not made before the due date (including interest), exceeds $1,000,000,

then there shall be a lien in favor of the plan in the amount determined under paragraph (3) upon all property and rights to property, whether real or personal, belonging to such person and any other person who is a member of the same controlled group of which such person is a member.

''(2) PLANS TO WHICH SUBSECTION APPLIES.—This subsection shall apply to a CSEC plan for any plan year for which the funded current liability percentage of such plan is less than 100 percent. This subsection shall not apply to any plan to which section 4021 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 does not apply (as such section is in effect on the date of the enactment of the Retirement Protection Act of 1994).

''(3) AMOUNT OF LIEN.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the amount of the lien shall be equal to the aggregate unpaid balance of required installments and other payments required under this section (including interest)—

''(A) for plan years beginning after 1987, and

''(B) for which payment has not been made before the due date.

''(4) NOTICE OF FAILURE; LIEN.—

''(A) NOTICE OF FAILURE.—A person committing a failure described in paragraph (1) shall notify the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation of such failure within 10 days of the due date for the required installment or other payment.

''(B) PERIOD OF LIEN.—The lien imposed by paragraph (1) shall arise on the due date for the required installment or other payment and shall continue until the last day of the first plan year in which the plan ceases to be described in paragraph (1)(B). Such lien shall continue to run without regard to whether such plan continues to be described in paragraph (2) during the period referred to in the preceding sentence.

''(C) CERTAIN RULES TO APPLY.—Any amount with respect to which a lien is imposed under paragraph (1) shall be treated as taxes due and owing the United States and rules similar to the rules of subsections (c), (d), and (e) of section 4068 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 shall apply with respect to a lien imposed by subsection (a) and the amount with respect to such lien.

''(5) ENFORCEMENT.—Any lien created under paragraph (1) may be perfected and enforced only by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, or at the direction of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, by any contributing employer (or any member of the controlled group of the contributing employer).

''(6) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) DUE DATE; REQUIRED INSTALLMENT.—The terms 'due date' and 'required installment' have the meanings given such terms by subsection (f), except that in the case of a payment other than a required installment, the due date shall be the date such payment is required to be made under this section.

''(B) CONTROLLED GROUP.—The term 'controlled group' means any group treated as a single employer under subsections (b), (c), (m), and (o) of section 414.

''(h) CURRENT LIABILITY.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'current liability' means all liabilities to employees and their beneficiaries under the plan.

''(2) TREATMENT OF UNPREDICTABLE CONTINGENT EVENT BENEFITS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of paragraph (1), any unpredictable contingent event benefit shall not be taken into account until the event on which the benefit is contingent occurs.

''(B) UNPREDICTABLE CONTINGENT EVENT BENEFIT.—The term 'unpredictable contingent event benefit' means any benefit contingent on an event other than—

''(i) age, service, compensation, death, or disability, or

''(ii) an event which is reasonably and reliably predictable (as determined by the Secretary).

''(3) INTEREST RATE AND MORTALITY ASSUMPTIONS USED.—

''(A) INTEREST RATE.—The rate of interest used to determine current liability under this section shall be the third segment rate determined under section 430(h)(2)(C).

''(B) MORTALITY TABLES.—

''(i) SECRETARIAL AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may by regulation prescribe mortality tables to be used in determining current liability under this subsection. Such tables shall be based upon the actual experience of pension plans and projected trends in such experience. In prescribing such tables, the Secretary shall take into account results of available independent studies of mortality of individuals covered by pension plans.

''(ii) PERIODIC REVIEW.—The Secretary shall periodically (at least every 5 years) review any tables in effect under this subsection and shall, to the extent the Secretary determines necessary, by regulation update the tables to reflect the actual experience of pension plans and projected trends in such experience.

''(C) SEPARATE MORTALITY TABLES FOR THE DISABLED.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (B)—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of plan years beginning after December 31, 1995, the Secretary shall establish mortality tables which may be used (in lieu of the tables under subparagraph (B)) to determine current liability under this subsection for individuals who are entitled to benefits under the plan on account of disability. The Secretary shall establish separate tables for individuals whose disabilities occur in plan years beginning before January 1, 1995, and for individuals whose disabilities occur in plan years beginning on or after such date.

''(ii) SPECIAL RULE FOR DISABILITIES OCCURRING AFTER 1994.—In the case of disabilities occurring in plan years beginning after December 31, 1994, the tables under clause (i) shall apply only with respect to individuals described in such subclause who are disabled within the meaning of title II of the Social Security Act and the regulations thereunder.

''(4) CERTAIN SERVICE DISREGARDED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a participant to whom this paragraph applies, only the applicable percentage of the years of service before such individual became a participant shall be taken into account in computing the current liability of the plan.

''(B) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the applicable percentage shall be determined as follows:

"If the years of participation are:	**The applicable percentage is:**
1	20
2	40
3	60
4	80
5 or more	100.

''(C) PARTICIPANTS TO WHOM PARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This subparagraph shall apply to any participant who, at the time of becoming a participant—

''(i) has not accrued any other benefit under any defined benefit plan (whether or not terminated) maintained by the employer or a member of the same controlled group of which the employer is a member,

''(ii) who first becomes a participant under the plan in a plan year beginning after December 31, 1987, and

''(iii) has years of service greater than the minimum years of service necessary for eligibility to participate in the plan.

''(D) ELECTION.—An employer may elect not to have this subparagraph apply. Such an election, once made, may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary.

''(i) FUNDED CURRENT LIABILITY PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of this section, the term 'funded current liability percentage' means, with respect to any plan year, the percentage which—

''(1) the value of the plan's assets determined under subsection (c)(2), is of

''(2) the current liability under the plan.

''(j) FUNDING RESTORATION STATUS.—Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section—

''(1) NORMAL COST PAYMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a CSEC plan that is in funding restoration status for a plan year, for purposes of section 412, the term 'accumulated funding deficiency' means, for such plan year, the greater of—

''(i) the amount described in subsection (a), or

''(ii) the excess of the normal cost of the plan for the plan year over the amount actually contributed to or under the plan for the plan year.

''(B) NORMAL COST.—In the case of a CSEC plan that uses a spread gain funding method, for purposes of this subsection, the term 'normal cost' means normal cost as determined under the entry age normal funding method.

''(2) PLAN AMENDMENTS.—In the case of a CSEC plan that is in funding restoration status for a plan year, no amendment to such plan may take effect during such plan year if such amendment has the effect of increasing liabilities of the plan by means of increases in benefits, establishment of new benefits, changing the rate of benefit accrual, or changing the rate at which benefits become nonforfeitable. This paragraph shall not apply to any plan amendment that is required to comply with any applicable law. This paragraph shall cease to apply with respect to any plan year, effective as of the first day of the plan year (or if later, the effective date of the amendment) upon payment by the plan sponsor of a contribution to the plan (in addition to any contribution required under this section without regard to this paragraph) in an amount equal to the increase in the funding liability of the plan attributable to the plan amendment.

''(3) FUNDING RESTORATION PLAN.—The sponsor of a CSEC plan shall establish a written funding restoration plan within 180 days of the receipt by the plan sponsor of a certification from the plan actuary that the plan is in funding restoration status for a plan year. Such funding restoration plan shall consist of actions that are calculated, based on reasonably anticipated experience and reasonable actuarial assumptions, to increase the plan's funded percentage to 100 percent over a period that is not longer than the greater of 7 years or the shortest amount of time practicable. Such funding restoration plan shall take into account contributions required under this section (without regard to this paragraph). If a plan remains in funding restoration status for 2 or more years, such funding restoration plan shall be updated each year after the 1st such year within 180 days of receipt by the plan sponsor of a certification from the plan actuary that the plan remains in funding restoration status for the plan year.

''(4) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION BY PLAN ACTUARY.—Not later than the 90th day of each plan year of a CSEC plan, the plan actuary shall certify to the plan sponsor whether or not the plan is in funding restoration status for the plan year, based on the plan's funded percentage as of the beginning of the plan year. For this purpose, the actuary may conclusively rely on an estimate of—

''(A) the plan's funding liability, based on the funding liability of the plan for the preceding plan year and on reasonable actuarial estimates, assumptions, and methods, and

''(B) the amount of any contributions reasonably anticipated to be made for the preceding plan year.

Contributions described in subparagraph (B) shall be taken into account in determining the plan's funded percentage as of the beginning of the plan year.

''(5) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) FUNDING RESTORATION STATUS.—A CSEC plan shall be treated as in funding restoration status for a plan year if the plan's funded percentage as of the beginning of such plan year is less than 80 percent.

''(B) FUNDED PERCENTAGE.—The term 'funded percentage' means the ratio (expressed as a percentage) which—

''(i) the value of plan assets (as determined under subsection (c)(2)), bears to

''(ii) the plan's funding liability.

''(C) FUNDING LIABILITY.—The term 'funding liability' for a plan year means the present value of all benefits accrued or earned under the plan as of the beginning of the plan year, based on the assumptions used by the plan pursuant to this section, including the interest rate described in subsection (b)(5)(A) (without regard to subsection (b)(5)(B)).

''(D) SPREAD GAIN FUNDING METHOD.—The term 'spread gain funding method' has the meaning given such term under rules and forms issued by the Secretary.

''(E) PLAN SPONSOR.—The term 'plan sponsor' means, with respect to a CSEC plan, the association, committee, joint board of trustees, or other similar group of representatives of the parties who establish or maintain the plan.''.

(b) CSEC PLANS.—Section 413 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) CSEC PLANS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, in the case of a CSEC plan—

''(1) FUNDING.—The requirements of section 412 shall be determined as if all participants in the plan were employed by a single employer.

''(2) APPLICATION OF PROVISIONS.—Paragraphs (1), (2), (3), and (5) of subsection (c) shall apply.

''(3) DEDUCTION LIMITATIONS.—Each applicable limitation provided by section 404(a) shall be determined as if all participants in the plan were employed by a single employer. The amounts contributed to or under the plan by each employer who maintains the plan (for the portion of the taxable year included within a plan year) shall be considered not to exceed such applicable limitation if the anticipated employer contributions for such plan year of all employers (determined in a reasonable manner not inconsistent with regulations prescribed by the Secretary) do not exceed such limitation. If such anticipated contributions exceed such limitation, the portion of each such employer's contributions which is not deductible under section 404 shall be determined in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

''(4) ALLOCATIONS.—Allocations of amounts under paragraph (3) and subsection (c)(5) among the employers maintaining the plan shall not be inconsistent with the regulations prescribed for this purpose by the Secretary.''.

(c) SEPARATE RULES FOR CSEC PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 412(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (C) and inserting '', and'', and by inserting at the end thereof the following new subparagraph:

''(D) in the case of a CSEC plan, the employers make contributions to or under the plan for any plan year which, in the aggregate, are sufficient to ensure that the plan does not have an accumulated funding deficiency under section 433 as of the end of the plan year.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 412 of such Code is amended—

(A) by striking ''multiemployer plan'' in paragraph (A) of subsection (a)(2), in clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(B), the first place it appears in clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(A), and the last place it appears in paragraph (2) of subsection (d), and inserting ''multiemployer plan or a CSEC plan'',

(B) by striking ''430(j)'' in paragraph (1) of subsection (b) and inserting ''430(j) or under section 433(f)'',

(C)(i) by striking ''and'' at the end of clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(B),

(ii) by striking the period at the end of clause (ii) of subsection (c)(1)(B) and inserting '', and'', and

(iii) by inserting the following new clause after clause (ii) of subsection (c)(1)(B):

''(iii) in the case of a CSEC plan, the funding standard account shall be credited under section 433(b)(3)(C) with the amount of the waived funding deficiency and such amount shall be amortized as required under section 433(b)(2)(C).'',

(D) by striking ''under paragraph (1)'' in clause (i) of subsection (c)(4)(A) and inserting ''under paragraph (1) or for granting an extension under section 433(d)'',

(E) by striking ''waiver under this subsection'' in subparagraph (B) of subsection (c)(4) and inserting ''waiver under this subsection or an extension under 433(d)'',

(F) by striking ''waiver or modification'' in subclause (I) of subsection (c)(4)(B)(i) and inserting ''waiver, modification, or extension'',

(G) by striking ''waivers'' in the heading of subsection (c)(4)(C) and of clause (ii) of subsection (c)(4)(C) and inserting ''waivers or extensions'',

(H) by striking ''section 431(d)'' in subparagraph (A) of subsection (c)(7) and in paragraph (2) of subsection (d) and inserting ''section 431(d) or section 433(d)'',

(I) by striking ''and'' at the end of subclause (I) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) and inserting ''or the accumulated funding deficiency under section 433, whichever is applicable,'',

(J) by striking ''430(e)(2),'' in subclause (II) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) and inserting ''430(e)(2) or 433(b)(2)(C), whichever is applicable, and'',

(K) by adding immediately after subclause (II) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) the following new subclause:

''(III) the total amounts not paid by reason of an extension in effect under section 433(d),'', and

(L) by striking ''for waivers of'' in clause (ii) of subsection (c)(4)(C) and inserting ''for waivers or extensions with respect to''.

(3) BENEFIT RESTRICTIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (29) of section 401(a) of such Code is amended by striking ''multiemployer plan'' and inserting ''multiemployer plan or a CSEC plan''.

(B) CONFORMING CHANGE.—Subsection (a) of section 436 of such Code is amended by striking ''single-employer plan'' and inserting ''single-employer plan (other than a CSEC plan)''.

(4) BENEFIT INCREASES.—Subparagraph (C) of section 401(a)(33) of such Code is amended by striking ''multiemployer plans'' and inserting ''multiemployer plans or CSEC plans''.

(5) LIQUIDITY SHORTFALLS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (A) of section 401(a)(32) of such Code is amended by striking ''430(j)(4)'' each place it appears and inserting ''430(j)(4) or 433(f)(5)''.

(B) PERIOD OF SHORTFALL.—Subparagraph (C) of section 401(a)(32) of such Code is amended by striking ''430(j)(3) by reason of section 430(j)(4)(A) thereof'' and inserting ''430(j)(3) or 433(f) by reason of section 430(j)(4)(A) or 433(f)(5), respectively''.

(6) DEDUCTION LIMITS.—Subsection (o) of section 404 of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(8) CSEC PLANS.—Solely for purposes of this subsection, a CSEC plan shall be treated as though section 430 applied to such plan and the minimum required contribution for any plan year shall be the amount described in section 412(a)(2)(D).''.

(7) SECTION 420.—Paragraph (5) of section 420(e) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 430'' each place it appears and inserting ''sections 430 and 433''.

(8) COORDINATION WITH SECTION 4971.—

(A) Subsection (a) of section 4971 of such Code is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (1), by striking the period at the end of paragraph (2) and inserting '', and'', and by adding at the end thereof the following new paragraph:

''(3) in the case of a CSEC plan, 10 percent of the CSEC accumulated funding deficiency as of the end of the plan year ending with or within the taxable year.''.

(B) Subsection (b) of section 4971 of such Code is amended—

(i) by striking ''or'' at the end of paragraph (1), by adding ''or'' at the end of paragraph (2), and by inserting immediately after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph:

''(3) a tax is imposed under subsection (a)(3) on any CSEC accumulated funding deficiency and the CSEC accumulated funding deficiency is not corrected within the taxable period,'', and

(ii) by striking ''minimum required contributions or accumulated funding deficiency'' and inserting ''minimum required contribution, accumulated funding deficiency, or CSEC accumulated funding deficiency''.

(C) Subsection (c) of section 4971 of such Code is amended—

(i) by striking ''accumulated funding deficiency'' each place it appears in paragraph (2) and inserting ''accumulated funding deficiency or CSEC accumulated funding deficiency'',

(ii) by striking ''accumulated funding deficiency or unpaid minimum required contribution'' each place it appears in paragraph (3) and inserting ''accumulated funding deficiency, CSEC accumulated funding deficiency, or unpaid minimum required contribution'', and

(iii) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) CSEC ACCUMULATED FUNDING DEFICIENCY.—The term 'CSEC accumulated funding deficiency' means the accumulated funding deficiency determined under section 433.''.

(D) Paragraph (1) of section 4971(d) of such Code is amended by striking ''accumulated funding deficiency or unpaid minimum required contribution'' and inserting ''accumulated funding deficiency, CSEC accumulated funding deficiency, or unpaid minimum required contribution''.

(E) Subsection (f) of section 4971 of such Code is amended—

(i) by striking ''430(j)(4)'' in paragraph (1) and inserting ''430(j)(4) or 433(f)'',

(ii) by striking ''430(j)'' in paragraph (1)(B) and inserting ''430(j) or 433(f), whichever is applicable'', and

(iii) by striking ''412(m)(5)'' in paragraph (3)(A) and inserting ''430(j) or 433(f), whichever is applicable''.

(9) EXCISE TAX ON FAILURE TO ADOPT FUNDING RESTORATION PLAN.—Section 4971 of such Code is amended by redesignating subsection (h) as subsection (i), and by inserting after subsection (g) the following new subsection:

''(h) FAILURE OF A CSEC PLAN SPONSOR TO ADOPT FUNDING RESTORATION PLAN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a CSEC plan that is in funding restoration status (within the meaning of section 433(j)(5)(A)), there is hereby imposed a tax on the failure of such plan to adopt a funding restoration plan within the time prescribed under section 433(j)(3).

''(2) AMOUNT OF TAX.—The amount of the tax imposed under paragraph (1) with respect to any plan sponsor for any taxable year shall be the amount equal to $100 multiplied by the number of days during the taxable year which are included in the period beginning on the day following the close of the 180-day period described in section 433(j)(3) and ending on the day on which the funding restoration plan is adopted.

''(3) WAIVER BY SECRETARY.—In the case of a failure described in paragraph (1) which the Secretary determines is due to reasonable cause and not to willful neglect, the Secretary may waive a portion or all of the tax imposed by such paragraph.

''(4) LIABILITY FOR TAX.—The tax imposed by paragraph (1) shall be paid by the plan sponsor (within the meaning of section 433(j)(5)(E)).''.

(10) REPORTING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 6059(b) of such Code is amended by striking ''430,'' and inserting ''430, the accumulated funding deficiency under section 433,''.

(B) ASSUMPTIONS.—Subparagraph (B) of section 6059(b)(3) of such Code is amended by striking ''430(h)(1) or 431(c)(3)'' and inserting ''430(h)(1), 431(c)(3), or 433(c)(3)''.

SEC. 203. ELECTION NOT TO BE TREATED AS A CSEC PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 414(y) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as added by section 201, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) ELECTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If a plan falls within the definition of a CSEC plan under this subsection (without regard to this paragraph), such plan shall be a CSEC plan unless the plan sponsor elects not later than the close of the first plan year of the plan beginning after December 31, 2013, not to be treated as a CSEC plan. An election under the preceding sentence shall take effect for such plan year and, once made, may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary.

''(B) SPECIAL RULE.—If a plan described in subparagraph (A) is treated as a CSEC plan, section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, as amended by the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act of 2010, shall cease to apply to such plan as of the first date as of which such plan is treated as a CSEC plan.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply as of the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 2702. Mrs. HAGAN (for herself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered

Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1___. EXCEPTIONS TO ESCROW REQUIREMENT FOR FLOOD INSURANCE PAYMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), in the second sentence, by striking ''subparagraph (C)'' and inserting ''subparagraph (B)''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in clause (ii), by redesignating subclauses (I) and (II) as items (aa) and (bb), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(B) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subclauses (I) and (II), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(C) in the matter preceding subclause (I), as redesignated by subparagraph (B), by striking ''(A) or (B), if—'' and inserting the following: ''(A)—

''(i) if—'';

(D) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(E) by adding at the end the following

''(ii) in the case of a loan that—

''(I) is in a junior or subordinate position to a senior lien secured by the same residential improved real estate or mobile home for which flood insurance is being provided at the time of the origination of the loan;

''(II) is secured by residential improved real estate or a mobile home that is part of a condominium, cooperative, or other project development, if the residential improved real estate or mobile home is covered by a flood insurance policy that—

''(aa) meets the requirements that the regulated lending institution is required to enforce under subsection (b)(1);

''(bb) is provided by the condominium association, cooperative, homeowners association, or other applicable group; and

''(cc) the premium for which is paid by the condominium association, cooperative, homeowners association, or other applicable group as a common expense;

''(III) is secured by residential improved real estate or a mobile home that is used as collateral for a business purpose;

''(IV) is a home equity line of credit;

''(V) is a nonperforming loan; or

''(VI) has a term of not longer than 12 months.''.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) REQUIRED APPLICATION.—The amendments to section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)) made by section 100209(a) of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920) and by subsection (a) of this section shall apply to any loan that is originated, refinanced, increased, extended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2016.

(B) OPTIONAL APPLICATION.—

(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this subparagraph—

(I) the terms ''Federal entity for lending regulation'', ''improved real estate'', ''regulated lending institution'', and ''servicer'' have the meanings given the terms in section 3 of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4003);

(II) the term ''outstanding loan'' means a loan that—

(aa) is outstanding as of January 1, 2016;

(bb) is not subject to the requirement to escrow premiums and fees for flood insurance under section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)) as in effect on July 5, 2012; and

(cc) would, if the loan had been originated, refinanced, increased, extended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2016, be subject to the requirements under section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended; and

(III) the term ''section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended'' means section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)(A)), as amended by—

(aa) section 100209(a) of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920); and

(bb) subsection (a) of this section.

(ii) OPTION TO ESCROW FLOOD INSURANCE PAYMENTS.—Each Federal entity for lending regulation (after consultation and coordination with the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council) shall, by regulation, direct that each regulated lending institution or servicer of an outstanding loan shall offer and make available to a borrower the option to have the borrower's payment of premiums and fees for flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.), including the escrow of such payments, be treated in the same manner provided under section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended.

(2) REPEAL OF 2-YEAR DELAY ON APPLICABILITY.—Subsection (b) of section 100209 of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920) is repealed.

(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section or the amendments made by this section shall be construed to supersede, during the period beginning on July 6, 2012 and ending on December 31, 2015, the requirements under section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)), as in effect on July 5, 2012.

SA 2703. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. ___. STUDY OF VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD INSURANCE OPTIONS.

(a) STUDY.—

(1) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Administrator shall conduct a study to assess options, methods, and strategies for making available voluntary community-based flood insurance policies through the National Flood Insurance Program.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—The study conducted under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) take into consideration and analyze how voluntary community-based flood insurance policies—

(i) would affect communities having varying economic bases, geographic locations, flood hazard characteristics or classifications, and flood management approaches; and

(ii) could satisfy the applicable requirements under section 102 of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a); and

(B) evaluate the advisability of making available voluntary community-based flood insurance policies to communities, subdivisions of communities, and areas of residual risk.

(3) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the study required under paragraph (1), the Administrator may consult with the Comptroller General of the United States, as the Administrator determines is appropriate.

(b) REPORT BY THE ADMINISTRATOR.—

(1) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives a report that contains the results and conclusions of the study conducted under subsection (a).

(2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include recommendations for—

(A) the best manner to incorporate voluntary community-based flood insurance policies into the National Flood Insurance Program; and

(B) a strategy to implement voluntary community-based flood insurance policies that would encourage communities to undertake flood mitigation activities, including the construction, reconstruction, or improvement of levees, dams, or other flood control structures.

(c) REPORT BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date on which the Administrator submits the report required under subsection (b), the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) review the report submitted by the Administrator; and

(2) submit to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives a report that contains—

(A) an analysis of the report submitted by the Administrator;

(B) any comments or recommendations of the Comptroller General relating to the report submitted by the Administrator; and

(C) any other recommendations of the Comptroller General relating to community-based flood insurance policies.

SA 2704. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of section 103, add the following:

(h) DISCLOSURE.—

(1) CHANGE IN RATES UNDER BIGGERT-WATERS.—Not later than the date that is 6 months before the date on which any change in risk premium rates for flood insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program resulting from the amendment made by section 100207 of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 919) is implemented, the Administrator shall make publicly available the rate tables and underwriting guidelines that provide the basis for the change.

(2) CHANGE IN RATES UNDER THIS ACT.—Not later than the date that is 6 months before the date on which any change in risk premium rates for flood insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program resulting from this Act or any amendment made by this Act is implemented, the Administrator shall make publicly available the rate tables and underwriting guidelines that provide the basis for the change.

(3) REPORT ON POLICY AND CLAIMS DATA.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report on the feasibility of—

(i) releasing property-level policy and claims data for flood insurance coverage

under the National Flood Insurance Program; and

(ii) establishing guidelines for releasing property-level policy and claims data for flood insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program in accordance with section 552a of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the ''Privacy Act of 1974'').

(B) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include—

(i) an analysis and assessment of how releasing property-level policy and claims data for flood insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program will aid policy holders and insurers to understand how the Administration determines actuarial premium rates and assesses flood risks; and

(ii) recommendations for protecting personal information in accordance with section 552a of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the ''Privacy Act of 1974'').

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 110. MONTHLY INSTALLMENT PAYMENTS FOR PREMIUMS.

Section 1308(g) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015(g)) is amended by striking ''either annually or in more frequent installments'' and inserting ''annually, monthly, or in other installments that are more frequent than annually''.

SEC. 111. ACCOUNTING FOR FLOOD MITIGATION ACTIVITIES IN ESTIMATES OF PREMIUM RATES.

Section 1307(a)(1) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4014(a)(1)) is amended by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

''(A) based on consideration of—

''(i) the risk involved and accepted actuarial principles; and

''(ii) the flood mitigation activities that an owner or lessee has undertaken on a property, including differences in the risk involved due to land use measures, floodproofing, flood forecasting, and similar measures,''.

SA 2705. Mr. KING (for himself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In section 106, strike subsection (a) and insert the following:

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1363(f) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4104(f)) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence, by inserting after ''as the case may be,'' the following: ''or, in the case of an appeal that is resolved by submission of conflicting data to the Scientific Resolution Panel provided for in section 1363A, the community,''; and

(2) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: ''The Administrator may use such amounts from the National Flood Insurance Fund established under section 1310 as may be necessary to carry out this subsection.''.

SA 2706. Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. EXEMPTION FROM FEES FOR CERTAIN MAP CHANGE REQUESTS.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a requester shall be exempt from submitting a review or processing fee for a request for a flood insurance rate map change based on a habitat restoration project that is funded in whole or in part with Federal or State funds, including dam removal, culvert redesign or installation, or the installation of fish passage.

SA 2707. Mr. TOOMEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike sections 103 through 109 and insert the following:

SEC. 103. PHASE-IN OF FLOOD INSURANCE RATE INCREASES.

(a) MAP CHANGES.—Section 1308(h) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015(h)) is amended—

(1) in the second sentence, by striking ''shall be phased in over a 5-year period'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''shall be implemented by increasing the risk premium rate by 25 percent each year following such effective date until the risk premium rate accurately reflects the current risk of flood to such property.''; and

(2) in the third sentence, by striking ''shall be phased in over a 5-year period'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''shall be phased in by increasing the risk premium rate by 25 percent each year following the effective date of such issuance, revision, updating, or change.''.

(b) HOME SALE TRIGGER.—

(1) PHASE-IN.—Section 1308(e) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015(e)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''and'' at the end;

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

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) described in section 1307(g)(2) that are principal residences shall be increased by 25 percent each year, beginning in the year after the first sale of such a property that occurs after the date of enactment of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and continuing in each successive year regardless of any further sale or resale of the property, until the risk premium rate charged for the property accurately reflects the current risk of flood to the property.''.

(2) APPLICATION OF PHASE-IN TO PRINCIPAL RESIDENCES PURCHASED BETWEEN JULY 7, 2012 AND APRIL 1, 2013.—

(A) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term ''eligible policy'' means a flood insurance policy—

(i) that covers a principal residence that was purchased during the period beginning on July 7, 2012 and ending on April 1, 2013; and

(ii) for which the risk premium rate charged was increased, after the purchase described in clause (i), to the full risk premium rate estimated under subsection (a)(1) of section 1307 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4014) as required under subsection (g)(2) of such section (as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act).

(B) APPLICATION OF PHASE-IN TO RISK PREMIUM RATE UPON POLICY RENEWAL.—The risk premium rate charged for an eligible policy shall—

(i) on the date on which the policy is first renewed after the date of enactment of this Act, be adjusted to be the rate that would have been charged as of that date if the phase-in provision under paragraph (3) of section 1308(e) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015(e)), as added by paragraph (1) of this subsection, had been in effect when the property covered by the eligible policy was purchased; and

(ii) be increased by 25 percent each year thereafter, in accordance with paragraph (3) of section 1308(e) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015(e)), as added by paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(c) PROMULGATION OF REGULATIONS AND RATE TABLES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall promulgate such regulations and make available such rate tables as necessary to implement subsections (a) and (b) and the amendments made by those subsections, as though those subsections were enacted as part of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 916).

(2) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—To ensure community, stakeholder, and expert participation in the promulgation of regulations and the establishment of rate tables under this subsection, the Administrator shall—

(A) publish the regulations and rate tables in the Federal Register; and

(B) before promulgating final regulations and making available final rate tables, provide a period for public comment on the regulations and rate tables published under subparagraph (A) that is not shorter than 45 days.

(3) TIMING OF PREMIUM CHANGES.—To allow for appropriate implementation of subsections (a) and (b) and the amendments made by those subsections, the Administrator may not implement any premium changes with respect to policy holders, including charges or rebates, that are necessary to implement subsections (a) and (b) and the amendments made by those subsections until the date that is 6 months after the date on which the Administrator promulgates final regulations and makes available final rate tables under this subsection.

(d) FLOOD INSURANCE FEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1308 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(j) FEE TO OFFSET PHASE-IN OF CERTAIN PREMIUM RATE INCREASES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall charge an annual fee to each holder of a flood insurance policy issued under this Act to offset the costs of the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 and the amendments made by that Act.

''(2) AMOUNT.—In establishing an amount of the fee to be charged under paragraph (1), the Administrator shall charge a policyholder with an annual household income that is not less than $500,000 twice the amount that the Administrator charges a policyholder with an annual household income that is less than $500,000.''.

(2) APPLICABILITY.—The Administrator shall charge the fee required under section 1308(j) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as added by paragraph (1), with respect to any flood insurance policy that is issued or renewed on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 104. AFFORDABILITY STUDY AND REPORT.

Notwithstanding the deadline under section 100236(c) of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–

141; 126 Stat. 957), not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the full Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and the full Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the full Committee on Financial Services and the full Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives the affordability study and report required under such section.

SEC. 105. AFFORDABILITY STUDY FUNDING.

Section 100236(d) of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 957) is amended by striking ''not more than $750,000'' and inserting ''such amounts as may be necessary''.

SEC. 106. FUNDS TO REIMBURSE HOMEOWNERS AND COMMUNITIES FOR SUCCESSFUL MAP APPEALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1363(f) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4104(f)) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence, by inserting after ''as the case may be,'' the following: ''or, in the case of an appeal that is resolved by submission of conflicting data to the Scientific Resolution Panel provided for in section 1363A, the community,''; and

(2) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: ''The Administrator may use such amounts from the National Flood Insurance Fund established under section 1310 as may be necessary to carry out this subsection.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1310(a) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4017(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (6), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (7), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(8) for carrying out section 1363(f).''.

SEC. 107. FLOOD PROTECTION SYSTEMS.

(a) ADEQUATE PROGRESS ON CONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD PROTECTION SYSTEMS.—Section 1307(e) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4014(e)) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence, by inserting ''or reconstruction'' after ''construction'';

(2) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: ''The Administrator shall find that adequate progress on the construction or reconstruction of a flood protection system, based on the present value of the completed flood protection system, has been made only if (1) 100 percent of the cost of the system has been authorized, (2) at least 60 percent of the cost of the system has been appropriated, (3) at least 50 percent of the cost of the system has been expended, and (4) the system is at least 50 percent completed.''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following: ''Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in determining whether a community has made adequate progress on the construction, reconstruction, or improvement of a flood protection system, the Administrator shall consider all sources of funding, including Federal, State, and local funds.''.

(b) COMMUNITIES RESTORING DISACCREDITED FLOOD PROTECTION SYSTEMS.—Section 1307(f) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4014(f)) is amended by striking the first sentence and inserting the following: ''Notwithstanding any other provision of law, this subsection shall apply to riverine and coastal levees that are located in a community which has been determined by the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to be in the process of restoring flood protection afforded by a flood protection system that had been previously accredited on a Flood Insurance Rate Map as providing 100-year frequency flood protection but no longer does so, and shall apply without regard to the level of Federal funding of or participation in the construction, reconstruction, or improvement of the flood protection system.''.

SEC. 108. TREATMENT OF FLOODPROOFED RESIDENTIAL BASEMENTS.

In implementing section 1308(h) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015(h)), the Administrator shall rate a covered structure using the elevation difference between the floodproofed elevation of the covered structure and the adjusted base flood elevation of the covered structure.

SEC. 109. DESIGNATION OF FLOOD INSURANCE ADVOCATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall designate a Flood Insurance Advocate to advocate for the fair treatment of policy holders under the National Flood Insurance Program and property owners in the mapping of flood hazards, the identification of risks from flood, and the implementation of measures to minimize the risk of flood.

(b) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—The duties and responsibilities of the Flood Insurance Advocate designated under subsection (a) shall be to—

(1) educate property owners and policyholders under the National Flood Insurance Program on—

(A) individual flood risks;

(B) flood mitigation;

(C) measures to reduce flood insurance rates through effective mitigation; and

(D) the flood insurance rate map review and amendment process;

(2) assist policy holders under the National Flood Insurance Program and property owners to understand the procedural requirements related to appealing preliminary flood insurance rate maps and implementing measures to mitigate evolving flood risks;

(3) assist in the development of regional capacity to respond to individual constituent concerns about flood insurance rate map amendments and revisions;

(4) coordinate outreach and education with local officials and community leaders in areas impacted by proposed flood insurance rate map amendments and revisions; and

(5) aid potential policy holders under the National Flood Insurance Program in obtaining and verifying accurate and reliable flood insurance rate information when purchasing or renewing a flood insurance policy.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated for each fiscal year such sums as may be necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Flood Insurance Advocate.

SEC. 110. HOME IMPROVEMENT FAIRNESS.

Section 1307(a)(2)(E)(ii) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4014(a)(2)(E)(ii)) is amended by striking ''30 percent'' and inserting ''50 percent''.

SEC. 111. EXCEPTIONS TO ESCROW REQUIREMENT FOR FLOOD INSURANCE PAYMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), in the second sentence, by striking ''subparagraph (C)'' and inserting ''subparagraph (B)''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in clause (ii), by redesignating subclauses (I) and (II) as items (aa) and (bb), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(B) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subclauses (I) and (II), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(C) in the matter preceding subclause (I), as redesignated by subparagraph (B), by striking ''(A) or (B), if—'' and inserting the following: ''(A)—

''(i) if—'';

(D) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(E) by adding at the end the following

''(ii) in the case of a loan that is—

''(I) in a junior or subordinate position to a senior lien secured by the same property for which flood insurance is being provided at the time of the origination of the loan;

''(II) secured by residential improved real estate or a mobile home that is part of a condominium, cooperative, or other project development, if the residential improved real estate or mobile home is covered by a flood insurance policy that—

''(aa) meets the requirements that the regulated lending institution is required to enforce under subsection (b)(1);

''(bb) is provided by the condominium association, cooperative, homeowners association, or other applicable group; and

''(cc) the premium for which is paid by the condominium association, cooperative, homeowners association, or other applicable group as a common expense;

''(III) secured by residential improved real estate or a mobile home that is used as collateral for a business purpose; or

''(IV) a home equity line of credit or a home equity loan.''.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) REQUIRED APPLICATION.—The amendments to section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)) made by section 100209(a) of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920) and by subsection (a) of this section shall apply to any loan that is originated, refinanced, increased, extended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2016.

(B) OPTIONAL APPLICATION.—

(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this subparagraph—

(I) the terms ''Federal entity for lending regulation'', ''improved real estate'', ''regulated lending institution'', and ''servicer'' have the meanings given the terms in section 3 of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4003);

(II) the term ''outstanding loan'' means a loan that—

(aa) is outstanding as of January 1, 2016; and

(bb) would, if the loan had been originated, refinanced, increased, extended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2016, be subject to the requirements under section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended; and

(III) the term ''section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended'' means section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)(A)), as amended by—

(aa) section 100209(a) of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920); and

(bb) subsection (a) of this section.

(ii) OPTION TO ESCROW FLOOD INSURANCE PAYMENTS.—Each Federal entity for lending regulation (after consultation and coordination with the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council) shall, by regulation, direct that each regulated lending institution or servicer of an outstanding loan shall offer and make available to a borrower the option to have the borrower's payment of premiums and fees for flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.), including the escrow of such payments, be treated in the same manner provided under section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended.

(2) REPEAL OF 2-YEAR DELAY ON APPLICABILITY.—Subsection (b) of section 100209 of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform

Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920) is repealed.

SA 2708. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1___. FLOOD MITIGATION METHODS FOR URBAN BUILDINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall issue guidelines for property owners that—

(1) provide alternative methods of mitigation, other than building elevation, to reduce flood risk to urban residential buildings that cannot be elevated due to their structural characteristics, including—

(A) types of building materials; and

(B) types of floodproofing; and

(2) inform property owners about how the implementation of mitigation methods described in paragraph (1) may affect risk premium rates for flood insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program.

(b) CALCULATION OF RISK PREMIUM RATES.—In calculating the risk premium rate charged for flood insurance for a property under section 1308 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015), the Administrator shall take into account the implementation of any mitigation method identified by the Administrator in the guidance issued under subsection (a) of this section.

SA 2709. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 110. LIMITATIONS ON FORCE-PLACED INSURANCE.

Section 102(e) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(e)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (3) through (6) as paragraphs (4) through (7), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

''(3) LIMITATIONS ON LENDERS AND SERVICERS.—

''(A) PAYMENTS FROM INSURANCE COMPANIES.—An lender or servicer, or an affiliate of a lender or servicer, may not receive a commission or any other payment from an insurance company in connection with securing business under paragraph (2) from the insurance company.

''(B) PURCHASE FROM AFFILIATED INSURANCE COMPANIES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), a lender or servicer, or an affiliate of a lender or servicer, that purchases insurance under paragraph (2) may not purchase the insurance from an insurance company that is affiliated with the lender or servicer.

''(ii) EXCEPTION.—Clause (i) shall not apply to the purchase of insurance under paragraph (2) by a lender or servicer, or an affiliate of a lender or servicer, that is a bank, or a Federal credit union or State credit union (as those terms are defined in section 101 of the Federal Credit Union Act (12 U.S.C. 1752)), with assets of not more than $1,000,000,000.''.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I submit the following notice in writing: In accordance with Rule V of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby give notice in writing that it is my intention to move to suspend Rule XXII, including germaneness requirements, for the purpose of proposing and considering amendment no. 2606 on S. 1845, as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. 7. ENDING UNEMPLOYMENT PAYMENTS TO JOBLESS MILLIONAIRES AND BILLIONAIRES.

(a) PROHIBITION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no Federal funds may be used to make payments of unemployment compensation (including such compensation under the Federal-State Extended Compensation Act of 1970 and the emergency unemployment compensation program under title IV of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008) to an individual whose adjusted gross income in the preceding year was equal to or greater than $1,000,000.

(b) COMPLIANCE.—Unemployment Insurance applications shall include a form or procedure for an individual applicant to certify the individual's adjusted gross income was not equal to or greater than $1,000,000 in the preceding year.

(c) AUDITS.—The certifications required by subsection (b) shall be auditable by the U.S. Department of Labor or the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

(d) STATUS OF APPLICANTS.—It is the duty of the states to verify the residency, employment, legal, and income status of applicants for Unemployment Insurance and no Federal funds may be expended for purposes of determining an individual's eligibility under this Act.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The prohibition under subsection (a) shall apply to weeks of unemployment beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, January 28, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mrs. MURRAY. 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 Tuesday, January 28, 2014, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct a hearing on Tuesday, January 28, 2014, at 10:00 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

For further information please contact David Berick at (202) 224–2209, Megan Brewster (202) 224–6689 or Brian Hughes, (202) 224–7555.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, January 28, 2014, at 10:00 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, January 28, 2014, at 10:00 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Judicial Nominations.''

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, January 28, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Federal Programs and the Federal Workforce of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, January 28, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Examining the Use and Abuse of Administratively Uncontrollable Overtime at the Department of Homeland Security.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Rose Mutiso, a fellow in Senator COONS's office, be given floor privileges for Wednesday, January 29, 2014.

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

COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION FLEXIBILITY ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to

Calendar No. 230, S. 1302; that the committee-reported substitute be considered; the Harkin-Roberts substitute amendment which is at the desk be agreed to; the committee-reported substitute, as amended, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; further, that if the Senate receives a bill from the House that is identical to the text of S. 1302 as passed by the Senate, then the House bill be read three times and passed with no intervening action or debate.

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

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill (S. 1302) to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans, which had been reported from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Cooperative and Small Employer Charity Pension Flexibility Act''.

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

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS OF POLICY.

Congress finds as follows:

(1) Defined benefit pension plans are a cost-effective way for cooperative associations and charities to provide their employees with economic security in retirement.

(2) Many cooperative associations and charitable organizations are only able to provide their employees with defined benefit pension plans because those organizations are able to pool their resources using the multiple employer plan structure.

(3) The pension funding rules should encourage cooperative associations and charities to continue to provide their employees with pension benefits.

SEC. 3. DEFINITION OF COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION PLANS.

(a) AMENDMENT TO ERISA.—Section 210 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1060) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f) COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION PLANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this title, except as provided in this subsection, a CSEC plan is an employee pension benefit plan (other than a multiemployer plan) that is a defined benefit plan—

''(A) to which section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 applies, without regard to—

''(i) section 104(a)(2) of such Act;

''(ii) the amendments to such section 104 by section 202(b) of the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act of 2010; and

''(iii) paragraph (3)(B); or

''(B) that, as of January 1, 2013, was maintained by more than one employer and all of the employers were organizations described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(2) AGGREGATION.—All employers that are treated as a single employer under subsection (b) or (c) of section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be treated as a single employer for purposes of determining if a plan was maintained by more than one employer under paragraph (1)(B).''.

(b) AMENDMENT TO CODE.—Section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(y) COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION PLANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this title, except as provided in this subsection, a CSEC plan is a defined benefit plan (other than a multiemployer plan)—

''(A) to which section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 applies, without regard to—

''(i) section 104(a)(2) of such Act;

''(ii) the amendments to such section 104 by section 202(b) of the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act of 2010; and

''(iii) paragraph (3)(B); or

''(B) that, as of January 1, 2013, was maintained by more than one employer and all of the employers were organizations described in section 501(c)(3).

''(2) AGGREGATION.—All employers that are treated as a single employer under subsection (b) or (c) shall be treated as a single employer for purposes of determining if a plan was maintained by more than one employer under paragraph (1)(B).''.

SEC. 4. FUNDING RULES APPLICABLE TO COOPERATIVE AND SMALL EMPLOYER CHARITY PENSION PLANS.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO ERISA.—

(1) MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARDS UNDER ERISA.—Part 3 of title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1081 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 306. MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARDS.

''(a) GENERAL RULE.—For purposes of section 302, the term 'accumulated funding deficiency' for a CSEC plan means the excess of the total charges to the funding standard account for all plan years (beginning with the first plan year to which section 302 applies) over the total credits to such account for such years or, if less, the excess of the total charges to the alternative minimum funding standard account for such plan years over the total credits to such account for such years.

''(b) FUNDING STANDARD ACCOUNT.—

''(1) ACCOUNT REQUIRED.—Each plan to which this section applies shall establish and maintain a funding standard account. Such account shall be credited and charged solely as provided in this section.

''(2) CHARGES TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year, the funding standard account shall be charged with the sum of—

''(A) the normal cost of the plan for the plan year,

''(B) the amounts necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized)—

''(i) in the case of a plan in existence on January 1, 1974, the unfunded past service liability under the plan on the first day of the first plan year to which section 302 applies, over a period of 40 plan years,

''(ii) in the case of a plan which comes into existence after January 1, 1974, but before the first day of the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, the unfunded past service liability under the plan on the first day of the first plan year to which section 302 applies, over a period of 30 plan years,

''(iii) in the case of a plan that is subject to section 303 for the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, the sum of—

''(I) the plan's funding standard carryover balance and prefunding balance (as such terms are defined in section 303(f)) as of the end of such plan year, and

''(II) the unfunded past service liability under the plan for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013,

over a period of 15 years,

''(iv) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net increase (if any) in unfunded past service liability under the plan arising from plan amendments adopted in such year, over a period of 15 plan years,

''(v) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net experience loss (if any) under the plan, over a period of 5 plan years, and

''(vi) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net loss (if any) resulting from changes in actuarial assumptions used under the plan, over a period of 10 plan years,

''(C) the amount necessary to amortize each waived funding deficiency (within the meaning of section 302(c)(3)) for each prior plan year in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 5 plan years,

''(D) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 5 plan years any amount credited to the funding standard account under paragraph (3)(D), and

''(E) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 20 years the contributions which would be required to be made under the plan but for the provisions of section 302(c)(7)(A)(i)(I) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006).

''(3) CREDITS TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year, the funding standard account shall be credited with the sum of—

''(A) the amount considered contributed by the employer to or under the plan for the plan year,

''(B) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized)—

''(i) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net decrease (if any) in unfunded past service liability under the plan arising from plan amendments adopted in such year, over a period of 15 plan years,

''(ii) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net experience gain (if any) under the plan, over a period of 5 plan years, and

''(iii) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net gain (if any) resulting from changes in actuarial assumptions used under the plan, over a period of 10 plan years,

''(C) the amount of the waived funding deficiency (within the meaning of section 302(c)(3)) for the plan year,

''(D) in the case of a plan year for which the accumulated funding deficiency is determined under the funding standard account if such plan year follows a plan year for which such deficiency was determined under the alternative minimum funding standard, the excess (if any) of any debit balance in the funding standard account (determined without regard to this subparagraph) over any debit balance in the alternative minimum funding standard account, and

''(E) for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, in the case of a plan that is subject to section 303 for the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, the sum of the plan's funding standard carryover balance and prefunding balance (as such terms are defined in section 302(f)) as of the end of the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014.

''(4) COMBINING AND OFFSETTING AMOUNTS TO BE AMORTIZED.—Under regulations prescribed

by the Secretary of the Treasury, amounts required to be amortized under paragraph (2) or paragraph (3), as the case may be—

''(A) may be combined into one amount under such paragraph to be amortized over a period determined on the basis of the remaining amortization period for all items entering into such combined amount, and

''(B) may be offset against amounts required to be amortized under the other such paragraph, with the resulting amount to be amortized over a period determined on the basis of the remaining amortization periods for all items entering into whichever of the two amounts being offset is the greater.

''(5) INTEREST.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the funding standard account (and items therein) shall be charged or credited (as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury) with interest at the appropriate rate consistent with the rate or rates of interest used under the plan to determine costs.

''(B) EXCEPTION.—The interest rate used for purposes of computing the amortization charge described in subsection (b)(2)(C) or for purposes of any arrangement under subsection (d) for any plan year shall be the greater of (i) 150 percent of the Federal mid-term rate (as in effect under section 1274 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for the 1st month of such plan year), or (ii) the rate of interest determined under subparagraph (A).

''(6) AMORTIZATION SCHEDULES IN EFFECT.—Amortization schedules for amounts described in paragraphs (2) and (3) that are in effect as of the last day of the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, by reason of section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 shall remain in effect pursuant to their terms and this section, except that such amounts shall not be amortized again under this section. In the case of a plan that is subject to section 303 for the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, any amortization schedules and bases for plan years beginning before such date shall be reduced to zero.

''(c) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(1) DETERMINATIONS TO BE MADE UNDER FUNDING METHOD.—For purposes of this section, normal costs, accrued liability, past service liabilities, and experience gains and losses shall be determined under the funding method used to determine costs under the plan.

''(2) VALUATION OF ASSETS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, the value of the plan's assets shall be determined on the basis of any reasonable actuarial method of valuation which takes into account fair market value and which is permitted under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(B) DEDICATED BOND PORTFOLIO.—The Secretary of the Treasury may by regulations provide that the value of any dedicated bond portfolio of a plan shall be determined by using the interest rate under section 302(b)(5) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006).

''(3) ACTUARIAL ASSUMPTIONS MUST BE REASONABLE.—For purposes of this section, all costs, liabilities, rates of interest, and other factors under the plan shall be determined on the basis of actuarial assumptions and methods—

''(A) each of which is reasonable (taking into account the experience of the plan and reasonable expectations) or which, in the aggregate, result in a total contribution equivalent to that which would be determined if each such assumption and method were reasonable, and

''(B) which, in combination, offer the actuary's best estimate of anticipated experience under the plan.

''(4) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN CHANGES AS EXPERIENCE GAIN OR LOSS.—For purposes of this section, if—

''(A) a change in benefits under the Social Security Act or in other retirement benefits created under Federal or State law, or

''(B) a change in the definition of the term 'wages' under section 3121 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or a change in the amount of such wages taken into account under regulations prescribed for purposes of section 401(a)(5) of such Code,

results in an increase or decrease in accrued liability under a plan, such increase or decrease shall be treated as an experience loss or gain.

''(5) FUNDING METHOD AND PLAN YEAR.—

''(A) FUNDING METHODS AVAILABLE.—All funding methods available to CSEC plans under section 302 (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006) shall continue to be available under this section.

''(B) NOT AFFECTED BY CESSATION OF BENEFIT ACCRUALS.—The availability of any funding method, including all spread gain funding methods, shall not be affected by whether benefit accruals under a plan have ceased. Except as otherwise provided in subparagraph (C) or in regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury, if benefit accruals have ceased under a plan, the spread gain funding methods may be applied by amortizing over the average expected future lives of all participants.

''(C) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—In the case of a plan amortizing over the average expected future lives of all participants pursuant to the second sentence of subparagraph (B), such amortization amount for any plan year shall not be less than the sum of—

''(i) the amount determined by amortizing, as of the first year for which the plan amortizes over the average future lives of all participants, the entire unfunded past service liability in equal installments over 15 years, and

''(ii) the amount determined by amortizing any increase or decrease in such unfunded past service liability in any subsequent year, other than an increase or decrease attributable to contributions or expected experience, in equal installments over 15 years.

''(D) CHANGES.—If the funding method for a plan is changed, the new funding method shall become the funding method used to determine costs and liabilities under the plan only if the change is approved by the Secretary of the Treasury. The preceding sentence shall not apply to any change made pursuant to, or permitted by, the second sentence of subparagraph (B) if such change is made for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013. Any such change may be made without the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury. If the plan year for a plan is changed, the new plan year shall become the plan year for the plan only if the change is approved by the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(E) APPROVAL REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS BY CERTAIN SINGLE-EMPLOYER PLANS SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIREMENT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—No actuarial assumption (other than the assumptions described in subsection (h)(3)) used to determine the current liability for a plan to which this subparagraph applies may be changed without the approval of the Secretary.

''(ii) PLANS TO WHICH SUBPARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This subparagraph shall apply to a plan only if—

''(I) the plan is a CSEC plan,

''(II) the aggregate unfunded vested benefits as of the close of the preceding plan year (as determined under section 4006(a)(3)(E)(iii)) of such plan and all other plans maintained by the contributing sponsors (as defined in section 4001(a)(13)) and members of such sponsors' controlled groups (as defined in section 4001(a)(14)) which are covered by title IV (disregarding plans with no unfunded vested benefits) exceed $50,000,000, and

''(III) the change in assumptions (determined after taking into account any changes in interest rate and mortality table) results in a decrease in the funding shortfall of the plan for the current plan year that exceeds $50,000,000, or that exceeds $5,000,000 and that is 5 percent or more of the current liability of the plan before such change.

''(6) FULL FUNDING.—If, as of the close of a plan year, a plan would (without regard to this paragraph) have an accumulated funding deficiency (determined without regard to the alternative minimum funding standard account permitted under subsection (e)) in excess of the full funding limitation—

''(A) the funding standard account shall be credited with the amount of such excess, and

''(B) all amounts described in paragraphs (2)(B), (C), and (D) and (3)(B) of subsection (b) which are required to be amortized shall be considered fully amortized for purposes of such paragraphs.

''(7) FULL-FUNDING LIMITATION.—For purposes of paragraph (6), the term 'full-funding limitation' means the excess (if any) of—

''(A) the accrued liability (including normal cost) under the plan (determined under the entry age normal funding method if such accrued liability cannot be directly calculated under the funding method used for the plan), over

''(B) the lesser of—

''(i) the fair market value of the plan's assets, or

''(ii) the value of such assets determined under paragraph (2).

''(C) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In no event shall the full-funding limitation determined under subparagraph (A) be less than the excess (if any) of—

''(I) 90 percent of the current liability (determined without regard to paragraph (4) of subsection (h)) of the plan (including the expected increase in such current liability due to benefits accruing during the plan year), over

''(II) the value of the plan's assets determined under paragraph (2).

''(ii) ASSETS.—For purposes of clause (i), assets shall not be reduced by any credit balance in the funding standard account.

''(8) ANNUAL VALUATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, a determination of experience gains and losses and a valuation of the plan's liability shall be made not less frequently than once every year, except that such determination shall be made more frequently to the extent required in particular cases under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(B) VALUATION DATE.—

''(i) CURRENT YEAR.—Except as provided in clause (ii), the valuation referred to in subparagraph (A) shall be made as of a date within the plan year to which the valuation refers or within one month prior to the beginning of such year.

''(ii) USE OF PRIOR YEAR VALUATION.—The valuation referred to in subparagraph (A) may be made as of a date within the plan year prior to the year to which the valuation refers if, as of such date, the value of the assets of the plan are not less than 100 percent of the plan's current liability.

''(iii) ADJUSTMENTS.—Information under clause (ii) shall, in accordance with regulations, be actuarially adjusted to reflect significant differences in participants.

''(iv) LIMITATION.—A change in funding method to use a prior year valuation, as provided in clause (ii), may not be made unless as of the valuation date within the prior plan year, the value of the assets of the plan are not less than 125 percent of the plan's current liability.

''(9) TIME WHEN CERTAIN CONTRIBUTIONS DEEMED MADE.—For purposes of this section, any contributions for a plan year made by an employer during the period—

''(A) beginning on the day after the last day of such plan year, and

''(B) ending on the day which is 8½ months after the close of the plan year,

shall be deemed to have been made on such last day.

''(10) ANTICIPATION OF BENEFIT INCREASES EFFECTIVE IN THE FUTURE.—In determining projected benefits, the funding method of a collectively bargained CSEC plan described in section 413(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (other than a multiemployer plan) shall anticipate benefit increases scheduled to take effect during the term of the collective bargaining agreement applicable to the plan.

''(d) EXTENSION OF AMORTIZATION PERIODS.—The period of years required to amortize any unfunded liability (described in any clause of subsection (b)(2)(B)) of any plan may be extended by the Secretary for a period of time (not in excess of 10 years) if such Secretary determines that such extension would carry out the purposes of this Act and provide adequate protection for participants under the plan and their beneficiaries, and if such Secretary determines that the failure to permit such extension would result in—

''(1) a substantial risk to the voluntary continuation of the plan, or

''(2) a substantial curtailment of pension benefit levels or employee compensation.

''(e) ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARD.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A CSEC plan which uses a funding method that requires contributions in all years not less than those required under the entry age normal funding method may maintain an alternative minimum funding standard account for any plan year. Such account shall be credited and charged solely as provided in this subsection.

''(2) CHARGES AND CREDITS TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year the alternative minimum funding standard account shall be—

''(A) charged with the sum of—

''(i) the lesser of normal cost under the funding method used under the plan or normal cost determined under the unit credit method,

''(ii) the excess, if any, of the present value of accrued benefits under the plan over the fair market value of the assets, and

''(iii) an amount equal to the excess (if any) of credits to the alternative minimum standard account for all prior plan years over charges to such account for all such years, and

''(B) credited with the amount considered contributed by the employer to or under the plan for the plan year.

''(3) SPECIAL RULES.—The alternative minimum funding standard account (and items therein) shall be charged or credited with interest in the manner provided under subsection (b)(5) with respect to the funding standard account.

''(f) QUARTERLY CONTRIBUTIONS REQUIRED.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If a CSEC plan which has a funded current liability percentage for the preceding plan year of less than 100 percent fails to pay the full amount of a required installment for the plan year, then the rate of interest charged to the funding standard account under subsection (b)(5) with respect to the amount of the underpayment for the period of the underpayment shall be equal to the greater of—

''(A) 175 percent of the Federal mid-term rate (as in effect under section 1274 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for the 1st month of such plan year), or

''(B) the rate of interest used under the plan in determining costs.

''(2) AMOUNT OF UNDERPAYMENT, PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—For purposes of paragraph (1)—

''(A) AMOUNT.—The amount of the underpayment shall be the excess of—

''(i) the required installment, over

''(ii) the amount (if any) of the installment contributed to or under the plan on or before the due date for the installment.

''(B) PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—The period for which interest is charged under this subsection with regard to any portion of the underpayment shall run from the due date for the installment to the date on which such portion is contributed to or under the plan (determined without regard to subsection (c)(9)).

''(C) ORDER OF CREDITING CONTRIBUTIONS.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(ii), contributions shall be credited against unpaid required installments in the order in which such installments are required to be paid.

''(3) NUMBER OF REQUIRED INSTALLMENTS; DUE DATES.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) PAYABLE IN 4 INSTALLMENTS.—There shall be 4 required installments for each plan year.

''(B) TIME FOR PAYMENT OF INSTALLMENTS.—

''In the case of the following required installments:	***The due date is:***
1st	*April 15*
2nd	*July 15*
3rd	*October 15*
4th	*January 15 of the following year.*

''(4) AMOUNT OF REQUIRED INSTALLMENT.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The amount of any required installment shall be 25 percent of the required annual payment.

''(B) REQUIRED ANNUAL PAYMENT.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'required annual payment' means the lesser of—

''(i) 90 percent of the amount required to be contributed to or under the plan by the employer for the plan year under section 302 (without regard to any waiver under subsection (c) thereof), or

''(ii) 100 percent of the amount so required for the preceding plan year.

Clause (ii) shall not apply if the preceding plan year was not a year of 12 months.

''(5) LIQUIDITY REQUIREMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A plan to which this paragraph applies shall be treated as failing to pay the full amount of any required installment to the extent that the value of the liquid assets paid in such installment is less than the liquidity shortfall (whether or not such liquidity shortfall exceeds the amount of such installment required to be paid but for this paragraph).

''(B) PLANS TO WHICH PARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This paragraph shall apply to a CSEC plan other than a plan described in section 302(d)(6)(A) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006) which—

''(i) is required to pay installments under this subsection for a plan year, and

''(ii) has a liquidity shortfall for any quarter during such plan year.

''(C) PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—For purposes of paragraph (1), any portion of an installment that is treated as not paid under subparagraph (A) shall continue to be treated as unpaid until the close of the quarter in which the due date for such installment occurs.

''(D) LIMITATION ON INCREASE.—If the amount of any required installment is increased by reason of subparagraph (A), in no event shall such increase exceed the amount which, when added to prior installments for the plan year, is necessary to increase the funded current liability percentage (taking into account the expected increase in current liability due to benefits accruing during the plan year) to 100 percent.

''(E) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this paragraph:

''(i) LIQUIDITY SHORTFALL.—The term 'liquidity shortfall' means, with respect to any required installment, an amount equal to the excess (as of the last day of the quarter for which such installment is made) of the base amount with respect to such quarter over the value (as of such last day) of the plan's liquid assets.

''(ii) BASE AMOUNT.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—The term 'base amount' means, with respect to any quarter, an amount equal to 3 times the sum of the adjusted disbursements from the plan for the 12 months ending on the last day of such quarter.

''(II) SPECIAL RULE.—If the amount determined under subclause (I) exceeds an amount equal to 2 times the sum of the adjusted disbursements from the plan for the 36 months ending on the last day of the quarter and an enrolled actuary certifies to the satisfaction of the Secretary of the Treasury that such excess is the result of nonrecurring circumstances, the base amount with respect to such quarter shall be determined without regard to amounts related to those nonrecurring circumstances.

''(iii) DISBURSEMENTS FROM THE PLAN.—The term 'disbursements from the plan' means all disbursements from the trust, including purchases of annuities, payments of single sums and other benefits, and administrative expenses.

''(iv) ADJUSTED DISBURSEMENTS.—The term 'adjusted disbursements' means disbursements from the plan reduced by the product of—

''(I) the plan's funded current liability percentage for the plan year, and

''(II) the sum of the purchases of annuities, payments of single sums, and such other disbursements as the Secretary of the Treasury shall provide in regulations.

''(v) LIQUID ASSETS.—The term 'liquid assets' means cash, marketable securities and such other assets as specified by the Secretary of the Treasury in regulations.

''(vi) QUARTER.—The term 'quarter' means, with respect to any required installment, the 3-month period preceding the month in which the due date for such installment occurs.

''(F) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe such regulations as are necessary to carry out this paragraph.

''(6) FISCAL YEARS AND SHORT YEARS.—

''(A) FISCAL YEARS.—In applying this subsection to a plan year beginning on any date other than January 1, there shall be substituted for the months specified in this subsection, the months which correspond thereto.

''(B) SHORT PLAN YEAR.—This subsection shall be applied to plan years of less than 12 months in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(g) IMPOSITION OF LIEN WHERE FAILURE TO MAKE REQUIRED CONTRIBUTIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a plan to which this section applies, if—

''(A) any person fails to make a required installment under subsection (f) or any other payment required under this section before the due date for such installment or other payment, and

''(B) the unpaid balance of such installment or other payment (including interest), when added to the aggregate unpaid balance of all preceding such installments or other payments for which payment was not made before the due date (including interest), exceeds $1,000,000,

then there shall be a lien in favor of the plan in the amount determined under paragraph (3) upon all property and rights to property, whether real or personal, belonging to such person and any other person who is a member of the same controlled group of which such person is a member.

''(2) PLANS TO WHICH SUBSECTION APPLIES.—This subsection shall apply to a CSEC plan for any plan year for which the funded current liability percentage of such plan is less than 100 percent. This subsection shall not apply to any plan to which section 4021 does not apply (as such section is in effect on the date of the enactment of the Retirement Protection Act of 1994).

''(3) AMOUNT OF LIEN.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the amount of the lien shall be equal to the aggregate unpaid balance of required installments and other payments required under this section (including interest)—

''(A) for plan years beginning after 1987, and

''(B) for which payment has not been made before the due date.

''(4) NOTICE OF FAILURE; LIEN.—

''(A) NOTICE OF FAILURE.—A person committing a failure described in paragraph (1) shall notify the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation of such failure within 10 days of the due date for the required installment or other payment.

''(B) PERIOD OF LIEN.—The lien imposed by paragraph (1) shall arise on the due date for the required installment or other payment and shall continue until the last day of the first plan year in which the plan ceases to be described in paragraph (1)(B). Such lien shall continue to run without regard to whether such plan continues to be described in paragraph (2) during the period referred to in the preceding sentence.

''(C) CERTAIN RULES TO APPLY.—Any amount with respect to which a lien is imposed under paragraph (1) shall be treated as taxes due and owing the United States and rules similar to the rules of subsections (c), (d), and (e) of section 4068 shall apply with respect to a lien imposed by subsection (a) and the amount with respect to such lien.

''(5) ENFORCEMENT.—Any lien created under paragraph (1) may be perfected and enforced only by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, or at the direction of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, by any contributing employer (or any member of the controlled group of the contributing employer).

''(6) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) DUE DATE; REQUIRED INSTALLMENT.—The terms 'due date' and 'required installment' have the meanings given such terms by subsection (f), except that in the case of a payment other than a required installment, the due date shall be the date such payment is required to be made under this section.

''(B) CONTROLLED GROUP.—The term 'controlled group' means any group treated as a single employer under subsections (b), (c), (m), and (o) of section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(h) CURRENT LIABILITY.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'current liability' means all liabilities to employees and their beneficiaries under the plan.

''(2) TREATMENT OF UNPREDICTABLE CONTINGENT EVENT BENEFITS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of paragraph (1), any unpredictable contingent event benefit shall not be taken into account until the event on which the benefit is contingent occurs.

''(B) UNPREDICTABLE CONTINGENT EVENT BENEFIT.—The term 'unpredictable contingent event benefit' means any benefit contingent on an event other than—

''(i) age, service, compensation, death, or disability, or

''(ii) an event which is reasonably and reliably predictable (as determined by the Secretary of the Treasury).

''(3) INTEREST RATE AND MORTALITY ASSUMPTIONS USED.—

''(A) INTEREST RATE.—The rate of interest used to determine current liability under this section shall be the third segment rate determined under section 303(h)(2)(C).

''(B) MORTALITY TABLES.—

''(i) SECRETARIAL AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of the Treasury may by regulation prescribe mortality tables to be used in determining current liability under this subsection. Such tables shall be based upon the actual experience of pension plans and projected trends in such experience. In prescribing such tables, the Secretary of the Treasury shall take into account results of available independent studies of mortality of individuals covered by pension plans.

''(ii) PERIODIC REVIEW.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall periodically (at least every 5 years) review any tables in effect under this subsection and shall, to the extent the Secretary of the Treasury determines necessary, by regulation update the tables to reflect the actual experience of pension plans and projected trends in such experience.

''(C) SEPARATE MORTALITY TABLES FOR THE DISABLED.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (B)—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of plan years beginning after December 31, 1995, the Secretary of the Treasury shall establish mortality tables which may be used (in lieu of the tables under subparagraph (B)) to determine current liability under this subsection for individuals who are entitled to benefits under the plan on account of disability. The Secretary of the Treasury shall establish separate tables for individuals whose disabilities occur in plan years beginning before January 1, 1995, and for individuals whose disabilities occur in plan years beginning on or after such date.

''(ii) SPECIAL RULE FOR DISABILITIES OCCURRING AFTER 1994.—In the case of disabilities occurring in plan years beginning after December 31, 1994, the tables under clause (i) shall apply only with respect to individuals described in such subclause who are disabled within the meaning of title II of the Social Security Act and the regulations thereunder.

''(4) CERTAIN SERVICE DISREGARDED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a participant to whom this paragraph applies, only the applicable percentage of the years of service before such individual became a participant shall be taken into account in computing the current liability of the plan.

''(B) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the applicable percentage shall be determined as follows:

''If the years of participation are:	***The applicable percentage is:***
1	*20*
2	*40*
3	*60*
4	*80*
5 or more	*100.*

''(C) PARTICIPANTS TO WHOM PARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This subparagraph shall apply to any participant who, at the time of becoming a participant—

''(i) has not accrued any other benefit under any defined benefit plan (whether or not terminated) maintained by the employer or a member of the same controlled group of which the employer is a member,

''(ii) who first becomes a participant under the plan in a plan year beginning after December 31, 1987, and

''(iii) has years of service greater than the minimum years of service necessary for eligibility to participate in the plan.

''(D) ELECTION.—An employer may elect not to have this subparagraph apply. Such an election, once made, may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(i) FUNDED CURRENT LIABILITY PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of this section, the term 'funded current liability percentage' means, with respect to any plan year, the percentage which—

''(1) the value of the plan's assets determined under subsection (c)(2), is of

''(2) the current liability under the plan.

''(j) TRANSITION.—The Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe such rules as are necessary or appropriate with respect to the transition of a CSEC plan from the application of section 303 to the application of this section.''.

(2) SEPARATE RULES FOR CSEC PLANS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 302(a) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1082(a)) is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (C) and inserting '', and'', and by inserting at the end thereof the following new subparagraph:

''(D) in the case of a CSEC plan, the employers make contributions to or under the plan for any plan year which, in the aggregate, are sufficient to ensure that the plan does not have an accumulated funding deficiency under section 306 as of the end of the plan year.''.

(B) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 302 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1082) is amended—

(i) by striking ''multiemployer plan'' the first place it appears in clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(A) and the last place it appears in paragraph (2) of subsection (d), and inserting ''multiemployer plan or a CSEC plan'',

(ii) by striking ''303(j)'' in paragraph (1) of subsection (b) and inserting ''303(j) or under 306(f)'',

(iii)(I) by striking ''and'' at the end of clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(B),

(II) by striking the period at the end of clause (ii) of subsection (c)(1)(B), and inserting '', and'', and

(III) by inserting the following new clause after clause (ii) of subsection (c)(1)(B):

''(iii) in the case of a CSEC plan, the funding standard account shall be credited under section 306(b)(3)(C) with the amount of the waived funding deficiency and such amount shall be amortized as required under section 306(b)(2)(C).'',

(iv) by striking ''under paragraph (1)'' in clause (i) of subsection (c)(4)(A) and inserting ''under paragraph (1) or for granting an extension under section 306(d)'',

(v) by striking ''waiver under this subsection'' in subparagraph (B) of subsection (c)(4) and inserting ''waiver under this subsection or an extension under 306(d)'',

(vi) by striking ''waiver or modification'' in subclause (I) of subsection (c)(4)(B)(i) and inserting ''waiver, modification, or extension'',

(vii) by striking ''waivers'' in the heading of subsection (c)(4)(C) and of clause (ii) of subsection (c)(4)(C) and inserting ''waivers or extensions'',

(viii) by striking ''section 304(d)'' in subparagraph (A) of subsection (c)(7) and in paragraph (2) of subsection (d) and inserting ''section 304(d) or section 306(d)'',

(ix) by striking ''and'' at the end of subclause (I) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) and adding ''or the accumulated funding deficiency under section 306, whichever is applicable,'',

(x) by striking ''303(e)(2),'' in subclause (II) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) and inserting ''303(e)(2) or 306(b)(2)(C), whichever is applicable, and'',

(xi) by adding immediately after subclause (II) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) the following new subclause:

''(III) the total amounts not paid by reason of an extension in effect under section 306(d),'',

(xii) by striking ''for waivers of'' in clause (ii) of subsection (c)(4)(C) and inserting ''for waivers or extensions with respect to'', and

(xiii) by striking ''single-employer plan'' in subparagraph (A) of subsection (a)(2) and in clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(B) and inserting ''single-employer plan (other than a CSEC plan)''.

(3) BENEFIT RESTRICTIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (g) of section 206 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1056) is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new paragraph:

''(12) CSEC PLANS.—This subsection shall not apply to a CSEC plan (as defined in section 210(f)).''.

(B) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Any restriction under section 206(g) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 that is in effect with respect to a CSEC plan as of the last day of the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, shall cease to apply as of the first day of the following plan year.

(4) BENEFIT INCREASES.—Paragraph (3) of section 204(i) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1054(i)) is amended by striking ''multiemployer plans'' and inserting ''multiemployer plans or CSEC plans''.

(5) SECTION 103.—Subparagraph (B) of section 103(d)(8) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1023(d)(8)) is

amended by striking ''303(h) and 304(c)(3)'' and inserting ''303(h), 304(c)(3), and 306(c)(3)''.

(6) SECTION 4003.—Subparagraph (B) of section 4003(e)(1) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1303(e)(1)) is amended by striking ''303(k)(1)(A) and (B) of this Act or section 430(k)(1)(A) and (B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986'' and inserting ''303(k)(1)(A) and (B) or 306(g)(1)(A) and (B) of this Act or section 430(k)(1)(A) and (B) or 433(g)(1)(A) and (B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986''.

(7) SECTION 4010.—Paragraph (2) of section 4010(b) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1310(b)) is amended by striking ''303(k)(1)(A) and (B) of this Act or section 430(k)(1)(A) and (B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986'' and inserting ''303(k)(1)(A) and (B) or 306(g)(1)(A) and (B) of this Act or section 430(k)(1)(A) and (B) or 433(g)(1)(A) and (B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986''.

(8) SECTION 4071.—Section 4071 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1371) is amended by striking ''section 303(k)(4)'' and inserting ''section 303(k)(4) or 306(g)(4)''.

(b) AMENDMENTS TO CODE.—

(1) MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARDS UNDER THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE.—Subpart A of part III of subchapter D of chapter 1 of subtitle A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 433. MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARDS.

''(a) GENERAL RULE.—For purposes of section 412, the term 'accumulated funding deficiency' for a CSEC plan means the excess of the total charges to the funding standard account for all plan years (beginning with the first plan year to which section 412 applies) over the total credits to such account for such years or, if less, the excess of the total charges to the alternative minimum funding standard account for such plan years over the total credits to such account for such years.

''(b) FUNDING STANDARD ACCOUNT.—

''(1) ACCOUNT REQUIRED.—Each plan to which this section applies shall establish and maintain a funding standard account. Such account shall be credited and charged solely as provided in this section.

''(2) CHARGES TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year, the funding standard account shall be charged with the sum of—

''(A) the normal cost of the plan for the plan year,

''(B) the amounts necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized)—

''(i) in the case of a plan in existence on January 1, 1974, the unfunded past service liability under the plan on the first day of the first plan year to which section 412 applies, over a period of 40 plan years,

''(ii) in the case of a plan which comes into existence after January 1, 1974, but before the first day of the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, the unfunded past service liability under the plan on the first day of the first plan year to which section 412 applies, over a period of 30 plan years,

''(iii) in the case of a plan that is subject to section 430 for the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, the sum of—

''(I) the plan's funding standard carryover balance and prefunding balance (as such terms are defined in section 430(f)) as of the end of such plan year, and

''(II) the unfunded past service liability under the plan for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013,

over a period of 15 years,

''(iv) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net increase (if any) in unfunded past service liability under the plan arising from plan amendments adopted in such year, over a period of 15 plan years,

''(v) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net experience loss (if any) under the plan, over a period of 5 plan years, and

''(vi) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net loss (if any) resulting from changes in actuarial assumptions used under the plan, over a period of 10 plan years,

''(C) the amount necessary to amortize each waived funding deficiency (within the meaning of section 412(c)(3)) for each prior plan year in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 5 plan years,

''(D) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 5 plan years any amount credited to the funding standard account under paragraph (3)(D), and

''(E) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized) over a period of 20 years the contributions which would be required to be made under the plan but for the provisions of section 412(c)(7)(A)(i)(I) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006).

''(3) CREDITS TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year, the funding standard account shall be credited with the sum of—

''(A) the amount considered contributed by the employer to or under the plan for the plan year,

''(B) the amount necessary to amortize in equal annual installments (until fully amortized)—

''(i) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net decrease (if any) in unfunded past service liability under the plan arising from plan amendments adopted in such year, over a period of 15 plan years,

''(ii) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net experience gain (if any) under the plan, over a period of 5 plan years, and

''(iii) separately, with respect to each plan year, the net gain (if any) resulting from changes in actuarial assumptions used under the plan, over a period of 10 plan years,

''(C) the amount of the waived funding deficiency (within the meaning of section 412(c)(3)) for the plan year,

''(D) in the case of a plan year for which the accumulated funding deficiency is determined under the funding standard account if such plan year follows a plan year for which such deficiency was determined under the alternative minimum funding standard, the excess (if any) of any debit balance in the funding standard account (determined without regard to this subparagraph) over any debit balance in the alternative minimum funding standard account, and

''(E) for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, in the case of a plan that is subject to section 430 for the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, the sum of the plan's funding standard carryover balance and prefunding balance (as such terms are defined in section 430(f)) as of the end of the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014.

''(4) COMBINING AND OFFSETTING AMOUNTS TO BE AMORTIZED.—Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary, amounts required to be amortized under paragraph (2) or paragraph (3), as the case may be—

''(A) may be combined into one amount under such paragraph to be amortized over a period determined on the basis of the remaining amortization period for all items entering into such combined amount, and

''(B) may be offset against amounts required to be amortized under the other such paragraph, with the resulting amount to be amortized over a period determined on the basis of the remaining amortization periods for all items entering into whichever of the two amounts being offset is the greater.

''(5) INTEREST.—

''(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the funding standard account (and items therein) shall be charged or credited (as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary) with interest at the appropriate rate consistent with the rate or rates of interest used under the plan to determine costs.

''(B) The interest rate used for purposes of computing the amortization charge described in subsection (b)(2)(C) or for purposes of any arrangement under subsection (d) for any plan year shall be the greater of—

''(i) 150 percent of the Federal mid-term rate (as in effect under section 1274 for the 1st month of such plan year), or

''(ii) the rate of interest determined under subparagraph (A).

''(6) AMORTIZATION SCHEDULES IN EFFECT.—Amortization schedules for amounts described in paragraphs (2) and (3) that are in effect as of the last day of the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, by reason of section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 shall remain in effect pursuant to their terms and this section, except that such amounts shall not be amortized again under this section. In the case of a plan that is subject to section 430 for the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, any amortization schedules and bases for plan years beginning before such date shall be reduced to zero.

''(c) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(1) DETERMINATIONS TO BE MADE UNDER FUNDING METHOD.—For purposes of this section, normal costs, accrued liability, past service liabilities, and experience gains and losses shall be determined under the funding method used to determine costs under the plan.

''(2) VALUATION OF ASSETS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, the value of the plan's assets shall be determined on the basis of any reasonable actuarial method of valuation which takes into account fair market value and which is permitted under regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

''(B) DEDICATED BOND PORTFOLIO.—The Secretary may by regulations provide that the value of any dedicated bond portfolio of a plan shall be determined by using the interest rate under section 412(b)(5) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006).

''(3) ACTUARIAL ASSUMPTIONS MUST BE REASONABLE.—For purposes of this section, all costs, liabilities, rates of interest, and other factors under the plan shall be determined on the basis of actuarial assumptions and methods—

''(A) each of which is reasonable (taking into account the experience of the plan and reasonable expectations) or which, in the aggregate, result in a total contribution equivalent to that which would be determined if each such assumption and method were reasonable, and

''(B) which, in combination, offer the actuary's best estimate of anticipated experience under the plan.

''(4) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN CHANGES AS EXPERIENCE GAIN OR LOSS.—For purposes of this section, if—

''(A) a change in benefits under the Social Security Act or in other retirement benefits created under Federal or State law, or

''(B) a change in the definition of the term 'wages' under section 3121 or a change in the amount of such wages taken into account under regulations prescribed for purposes of section 401(a)(5),

results in an increase or decrease in accrued liability under a plan, such increase or decrease shall be treated as an experience loss or gain.

''(5) FUNDING METHOD AND PLAN YEAR.—

''(A) FUNDING METHODS AVAILABLE.—All funding methods available to CSEC plans under section 412 (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006) shall continue to be available under this section.

''(B) NOT AFFECTED BY CESSATION OF BENEFIT ACCRUALS.—The availability of any funding method, including all spread gain funding methods, shall not be affected by whether benefit accruals under a plan have ceased. Except as otherwise provided in subparagraph (C) or in regulations prescribed by the Secretary, if benefit accruals have ceased under a plan, the spread

gain funding methods may be applied by amortizing over the average expected future lives of all participants.

''(C) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—In the case of a plan amortizing over the average expected future lives of all participants pursuant to the second sentence of subparagraph (B), such amortization amount for any plan year shall not be less than the sum of—

''(i) the amount determined by amortizing, as of the first year for which the plan amortizes over the average future lives of all participants, the entire unfunded past service liability in equal installments over 15 years, and

''(ii) the amount determined by amortizing any increase or decrease in such unfunded past service liability in any subsequent year, other than an increase or decrease attributable to contributions or expected experience, in equal installments over 15 years.

''(D) CHANGES.—If the funding method for a plan is changed, the new funding method shall become the funding method used to determine costs and liabilities under the plan only if the change is approved by the Secretary. The preceding sentence shall not apply to any change made pursuant to, or permitted by, the second sentence of subparagraph (B) if such change is made for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013. Any such change may be made without the approval of the Secretary. If the plan year for a plan is changed, the new plan year shall become the plan year for the plan only if the change is approved by the Secretary.

''(E) APPROVAL REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS BY CERTAIN SINGLE-EMPLOYER PLANS SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIREMENT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—No actuarial assumption (other than the assumptions described in subsection (h)(3)) used to determine the current liability for a plan to which this subparagraph applies may be changed without the approval of the Secretary.

''(ii) PLANS TO WHICH SUBPARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This subparagraph shall apply to a plan only if—

''(I) the plan is a CSEC plan,

''(II) the aggregate unfunded vested benefits as of the close of the preceding plan year (as determined under section 4006(a)(3)(E)(iii) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974) of such plan and all other plans maintained by the contributing sponsors (as defined in section 4001(a)(13) of such Act) and members of such sponsors' controlled groups (as defined in section 4001(a)(14) of such Act) which are covered by title IV (disregarding plans with no unfunded vested benefits) exceed $50,000,000, and

''(III) the change in assumptions (determined after taking into account any changes in interest rate and mortality table) results in a decrease in the funding shortfall of the plan for the current plan year that exceeds $50,000,000, or that exceeds $5,000,000 and that is 5 percent or more of the current liability of the plan before such change.

''(6) FULL FUNDING.—If, as of the close of a plan year, a plan would (without regard to this paragraph) have an accumulated funding deficiency (determined without regard to the alternative minimum funding standard account permitted under subsection (e)) in excess of the full funding limitation—

''(A) the funding standard account shall be credited with the amount of such excess, and

''(B) all amounts described in paragraphs (2)(B), (C), and (D) and (3)(B) of subsection (b) which are required to be amortized shall be considered fully amortized for purposes of such paragraphs.

''(7) FULL-FUNDING LIMITATION.—For purposes of paragraph (6), the term 'full-funding limitation' means the excess (if any) of—

''(A) the accrued liability (including normal cost) under the plan (determined under the entry age normal funding method if such accrued liability cannot be directly calculated under the funding method used for the plan), over

''(B) the lesser of—

''(i) the fair market value of the plan's assets, or

''(ii) the value of such assets determined under paragraph (2).

''(C) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In no event shall the full-funding limitation determined under subparagraph (A) be less than the excess (if any) of—

''(I) 90 percent of the current liability (determined without regard to paragraph (4) of subsection (h)) of the plan (including the expected increase in such current liability due to benefits accruing during the plan year), over

''(II) the value of the plan's assets determined under paragraph (2).

''(ii) ASSETS.—For purposes of clause (i), assets shall not be reduced by any credit balance in the funding standard account.

''(8) ANNUAL VALUATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, a determination of experience gains and losses and a valuation of the plan's liability shall be made not less frequently than once every year, except that such determination shall be made more frequently to the extent required in particular cases under regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

''(B) VALUATION DATE.—

''(i) CURRENT YEAR.—Except as provided in clause (ii), the valuation referred to in subparagraph (A) shall be made as of a date within the plan year to which the valuation refers or within one month prior to the beginning of such year.

''(ii) USE OF PRIOR YEAR VALUATION.—The valuation referred to in subparagraph (A) may be made as of a date within the plan year prior to the year to which the valuation refers if, as of such date, the value of the assets of the plan are not less than 100 percent of the plan's current liability.

''(iii) ADJUSTMENTS.—Information under clause (ii) shall, in accordance with regulations, be actuarially adjusted to reflect significant differences in participants.

''(iv) LIMITATION.—A change in funding method to use a prior year valuation, as provided in clause (ii), may not be made unless as of the valuation date within the prior plan year, the value of the assets of the plan are not less than 125 percent of the plan's current liability.

''(9) TIME WHEN CERTAIN CONTRIBUTIONS DEEMED MADE.—For purposes of this section, any contributions for a plan year made by an employer during the period—

''(A) beginning on the day after the last day of such plan year, and

''(B) ending on the day which is 8½ months after the close of the plan year,

shall be deemed to have been made on such last day.

''(10) ANTICIPATION OF BENEFIT INCREASES EFFECTIVE IN THE FUTURE.—In determining projected benefits, the funding method of a collectively bargained CSEC plan described in section 413(a) (other than a multiemployer plan) shall anticipate benefit increases scheduled to take effect during the term of the collective bargaining agreement applicable to the plan.

''(d) EXTENSION OF AMORTIZATION PERIODS.—The period of years required to amortize any unfunded liability (described in any clause of subsection (b)(2)(B)) of any plan may be extended by the Secretary of Labor for a period of time (not in excess of 10 years) if such Secretary determines that such extension would carry out the purposes of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and provide adequate protection for participants under the plan, and their beneficiaries and if such Secretary determines that the failure to permit such extension would result in—

''(1) a substantial risk to the voluntary continuation of the plan, or

''(2) a substantial curtailment of pension benefit levels or employee compensation.

''(e) ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARD.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A CSEC plan which uses a funding method that requires contributions in all years not less than those required under the entry age normal funding method may maintain an alternative minimum funding standard account for any plan year. Such account shall be credited and charged solely as provided in this subsection.

''(2) CHARGES AND CREDITS TO ACCOUNT.—For a plan year the alternative minimum funding standard account shall be—

''(A) charged with the sum of—

''(i) the lesser of normal cost under the funding method used under the plan or normal cost determined under the unit credit method,

''(ii) the excess, if any, of the present value of accrued benefits under the plan over the fair market value of the assets, and

''(iii) an amount equal to the excess (if any) of credits to the alternative minimum standard account for all prior plan years over charges to such account for all such years, and

''(B) credited with the amount considered contributed by the employer to or under the plan for the plan year.

''(3) SPECIAL RULES.—The alternative minimum funding standard account (and items therein) shall be charged or credited with interest in the manner provided under subsection (b)(5) with respect to the funding standard account.

''(f) QUARTERLY CONTRIBUTIONS REQUIRED.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If a CSEC plan which has a funded current liability percentage for the preceding plan year of less than 100 percent fails to pay the full amount of a required installment for the plan year, then the rate of interest charged to the funding standard account under subsection (b)(5) with respect to the amount of the underpayment for the period of the underpayment shall be equal to the greater of—

''(A) 175 percent of the Federal mid-term rate (as in effect under section 1274 for the 1st month of such plan year), or

''(B) the rate of interest used under the plan in determining costs.

''(2) AMOUNT OF UNDERPAYMENT, PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—For purposes of paragraph (1)—

''(A) AMOUNT.—The amount of the underpayment shall be the excess of—

''(i) the required installment, over

''(ii) the amount (if any) of the installment contributed to or under the plan on or before the due date for the installment.

''(B) PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—The period for which interest is charged under this subsection with regard to any portion of the underpayment shall run from the due date for the installment to the date on which such portion is contributed to or under the plan (determined without regard to subsection (c)(9)).

''(C) ORDER OF CREDITING CONTRIBUTIONS.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(ii), contributions shall be credited against unpaid required installments in the order in which such installments are required to be paid.

''(3) NUMBER OF REQUIRED INSTALLMENTS; DUE DATES.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) PAYABLE IN 4 INSTALLMENTS.—There shall be 4 required installments for each plan year.

''(B) TIME FOR PAYMENT OF INSTALLMENTS.—

''In the case of the following required installments:	***The due date is:***
1st	*April 15*
2nd	*July 15*
3rd	*October 15*
4th	*January 15 of the following year.*

''(4) AMOUNT OF REQUIRED INSTALLMENT.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The amount of any required installment shall be 25 percent of the required annual payment.

''(B) REQUIRED ANNUAL PAYMENT.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'required annual payment' means the lesser of—

''(i) 90 percent of the amount required to be contributed to or under the plan by the employer for the plan year under section 412 (without regard to any waiver under subsection (c) thereof), or

''(ii) 100 percent of the amount so required for the preceding plan year.

Clause (ii) shall not apply if the preceding plan year was not a year of 12 months.

''(5) LIQUIDITY REQUIREMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A plan to which this paragraph applies shall be treated as failing to pay the full amount of any required installment to the extent that the value of the liquid assets paid in such installment is less than the liquidity shortfall (whether or not such liquidity shortfall exceeds the amount of such installment required to be paid but for this paragraph).

''(B) PLANS TO WHICH PARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This paragraph shall apply to a CSEC plan other than a plan described in section 412(l)(6)(A) (as in effect on the day before the enactment of the Pension Protection Act of 2006) which—

''(i) is required to pay installments under this subsection for a plan year, and

''(ii) has a liquidity shortfall for any quarter during such plan year.

''(C) PERIOD OF UNDERPAYMENT.—For purposes of paragraph (1), any portion of an installment that is treated as not paid under subparagraph (A) shall continue to be treated as unpaid until the close of the quarter in which the due date for such installment occurs.

''(D) LIMITATION ON INCREASE.—If the amount of any required installment is increased by reason of subparagraph (A), in no event shall such increase exceed the amount which, when added to prior installments for the plan year, is necessary to increase the funded current liability percentage (taking into account the expected increase in current liability due to benefits accruing during the plan year) to 100 percent.

''(E) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this paragraph:

''(i) LIQUIDITY SHORTFALL.—The term 'liquidity shortfall' means, with respect to any required installment, an amount equal to the excess (as of the last day of the quarter for which such installment is made) of the base amount with respect to such quarter over the value (as of such last day) of the plan's liquid assets.

''(ii) BASE AMOUNT.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—The term 'base amount' means, with respect to any quarter, an amount equal to 3 times the sum of the adjusted disbursements from the plan for the 12 months ending on the last day of such quarter.

''(II) SPECIAL RULE.—If the amount determined under subclause (I) exceeds an amount equal to 2 times the sum of the adjusted disbursements from the plan for the 36 months ending on the last day of the quarter and an enrolled actuary certifies to the satisfaction of the Secretary that such excess is the result of nonrecurring circumstances, the base amount with respect to such quarter shall be determined without regard to amounts related to those nonrecurring circumstances.

''(iii) DISBURSEMENTS FROM THE PLAN.—The term 'disbursements from the plan' means all disbursements from the trust, including purchases of annuities, payments of single sums and other benefits, and administrative expenses.

''(iv) ADJUSTED DISBURSEMENTS.—The term 'adjusted disbursements' means disbursements from the plan reduced by the product of—

''(I) the plan's funded current liability percentage for the plan year, and

''(II) the sum of the purchases of annuities, payments of single sums, and such other disbursements as the Secretary shall provide in regulations.

''(v) LIQUID ASSETS.—The term 'liquid assets' means cash, marketable securities and such other assets as specified by the Secretary in regulations.

''(vi) QUARTER.—The term 'quarter' means, with respect to any required installment, the 3-month period preceding the month in which the due date for such installment occurs.

''(F) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary may prescribe such regulations as are necessary to carry out this paragraph.

''(6) FISCAL YEARS AND SHORT YEARS.—

''(A) FISCAL YEARS.—In applying this subsection to a plan year beginning on any date other than January 1, there shall be substituted for the months specified in this subsection, the months which correspond thereto.

''(B) SHORT PLAN YEAR.—This subsection shall be applied to plan years of less than 12 months in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

''(g) IMPOSITION OF LIEN WHERE FAILURE TO MAKE REQUIRED CONTRIBUTIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a plan to which this section applies, if—

''(A) any person fails to make a required installment under subsection (f) or any other payment required under this section before the due date for such installment or other payment, and

''(B) the unpaid balance of such installment or other payment (including interest), when added to the aggregate unpaid balance of all preceding such installments or other payments for which payment was not made before the due date (including interest), exceeds $1,000,000,

then there shall be a lien in favor of the plan in the amount determined under paragraph (3) upon all property and rights to property, whether real or personal, belonging to such person and any other person who is a member of the same controlled group of which such person is a member.

''(2) PLANS TO WHICH SUBSECTION APPLIES.—This subsection shall apply to a CSEC plan for any plan year for which the funded current liability percentage of such plan is less than 100 percent. This subsection shall not apply to any plan to which section 4021 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 does not apply (as such section is in effect on the date of the enactment of the Retirement Protection Act of 1994).

''(3) AMOUNT OF LIEN.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the amount of the lien shall be equal to the aggregate unpaid balance of required installments and other payments required under this section (including interest)—

''(A) for plan years beginning after 1987, and

''(B) for which payment has not been made before the due date.

''(4) NOTICE OF FAILURE; LIEN.—

''(A) NOTICE OF FAILURE.—A person committing a failure described in paragraph (1) shall notify the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation of such failure within 10 days of the due date for the required installment or other payment.

''(B) PERIOD OF LIEN.—The lien imposed by paragraph (1) shall arise on the due date for the required installment or other payment and shall continue until the last day of the first plan year in which the plan ceases to be described in paragraph (1)(B). Such lien shall continue to run without regard to whether such plan continues to be described in paragraph (2) during the period referred to in the preceding sentence.

''(C) CERTAIN RULES TO APPLY.—Any amount with respect to which a lien is imposed under paragraph (1) shall be treated as taxes due and owing the United States and rules similar to the rules of subsections (c), (d), and (e) of section 4068 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 shall apply with respect to a lien imposed by subsection (a) and the amount with respect to such lien.

''(5) ENFORCEMENT.—Any lien created under paragraph (1) may be perfected and enforced only by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, or at the direction of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, by any contributing employer (or any member of the controlled group of the contributing employer).

''(6) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) DUE DATE; REQUIRED INSTALLMENT.—The terms 'due date' and 'required installment' have the meanings given such terms by subsection (f), except that in the case of a payment other than a required installment, the due date shall be the date such payment is required to be made under this section.

''(B) CONTROLLED GROUP.—The term 'controlled group' means any group treated as a single employer under subsections (b), (c), (m), and (o) of section 414.

''(h) CURRENT LIABILITY.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'current liability' means all liabilities to employees and their beneficiaries under the plan.

''(2) TREATMENT OF UNPREDICTABLE CONTINGENT EVENT BENEFITS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of paragraph (1), any unpredictable contingent event benefit shall not be taken into account until the event on which the benefit is contingent occurs.

''(B) UNPREDICTABLE CONTINGENT EVENT BENEFIT.—The term 'unpredictable contingent event benefit' means any benefit contingent on an event other than—

''(i) age, service, compensation, death, or disability, or

''(ii) an event which is reasonably and reliably predictable (as determined by the Secretary).

''(3) INTEREST RATE AND MORTALITY ASSUMPTIONS USED.—

''(A) INTEREST RATE.—The rate of interest used to determine current liability under this section shall be the third segment rate determined under section 430(h)(2)(C).

''(B) MORTALITY TABLES.—

''(i) SECRETARIAL AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may by regulation prescribe mortality tables to be used in determining current liability under this subsection. Such tables shall be based upon the actual experience of pension plans and projected trends in such experience. In prescribing such tables, the Secretary shall take into account results of available independent studies of mortality of individuals covered by pension plans.

''(ii) PERIODIC REVIEW.—The Secretary shall periodically (at least every 5 years) review any tables in effect under this subsection and shall, to the extent the Secretary determines necessary, by regulation update the tables to reflect the actual experience of pension plans and projected trends in such experience.

''(C) SEPARATE MORTALITY TABLES FOR THE DISABLED.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (B)—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of plan years beginning after December 31, 1995, the Secretary shall establish mortality tables which may be used (in lieu of the tables under subparagraph (B)) to determine current liability under this subsection for individuals who are entitled to benefits under the plan on account of disability. The Secretary shall establish separate tables for individuals whose disabilities occur in plan years beginning before January 1, 1995, and for individuals whose disabilities occur in plan years beginning on or after such date.

''(ii) SPECIAL RULE FOR DISABILITIES OCCURRING AFTER 1994.—In the case of disabilities occurring in plan years beginning after December 31, 1994, the tables under clause (i) shall apply only with respect to individuals described in such subclause who are disabled within the meaning of title II of the Social Security Act and the regulations thereunder.

''(4) CERTAIN SERVICE DISREGARDED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a participant to whom this paragraph applies, only the applicable percentage of the years of service before such individual became a participant shall be taken into account in computing the current liability of the plan.

''(B) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the applicable percentage shall be determined as follows:

"If the years of participation are:	The applicable percentage is:
1	20
2	40
3	60
4	80
5 or more	100.

''(C) PARTICIPANTS TO WHOM PARAGRAPH APPLIES.—This subparagraph shall apply to any participant who, at the time of becoming a participant—

''(i) has not accrued any other benefit under any defined benefit plan (whether or not terminated) maintained by the employer or a member of the same controlled group of which the employer is a member,

''(ii) who first becomes a participant under the plan in a plan year beginning after December 31, 1987, and

''(iii) has years of service greater than the minimum years of service necessary for eligibility to participate in the plan.

''(D) ELECTION.—An employer may elect not to have this subparagraph apply. Such an election, once made, may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary.

''(i) FUNDED CURRENT LIABILITY PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of this section, the term 'funded current liability percentage' means, with respect to any plan year, the percentage which—

''(1) the value of the plan's assets determined under subsection (c)(2), is of

''(2) the current liability under the plan.

''(j) TRANSITION.—The Secretary may prescribe such rules as are necessary or appropriate with respect to the transition of a CSEC plan from the application of section 430 to the application of this section.''.

(2) SEPARATE RULES FOR CSEC PLANS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 412(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (C) and inserting '', and'', and by inserting at the end thereof the following new subparagraph:

''(D) in the case of a CSEC plan, the employers make contributions to or under the plan for any plan year which, in the aggregate, are sufficient to ensure that the plan does not have an accumulated funding deficiency under section 433 as of the end of the plan year.''.

(B) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 412 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(i) by striking ''multiemployer plan'' in paragraph (A) of subsection (a)(2), in clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(B), the first place it appears in clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(A), and the last place it appears in paragraph (2) of subsection (d), and inserting ''multiemployer plan or a CSEC plan'',

(ii) by striking ''430(j)'' in paragraph (1) of subsection (b) and inserting ''430(j) or under 433(f)'',

(iii)(I) by striking ''and'' at the end of clause (i) of subsection (c)(1)(B),

(II) by striking the period at the end of clause (ii) of subsection (c)(1)(B) and inserting '', and'', and

(III) by inserting the following new clause after clause (ii) of subsection (c)(1)(B):

''(iii) in the case of a CSEC plan, the funding standard account shall be credited under section 433(b)(3)(C) with the amount of the waived funding deficiency and such amount shall be amortized as required under section 433(b)(2)(C).'',

(iv) by striking ''under paragraph (1)'' in clause (i) of subsection (c)(4)(A) and inserting ''under paragraph (1) or for granting an extension under section 433(d)'',

(v) by striking ''waiver under this subsection'' in subparagraph (B) of subsection (c)(4) and inserting ''waiver under this subsection or an extension under 433(d)'',

(vi) by striking ''waiver or modification'' in subclause (I) of subsection (c)(4)(B)(i) and inserting ''waiver, modification, or extension'',

(vii) by striking ''waivers'' in the heading of subsection (c)(4)(C) and of clause (ii) of subsection (c)(4)(C) and inserting ''waivers or extensions'',

(viii) by striking ''section 431(d)'' in subparagraph (A) of subsection (c)(7) and in paragraph (2) of subsection (d) and inserting ''section 431(d) or section 433(d)'',

(ix) by striking ''and'' at the end of subclause (I) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) and inserting ''or the accumulated funding deficiency under section 433, whichever is applicable,'',

(x) by striking ''430(e)(2),'' in subclause (II) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) and inserting ''430(e)(2) or 433(b)(2)(C), whichever is applicable, and'',

(xi) by adding immediately after subclause (II) of subsection (c)(4)(C)(i) the following new subclause:

''(III) the total amounts not paid by reason of an extension in effect under section 433(d),'', and

(xii) by striking ''for waivers of'' in clause (ii) of subsection (c)(4)(C) and inserting ''for waivers or extensions with respect to''.

(3) BENEFIT RESTRICTIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (29) of section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''multiemployer plan'' and inserting ''multiemployer plan or a CSEC plan''.

(B) CONFORMING CHANGE.—Subsection (a) of section 436 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''single-employer plan'' and inserting ''single-employer plan (other than a CSEC plan)''.

(C) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Any restriction under sections 401(a)(29) and 436 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that is in effect with respect to a CSEC plan as of the last day of the last plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, shall cease to apply as of the first day of the following plan year.

(4) BENEFIT INCREASES.—Subparagraph (C) of section 401(a)(33) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''multiemployer plans'' and inserting ''multiemployer plans or CSEC plans''.

SEC. 5. TRANSPARENCY.

(a) NOTICE TO PARTICIPANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 101(f) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1021(f)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(E) EFFECT OF CSEC PLAN RULES ON PLAN FUNDING.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a CSEC plan, each notice under paragraph (1) shall include—

''(I) a statement that different rules apply to CSEC plans than apply to single-employer plans, and

''(II) for the first 2 plan years beginning after December 31, 2013, a statement that, as a result of changes in the law made by the Cooperative and Small Employer Charity Pension Flexibility Act, the contributions to the plan may have changed.

''(ii) APPLICABLE PLAN YEAR.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'applicable plan year' means any plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, for which—

''(I) the plan has a funding shortfall (as defined in section 303(c)(4)) greater than $1,000,000, and

''(II) the plan had 50 or more participants on any day during the preceding plan year.

For purposes of any determination under subclause (II), the aggregation rule under the last sentence of section 303(g)(2)(B) shall apply.

''(iii) SPECIAL RULE FOR PLAN YEARS BEGINNING BEFORE 2014.—In the case of a preceding plan year referred to in clause (i)(III) which begins before January 1, 2014, the information described in such clause shall be provided only without regard to the different rules applicable to CSEC plans.''.

(2) MODEL NOTICE.—The Secretary of Labor may modify the model notice required to be published under section 501(c) of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 to include the information described in section 101(f)(2)(E) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as added by this subsection.

(b) NOTICE OF FAILURE TO MEET MINIMUM FUNDING STANDARDS.—

(1) PENDING WAIVERS.—Paragraph (2) of section 101(d) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1021(d)) is amended by striking ''303'' and inserting ''303 or 306''.

(2) DEFINITIONS.—Paragraph (3) of section 101(d) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (21 U.S.C. 1021(d)) is amended by striking ''303(j)'' and inserting ''303(j) or 306(f), whichever is applicable''.

(c) ADDITIONAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Section 103 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1023) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(g) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WITH RESPECT TO CSEC PLANS.—With respect to any CSEC plan, an annual report under this section for a plan year shall include a list of participating employers and a good faith estimate of the percentage of total contributions made by such participating employers during the plan year.''.

SEC. 6. ELECTIONS.

(a) ELECTION NOT TO BE TREATED AS A CSEC PLAN.—

(1) AMENDMENT TO ERISA.—Subsection (f) of section 210 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as added by section 3, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) ELECTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If a plan falls within the definition of a CSEC plan under this subsection (without regard to this paragraph), such plan shall be a CSEC plan unless the plan sponsor elects not later than the close of the first plan year of the plan beginning after December 31, 2013, not to be treated as a CSEC plan. An election under the preceding sentence shall take effect for such plan year and, once made, may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(B) SPECIAL RULE.—If a plan described in subparagraph (A) is treated as a CSEC plan, section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, as amended by the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act of 2010, shall cease to apply to such plan as of the first date as of which such plan is treated as a CSEC plan.''.

(2) AMENDMENT TO THE CODE.—Section 414(y) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as added by section 3, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) ELECTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If a plan falls within the definition of a CSEC plan under this subsection (without regard to this paragraph), such plan shall be a CSEC plan unless the plan sponsor elects not later than the close of the first plan year of the plan beginning after December 31, 2013, not to be treated as a CSEC plan. An election under the preceding sentence shall take effect for such plan year and, once made, may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary.

''(B) SPECIAL RULE.—If a plan described in subparagraph (A) is treated as a CSEC plan, section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, as amended by the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act of 2010, shall cease to apply to such

plan as of the first date as of which such plan is treated as a CSEC plan.''.

(b) ELECTION TO CEASE TO BE TREATED AS AN ELIGIBLE CHARITY PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d) of section 104 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, as added by section 202 of the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act of 2010, is amended by—

(A) striking ''For purposes of'' and inserting ''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of'', and

(B) adding at the end the following:

''(2) ELECTION NOT TO BE AN ELIGIBLE CHARITY PLAN.—A plan sponsor may elect for a plan to cease to be treated as an eligible charity plan for plan years beginning after December 31, 2013. Such election shall be made at such time and in such form and manner as shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. Any such election may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(3) ELECTION TO USE FUNDING OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO OTHER PLAN SPONSORS.—

''(A) A plan sponsor that makes the election described in paragraph (2) may elect for a plan to apply the rules described in subparagraphs (B), (C), and (D) for plan years beginning after December 31, 2013. Such election shall be made at such time and in such form and manner as shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. Any such election may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary of the Treasury.

''(B) Under the rules described in this subparagraph, for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, a plan has—

''(i) an 11-year shortfall amortization base,

''(ii) a 12-year shortfall amortization base, and

''(iii) a 7-year shortfall amortization base.

''(C) Under the rules described in this subparagraph, section 303(c)(2)(A) and (B) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and section 430(c)(2)(A) and (B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be applied by—

''(i) in the case of an 11-year shortfall amortization base, substituting '11-plan-year period' for '7-plan-year period' wherever such phrase appears, and

''(ii) in the case of a 12-year shortfall amortization base, substituting '12-plan-year period' for '7-plan-year period' wherever such phrase appears.

''(D) Under the rules described in this subparagraph, section 303(c)(7) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and section 430(c)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall apply to a plan for which an election has been made under subparagraph (A). Such provisions shall apply in the following manner:

''(i) The first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, shall be treated as an election year, and no other plan years shall be so treated.

''(ii) All references in section 303(c)(7) of such Act and section 430(c)(7) of such Code to 'February 28, 2010' or 'March 1, 2010' shall be treated as references to 'February 28, 2013' or 'March 1, 2013', respectively.

''(E) For purposes of this paragraph, the 11-year amortization base is an amount, determined for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, equal to the unamortized principal amount of the shortfall amortization base (as defined in section 303(c)(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and section 430(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) that would have applied to the plan for the first plan beginning after December 31, 2009, if—

''(i) the plan had never been an eligible charity plan,

''(ii) the plan sponsor had made the election described in section 303(c)(2)(D)(i) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and in section 430(c)(2)(D)(i) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to have section 303(c)(2)(D)(i) of such Act and section 430(c)(2)(D)(iii) of such Code apply with respect to the shortfall amortization base for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2009, and

''(iii) no event had occurred under paragraph (6) or (7) of section 303(c) of such Act or paragraph (6) or (7) of section 430(c) of such Code that, as of the first day of the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, would have modified the shortfall amortization base or the shortfall amortization installments with respect to the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2009.

''(F) For purposes of this paragraph, the 12-year amortization base is an amount, determined for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, equal to the unamortized principal amount of the shortfall amortization base (as defined in section 303(c)(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and section 430(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) that would have applied to the plan for the first plan beginning after December 31, 2010, if—

''(i) the plan had never been an eligible charity plan,

''(ii) the plan sponsor had made the election described in section 303(c)(2)(D)(i) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and in section 430(c)(2)(D)(i) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to have section 303(c)(2)(D)(i) of such Act and section 430(c)(2)(D)(iii) of such Code apply with respect to the shortfall amortization base for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2010, and

''(iii) no event had occurred under paragraph (6) or (7) of section 303(c) of such Act or paragraph (6) or (7) of section 430(c) of such Code that, as of the first day of the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, would have modified the shortfall amortization base or the shortfall amortization installments with respect to the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2010.

''(G) For purposes of this paragraph, the 7-year shortfall amortization base is an amount, determined for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, equal to—

''(i) the shortfall amortization base for the first plan year beginning after December 31, 2013, without regard to this paragraph, minus

''(ii) the sum of the 11-year shortfall amortization base and the 12-year shortfall amortization base.''.

(c) DEEMED ELECTION.—For purposes of sections 4(b)(2) and 4021(b)(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, a plan shall be deemed to have made an irrevocable election under section 410(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 if—

(1) the plan was established before January 1, 2014;

(2) the plan falls within the definition of a CSEC plan;

(3) the plan sponsor does not make an election under section 210(f)(3)(A) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and section 414(y)(3)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as added by this Act; and

(4) the plan, plan sponsor, administrator, or fiduciary remits one or more premium payments for the plan to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation for a plan year beginning after December 31, 2013.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply as of the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 7. SPONSOR EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''CSEC plan'' has the meaning given that term in subsection (f)(1) of section 210 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1060(f)(1)) (as added by this Act).

(b) EDUCATION.—The Participant and Plan Sponsor Advocate established under section 4004 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1304) shall make itself available to assist CSEC plan sponsors and participants as part of the duties it performs under the general supervision of the Board of Directors under section 4004(b) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 1304(b)).

SEC. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

Unless otherwise specified in this Act, the provisions of this Act shall apply to years beginning after December 31, 2013.

The amendment (No. 2701) was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The committee-reported substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

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

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 334.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 334) recognizing the goals of Catholic Schools Week and honoring the valuable contributions of Catholic schools in the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. 334) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of January 16, 2014, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF ESCORT COMMITTEE

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Presiding Officer of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join a like committee on the part of the House to escort President Obama into the House Chamber for the joint session to be held tonight at 9 p.m.

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

ORDERS FOR RECESS AND FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2014

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 8:25 p.m. tonight and, upon reconvening, proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the joint session of Congress provided under the provisions of H. Con. Res. 75; and that upon dissolution of the joint session, the Senate adjourn until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, January 29, 2014; that following

the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the 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 for 1 hour with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each and the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half; and that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1926, the flood insurance bill, postcloture, with the time until noon equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, and that at noon all postcloture time be deemed expired.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. The President of the United States will deliver the State of the Union Address at 9 p.m. this evening. The Senate will begin gathering in the Senate Chamber at 8:20 p.m., depart from the Senate Chamber at 8:30 p.m., and proceed as a body to the House.

RECESS

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

There being no objection, the Senate, at 4:15 p.m., recessed until 8:25 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. DONNELLY).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1926

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that following morning business on Wednesday, January 29, all postcloture time be yielded back and the motion to proceed to S. 1926 be agreed to; that after the bill is reported, the following amendments be agreed to: Hagan, No. 2702; Rubio, No. 2704; King, No. 2705; Blunt, No. 2698; and the amended text be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment; that the only other amendments in order be the following: Reed of Rhode Island, No. 2703; Coburn, No. 2697; Merkley, No. 2709; Heller, No. 2700; Whitehouse, No. 2706; Toomey, No. 2707—which is a substitute; Gillibrand, No. 2708; that no second-degree amendments be in order to any of these amendments prior to votes in relation to the amendments; that it be in order for Senator TOOMEY to modify his amendment with the text of Rubio No. 2704 and Hagan No. 2702; that there be 30 minutes of debate equally divided on each amendment or motion to waive a budget point of order, if made; that there be up to 1 hour of general debate on the bill equally divided between the proponents and opponents; that amendments in this agreement must be offered prior to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, January 29, that is tomorrow; that it be in order for Senator CRAPO or designee to raise a budget point of order against the bill; that if such a point of order is raised, Senator MENENDEZ or designee be recognized to move to waive the point of order; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to the vote on the motion to waive, if made; that if the motion to waive is agreed to, the Senate proceed to votes in relation to the amendments in the order listed; that upon disposition of the amendments, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Reserving the right to object, and I will not be objecting, this is a good step in the direction of getting the Senate back to a process under which amendments are allowed and voted on by both sides. I particularly thank Senator ISAKSON for his hard work on this.

Obviously, I do not object.

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

JOINT SESSION OF THE TWO HOUSES—ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will proceed to the Hall of the House of Representatives to receive a message from the President of the United States.

Thereupon, the Senate, preceded by the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Drew Willison; the Secretary of the Senate, Nancy Erickson; and the Vice President of the United States, JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr., proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear the address by the President of the United States, Barack H. Obama.

The address delivered by the President of the United States to the joint session of the two Houses of Congress appears in the proceedings of the House of Representatives in today's RECORD.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

At the conclusion of the joint session of the two Houses, and in accordance with the order previously entered, at 10:27 p.m., the Senate adjourned until Wednesday, January 29, 2014, at 10 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING TRUDI TERRY AND IRENE DICKERMAN FOR THEIR SERVICE TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two Clerk of the House employees, Trudi Terry and Irene Dickerman, for their years of service to the House of Representatives. Both Trudi and Irene will be retiring after working in the Clerk of the House's organization for more than 15 years.

Trudi was born in Amarillo, Texas and received a Bachelor of Arts and Science in Secondary Education with certification in English, Speech, and Physical Education from West Texas State University. After college, Trudi became a Certified Reporter Instructor

(CRI) and Certified Program Evaluator (CPE) from the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA). As a CPE, Trudi was a member of the national evaluating team tasked with traveling to schools nationwide and determining if those schools met the certification requirements of the NCRA. In 1999, Trudi was hired as a Scopist in the Office of the Official Reporters, a division within the Clerk of the House's organization. As a Scopist, Trudi edited the official transcript, first for House committees and then proceedings of the House floor for the Congressional Record. In 2001, Trudi moved into a new role within the Clerk's organization and assumed the position as the Assistant Chief Clerk of Debates.

In 2004, Trudi became the Chief Clerk of Debates and will hold this position until her retirement on February 3, 2014. During her tenure, Trudi developed a reputation of having a strong work ethic and steadfast dedication to the institution of the House of Representatives. She will be missed by Members of Congress, House staff, and her department colleagues.

Irene Dickerman was born in Los Angeles, California and received a Bachelor of Arts and Science in English Literature from California State University in Northridge, California. After college, Irene also became a CPI from the NCRA. In 1999, Irene was hired as a Scopist in the Office of the Official Reporters. As a Scopist, Irene edited the official transcript, first for House committees and then proceedings of the House floor for the Congressional Record. In 2006, Irene became the Chief Editor and will be in this position until her retirement on February 3, 2014. Irene was well respected as an individual who possessed deep institutional knowledge and maintained a strong level of accuracy in her capacity within the Clerk of the House's organization.

CELEBRATING MR. SCOTT DOWNIE

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Mr. Scott Downie on the occasion of his retirement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Mr. Downie's long commitment to the conservation of fisheries and watersheds of the North Coast has improved the environment for all Californians.

Mr. Downie's service to the North Coast includes 14 years as a commercial fisherman, 10 years as a habitat restoration coordinator for the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, and 23 years as a fish habitat supervisor and senior environmental scientist with Fish and Wildlife. Mr. Downie is also a co-founder of the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project and of the Eel River Watershed Improvement Group.

Mr. Downie's vast experience and understanding of fisheries has helped preserve Northern California's vital salmonid populations and has inspired many others dedicated to this cause. His accomplishments and leadership will undoubtedly leave a legacy for many years to come.

Please join me in expressing deep appreciation to Mr. Scott Downie for his long and impressive career, and his exceptional record of service.

IN MEMORY OF DONA BARBOUR WORRELL

HON. RANDY K. WEBER, SR.

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to remember a fellow Texan, Dona Barbour Worrell of Brazoria and Spring Branch who passed away Saturday, January 11 2014.

Dona was the daughter of Susan Louise Poole and Dr. Joel Lane Barbour of Bay City, Texas. She was the youngest of two children. She was also the granddaughter of Thomas Jefferson Poole, the president of the Bay City Bank and Trust from 1909–1929.

Mr. Poole owned a 5,000 acre ranch in Matagorda County, where Barbour spent a lot of her childhood. In 1929 Poole formed a partnership with Allen Ranch, creating the Allen-Poole Cattle Co. They shipped cattle by rail to Oklahoma and Kansas, and at its height, the Allen-Poole Cattle Co. shipped more cattle than any other ranch in Texas except for the King Ranch. The Poole Ranch was very much a part of her life and an integral part of her family.

Dona attended Trinity University, where she met her husband, Thomas Alfred Worrell. The two were married in 1960. Shortly after their marriage, Tommy took a part in the movie, "The Alamo," starring John Wayne.

Dona's life ultimately leads her and her family back to Texas. They split their time between San Antonio and the Poole Ranch in Brazoria, Texas, where they owned and operated shows at various dude ranches.

Dona touched the lives of many people, including close friends and famous Hollywood actors. James Drury, who is best known for his role in The Virginian as well as General Douglas MacArthur and his wife Jean, who arranged for Dona to attend a coalition at West Point, just to name a few.

Dona is survived by her husband Tommy, (Thomas) Worrell; Son, Todd Worrell and spouse, Marty Worrell and children from a previous marriage, Daniel Lane Worrell, Dylan Thomas Worrell and Bethany Kirsten Worrell; Daughter, Heather Worrell and her partner, Kellye McKinna and their children, Thelen Lane McKinna-Worrell and Ella Kathryn McKinna-Worrell; and daughter Sunni Worrell Duncan, her spouse, Daniel Duncan their children from a previous marriage, Austin Thomas Soward, Hunter Brian Soward, and Courtland Shea Duncan.

She is preceded in death by her parents, grandparents, and brother. Dona was a strong Texan, deeply devoted to her husband and family, she will be greatly missed.

BRINGING ATTENTION TO ERADICATING THE BULLYING EPIDEMIC

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the Founder and Chairman of the Congressional Anti-Bullying Caucus to bring attention to the Be a STAR (Show Tolerance and Respect) Alliance, an anti-bullying initiative co-founded in 2011 by The Creative Coalition and WWE to encourage young people to treat each other with tolerance and respect through education and grassroots initiatives. WWE and The Creative Coalition leverage the power of The Creative Coalition's entertainment industry constituencies and WWE's global brand and platforms to help combat the bullying epidemic plaguing today's youth. This month, for the first time ever, Be a STAR awarded five grants totaling $125,000 to outstanding non-profit public charities that develop and implement anti-bullying programs.

The five grantees of the inaugural Be a STAR grant program are:

The Armory Foundation, New York, NY: The Armory Foundation, a NYC non-profit, services more than 125,000 athletes and is home to the premier indoor track and field center in the United States. The Be a STAR grant will help fund the Armory College Prep's Fair Play Program, which reaches more than 300 students in public high schools in New York City, New Jersey and Westchester. The grant will also provide training for The Armory Foundation's

staff, who will ensure that Be a STAR's lesson plans are integrated effectively into the program's workshops.

Blue Star Families, Inc., Falls Church, VA: Blue Star serves more than 10,000 military families in 70 locations around the world by supporting, connecting and empowering families through chapter-based programs. The Be a STAR grant will help fund MilKidz Clubs, which connects military kids—regardless of rank, branch of service or military installation—and provides them the resources, mentoring and opportunity to become the next wave of leaders in their communities. Approximately 1.5 million military children are enrolled in United States schools with the average military family moving about every two years. As a result, approximately 750,000 children of military families are the ''new kid'' each year in their school. In order to help these children, MilKidz will integrate Be a STAR resources into its after-school activities and incorporate Be a STAR's nine lesson plans, including Courage, Responsibility, Dignity, Friendship, Advocacy, Resiliency, Empathy, Identity and Morality into its monthly meetings.

Do Something, New York, NY: Do Something is one of the largest non-profit organizations in the United States that creates opportunities for young people to participate in causes that combat bullying, animal cruelty, homelessness and cancer. The Be a STAR grant will be used to help fund Do Something's ''Bully Text'' mobile platform. ''Bully Text'' is a digital experience where kids encounter different bullying scenarios and learn how to respond in various ways. According to Do Something's 2012 ''The Bully Report'', cyber bullying is the most pervasive type of bullying with 70 percent of students reporting frequent bullying online and 35 percent reporting bullying through texting.

East LA Boys & Girls Club (BGCELA), Los Angeles, CA: The mission of BGCELA is to enable all young people and their families to realize their full potential as productive, healthy, caring and responsible individuals through life-enhancing programs. The Be a STAR grant will support and fund parent workshops and training taught by local anti-bullying experts during National Bullying Prevention Month. Videos from the Be a STAR resource guide will be shown and discussed using the Be a STAR Student Activity Sheets and students will be taught Be a STAR's nine lesson plans.

National Voices for Equality, Education and Enlightenment (NVEEE), Fort Lauderdale, FL: NVEEE is a community-based non-profit whose mission is to prevent bullying, violence and suicide among youth, families and communities through direct service, mentoring and prevention education. The Be a STAR grant will fund the Peace Ambassadors program, which serves approximately 7,000 students in Ft. Lauderdale who will participate in tailored workshops that have integrated Be a STAR resources and training. The Peace Ambassador program is a leadership program comprised of students who serve as advocates and leaders to prevent bullying, suicide and violence in their schools and communities. Additionally, through the support of the Be a STAR grant, NVEEE will provide parents and students with information and resources from Be a STAR alliance members.

On behalf of the Congressional Anti-Bullying Caucus, I congratulate The Creative Coalition, WWE, Be a STAR, and the grant winners.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AT MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS INCLUDING THE 2014 SUPER BOWL

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, a hearing that I held yesterday focused on the preparations for the upcoming Super Bowl to prevent human trafficking and strategies employed by airlines, busses, trains, and hotels designed to mitigate human trafficking.

In less than a week, New Jersey will be hosting the Super Bowl, and along with welcoming enthusiastic fans, the state also is preparing for a likely influx of both domestic and international traffickers.

Sadly, but almost certainly, they will bring with them sexually exploited trafficking victims—many of them from abroad—in an attempt to cash in on the Super Bowl crowds. We know from the past that any large sporting event—especially the Super Bowl—acts as a sex trafficking magnet. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reports that more than 10,000 exploited women and girls were trafficked to Miami for the Super Bowl in 2010.

This must not happen again. New Jersey Governor Chris Christie has put in place a robust anti-human trafficking plan. For example, his Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness has stepped-up efforts to combat trafficking at the Super Bowl, distributing flyers to emergency medical services, fire department, law enforcement, and other emergency care professions so that these front line professionals will know when to be concerned that someone is a trafficking victim and how to respond appropriately. The transportation and hospitality training concept has proven straightforward, effective—and it is catching on.

On her way to yet another assembly and community awareness conference at St. Elizabeth's College in Morristown, NJ Assistant Attorney General Tracy Thompson, who is spearheading the Christie administration's anti-human trafficking effort, told me that they have trained 10,000 people, including a train-the-trainer initiative. She noted that the Super Bowl creates an increased ''breeding ground'' for sex trafficking.

She said, ''Today's victims can be any race, age or gender. Victims are exploited for prostitution, pornography and forced labor.

Traffickers control victims through force and fraud utilizing physical and psychological abuse, threats and isolation.

Know it. See it. Report it.''

According to Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, the Super Bowl can be described as ''the single largest human trafficking incident in the United States.'' Capt. Doug Cain, Louisiana State Police spokesman, said after the 2013 Super Bowl in New Orleans, ''Any time you have a large influx of tourists in town and they're spending a lot of money, there's a criminal element that moves in to take advantage of that.''

Greece, which hosted the Olympics in 2004, saw a 95% increase in trafficking victims in the months leading up to and including the Olympics. Next month, Russia—a country ranked at the lowest Tier by the annual U.S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report—will host the winter Olympic Games. Since Russia does not have in place any formal national procedures to guide law enforcement in the identification of sex trafficking victims and does not fund trafficking victim care, I am very concerned that the 2014 Winter Olympics may turn out to be a trafficking nightmare.

Later this year, Brazil will host the 2014 World Cup and then the 2016 Summer Olympics. Although Brazil has improved their anti-trafficking laws and is taking steps to mitigate trafficking risks, the fact remains that Brazil will have to do much more if they want to protect their children from sex tourism. Numbers from Brazil's Federal Police indicate that between 250,000 and 400,000 children are forcibly prostituted.

Worldwide, the best estimates are that 600,000 to 800,000 trafficking victims are moved across international borders every year. Millions more victims are moved within national borders. But anti-trafficking efforts have only recently turned to equipping transportation employees to identify victims in transit. The training is easy, inexpensive, and is already saving lives.

In July of 2010, I chaired a conference in Washington, DC, to bring together the relevant U.S. agencies, such as the Customs and Border Patrol, various U.S. airlines, and non-governmental organizations to focus on interdicting traffickers by training commercial transportation employees to recognize the indicators for trafficking. Speakers, including Deborah Sigmund, founder of a non-government organization called Innocents at Risk, explained how flight attendants were the ''first line of defense'' in the fight against human trafficking.

Flight attendants are in the unique position to observe a potential trafficking in progress and then call a trafficking hotline or inform the pilot to radio ahead so that the proper authorities can intervene.

Former flight attendant Nancy Rivard, President of Airline Ambassadors International and one of today's witnesses, told us how she and other flight attendants compared notes one day and were shocked and dismayed at how often they had noticed what they suspected was a trafficked woman or child on their flight, but had no training or protocol to do something about it. Nancy has been doing a great deal about it ever since, training airline employees around the United States and world. Last year I joined Ms. Rivard at a training seminar in Kiev, Ukraine.

One of the earliest successes of the program was a call Ms. Rivard placed to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security regarding a child she had observed on her flight from the Dominican Republic to Boston. That tip led to the break-up of a trafficking ring that had transported more than 80 children to the United States.

Just this year, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released a similar training initiative, the Blue Lightning program, to domestic U.S. airlines—so far, Delta, JetBlue, Allegiant, and North American Airlines are on board. With minimal modifications, the training is also easily adaptable to bus drivers, station operators, train conductors, trucking associations, and other transportation industry professionals.

The New Jersey Human Trafficking Task Force, which was originally started with seed

money from a law I authored—the Trafficking Victim's Protection Act of 2000—is working overtime to mitigate sex trafficking and has released anti-trafficking brochures to bus and train employees in New Jersey, as well as reached out to another major industry on the front lines of spotting traffickers and victims: the hotels.

We had with us yesterday the NGO End Child Prostitution and Trafficking, or ECPAT–USA, which has been conducting hotel training on behalf of the task force in the lead-up to the Super Bowl. Hyatt, Hilton, Wyndham, Carlson, and Accor hotels have been establishing a new industry standard to ensure that their properties are not used for human trafficking.

In addition to reaching out to transportation employees and hotels, the New Jersey Human Trafficking Task Force has increased print and electronic public service announcements and training programs for law enforcement officials, health care workers, lawyers, and others on the front lines of potential interactions with trafficking victims.

In December, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe OSCE, which comprises 57 countries from Europe and North America, endorsed my plan to make anti-trafficking training for airline employees, other public and commercial carriers, as well as hotel employees, a primary goal in the international strategy to combat human trafficking. In an earlier session, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly adopted my resolution to implement such training in each member country.

Any country that competes to host a major sporting event must be fully aware of the human trafficking vulnerabilities associated with such events and the best practices for protecting and rescuing the victims. In fact, the International Olympic Committee and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, or FIFA, should take into consideration a country's anti-trafficking commitment and ability when awarding games. Standard anti-trafficking measures should be included along with the required security measures and stadium specifications.

Finally, the only standard that fits the crime of human trafficking—zero tolerance—must be rigorously and faithfully enforced by arrests of those engaged in this nefarious trade—modern-day slavery. And there can be no higher priority than the liberation and protection of the victims. Combating human trafficking must be continuously prioritized at all levels of government, the faith community, civil society and corporations, including the National Football League. All of us must do our part to protect the women and girls.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF BLACK JANUARY

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. PASTOR of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my condolences to the people of Azerbaijan who, on January 20, remember ''Black January.''

On January 19, 1990, the Soviet Union declared a ''State of Emergency'' in Baku and other parts of Azerbaijan, in an attempt to suppress further movements towards independence. In the middle of the night and into January 20, some 26,000 Soviet troops moved into Baku brutalizing and randomly killing the civilian population as they proceeded. Over one hundred Azeris were killed and up to 800 were injured. This brutality, far from crushing the Azerbaijani spirit, steeled their resolve and on October 18, 1991, the Azerbaijan Parliament declared the country's independence, which it retains today.

Azerbaijan had always shown a special desire to be independent. With the fall of the Russian Empire in 1918, Azerbaijan declared its independence and granted voting rights for women, a full year before American women were enfranchised. Today, Azerbaijan is the only former Russian Republic which does not have foreign troops stationed on its soil.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the events of ''Black January'' and the Azeri determination that led to the independent Republic of Azerbaijan we know today.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF CONGRESSMAN VICENTE ''BEN'' GARRIDO BLAZ

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of my good friend, the late Vicente ''Ben'' Tomas Garrido Blaz, a retired Brigadier General in the United States Marine Corps and former Member of Congress who represented the people of Guam. Congressman Blaz was a hero and leader who inspired generations on Guam. He passed away on January 8, 2014 at the age of 85.

Congressman Blaz was born on February 14, 1928 to Vicente Cruz Blaz and Rita Garrido Blaz from the village of Ordot, Guam, and he was the third of eight children. He married his late wife, Ann Evers Blaz, in 1953, and they had two sons, Thomas and Michael and five grandchildren. Congressman Blaz was predeceased by his wife and parents, and his siblings and in-laws: Rosario and Pedro Cruz, Maria Blaz, Emilia and Alfred Rios, Brigida Blaz, and Alfred Blaz. He is survived by his sons, Tom and Mike, and their spouses, Shelane and Barbara; his five grandchildren; and his siblings and in-laws: Joaquin Blaz, Patricia and Jose Borja, and Frank and Julie Blaz.

On December 8, 1941, Ben was 13 when Guam was invaded by enemy forces during World War II. He endured the hardships of the 32 months of enemy occupation, and was among those conscripted into forced labor. As a survivor of the occupation, General Blaz had a strong sense of patriotism and duty to our country. He never forgot these experiences and they helped to inspire him to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps and to continue a life of service as a Congressman.

After the war, Ben graduated from George Washington High School and was awarded an academic scholarship to attend the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Ben was a patriot, and when war broke out in Korea, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and attended Officer Candidate School. In 1951, Ben graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a Bachelor of Science degree and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He continued his professional education and earned a Master of Arts degree from the George Washington University in 1963 and graduated from the Naval War College in 1970. General Blaz was bestowed an honorary Doctors of Laws from the University of Guam in 1974; in 1988 he was recognized as a distinguished alumnus of the University of Notre Dame, where he was conferred the Rev. William Corby Award for his notable military service.

As an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, Brigadier General Blaz served our nation with honor and distinction. He served three overseas tours in Vietnam; Okinawa, Japan; and Osaka, Japan. He was appointed as the Commanding Officer of the 9th Marines, and had the honor of commanding one of the Marine Corps regiments which liberated Guam during World War II. In 1977, Ben was promoted to Brigadier General, becoming the first Chamorro to attain flag officer rank. He retired in 1980 after 30 years of distinguished service in the Marine Corps. During his service, his awards and decorations included the Legion of Merit (twice awarded); Bronze Star (with Combat V); Navy Commendation Medal (twice awarded); Combat Action Ribbon; and Vietnam Cross of Gallantry (Gold Star).

Following his military retirement, General Blaz ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 1982. He was successful in 1984 when he was elected to the 99th Congress, and he served in the House of Representatives for four terms from 1985 to 1993. At the start of his first term, Congressman Blaz was elected by his peers to serve as the president of his freshman class. Congressman Blaz worked to improve the relationship between the federal government and Guam. As a member of the Armed Services, Natural Resources, and Foreign Affairs Committees, he worked to address Guam's issues, national security issues and Asia-Pacific issues. He promoted improving Guam's political status, advocated for war reparations for Guam, worked to improve education and health programs, and sought the return of excess federal lands to the people of Guam.

Ben never truly retired from public service, and after he left Congress, he became Guam's senior statesman. He was an invaluable mentor to Congressman Robert Underwood and myself, and I would often look to him for counsel and support on issues important to Guam. During his time in Congress, Congressman Blaz often remarked of the territories, ''We are equal in war but not in peace,'' recognizing the inequality between U.S. citizens residing in the territories and those living in the 50 states. During my time in Congress, I too have recognized the sentiment behind this profound statement, and I kept a plaque of Ben's quote on my desk when I first took office. Congressman Blaz was also a strong supporter of the events held in Washington to commemorate the Liberation of Guam. He faithfully attended the wreath laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery and the receptions on Capitol Hill that are held every year.

Throughout his life, Ben worked to promote and preserve the Chamorro culture, language, and history. He produced two television series Nihi Ta Bisita (Let Us Visit) which centered on

Guam's culture, language, and history, and Nihi Ta Hasso (Let Us Remember) which centered on the occupation and liberation of Guam during World War II, and was later published as a book. He is also the author of Bisita Guam: A Special Place in the Sun, which is an important resource in Guam's schools.

I join the people of Guam in honoring the memory of Congressman Ben Blaz and commemorating his many contributions to our island and our nation. I extend my sincere condolences to the entire Blaz family. While General Blaz is no longer with us, his legacy of selfless service and patriotism inspires our young men and women in the military and throughout our island.

A REPORT ON THE G8 DEMENTIA SUMMIT

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on December 11, the G8 convened a dementia summit in London to examine and presumably harmonize the various national action plans on the growing international crisis of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. The outcome appears to indicate a coalescing around the U.S. plan to make significant headway on addressing dementia by 2025, which would have significant implications globally, particularly in low and middle-income countries where increasing aging populations and numbers of people with dementia strain limited resources.

On January 4, 2011, President Obama signed into law the National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA), requiring the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish the National Alzheimer's Project. Among other provisions of that law, the administration was mandated to: create and maintain an integrated national plan to overcome Alzheimer's disease; coordinate Alzheimer's disease research and services across all federal agencies; accelerate the development of treatments that would prevent, halt, or reverse the course of Alzheimer's disease; improve early diagnosis and coordination of care and treatment of Alzheimer's disease; improve outcomes for ethnic and racial minority populations that are at higher risk for Alzheimer's disease; and coordinate with international bodies to fight Alzheimer's globally.

That congressionally-mandated plan apparently found favor with the G8, which endorsed that plan as being comprehensive and forward-looking. But even before the summit, the U.S. national plan on Alzheimer's led nearly a dozen other nations to adopt their own national strategies.

According to the testimony at this subcommittee's November 21, 2013 pre-summit hearing, this comprehensive approach is vital to meeting what is a looming global health crisis.

The World Health Organization and Alzheimer's Disease International 2012 Dementia Report estimates that there were 35.6 million people with dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, worldwide in 2010. This number is projected to nearly double every 20 years, increasing to 65.7 million in 2030 and 115.4 million in 2050.

The global cost of this condition totaled $604 billion in 2010, according to the Alzheimer's Disease International. To put this figure in context, Alzheimer's cost would equal the Gross Domestic Product of the 18th-place country in the world ranked by GDP.

While the other G8 countries may pledge funding to address Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia in the developing world, we are facing an impending global health crisis over Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. The FY2014 federal budget request for U.S.-funded global health programs was $8.3 billion. The focus is on achieving an AIDS-free generation and ending preventable child and maternal deaths through the Administration's Global Health Initiative. Under this budget, maternal and child health would receive $680 million, malaria program would receive $670 million, tuberculosis programs would receive $191 million, neglected tropical disease programs would receive $85 million and pandemic influenza and other emerging threats programs would receive $47 million.

WHO estimates that more than half of global dementia cases are in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) where cases are projected to grow. Across Asia, Latin America and Africa, these developing countries are expected to see the most rapid growth in dementia cases over the next several decades. In 2010, roughly 53% of dementia cases were in low- and middle-income countries. By 2050, WHO expects 70% of all cases to be found in such countries. So how will this impact our foreign aid portfolio, especially as regards global health?

We need to better understand the level of international cooperation our government can expect in the search for early detection techniques, prevention and treatment of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. There has been collaboration among scientists across borders on HIV/AIDS, but how much can we expect on the various forms of dementia? Many countries in the developing world don't even have surveillance adequate to provide reliable statistics on the incidence of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. Given the negative impact of the brain drain, they may not be able to be the active, effective partners we need them to be in this area. However, without their help, it will be difficult to even formulate programs to help such nations cope with this growing health threat.

These are questions we addressed at a recent hearing. The administration was unable to participate in my subcommittee's November 21, 2013 hearing on the subject, but we recently had the head of the National Institute on Aging to provide the administration's view on what the summit produced. We were also joined by two representatives from the NGO community who participated in the London summit to give us a private sector view of those proceedings.

We will need more than rhetoric to deal with this crisis. As more of us live longer worldwide, the threat of developing Alzheimer's or some other form of dementia grows exponentially. We cannot afford to have a robust domestic program to fight this condition and find that our international efforts are undermined by the failure of other donors to play their proper role in this effort.

CELEBRATING MR. GARY FLOSI

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Mr. Gary Flosi on his recent retirement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Mr. Flosi's dedication to the North Coast's fisheries and watersheds has been a tremendous service to the state.

Mr. Flosi began his career as a wildland firefighter with the California Ecology Corps in October 1975, then moved on to work with the California Conservation Corps. When he joined Fish and Wildlife, he helped develop the fisheries technician program with the CCC and led the state's peer review committee for Fish and Wildlife's Fisheries Restoration Grants Program. Mr. Flosi co-founded the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project and has served on its Advisory Committee for 20 years.

Through 4–H and FFA, the CCC and AmeriCorps, Mr. Flosi has passed on his understanding of the importance of fisheries to many who follow in his footsteps. His example will continue to inspire those who wish to restore the environment and fisheries that are so vital to California.

Please join me in expressing deep appreciation to Mr. Gary Flosi for his long and impressive career, and his exceptional record of service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, on Rollcall #25 for H.R. 3008, I am not recorded because I was absent. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

ON THE OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC.

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. PETERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome the Metro Detroit and Ann Arbor Chapters of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. to Michigan's Fourteenth Congressional District, as they gather to celebrate their One-hundred-and-sixth Anniversary.

Founded in 1908, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority (AKA) was the product of a small and dedicated group of African-American college students from Howard University who sought to make the college experience as meaningful as possible for themselves and the generations of young women that followed them. Together, this group of pioneers created our nation's first historically African-American sorority and set out upon a journey to promote and encourage high scholastic achievement,

strong ethical standards, improved friendship among college women, as well as to identify and develop solutions to issues that prevented young women from accessing higher education. With the motto of ''Service to All Mankind,'' the sorority quickly took root in campuses and communities across the United States.

In the early years following its inception, the members of AKA engaged in endeavors that both assisted with access to and maximizing of the higher education experience for women of color. By the time AKA celebrated its Twenty-fifth Anniversary in 1933, the sorority had grown into a national organization with over 500 members in 104 chapters from across the United States. Among AKA's first achievements were the creation of a $2000 scholarship to increase the ability of talented young women to financially afford college and an engagement with the NAACP to remove social barriers that prevented equal access to college education.

As the decades passed, AKA continued to expand both its membership and the scope of its community programs. In support of their sorority's mission to make higher education more accessible, the members of AKA took frontline roles in the Civil Rights movement and the President Johnson's War on Poverty. In addition to its Emerging Young Leader Initiatives, which provides middle school aged girls with leadership development and enhanced academic opportunities, AKA and its members began to tackle issues of community health, poverty and environmental justice. To support healthier communities, AKA started an asthma prevention program to help families identify and treat childhood asthma before it impacts the educational experience. In fulfillment of AKA's mission, its members undertook the creation of programs to empower their communities with information on the impact of environmental issues affecting them, setup health care forums targeted to women's issues and continue to partner with international leaders like UNESCO to end hunger and poverty across the globe.

Today, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. is a thriving global organization with over 200,000 members worldwide across hundreds of chapters and has affected the future of thousands of young women. AKA's members have been part of key social movements that have seen our nation and the world move closer to equality on all fronts. I thank the members of the Metro Detroit and Ann Arbor Chapters of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. for their tireless dedication and service to Greater Detroit region and congratulate them on celebrating another great milestone in their history. I am proud to represent so many strong and talented Alpha Kappa Alpha women and I wish them well in their future endeavors as they continue making a remarkable impact on communities around the world.

IN RECOGNITION OF MONSIGNOR THOMAS BANICK FOR 50 YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE AS A CATHOLIC PRIEST

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Monsignor Thomas Banick, who after 50 years of service to the Catholic Church and his community, is retiring. Monsignor Banick was ordained by Archbishop Martin J. O'Connor on December 18, 1963, in the Church of St. Ignatius in Rome. A day later, he celebrated his First Mass at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. In 1964, he was awarded the Degree of Licentiate in Sacred Theology by the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Shortly thereafter, Father Banick returned to the United States and celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving at Holy Family Church.

Monsignor Banick was first assigned to Holy Ghost Church in Olyphant as an assistant pastor, where he took up residence after serving as an interim assistant pastor for the summer of 1964 at St. Mary of Mount Carmel Church in Dunmore. In 1967, he was transferred to Gate of Heaven Parish, where he served as assistant pastor until September 1969. From then until 1978, Father Banick held the position of Professor of Theology, Director of Spiritual Life, and Director of Music at St. Pius X Seminary in Dalton. During this time, he also served as Lecturer in Religious Studies and Theology at the University of Scranton, Lecturer in Liturgical Music at Marywood College, Chairperson of the Music Commission of the Diocese of Scranton, and Director of Music at St. Peter's Cathedral. Father Banick engaged in further studies at Fordham University and Woodstock College in New York, the University of San Francisco, and the University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, where he was awarded a Doctorate in Sacred Theology in 1973.

In 1976, he took up residence at Marywood College and was appointed the first Director of the Office for Continuing Education of Priests by Bishop J. Carroll McCormick, the sixth Bishop of Scranton. In September 1976, at the request of the Board of Bishops of the North American College, Bishop McCormick released Father Banick for service to the College as Director of the Advising Program and Director of Music. A year later, he was named Vice Rector of the College, a position he held until 1985. While in Rome, he was also Assistant Professor of Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University of St. Thomas Aquinas. Before leaving Rome to return to the Diocese, he was named a Prelate of Honor by Pope John Paul II, on May 28, 1985.

After returning to Pennsylvania, Monsignor Banick was appointed to his first pastorate at St. Mary's by Bishop James C. Timlin on September 4, 1985. Since then, Monsignor Banick served faithfully as Pastor of St. Mary's Church of the Immaculate Conception in Wilkes-Bane for 28 years. Soon after becoming pastor, he established a Pastoral Team to assist him in the pastoral leadership of the large downtown church and in the ongoing ecclesial renewal inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council. St. Mary's Parish Center, constructed in 1995 to mark the 150th anniversary of St. Mary's founding, provided much needed space for parish ministries and activities, including a Religious Education (CCD) Center, a Music Center and a Reception Hall.

During his pastorate, Monsignor Banick served on the Presbyterian Council of the Diocese of Scranton. He also held membership in ecumenical, inter-faith, and community groups, including the Catholic Youth Center of Wyoming Valley, the Wyoming Valley Council of Churches, the Inter-faith Council of Wyoming Valley, the Children's Service Center of Wyoming Valley, and the Inter-faith Resource Center for Peace and Justice. Monsignor Banick was Chairperson of the Mayor's Task Force on Alcohol and Drugs in Wilkes-Barre, and was Vice-President of VISION (Volunteers in Service in Our Neighborhoods) which operated the shelter for homeless in the Wilkes-Barre area. He also served on the Administrative Board of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, and the Catholic Theological Society of America, and the Board of Directors of the United Way of Wyoming Valley. He also presided over the Board of Directors of the King's College/St. Mary's Early Childhood Learning Center, located at St. Mary's, which he founded in 1995 with Father James Lackenmeir, CSC, President of King's College.

Recently, Monsignor Banick also became pastor of St. Joseph's Slovak Church and St. Therese Church when the reorganization plan of the Diocese of Scranton consolidated them into St. Mary's Church to form Our Lady of Fatima Parish on June 27, 2011.

Today, I am proud to honor Monsignor Banick for a lifetime of devotion to improving his community, serving the Church he loves through priesthood, and positively touching the lives of countless citizens of Northeast Pennsylvania.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT E. ''BOB'' MAGEE

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community are exceptional. Lake Elsinore has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent and make their communities a better place to live and work. Robert E. ''Bob'' Magee is one of these individuals. On January 25, 2014, Bob will be honored as the 2013 ''John Packman Award'' recipient at the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce Installation and Awards Gala.

Each year, the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce awards one individual the John Packman Award. This individual is selected based on the criteria that they have given the highest level of service to his or her community in the past year. After evaluating all that Bob has done for our community, it became clear how worthy he is of this honor.

Bob was born and raised in the thriving city of Sacramento, California, to Ed and Lynn Magee as one of four children. Bob went on to graduate high school after his family moved to the sunny Southern California city of San Diego and later attended San Diego State University (SDSU), where he earned his degree in Public Administration with an Emphasis in City Planning. Bob's thriving career began when he interned for Assemblyman Larry Stirling's 77th District Office and later with the Planning Department of the City of Santee during his years at SDSU. Following these experiences, Bob's passion for public service ignited. His first job out of college led him to follow this passion to Lake Elsinore, where he

began to work with the city's Planning Department on a wide array of things, including reviewing development applications and supervising the city's Code Enforcement Program.

In 1995, Bob became the Director of Governmental Affairs for Recyc, Inc, where his experience eventually led him to become the Vice President of its parent Company, Gro West. His extensive work and specialization in Mining and Land Development, Heavy Equipment Rentals, and Wholesale Nurseries created an environment for tremendous growth within the region. In 2001, Bob expanded his experience in the field by accepting a position as Executive Officer for Forest Wood Fiber Products. His management style demonstrated through his roles in the business community led him to win a seat on the Lake Elsinore City Council in 2003. He would go on the win a second term in 2008, where he was selected by his colleagues to serve as the Lake Elsinore City Mayor, a position he has held four times.

It is hard to imagine that Bob would have any free time on his hands, yet has he always found time for his community. Bob was a Little League Baseball coach for virtually a decade during the 1990s, and prioritized public safety by organizing and instituting Neighborhood Watch groups throughout the area. He served as Vice Chairman of the County's Historical Commission, Chairman of the Lakeland Village Advisory Committee, Chairman of the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), and as Chairman of the RCTC's Budget Subcommittee. He is also a dedicated member of the Riverside County Solid Waste Advisory Task Force, the Lake Elsinore Redevelopment Committee, the State Route 91 Advisory Committee, the Wells Fargo Inland Empire Community Board, and the Riverside County Republican Central Committee.

For all that he has done, it is no surprise that Bob has been the recipient of numerous community awards including being named ''Citizen of the Year'' by the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce in 2005, ''Distinguished Citizen of the Year'' by the Tahquitz District of the Boy Scouts of America in 2010, and being appointed to the State Board of Fire Services by then Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger.

In his spare time, Bob enjoys off-road racing, riding motorcycles, golf, tennis and walking his dog. He and his wife, Gina, live in Lake Elsinore where they enjoy cheering on their son, Richard, who is serving in the United States Army.

Considering all that Bob has done for Lake Elsinore, the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce named him their 2013 John Packman Award recipient. Bob's tireless passion for service has contributed immensely to the betterment of our community. He has been the heart and soul of many organizations and events and I am proud to call him a fellow community member, American and friend. I know that many community members are grateful for his service and salute him as he receives this prestigious award.

CONGRESSIONAL RECOGNITION FOR DEBBIE RICH RECIPIENT OF THE 2014 PHYLLIS EHLINGER WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

HON. RON BARBER

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Debbie Rich, chief executive officer of the Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona, who has been named winner of the 2014 Phyllis Ehlinger Women of Excellence Award by the Tucson Chapter of the American Advertising Federation.

This prestigious award recognizes a local woman who is a business owner or executive and who has demonstrated success within her industry, along with a dedication to philanthropy and mentoring.

Debbie is a former Girl Scout herself who today leads an organization that serves more than 15,000 girls and has more than 2,500 adult volunteers in Pima, Cochise, Greenlee, Yuma and Santa Cruz counties as well as southern parts of Graham, Maricopa and Pinal counties.

To meet the demand for services in Southern Arizona's underserved communities, Debbie created an innovative program using women students at the University of Arizona and Pima Community College as troop leaders. This has become a program beneficial both for the young scouts and also for the students who serve as their mentors and role models. To date, it is the only Girl Scout organization in the Nation to use this model.

Also under Debbie's leadership, Girl Scouts in Southern Arizona are addressing serious contemporary issues such as poverty, illiteracy, hunger, homelessness and violence.

Debbie's programs have become so successful and popular that the Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona now requires more space to fulfill its mission. There soon will be an enlarged campus with meeting rooms, science labs, a demonstration kitchen, a digital media lab and a gym.

Debbie has said that her goal is to motivate every girl in our community to be the best that she can be. Debbie herself has set a sterling example for the Girl Scouts who will come after her.

I am proud to recognize Debbie Rich on the occasion of her selection as recipient of the 2014 Phyllis Ehlinger Women of Excellence Award.

HONORING THE NORTH THOMPSONVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the North Thompsonville Fire Department. The NTFD is led by Chief Earl Provencher and Deputy Chiefs Douglas Maxellon and David Lapponese who are all prepared to lead a group of firefighters, or the entire department if necessary, into any situation. Chairman Ralph Jensen heads the board of five fire commissioners. Since its first meeting in the Manning Barn on February 16, 1914, the fire department has grown steadily. Today, the station serves as a second home to the 46 men and women who proudly serve the 10,000 people of their district.

Through the years, the North Thompsonville Fire Department has expanded to better meet the needs of the community. By 1929, they had moved out of the Thompsonville Water Company Pumping Station and into their first fire station. In 1969, with more than 50 active members, the department hired the first part-time employees and named its first Fire Fighter of the Year, Ernest W. Deford. A generous donation from the John Maciolek Post of the American Legion in 1973 revolutionized the way the department responded to motor vehicle accidents. Believed to have the second set of Jaws of Life in the State of Connecticut, the department's use of this life-saving tool made critical rescues safer and more effective.

In 2009, the department proudly honored Deputy Chief Ken ''Pops'' Provencher for his 50 years of service. In 2012, they also gave this distinguished honor to Captain Patrick Griffin just before he passed away. The following year, department again had the privilege of honoring Captain Ralph Jensen, Sr. These men started as cadets and worked through the ranks from firefighter all the way up their respective ranks at retirement. All three continued their careers by becoming Fire Commissioners. The district, the members, and the citizens of the North Thompsonville Fire District thanked these men for their combined 150 years of service.

In 2012, the North Thompsonville Fire Department responded to 502 calls including structure, vehicle, brush and incidental fires, hazardous material incidents, mutual aid assignments, and medical emergencies. The department spent over 2,900 hours responding to emergencies and an additional 4,100 hours in training.

I ask that my colleagues join with me in congratulating the North Thompsonville Fire Department on the 100th anniversary and commend them for the work they do each day to keep their community safe.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, due to a flight cancellation and airline delays, I was unable to be present for votes on Monday, January 27. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes'' on rollcall vote No. 24, regarding H.R. 2166, and ''yes'' on rollcall vote No. 25, regarding H.R. 3008.

REMEMBERING COLONEL (U.S. ARMY RETIRED) WILLIAM EDWARD CALLENDER, SR.

HON. BRADLEY BYRNE

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to remember the life of Colonel

(U.S. Army Retired) William Callender of Mobile, Alabama. Colonel (U.S. Army Retired) Callender, known affectionately to his family as 'The Colonel,' passed away on January 17, 2014, and was laid to rest in Pine Crest Cemetary in Mobile on January 22.

An avid Alabama Crimson Tide football fan, Colonel (U.S. Army Retired) Callender, was born in Mobile on September 17, 1937, graduating from Murphy High School in 1956 and the University of Alabama in 1960. He was married to his wife, Jacqueline, in 1958 and began his career in military service directly after his college graduation in 1960.

Colonel (U.S. Army Retired) Callender was sent to serve in Vietnam, earning a Purple Heart, Distinguished Flying Cross, the Soldier's Medal and the Gallatry Cross with Bronze Star Medal. He was truly an American hero, selflessly putting himself in harm's way to protect the lives of his peers.

But Colonel (U.S. Army Retired) Callender's service continued even after his multiple tours in Vietnam, becoming known in South Alabama for his work on behalf of America's military veterans and earning the Gulf Coast Veteran of the Year Award in 2006. After retiring from the U.S. Army, Colonel (U.S. Army Retired) Callender began working at the University of South Alabama in Mobile, as well as serving on the Baldwin County School Board.

Upon his full retirement, he and his wife Jacqueline moved to Orange Beach, Alabama, serving on the Battleship Commission and enjoying his much-deserved retirement fishing. He will be greatly missed by his family—his wife, Jacqueline, his three daughters Ginger Hawkins, Cyndi Callender and Tammy Hadley, and his 12 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

South Alabama lost a great man on January 17 with the passing of Colonel (U.S. Army Retired) Callender. We thank him for his service and remember him for his courageous spirit fighting to defend our country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I was not present during rollcall vote No. 24 and 25 on January 27, 2014, due to a flight delay.

I would like the record to reflect how I would have voted:

On rollcall vote No. 24, I would have voted "yes"; on rollcall vote No. 25, I would have voted "yes".

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS: INCOME INEQUALITY

SPEECH OF

HON. MARCIA L. FUDGE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 27, 2014

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues Congressmen Jeffries and Horsford for once again leading the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order Hour. Today's topic of income/economic inequality is one of the most critical challenges currently facing our country.

For too many Americans, the barriers to economic opportunity and mobility have become insurmountable.

Just last week, a Pew Research Center survey found that at least 60 percent of all Republicans, Democrats and Independents say the gap between the rich and everyone else has grown in the past 10 years.

However, we do not need a survey to tell us what we already know to be true. According to the Census Bureau, 95 percent of all economic gains since the recovery began have gone to the top 1 percent.

We also know that, since 1979, our economy has more than doubled in size, but most of that growth has flowed to a fortunate few.

In the past, the average CEO made about 20 to 30 times the income of the average worker, today's CEO makes 273 times more. Meanwhile, a family in the top 1 percent has a net worth 288 times higher than the typical American family, the largest income gap ever for our country.

This is simply egregious.

We cannot continue to believe that a growing economy guarantees higher wages and income for all. Because it does not.

We cannot ignore that in 2014, women continue to lag behind men in wages, with women making 77 cents for every dollar a man takes home.

According to The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Pushes Back from the Brink, women make up nearly two-thirds of minimum-wage workers. Given this statistic, it's no wonder that a third of all American women are living on the brink of poverty.

Americans are working harder than ever, for the smallest of gains. This is simply not acceptable.

Congress must renew its focus on investing in the American people through quality programs that promote access to the middle class, equality and accountability.

In order to help the working poor and middle class, we must raise the minimum wage; invest in education; improve our infrastructure; reign in Wall Street and return our focus to Main Street.

Only then will we be on the path toward prosperity and equal economic opportunity for all.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained yesterday and missed roll Nos. 24 and 25. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on roll Nos. 24 and 25.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE SAN JOAQUIN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

HON. JERRY McNERNEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. McNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating the San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation for its efforts on AgVenture, an innovative program that teaches students about agriculture and our nation's food supply.

California's San Joaquin Valley is one of the most bountiful agricultural regions in the world. From cucumbers to walnuts, from tomatoes to cherries, the Valley is vital to the United States' food security. In 2012, San Joaquin County alone produced $2.8 billion in agricultural revenue, an extraordinary 28 percent increase from the previous year, and is responsible for countless jobs in the region.

To help raise awareness about local agriculture, the San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation started AgVenture, which educates 11,000 elementary school students per year in San Joaquin County farming techniques, the history of certain crops, and the food they eat.

AgVenture helps rebuild a sense of community between those who live in urban and suburban cities and people in rural areas. AgVenture and other efforts by the San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation promote healthy diets, ensure affordable food, and honor the rich agricultural history of the United States. I am proud to represent San Joaquin County farmers in Congress.

I urge my colleagues to join me in commending the San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation, its AgVenture program, and its dedication to improving the education and nutrition of California's youth.

GOOD SAMARITAN SEARCH AND RECOVERY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DOC HASTINGS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 27, 2014

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Chairman FRANK D. LUCAS of the Committee on Agriculture for his assistance in scheduling H.R. 2166 for consideration by the House of Representatives on Monday, January 27, 2014. I submit an exchange of letters between the Committees regarding this bill.

The continued cooperation shown by Chairman LUCAS and his able staff on national forest issues is much appreciated, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Chairman for the remainder of the Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, September 10, 2013.

Hon. DOC HASTINGS,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, Longworth HOB, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HASTINGS: Thank you for the opportunity to review the relevant provisions of the text of H.R. 2166, the Good Samaritan Search and Recovery Act of 2013. As you are aware, the bill was primarily referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, while the Agriculture Committee received an additional referral.

I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House in an expeditious manner and, accordingly, I agree to discharge H.R. 2166 from further consideration by the Committee on Agriculture. I do so with the understanding that by discharging the bill, the Committee on Agriculture does not waive any future jurisdictional claim on this or similar matters. Further, the Committee on Agriculture reserves

the right to seek the appointment of conferees, if it should become necessary.

I ask that you insert a copy of our exchange of letters into the Congressional Record during consideration of this measure on the House floor.

Thank you for your courtesy in this matter and I look forward to continued cooperation between our respective committees.

Sincerely,

FRANK D. LUCAS,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, September 11, 2013.

Hon. FRANK D. LUCAS,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Longworth HOB, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2166, the Good Samaritan Search and Recovery Act of 2013. As you know, the Committee on Natural Resources ordered reported the bill on June 12, 2013. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Agriculture will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Natural Resources concurs with the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 2166 at this time, the Committee on Agriculture does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. In addition, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Agriculture represented on the conference committee. Finally, I would be pleased to include your letter and this response in the bill report filed by the Committee on Natural Resources, as well as in the Congressional Record during floor consideration, to memorialize our understanding.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

DOC HASTINGS,
Chairman.

CONGRATULATING SUSAN ELKINGTON

HON. LARRY BUCSHON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Susan Elkington on her selection to receive a STEP Award from The Manufacturing Institute. As she is a fellow Hoosier and an inspiration to young women interested in technical careers, I am pleased to stand before this body of Congress to recognize her contributions to Toyota, the automotive industry, Indiana, and her community.

Manufacturing is revitalizing our economy and making America strong. Investments in manufacturing, particularly in automotive manufacturing, multiply across the economy, creating jobs and growth in other sectors. Manufacturing is the backbone of our Nation's middle class. Today's manufacturing offers competitive wages, is high tech, safe, and offers great growth opportunities for women. Yet, over 80 percent of manufacturers still cannot find the skilled workers they need.

Part of this skills gap is due to the lack of women in the industry. While women make up 50 percent of the U.S. workforce, they make up only 24 percent of the manufacturing workforce.

STEP Award Honorees, such as Ms. Elkington, are attracting more women to manufacturing careers by educating young workers. By telling the real stories of these women, we can inspire and encourage the next generation of women to join the manufacturing industry and pursue exciting and meaningful careers.

Ms. Elkington has provided leadership and expertise at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Indiana in a variety of influential roles as she progressed to become Toyota's first female vice president of manufacturing for a vehicle assembly plant. She has been a key player in Toyota's success in Indiana from the beginning.

She joined Toyota as a manufacturing engineering specialist in 1998, serving on a team preparing for the start of production of Toyota Indiana's first vehicle, the Tundra full-size pickup truck. She rose through the ranks into the role of General Manager of Assembly and Stamping/Body Weld, where she oversaw numerous operations of Production, Conveyance, Engineering, Maintenance and new model preparation. She helped to plan and manage production of Toyota's Sequoia, Sienna, Highlander and the Highlander Hybrid models.

Ms. Elkington is committed to diversity and inclusion within manufacturing both at Toyota and in the State of Indiana. She recognized the absence of women in manufacturing early in her career. Consequently, she led Toyota Indiana's diversity and inclusion initiatives as diversity champion, and as Toyota's champion for the Society of Women Engineers.

I am thankful for the years of dedication and hard work by Susan Elkington, and I congratulate her for setting an example of professional excellence and advocacy of women in manufacturing, as well as her commitment to the greater community.

CELEBRATING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, most Americans would agree on the essential importance of education to a successful and meaningful life. But knowledge in and of itself is insufficient without a moral and ethical context for its appropriate application. Thus, the importance of Catholic schools, which we celebrate this week.

In the Northern Mariana Islands the Catholic schools of Eskuelan San Francisco de Borja on Rota, St. Joseph Catholic School on Tinian, and Mount Carmel School on the Saipan, have been the vanguard not only in educational excellence, but also in the inculcation of spiritual values. Graduates of these schools, who now fill every nook and cranny of leadership in our communities, carry both intellectual skills and a moral compass to their work in our society. We are all better off as a result. And, at least in part, we have Catholic schools to thank.

We have also to thank the parents of every Catholic school student. For, over the years, these parents have chosen to sacrifice, to deploy their limited resources, to send their sons and daughters to parochial schools. Even as the quality of free, public education in the Northern Marianas has continued to improve—and I am sure that faculty and students in our fine public institutions would even proudly argue to surpass our Catholic schools—still have parents found something of extra value in those Catholic schools and continued to pay for their children to receive a Catholic education.

And we have to thank the religious and lay teachers in our Catholic schools. These women and men have chosen to forego material rewards of life in order to serve as the conduit for the moral system that underlies the academic content of their classrooms. Often among the best educated members of our community, rather than using their knowledge to advance their own interests these teachers disseminate what they know, so that many lives may be enriched. Their service and sacrifice, too, we celebrate and recognize during Catholic Schools Week.

Lastly, we congratulate the students in our Catholic schools. You are part of a heritage in the Northern Mariana Islands that we trace back directly to the founding of Mount Carmel School in 1952, but which certainly has its roots with the original Catholic missionaries of the 16th century. That is a remarkable tradition. One to be proud of, as you mark Catholic Schools Week, and to carry on.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, on January 27, 2014, I missed rollcall votes Nos. 24 and 25. My flight to Washington was delayed. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner:

Rollcall No: 24 "aye."

Rollcall No: 25 "aye."

IN TRIBUTE TO MR. GEORGE ZLOTNICK

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize George Zlotnick as he reaches his 90th birthday. A member of our "greatest generation," George is a respected Connecticut veteran who participated in the last airborne deployment of World War II in Operation Varsity before embarking on a successful career in the construction industry.

As a young 19-year-old from Willimantic, Connecticut, George enlisted in the Army in 1943. Beginning as an infantryman before joining the Army Air Corps, George's dream of flying a plane became a reality when he was sent to the Pre-Flight Training at Teacher's College in Pennsylvania. After completing his training, George was sent to Germany on March. 24, 1945, to participate in one of the largest airborne military assaults in America's history.

Praised as a key tactical success for the Allies in the fight against Nazi Germany, Operation Varsity dropped Allied troops behind enemy lines to secure the Rhine River in Wesel, Germany. As a paratrooper with the 464th Field Artillery Battalion of the 17th Airborne Division, George was tasked with carrying the barrel of a cannon weighing more than 200 pounds through enemy fire to deliver ammunition to Allied troops. Completing his mission with courage, George was honorably discharged from service in February 1946.

After serving his country, George started his own construction company in Ashford, Connecticut in 1948. Like many great American success stores, George began his business from humble beginnings; assembling small buildings, chicken coops and barns for local farmers. Sixty-five years later, Zlotnick Contruction Incorporated remains a respected organization in Mansfield, Connecticut and has won contracts with key multinational firms. George and his wife Zenia have also remained an unwavering part of the business and Orthodox Church communities of Connecticut.

As George prepares to celebrate his 90th birthday on March 9, 2014, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating this great American veteran and businessman and thanking him for his contribution to our Nation.

TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY AND JEANNE PRITZKER

HON. KAREN BASS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, today, I pay tribute to two philanthropists of exceptional dedication and character—Anthony and Jeanne Pritzker. The Pritzkers have been committed to improving the lives of foster youth through the Anthony and Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation.

For more than a decade the Anthony and Jeanne Prtitzker Family Foundation has been making investments to strengthen important institutions that help the residents of Los Angeles. The foundation's grants have helped improve medical care, higher education, the environment, the arts and the foster care system in our city. These investments enrich our communities now, and for future generations.

In 2012, Jeanne Pritzker started the nonprofit Foster Care Counts after being inspired by two teenagers they took into their own home, while raising her own children. Foster Care Counts has brought thousands of foster kids and families to their own home to celebrate family with their successful, Foster Mother's Day event.

The Pritzkers recently gave a $3 million gift to UCLA to create an endowment that covers tutoring, mental health services, summer housing, unforeseen school expenses and other costs for UCLA students who were or are in foster care. They have long been contributors to UCLA's Guardian Scholars program, which provides support to former and current foster-care youth who are students at UCLA. This generous donation is helping ensure the continued success of this vulnerable population.

Today we honor the Pritzkers, for fighting for those who sometimes do not have a voice, and making their lives a little better

CLIMATE CHANGE

HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Safe Climate Caucus to address the issue of climate change.

Global warming means that the planet on average is getting warmer. The evidence here is indisputable.

Global warming is also causing freak weather events that just aren't normal. These include hurricanes, typhoons and droughts. They also include the brutal cold fronts that are sweeping the country.

Some climate deniers have used this as an opportunity to assert that the overwhelming science behind global warming is wrong. The irony in this assertion is that while the U.S. has extreme unusually cold temperatures, current temperatures in the Arctic are above average.

NOAA recently confirmed that 2013 was the fourth warmest year on record. All 13 years of the 21st century rank among the 15 warmest since records began 134 years ago. On average, spring weather arrives ten days earlier than it used to in the Northern Hemisphere. While many states in the Midwest and Northeast have exceptionally cold temperatures, Alaska is experiencing unusually warm weather and California is going through a record-breaking drought. Average daily highs in Alaska are 11 degrees greater than the historical average for January.

These unusual weather events are doing real economic harm and are hurting American families. Congress needs to tackle this problem of man-made climate change head on and not just bury our heads in the snow.

HONORING MONICA DOMINGUEZ

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize Monica Dominguez, the lead counselor at Dr. Sue Shook Elementary School in Horizon City, Texas. Ms. Dominguez is in Washington D.C. to be honored as an American School Counselor Association (ASCA) 2014 School Counselor of the Year finalist.

Ms. Dominguez has led Shook Elementary's efforts to close the gap in services for low-income students through a counseling program that supports students' academic, social and emotional development. By reaching out to students beyond the confines of the school day, Ms. Dominguez has earned respect from fellow educators, parents, and most importantly, her students. In addition, Ms. Dominguez has developed effective relationships with local agencies to support the overall well-being of diverse students and families in El Paso County.

Before joining the staff at Shook Elementary, Ms. Dominguez served as the grants counselor for Project HOPE (Heightened Opportunities for Promoting Excellence) at H. D. Hilley Elementary School, which serves many students and families who experienced the negative impacts of violence in Mexico. Many of these families moved to El Paso to escape violence and the new students were in need of emotional and academic support. Ms. Dominguez set up Hilley's first data-driven, comprehensive school counseling program, where she maintained a low student-to-counselor ratio; decreased disciplinary referrals; increased attendance rates; and helped students and teachers succeed on state assessments.

Horizon City and the entire El Paso community continue to benefit from the positive impacts that Ms. Dominguez has on her students in her third year as a counselor at Shook Elementary. Her leadership skills and comprehensive vision shape the lives of her students and their families. I join the ASCA and the El Paso community in honoring Ms. Dominguez for her dedication to serving students and for the inspiring example she has set for school counselors across the country.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 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 $17,263,279,883,739.66. We've added $6,636,402,834,826.58 to our debt in 5 years. This is $6.6 trillion in debt our Nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

HONORING JUDGE FRANK CREEDE, JR.

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. NUNES. Mr. Speaker, Alongside my colleague DAVID VALADAO, I rise today to pay tribute to Judge Frank Creede, Jr., who recently passed away.

Frank Creede distinguished himself at an early age. During World War II, he joined the army at the age of eighteen and served in a heavy machine-gun squad in Europe, where he was taken prisoner during the Battle of the Bulge. Surviving a forced march and a railroad ride in a boxcar from Belgium to Germany, he was liberated from his POW camp in April 1945 and was later awarded the Purple Heart.

Upon his return to the United States, Frank began his long, eminent legal career. After practicing law for more than two decades and becoming a founding partner of the law firm now called Creede, Dawson, Gillaspy and Ninnis, he was appointed as a Fresno County judge by Governor Ronald Reagan in 1973. He heard more than 200 jury trials and adjudicated many high-profile cases during his outstanding tenure on the bench, which included service as presiding judge of the Superior Court and several other courts. Judge Creede retired in 1998 after being re-elected to the

Superior Court four times. Among his many awards and commendations, the Fresno County Law Library was renamed in his honor.

In retirement Judge Creede remained active as a visiting judge. He also participated in a remarkably wide array of charitable organizations and civic groups including some dedicated to preventing animal cruelty, which was a particular passion of his.

Known for his sense of humor, work ethic, and compassion, Judge Creede was a wonderful asset to the Fresno community. For decades he served his country and his community with distinction. He leaves behind an enduring legacy that his family should look upon with the deepest sense of pride.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I want to state for the record that yesterday, January 27, I missed several rollcall votes. Had I been present I would have voted: ''yes''—rollcall vote 24—H.R. 2166—Good Samaritan Search and Recovery Act; ''yes''—rollcall vote 25—H.R. 3008—To provide for the conveyance of a small parcel of National Forest System land in Los Padres National Forest in California, and for other purposes.

HONORING GARY BIXHORN

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Gary D. Bixhorn on his retirement after 35 years of educational leadership and service. As Chief Operating Officer of Eastern Suffolk BOCES, Gary oversaw New York State's largest BOCES, serving more than 50 school districts across an area of 1,000 square miles. Under his guidance, Eastern Suffolk BOCES became a leader in exploring cost-saving opportunities for school districts, and Gary became one of the region's top advocates for Long Island schools.

Gary did an outstanding job during exceptionally challenging economic times for education, testifying frequently before commissions and forums where he shared his vast knowledge and understanding of school finance. He was a key spokesperson in the fight to urge New York State lawmakers to end the Gap Elimination Adjustment, a formula in the state budget that reduces the amount of aid to school districts, and he fought New York's first property tax cap, one of the most stringent in the nation. Newsday called him, ''the region's leading analyst of financial trends in education.''

Gary understood the unique qualities of Long Island's schools and was a master at forming coalitions to advocate for their most pressing needs and to find creative solutions to save money and provide services. As national economic conditions declined, he advocated for shared services as a means of reducing costs, arguing that BOCES was well positioned to provide these shared services. He embraced and promoted the idea of cost sharing as an alternative to school district consolidation, and he championed the concept known as ''functional consolidation,'' or the pooling of resources to provide such services as business management, food service, software purchases and transportation.

Gary's vision for BOCES went well beyond its traditional role to provide regional educational services such as special education and career and technical education. He saw BOCES as a vehicle for helping school districts join together to meet their collective needs. He once said, ''BOCES doesn't exist in a vacuum. It exists as the collective will of our component school districts and our stakeholders in the region.'' He demonstrated the kind of strategic, regional thinking that could provide effective solutions. Gary also served as president of the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association, SCSSA, and then as chair of its Legislative Committee. He was well versed in the particular needs and characteristics of the region's school districts and saw it as his responsibility to communicate those needs to legislators in Albany and Washington, particularly in pushing for fair distribution of state aid.

I was proud to stand with him and others last June for the unveiling of Long Island's first P–TECH program, a cutting-edge educational partnership with Longwood School District to train Long Island students for high skill technology jobs. Gary also served as a member of my Education Advisory Board and was always looked to for his ability to synthesize information and analyse educational data.

Mr. Speaker, it has been an honor to work with Gary Bixhorn. He embodies the spirit of the BOCES mission to enable school districts to operate more efficiently by working together. His ability to see the broad picture while analyzing the small details made him a valuable educational resource for our region and a widely-respected leader. On behalf of New York's first congressional district, I would like to thank him for his lasting impact on education and wish him well in retirement.

RECOGNIZING ALCALDESA SUZANNE BRANGHAM

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Suzanne Brangham, who has been named the City of Sonoma's 2014 Alcaldesa, or Honorary Mayor. The title ''Alcalde,'' or ''Alcaldessa'' when referring to a woman, is the Spanish word for ''Mayor.'' While the Alcalde was the primary civil authority during the Spanish colonial period in California, in modern times, it is an honorary title bestowed upon invaluable members of the community.

Ms. Brangham has lived in Sonoma for 25 years, where she has given back to her community as both a businesswoman and philanthropist. She has founded a number of businesses in Sonoma, including the Ramekins Culinary School, the MacArthur Place Hotel & Spa, and the General's Daughter restaurant, which is located in a Victorian home built by the daughters of Mariano G. Vallejo, the Commander General of California and founder of the City of Sonoma. In addition to revitalizing Sonoma through her business ventures, she authored the bestselling book Housewise, which earned her national interviews and appearances on the Today Show, Good Morning America, and Oprah.

Ms. Brangham is as equally dedicated to her philanthropic efforts as she is to her business ventures. Her efforts include promoting local arts—she has worked with the Sonoma Valley Museum of Art, the Sebastiani Theatre Alliance, and the Sonoma International Film Festival—and helping the young people of Sonoma Valley through organizations such as Teen Safe Ride, the Mentoring Alliance, and the Sonoma Valley Boys & Girls Clubs. She has also served with the Sonoma Valley Hospital Coalition, the Sonoma Valley Fund, the Lyon Ranch Animal Rescue and Therapy Center as well as Pets Lifeline.

Mr. Speaker, Suzanne Brangham is a beloved and vitally important member of the community and it is appropriate that we acknowledge her today as Sonoma's Alcaldesa for 2014.

HONORING AUBURN UNIVERSITY FULLBACK JAY PROSCH

HON. BRADLEY BYRNE

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a young man who is representing our community in South Alabama in the Senior Bowl, Jay Prosch. Jay is a fullback at Auburn University, having originally attended UMS Wright in Mobile, AL, before playing college football at Auburn.

Jay is an exceptionally talented young individual. While serving as Team Captain his senior year at UMS Wright, he received the Joe Bullard, Jr. Award, given to the player who displays exemplary leadership and love of the game of football.

In addition, Jay was awarded the Most Valuable Linebacker Award, Mobile Optimist Club Offensive Back of the Year Award, and State of Alabama 4A Lineman of the Year Award. That year, his senior year, he recorded 199 tackles, 114 solo stops, 16 of which were for a loss, five pass interruptions, and one sack. He also rushed five times for 16 yards and one touchdown as a fullback.

Jay has become a standout at Auburn and previously during his time at the University of Illinois as a standout in strength training. He clean lifted more than 400 pounds while weighing just 250. He was also recorded at 4.72 seconds in the 40-yard dash.

CBS Sports named him a ''Freak,'' as well as Gil Brandt listing him as one of the country's Top 100 Seniors this year.

We are all so proud of Jay and his accomplishments on the field of play. He has excelled as a player, a leader, and an individual, and is regarded as a leader by his teammates and coaches. South Alabama is proud to claim him as one of our own, and we wish him luck as he takes the field in the Senior Bowl.

TRIBUTE TO DAVE OSTER

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community are exceptional. Lake Elsinore has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent and make their communities better places to live and work. Dave Oster is one of these individuals. On January 25, 2014, Dave will be honored as the 2013 ''Citizen of the Year'' at the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce Instalation and Awards Gala.

Dave was born and raised in the small town of Mantua, OH, where the friendly and respectful nature of the community created a family-like atmosphere. Dave grew up watching his father establish a successful career in human resources, and soon, his work ethic and values were formed. Growing up, Dave developed his passion for America's favorite pastime, baseball, and found himself consistently holding a leadership position as captain for many of his teams. Dave went on to graduate high school and attend Bowling Green State University and later Ohio Northern University, where he earned his degree in sports management. He was honored with his first leadership award, the Clyde A. Lamb Award, during his senior year at Ohio Northern.

Dave's thriving career in sports began when he interned for the Cleveland Force, a renowned soccer team based in Ohio. His first job out of college followed suit, as he became the General Manager for the minor league baseball team, the Geneva Cubs. Dave became involved in every facet of the organization, from concessions to clean up, and he established an environment of success and fun. Dave quickly learned how to grow a business and manage a staff, eventually leading him to win the John H. Johnson Award for team recognition and running of an organization.

After 4 years with the Geneva Cubs, Dave took his talent and drive to Delaware, where he began his job as Assistant General Manager for the Wilmington Blue Rocks minor league team. During a time when the organization was just beginning, Dave used his skills and expertise to help build the franchise from the ground up. He made sure the community saw every game as a ''must-attend'' event, and grew attendance from 800 to 6,000 fans, virtually selling out every home game. Dave soon made another move, ending up in Salem, VA, where he was promoted to General Manager of the Salem Avalanche. For all of his hard work, he was honored with the Executive of the Year award for the Carolina League.

Following his success on the East Coast, Dave took a huge leap of faith, and moved out West, where he found his new home with the Lake Elsinore Storm as the Owner and President. His contributions as a leader in the area resulted in huge economic growth and community involvement. For this, he was once again honored with the Executive of the Year Award in the California League. Aside from the tremendous work he has done to create success with The Storm, above all, he is most proud of the family he has found in the staff, and the passion he has for the community, the players and the franchise. 2013 marked Dave's 25th year in professional sports, and his 14th season with the Lake Elsinore Storm.

Dave is most known as an effective leader with a natural ability to organize the efforts and goodwill of others. He is an enthusiastic team builder who enjoys encouraging creativity in the staff that he leads. Considering all that Dave has done for Lake Elsinore, the Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce named him their 2013 Citizen of the Year. Dave's tireless passion for service has contributed immensely to the betterment of our community. He has been the heart and soul of many organizations and events and I am proud to call him a fellow community member, American, and friend. I know that many community members are grateful for his service and salute him as he receives this prestigious award.

FERRUM COLLEGE 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROBERT HURT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. HURT. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and Representatives BOB GOODLATTE and MORGAN GRIFFITH, I submit these remarks to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Ferrum College.

A private institution, Ferrum College was founded in 1913 and has a long and storied history that has left an enduring footprint on Franklin County, as well as Virginia and the nation. The 700-acre campus is located in Ferrum, Virginia, the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Ferrum is home to the second oldest environmental science program in the nation. Today, over 1500 students, from 25 states and a dozen countries, are currently enrolled in 33 areas of study. Ferrum offers bachelor's degrees in twenty-eight programs and received accreditation as a four-year college in 1976. The students are active members of the surrounding Franklin County and Rocky Mount communities.

We wish the students, faculty, and staff the best, as they celebrate Founders Day and their 100th anniversary on February 8th. We also look forward to the continued success of Ferrum College as it carries on its mission of educating our young people and preparing them for their future endeavors.

KIM SKUMANICK, PRESIDENT OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

HON. LOU BARLETTA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Kim Skumanick on her inauguration as president of the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors (PAR).

Ms. Skumanick is a graduate of Penn State University and presently works as an associate broker with Lewith and Freeman Real Estate in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania. Prior to becoming president of PAR, she served as the chair of PAR's Legislative Planning Group and the Legislative Committee. She also held the roles of treasurer of the Realtors Political Action Committee (RPAC) and District 1 Vice President. Today, she is on the Strategic Oversight Committee, Legislative Committee and the Land Use and Local Issues Subcommittee, as well as on the Public Policy & Political Advocacy Coordinating Committee and the Administrative Coordinating Committee. Ms. Skumanick is a National Association of Realtors director and has served for nine years as a Federal Political Coordinator for the 10th Congressional District.

For her hard work and dedication in real estate, Ms. Skumanick has been the recipient of significant recognition. In 2003, she received PAR's Realtor Active in Politics Award. A member of the Greater Scranton Board of Realtors, Kim was president in 2003 and was named Realtor of the Year in 2006.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Skumanick has shown outstanding commitment to the Pennsylvania real estate community. Therefore, I commend her on her inauguration as president of the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

House and Senate met in Joint Session to receive a State of the Union Address from the President of the United States.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S493–S555

Measures Introduced: Four bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 1965–1968, and S. Res. 340. **Page S528**

Measures Reported:

S. 611, to make a technical amendment to the T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area Act, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 113–136) **Page S527**

Measures Passed:

Cooperative and Small Employer Charity Pension Flexibility Act: Senate passed S. 1302, to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, and the following amendment proposed thereto:

Pages S545–54

Reid (for Harkin) Amendment No. 2701, in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S546–54**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that if the Senate receives a bill from the House of Representatives that is identical to the text of S. 1302, then the House bill be read three times and passed, with no intervening action or debate.

Page S546

Catholic Schools Week: Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 334, recognizing the goals of Catholic Schools Week and honoring the valuable contributions of Catholic schools in the United States, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S554**

Measures Considered:

Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers. **Pages S495–S516**

A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at approximately 11 a.m., on Wednesday, January 29, 2014, all post-cloture time be yielded back and the motion to proceed to the bill be agreed to; that after the bill is reported, the following amendments be agreed to: Hagan Amendment No. 2702; Rubio Amendment No. 2704; King Amendment No. 2705; and Blunt Amendment No. 2698; and the amended text be considered as original text for the purposes of further amendment; that the only other amendments in order be the following: Reed Amendment No. 2703; Coburn Amendment No. 2697; Merkley Amendment No. 2709; Heller Amendment No. 2700; Whitehouse Amendment No. 2706; Toomey Amendment No. 2707; and Gillibrand Amendment No. 2708; that no second-degree amendments be in order to any of these amendments prior to votes in relation to the amendments; that it be in order for Senator Toomey to modify his amendment with the text of Rubio Amendment No. 2704 and Hagan Amendment No. 2702; that there be 30 minutes of debate equally divided on each amendment or motion to waive a budget point or order, if made; that there be up to one hour of general debate on the bill equally divided between proponents and opponents; that amendments in this agreement must be offered prior to 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 29, 2014; that it be in order for Senator Crapo, or designee, to raise a budget point of order against the bill; that if such a point of order is raised, Senator Menendez, or designee, be recognized to move to waive the point of

order; that upon the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote on the motion to waive, if made; that if the motion to waive is agreed to, Senate vote in relation to the amendments in the order listed; that upon the disposition of the amendments, the bill be read a third time and Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended. Page S555

Escort Committee—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the Presiding Officer of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join a like committee on the part of the House to escort President Obama into the House Chamber for the joint session to be held at 9 p.m., on Tuesday, January 28, 2014. Page S554

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting the report on the State of the Union delivered to a Joint Session of Congress on January 28, 2014; which was ordered to lie on the table. (PM–27) Pages S521–26

Messages from the House: Page S526

Measures Referred: Page S526

Measures Placed on the Calendar: Pages S493, S526

Executive Communications: Pages S526–27

Executive Reports of Committees: Page S527

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S528–29

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Page S529

Additional Statements: Pages S518–21

Amendments Submitted: Pages S529–45

Notices of Intent: Page S545

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S545

Privileges of the Floor: Page S545

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 10:27 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, January 29, 2014. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S555.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Madelyn R. Creedon, of Indiana, to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration, Brad R. Carson, of Oklahoma, to be Under Secretary of the Army, William A. LaPlante, Jr., of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, and 1,096 nominations in the Army and Air Force.

MILITARY RETIREMENT SYSTEM

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine recent changes to the United States military retirement system, after receiving testimony from Christine H. Fox, Acting Deputy Secretary, and Admiral James A. Winnefeld, Jr., USN, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, both of the Department of Defense; General John H. Tilelli, Jr., USA (Ret.), Military Officers Association of America, Master Sergeant Richard J. Delaney, USAF (Ret.), The Retired Enlisted Association, and David S. C. Chu, Institute for Defense Analyses, all of Alexandria, Virginia; and General Gordon R. Sullivan, USA (Ret.), Association of the United States Army, Arlington, Virginia.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, after receiving testimony from Fred P. Hochberg, President and Chairman, Export-Import Bank of the United States.

CRITICAL MINERALS POLICY ACT

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine S. 1600, to facilitate the reestablishment of domestic, critical mineral designation, assessment, production, manufacturing, recycling, analysis, forecasting, workforce, education, research, and international capabilities in the United States, after receiving testimony from David Danielson, Assistant Secretary of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy; Lawrence D. Meinert, Mineral Resources Program Coordinator, Geological Survey, Department of the Interior; Major General Robert H. Latiff, (Ret.), George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia; David Isaacs, Semiconductor Industry Association, and Jennifer Thomas, The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, both of Washington, D.C.; Jim Sims, Molycorp, Inc., Greenwood, Colorado; Gregory Conrad, Interstate Mining Compact Commission, Herndon, Virginia, on behalf of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources; and Roderick G. Eggert, Colorado School of Mines, Golden.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Max Sieben

Baucus, of Montana, to be Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, who was introduced by Senator Tester, Arnold A. Chacon, of Virginia, to be Director General of the Foreign Service, and Daniel Bennett Smith, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, all of the Department of State, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OVERTIME

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Federal Programs and the Federal Workforce concluded a hearing to examine overtime at the Department of Homeland Security, after receiving testimony from Carolyn N. Lerner, Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel; Ron Vitiello, Deputy Chief, Border Patrol, and Catherine Emerson, Chief Human Capital Officer, both of the Department of Homeland Security; and Brandon Judd, National Border Patrol Council, Washington, D.C.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine 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, after the nominees, who were introduced by Senators Flake and McCain, testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 22 public bills, H.R. 3936–3957, were introduced.

Pages H1479–80

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H1481**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Webster to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1433**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:50 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Pages H1438–39**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by a yea-and-nay vote of 260 yeas to 142 nays with 3 answering "present", Roll No. 28

Pages H1439, H1458–59

No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act: The House passed H.R. 7, to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions, by a yea-and-nay vote of 227 yeas to 188 nays with 1 answering "present", Roll No. 30.

Pages H1459–72

Rejected the Moore 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 yea-and-nay vote of 192 yeas to 221 nays with 1 answering "present", Roll No. 29.

Pages H1470–71

Pursuant to the rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113–33 shall be considered as adopted.

Page H1459

H. Res. 465, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 7) and the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2642), was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 224 yeas to 192 nays, Roll No. 27, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 222 yeas to 194 nays, Roll No. 26.

Pages H1443–58

A point of order was raised against the consideration of H. Res. 465 and it was agreed to proceed with consideration of the resolution by voice vote.

Pages H1443–45

A second point of order was raised against the consideration of H. Res. 465 and it was agreed to proceed with consideration of the resolution by voice vote. **Pages H1445–47**

Support for United States-Republic of Korea Civil Nuclear Cooperation Act: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and pass S. 1901, to authorize the President to extend the term of the nuclear energy agreement with the Republic of Korea until March 19, 2016. **Pages H1472–73**

Meeting Hour: Agreed that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, January 29th. **Page H1473**

House Democracy Partnership—Appointment: Read a letter from Representative Pelosi, Minority Leader, in which she appointed the following Members to the House Democracy Partnership: Representatives Price (NC), Capps, Farr, Ellison, Roybal-Allard, Davis (CA), Moore, McDermott, and Titus.

Page H1473

Recess: The House recessed at 5:18 p.m. and reconvened at 8:41 p.m. Page H1473

State of the Union Address: President Barack Obama delivered his State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress, pursuant to the provisions of H. Con. Res. 75. He was escorted into the House Chamber by a committee comprised of Representatives Cantor, McCarthy (CA), Walden, Lankford, Jenkins, Foxx, Pelosi, Hoyer, Clyburn, Becerra, Crowley, Israel, and DeLauro and Senators Reid, Durbin, Schumer, Murray, Bennet, Stabenow, Begich, McConnell, Cornyn, Thune, Blunt, and Barrasso. The President's message was referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 113–82). Pages H1473–78

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H1439.

Senate Referral: S. 1901 was held at the desk.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Five yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1457–58, H1458, H1458–59, H1471, and H1472. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 10:27 p.m.

Committee Meetings

REBALANCING TO THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled"Rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific Region: Examining Its Implementation". Testimony was heard from Frank Kendall, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Department of Defense; and Michael D. Lumpkin, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Department of Defense; and VADM Frank Pandolfe, Director, Strategic Plans and Policy, Joint Staff.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA'S COUNTERSPACE PROGRAM AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Strategic Forces; and Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces held a joint hearing entitled "The People's Republic of China's Counterspace Program and the Implications for U.S. National Security". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE WAR ON POVERTY: EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Committee on the Budget: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "AProgress Report on The War on Poverty: Expanding Economic Opportunity". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

KEEPING COLLEGE WITHIN REACH: SHARING BEST PRACTICES FOR SERVINGLOW-INCOME AND FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS

Committee on Education and the Workforce:: Subcommittee on HigherEducation and Workforce Training held a hearing entitled "Keeping College Within Reach: Sharing Best Practices for Serving Low-income and First Generation Students". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Full Committee concluded markup on H.R. 3826, the "Electricity Security and Affordability Act"; and H.R. 2126, the "Better Buildings Act of 2013". The bill H.R. 2126 was ordered reported, as amended; and the bill H.R. 3826 was ordered reported, without amendment.

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "The Semi-Annual Report of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau". Testimony was heard from Richard Cordray, Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Middle East and North Africa; and Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade held a hearing entitled "Implementation of the Iran Nuclear Deal". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

EXAMINING TSA'S CADRE OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATORS

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on TransportationSecurity held a hearing entitled "Examining TSA's Cadre of Criminal Investigators". Testimony was heard from the following Homeland Security officials: Roderick Allison, Assistant Administrator, Office of Inspection, Transportation Security Administration; Karen Shelton Waters, Assistant Administrator, Office of Human Capital, Transportation Security Administration; and Anne Richards, Assistant Inspector General, Office of Audits.

TOP MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES: GRANT MANAGEMENT AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Top Management Challenges: Grant Management at the U.S. Department of Justice''. Testimony was heard from Michael E. Horowitz, Inspector General, Department of Justice.

THE SCOPE OF FAIR USE

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property and the Internet held a hearing entitled ''The Scope of Fair Use''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a markup on thefollowing legislation: H.R. 163, the ''Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Conservation and Recreation Act''; H.R. 2095, the ''Land Disposal Transparency and Efficiency Act''; H.R. 2259, the ''North Fork Watershed Protection Act of 2013''; H.R. 2657, the ''Disposal of Excess Federal Lands Act of 2013''; and H.R. 3492, the ''River Paddling Protection Act''; and a motion to consider Committee Print 113–1. The following bills were ordered reported, as amended: H.R. 163; H.R. 2095; H.R. 2259; and H.R. 3492. The following bill was ordered reported, without amendment: H.R. 2657. The motion to consider Committee Print 113–1 was approved and adopted, as amended.

DOCUMENTS DETAILING HEALTHCARE.GOV SECURITY VULNERABILITIES

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''A Roadmap for Hackers?—Documents Detailing Healthcare.gov Security Vulnerabilities''. This was a closed hearing.

SMALL BUSINESS TRADE AGENDA: STATUS AND IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Committee on Small Business: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Energy and Trade held a hearing entitled ''Small Business Trade Agenda: Status and Impact of International Agreements''. Testimony was heard from James Sanford, Assistant United States Trade Representative, Small Business, Market Access and Industrial Competitiveness, Office of the Trade Representative.

IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FEDERAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY GRANT PROGRAMS

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee onHighways and Transit held a hearing entitled ''Improving the Effectiveness of the Federal Surface Transportation Safety Grant Programs''. Testimony was heard from Christopher A. Hart, Vice Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board; and public witnesses.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LEARNING FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR'S SUCCESSFUL APPROACH TO HIRING VETERANS

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''What can the Federal Government Learn from the Private Sector's Successful Approach to Hiring Veterans?''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

IMPACT OF THE EMPLOYER MANDATE'S DEFINITION OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE ON JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Committee on Ways and Means: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Impact of the Employer Mandate's Definition of Full-time Employee on Jobs and Opportunities''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

FARM BILL

Conferees agreed to file a conference report on the differences between the Senate and House passed versions of H.R. 2642, to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D75)*

H.R. 3527, to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the poison center national toll-free number, national media campaign, and grant program. Signed on January 24, 2014. (Public Law 113–77)

S. 230, to authorize the Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs. Signed on January 24, 2014. (Public Law 113–78)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2014

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Subcommittee on Economic Policy, to hold hearings to examine the annual report and oversight of the Office of Financial Research, 3:30 p.m., SD–538.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: business meeting to consider the nominations of Michael Keith Yudin, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, James Cole, Jr., of New York, to be General Counsel, James H. Shelton III, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary, Theodore Reed Mitchell, of California, to be Under Secretary, and Ericka M. Miller, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, all of the Department of Education, France A. Cordova, of New Mexico, to be Director of the National Science Foundation, David Weil, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, and Steven Joel Anthony, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Railroad Retirement Board, Time to be announced, Room to be announced.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: business meeting to consider S. 1486, to improve, sustain, and transform the United States Postal Service, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: business meeting to consider S. 1448, to provide for equitable compensation to the Spokane Tribe of Indians of the Spokane Reservation for the use of tribal land for the production of hydropower by the Grand Coulee Dam, and the nomination of Vincent G. Logan, of New York, to be Special Trustee, Office of Special Trustee for American Indians, Department of the Interior; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine S. 919, to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian tribes, 2:30 p.m., SD–628.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold an oversight hearing to examine the Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Committee on Rules and Administration: to hold hearings to examine S. 1728, to amend the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act to improve ballot accessibility to uniformed services voters and overseas voters, 10 a.m., SR–301.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold hearings to examine worldwide threat, 10 a.m., SH–216.

House

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Military Personnel, hearing entitled ''Religious Accommodations in the Armed Services'', 9:30 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 938, to strengthen the strategic alliance between the United States and Israel, and for other purposes; and H. Res. 447, supporting the democratic and European aspirations of the people of Ukraine, and their right to choose their own future free of intimidation and fear, 9:30 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

10 a.m., Wednesday, January 29

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond one hour), Senate will begin consideration of S. 1926, Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act.

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

9 a.m., Wednesday, January 29

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of the Conference Report to accompany H.R. 2642—Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

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